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Attitudes Towards Chivalry in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*

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Declaration

I declare that:

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Abstract

The main purpose of this thesis is to expound the notion that the fourteenth-century poet John Barbour used a loose framework of standard chivalric ideals and tropes to explain and in some cases legitimise the actions of his heroes and that Blind Hary adopted a similar approach when composing *The Wallace* around a century later. It will explore the idea that both writers did this in order to present their heroes in a way that their audiences would recognise and also to influence the behaviour of these audiences, insofar as the audience of these works in their immediate historical context can be reconstructed. This thesis will not attempt to deal with whether or not they were successful in affecting change in the behaviour of the audiences, as this would require a significant broadening of the scope of this study and it is doubtful whether this may even be possible to assess even in a much wider study. However, in addressing the major themes of both poems with regards to chivalry, this thesis will draw on the historical contexts in which each source was written in order to better explain why these authors adopted the attitudes they did and why the notions they espouse might have been apposite at the time of writing. In particular, it will consider the way each author explores themes of prudence, friendship and loyalty as expressed through oath-making for what these themes tell us about Barbour and Hary's engagement with chivalry. These themes will then be drawn together in a final chapter on what constitutes 'acceptable' behaviour for each of these writers.

Contents

Introduction

Chivalry has been a source of much interest, both popular and scholarly, but until relatively recently it has received little attention in a Scottish context.[1] The term chivalry is a somewhat ambiguous term and can be difficult for modern scholars to clearly define in a manner that covers the many expressions of chivalry identifiable in medieval literature. Broadly, medieval writers recognised a set of ideal virtues that encapsulated 'proper' behaviour for the martial class, which modern scholars can roughly identify as amounting to a set of chivalric standards. Unsurprisingly, medieval writers did not always agree on the ideal standards that ought to dictate the behaviour of knights, and even in those cases when two writers did agree on a particular ideal they might not agree on how that ideal should be expressed. Thus Barthélemy has noted that different writers could not only offer variations on the theme of chivalry but actually present directly contradictory representations of the term.[2] Maurice Keen, who has written one of the most influential scholar works on the subject of chivalry, presents a working definition of the term chivalry as 'an ethos in which martial, aristocratic and Christian elements were fused together.'[3] Foran also offers a broad definition of chivalry as 'a political language, an authoritative manner of representing events of political consequence.'[4] In other words, chivalry was a tool for discussing and debating aristocratic lifestyles and relationships. These definitions are particularly useful in that they recognise the fact that individual writers often emphasised different elements of what constituted the ideal knightly character and they will be employed in this study to focus in on those elements that were considered important by the writer of a given work.

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[1] A. Borst, 'Knighthood in the Middle Ages: Ideal and Reality', in F. L. Cheyette (ed.), *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), pp. 180-191; R. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, (2nd edn., Cardinal, 1974); J. Barnie, *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974); M. Keen, *Chivalry*, (London: Yale University Press, 1984); R. W. Hanning, 'The criticism of chivalric epic and romance', in H. Chickering and T. H. Seiler (eds.), *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), pp. 91-113; M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War 1066– 1217*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); R. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); C. Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

[2] D. Barthélemy, 'Modern Mythologies of Medieval Chivalry', in P. Linehan and J. L. Nelson (eds.), *The Medieval World*, (London, 2002), p. 215

[3] M. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 16

[4] S. Foran, 'A Nation of Knights? Chivalry and the Community of the Realm in Barbour's *Bruce*', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 140

The Scottish nobility are known to have openly and readily engaged with chivalry in the late medieval period.[5] This can be traced to the impact of 'Frankish' lords which transformed the nature of Scottish aristocratic society, and the consolidation of Francophone literary genres and styles can be seen in the production of Guillaume le Clerc's *Roman de Fergus* in the twelfth-century.[6] Members of the late medieval Scottish aristocracy participated in the ritual and display associated with the notion of chivalry, adopting heraldic devices as a means of identifying themselves.[7] Furthermore, tournaments and other formal displays of chivalric virtues became a popular pastime, with Scots competing both in their native country and in other kingdoms around Europe.[8] And most importantly for this study, a recognition of the importance of chivalry to the Scottish nobility came to be expressed in the literature produced in the kingdom during this period. Two works in particular stand out as being especially focussed on the issue of chivalry, namely *The Bruce* written by John Barbour, archdeacon of Aberdeen and *The Wallace* written by an otherwise anonymous figure known to modern scholars simply as Blind Hary. These two works stand out because each writer tackles chivalry as a central theme of his work, as opposed to dealing with the subject only in an incidental way. Furthermore, both works take the form of long narrative poems and present biographical details about the lives of two of the most revered figures from Scotland's early fourteenth-century history, William Wallace and King Robert I. Perhaps more importantly than that, *The Wallace*, although composed roughly a century after *The Bruce*, drew a great deal of inspiration from the earlier work and is largely modelled on Barbour's poem. Hary even goes so far as to adapt whole passages from *The Bruce* and transpose them into his own poem, demonstrating that from its very conception *The Wallace* was heavily indebted to *The Bruce*. Yet despite their works being so strongly connected these two writers differ greatly in many of their attitudes towards chivalry and their approaches to presenting and

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[5] K. Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland, 1424-1513*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006)

[6] G. W. S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); G. le Clerc, *Fergus of Galloway: Knight of King Arthur*, (D.D.R. Owen ed. & trans), (London, 1991)

[7] R. R. Stodart, *Scottish Arms, Being a Collection of Armorial Bearings AD 1370-1678: reproduced in facsimile from contemporary manuscripts, with heraldic and genealogical notes*, (Edinburgh: W. Paterson, 1881), 2 volumes; C. Campbell (ed.), *The Scots Roll: A Study of a Fifteenth-Century Roll of Arms*, (Edinburgh: Heraldry Society of Scotland, 1995); K. Stevenson, 'Jurisdiction, Authority and Professionalisation: The Officers of Arms of Late Medieval Scotland' in K. Stevenson (ed.), *The Herald in Late Medieval Europe*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), pp. 41-66; W. de G. Birch, *History of Scottish Seals from the Eleventh to the Seventeenth-Century*, (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1905), 2 volumes

[8] C. Edington, 'The Tournament in Medieval Scotland', in M. Strickland, (ed.), *Armies, Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France: Proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium*, (Stamford, 1998), pp. 46-62; K. Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, pp. 63-102

interpreting the material at their disposal. Moreover, both writers display a familiarity with trends in contemporary writing and yet at the same time can promote remarkably unorthodox opinions and advocate their views in decidedly unconventional ways in certain passages of the two poems. In doing so, Barbour and Hary offer not just an insight into their own personal thoughts on a wide range of issues that were considered important in the medieval intellectual milieu, but they also provide a fascinating glimpse into the attitudes and opinions of their intended audience as well. In composing their respective poems and advocating their own peculiar stances on various issues Barbour and Hary no doubt intended to influence the views of those who would be exposed to their work, which can be illuminating in terms of assessing the attitudes of the medieval Scottish aristocracy. However, in presenting their ideas in a particular way or putting a particular slant on them, Barbour and Hary can also provide some notion of what made a given idea attractive to their respective audiences, offering further insight into the mind-set of those who the writers expected to read their work. The purpose of this thesis then is to consider what Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace* reveal about the writers' attitudes towards chivalry and also the attitudes of their intended audiences, insofar as they can be reconstructed.

Both *The Bruce* and *The Wallace* have been the subject of considerable interest for scholars and many questions have been raised about both works.[9] The circumstances of the

[9] G. Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's Wallace', *Essays & Studies 1* (1910), pp. 85-112; W. H. Schofield, *Mythical Bards and the Life of William Wallace*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920); I. Walker, 'Barbour, Blind Harry, and Sir William Craigie', *Studies in Scottish Literature 1* (1964), pp. 189–201; W. Scheps, 'Possible Sources for Two Instances of Historical Inaccuracy in Blind Harry's *Wallace*', *Notes & Queries 16* (1969), pp. 125-126; W. Scheps, 'William Wallace and His 'Buke': Some Instances of Their Influence on Subsequent Literature', *Studies in Scottish Literature 6* (1969), pp. 220-237; L. A. Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 9: Iss. 4 (1972), pp. 218–242; V. Harward, 'Hary's *Wallace* and Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', in Studies in *Scottish Literature 10* (1972), pp. 48-50; B.W. Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', in *Mediaeval Studies 35* (1973), pp. 477-508; B. W. Kliman, 'The Significance of Barbour's Naming of Commoners', *Studies in Scottish Literature 11* (1973), pp. 108–113; J. Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*', *The Chaucer Review* 8 (1974), pp. 241-251; J. MacQueen, 'The literature of fifteenth-century Scotland', in J.M. Brown (ed.), *Scottish Society in the Fifteen-Century*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp. 184-208; A. M. McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', in W.H. Jackson (ed.), *Knighthood in Medieval Literature*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1981), pp. 167-180; E. Walsh, 'Hary's *Wallace*: The Evolution of a Hero', *Scottish Literary Journal 11.1* (May 1984), pp. 5-19; W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Stories and Storytelling in Barbour's *Brus*', in J.D. McClure and M.R.G. Spiller (eds.), *Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), pp. 55-66; G.G. Wilson, 'Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*: Complements, Compensations and Conventions', in *Studies in Scottish Literature 25* (1990), pp. 189–201; M. P. McDiarmid, '*Rauf Colyear, Golagros and Gawane*, Hary's *Wallace*: Their Themes of Independence and Religion', in *Studies in Scottish Literature 26* (1991), pp. 328-333; S. Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1992); R. J. Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland: Historical Narrative in Medieval Scotland*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); L. O. Pardon and J. N. Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', in L. O. Pardon and C. L. Vitto (eds.), *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 77-95; S. Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', in M. Strickland (ed.), *Armies,*

survival of both works will be considered, as will the attempts of various scholars to better understand each of these poems. Attention will be given to questions of patronage and genre, issues which have been widely discussed by historians. Furthermore, previous observations on the structure of the poems will be examined for what illumination they can provide for the purposes of this study. Historians have recognised the usefulness of Barbour's *Bruce* and – to a lesser extent – Hary's *Wallace* in reconstructing an accurate chronology of events for the periods they cover, and their findings will also be given due consideration.

In order to assess the attitudes toward chivalry present in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace* it is necessary to consider the overriding themes of the two works. Wherever possible, this study will endeavour to identify areas of agreement and disagreement between the poems and the works of other comparable near-contemporary works, such as Thomas Gray, Geoffroi de Charny, Christine de Pizan and Andrew of Wyntoun. In most cases, this will involve considering how Barbour and Hary deal with a particular theme that is common to both and what their different approaches to these themes suggest about their intentions in presenting them in this way. But in some cases either Barbour or Hary will emphasise a theme that the other does not. Such is the case with prudence, which is one of the most elevated virtues a character can possess in Barbour's *Bruce* but is almost entirely absent from Hary's work. Prudence was a widely recognised virtue in the medieval period, and was quite naturally promoted among those men who

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Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France: proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium, (Stamford: Paul Watkins Pub., 1998), pp. 13-29; G. M. Brunsden, 'Aspects of Scotland's Social, Political, and Cultural Scene in the Late Seventeenth-and Early Eighteenth-centuries, as Mirrored in the Wallace and Bruce Traditions,' in E.J. Cowan and D. Gifford (eds.), *The Polar Twins*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Pub., 1999), pp. 75-113; S. Cameron, 'Keeping the Customer Satisfied: Barbour's *Bruce* and the phantom division at Bannockburn', in E.J. Cowan and D. Gifford (eds.), *The Polar Twins*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Pub., 1999), pp. 61-74; K. Saldanha, 'Studies in Medieval Scottish Historical Romance: An examination of John Barbour's *Bruce*, Hary's *Wallace*, the octosyllabic *Buik of King Alexander*, and the decasyllabic *Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour*', (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2000); G. Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, (Stroud: Sutton Pub., 2001); R. J. Moll, ''Off quhat nacioun art thow?': National Identity in Blind Hary's *Wallace*', in R. A. McDonald (ed.), *History, Literature, and Music in Scotland, 700-1560*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 120–143; J. H. Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2004); R. J. Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald': Making Sense of Scottish Lives and the Desire for History in Barbour, Wyntoun and Blind Hary', in P. Bawcutt and J. Hadley Williams (eds.), *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 35-48; F. Riddy, 'Unmapping the Territory: Blind Hary's *Wallace*', in E. J. Cowan (ed.), *The Wallace Book*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), pp. 107–16; N. Royan, 'A Question of Truth: Barbour's *Bruce*, Hary's *Wallace* and *Richard Coer de Lion*', in *International Review of Scottish Studies 34*, (2009), pp. 75-105; S. Foran, 'A Great Romance: Chivalry and War in Barbour's *Bruce*', in C. Given-Wilson (ed.), *Fourteenth-Century England VI*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 1-25; A. Beam, ''At the apex of chivalry': Sir Ingram de Umfraville and the Anglo-Scottish wars', in A. King and D. Simpkin (eds.), *England and Scotland at War, c.1296-c.1513*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012), pp. 53-76; S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015)

pursued an active military career, but it is less commonly found in other chivalric texts, especially those claiming to belong to the romance genre. Barbour's *Bruce* is replete with examples of prudence in action and also contains a number of digressions in which Barbour expounds his feelings on the matter in great detail. The quality of prudence relies on wisdom to temper one's actions, and as a result there is a sense in *The Bruce* that prudence is developed through experience, and this can often take some time to acquire. Prudence, and its antitheses cowardice and foolhardiness, are characteristics shared by many of the heroes and villains in *The Bruce*, to a greater or lesser degree, and the tales Barbour includes that illustrate these features serve to further illuminate the nature of prudence as Barbour understood it. Of particular interest to this study are the connections that Barbour makes between prudence and other more widely-recognised chivalric virtues such as prowess and renown.[10] Throughout the poem Barbour repeatedly suggests that prudence offers a way to demonstrate or achieve other chivalric values. It is in this way that Barbour tries to integrate the concept of prudence with a wider framework of chivalric practice.

Both Barbour and Hary demonstrate a keen interest in the obligations placed upon their heroes by their position in society. The obligations that Barbour and Hary explore can be general – as in the case of loyalty, which both writers presume to be an obligation imposed on those within the kingdom regardless of their social standing – or specific – as in the case of oath-making. The interest of both writers on the subject of oath-making is unsurprising as this was an integral part of medieval social and political life for the aristocracy. Oaths were one of the main methods by which relationships were established and responsibilities were assigned in the medieval period, very often concluded in public ceremonies and frequently accompanied by considerable ritual and display.[11] Chivalry was tightly bound up with issues surrounding oath-making and virtues like loyalty and honour were core elements of the works of most chivalric writers. In fact, for Barbour loyalty was the greatest virtue a knight could possess, as one of the most famous passages from *The Bruce* attests.[12] Neither work is particularly interested in the ritual and display element of oath-making but both make the seriousness of oath-making clear to the respective

[10] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 2, 56, 99; Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, p. 135-160, 304-310
[11] N. Offenstadt, 'The rituals of peace during the Civil War in France, 1409-19 – politics and the public sphere', in T. Thornton (ed.), *Social Attitudes and Political Structures in the Fifteenth Century*, (Stroud: Sutton 2000), pp. 88-100; R. Lesaffer, 'Peace treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', in R. Lesaffer (ed.), *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the Late Middle Ages to World War One*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 9-44; J. Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages: Principles and Practice*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011)
[12] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 367-9

audiences. Both writers seek to portray the most iniquitous villains as traitors or oath-breakers – and in some cases both – and use these transgressions as an excuse to inflict the harshest punishments on them. All of these obligations are closely bound up with the notion of reciprocal lord-vassal relations, which Barbour seems to recognise more so than Hary. For Barbour, it is proper for a vassal to sublimate his own desires and faithfully obey his lord, and in return his lord should be generous in rewarding him for this loyalty. Thus in *The Bruce* whenever one side fails in his responsibility in this regard, the relationship breaks down. Hary on the other hand is more concerned with the question of calculation and the role it plays in oath-making. Wallace is fundamentally a very honest and straight-forward man, who frequently comes to grief at the hands of scheming and duplicitous individuals who seek to fulfil their intentions through underhand means. By including this theme, which is best attested towards the end of the poem during Wallace's time in France, Hary promotes the notion that openness and sincerity are paramount in establishing beneficial relations with others.

Friendship is another theme that Barbour shows a particularly strong interest in, and while this theme is carried over into *The Wallace* as well Hary is considerably less interested in exploring the subject. Medieval thought on friendship had been greatly influenced by classical philosophy and was a common subject of chivalric romances from the thirteenth-century onwards.[13] However, friendship fulfilled an important contemporary socio-political function as well. Cultivating friendships with more powerful figures was a means to exert political influence beyond what an individual's actual social standing might ordinarily allow. The main friendship explored by Barbour is that between his chief protagonists – Bruce and Douglas. Philosophically, this friendship reflects the 'standard' medieval outlook on what a friendship would be, building on classical foundations, in that both men are drawn into one another's company by their shared values and characteristics and a sense of mutual admiration.[14] However, the physical expression of that relationship

[13] R. Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealisation of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature*, (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1994); J. Haseldine, 'Introduction: Why Friendship?' in J. Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, (Sutton, 1999), pp. xvii-xxiii; G. Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', in J. Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, (Sutton, 1999), pp. 91-105; A. Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal and Value from Antiquity to the Early Modern Time', in A. Classen and M. Sandridge (eds.), *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 1-184

[14] T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, translated by the English Dominican Fathers, (London: Burns, Oates & Washburne, 1912-36; New York: Benziger, 1947-48; New York: Christian Classics, 1981); M. T. Cicero, *Laelius, On friendship (Laelius de amicitia) & The Dream of Scipio (Somnium Scipionis)*, (J. G. F. Powell ed. & trans.), (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990); Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, (R. Crisp ed. & trans), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

serves to illustrate the practical value of friendship in the medieval period. On two noteworthy occasions, Douglas is able to use his closeness with the king to gain quite remarkable concessions from him, convincing the king to suspend his own intentions momentarily in order to benefit Douglas instead. In terms of how Barbour presents the two men interacting with one another, it seems that he borrows a great deal from such friendships as they appeared in romance literature of the time, such as in the sentiments exchanged in Bruce's highly emotional deathbed scene. It may be that Barbour was simply trying to understand the historical relationship between these two men as best he could and that the model of the heroic knightly companions suited his purpose best. The friendships that Hary portrays in *The Wallace* are explored much less thoroughly than that of Bruce and Douglas in *The Bruce*, but they too can be illuminating. For instance, the brief, bitter and ultimately disastrous friendship between Wallace and Fawdoun provides an interesting illustration of a kind of functional friendship in which both parties are involved merely for the use they can get out of the other, a type of relationship recognised but discouraged by both classical and medieval writers.[15] Hary also provides his protagonist with 'true' friends and to a limited extent these relationships reflect the same sense of mutual admiration as that of Bruce and Douglas. However, Hary's focus is so utterly fixed on Wallace alone that these relationships are still not given the depth of those in *The Bruce* and thus provide less insight into Hary's understanding of friendship than Barbour provides in his poem.

There are a number of other, less prominent but no less illuminating themes that Barbour and Hary present that also deserve consideration. In general, these themes collectively add up to provide an impression how each writer believed acceptable behaviour was judged. In Barbour's case, he offers a great deal of information on what he considered to be appropriate behaviour and characteristics for a king. These can be gleaned both from general observations of Bruce's character throughout the poem but also by comparing specific episodes in his life to those of the antagonists, such as by considering Bruce's deathbed scene alongside that of Edward I. One of the potential limitations Barbour faced when composing *The Bruce* was the prospect of having to deal with events that cast his heroes in a less than favourable light, such as Bruce's murder of Comyn and the so-called Douglas Larder. However, the way in which Barbour handles these episodes, how he excuses or justifies the actions of the protagonists or reinterprets them in favour of his heroes, is another excellent illustration of Barbour's thoughts on this issue of acceptable

[15] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 7

behaviour. Barbour's account of the fighting in *The Bruce* almost invariably involves the Scots laying traps and setting ambushes and doing whatever can be done to gain the upper hand over the English without meeting them in open battle, a strategy that even Barbour occasionally hints at as being unconventional – at least by the standards of the heroic literature of the time. But this too provides ample material with which to reconstruct Barbour's attitude towards what constituted acceptable behaviour, through his justifications for this strategy.

One of the most commonly noted themes of *The Wallace* is that of its nascent patriotism, which is a frequent source of justification for Wallace's actions in the poem. Furthermore, Wallace's directness is often used to justify actions which go against the polite conventions of society, especially when contrasted with the deceit of other characters. Undoubtedly one of the most fascinating episodes of *The Wallace* is that of his encounter with the Red Reiver, a pirate who becomes one of Wallace's most loyal followers. When considered in conjunction with a later incident involving another pirate, John of Lyn, it becomes clear that Hary uses these two similar but contrasting characters to present his audience with a lesson in how to go about seeking to redress personal misdeeds. Furthermore, Hary has been seen as expressing a somewhat revolutionary sentiment against the kingship of James III and his work has even been interpreted as an outright anti-royalist text. However, it is in fact possible to interpret the same passages as expressing a far more conservative sentiment that even when a given king is failing in his responsibility to the kingdom, Hary's audience should look for solace and security in long-standing goals such as the defence of the realm.

The themes of prudence, social obligation – particularly in terms of oath-making and friendship – and, more broadly, standards of acceptable behavior offer particular insight into the attitudes of Barbour and Hary towards chivalry. Furthermore, the manner in which these themes are dealt with offer some indication of the appeal of and engagement with such ideas among their contemporary audiences. Comparison with near contemporary works of literature and documentary evidence allows these works to be placed in a wider context, giving some idea of how far Barbour and Hary were drawing on and developing ideas prevalent in the broader intellectual culture of the period. However, before this can be explored both works must be considered in the context of the relevant historiography, since each of them has been the subject of significant – and in the case of Barbour, extensive – scholarly interest.

Historiography of Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*

The author of *The Bruce*, John Barbour, is a relatively well-attested historical figure.[1] The year of his birth is unknown although it is often given as some time in the 1320s, as Duncan – Barbour's most recent editor – puts it 'as much to give him a toehold in King Robert's reign as for anything his career tells us'.[2] Barbour was close to the royal court and at times in his career enjoyed the direct patronage of the king, as is demonstrated by references to him serving as an auditor at the exchequer in 1373 and 1375 and a grant of an annuity of £1 from the burgh of Aberdeen's yearly payment to the Crown in 1379.[3] This, coupled with the frequent use of clearly pro-Stewart sentiments in *The Bruce*, has led many historians to believe that the poem was a product of direct royal patronage. Although *The Bruce* is the only example of his writing to survive to the present day, Andrew of Wyntoun and Walter Bower identify three other works – known as *The Brut*, *The Stewartis Oryginalle* and *The Stewartis Genealogy* – as having been written by Barbour.[4] While some doubt has been cast over whether these are indeed three separate works or simply different titles for a single piece, it is clear that the unifying theme of these titles is the mythic Trojan origins of the people of Britain and the part that the ancestors of the Stewarts played in them. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that these works were produced at the behest of the king himself and used as part of a propaganda campaign to boost the legitimacy of the new royal dynasty. However, as will be seen below the likelihood that these works were patronised by the king does not necessarily mean that the same is true of *The Bruce*.

Barbour's *Bruce* is a long narrative poem almost fourteen thousand lines long and recounts the adventures of King Robert I and his chief lieutenants in their combined attempts to recover their rightful inheritances. It survives in one complete manuscript, currently held at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, and in one incomplete manuscript that is missing an early portion of the poem, currently held at St John's College

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[1] Contrary to the general scholarly consensus on the authorship of *The Bruce*, Taggart has argued that as many as six writers may have contributed material to the work – with Barbour serving as editor – on the basis of computerised 'cluster analysis' of words used in the text, Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', Chapter 2 & p. 263-265; it is possible that this impression could be related to Head's observation that Ramsay's exemplars were likely the work of more than one scribe, G. Head, 'Studies in the Language, Palaeography and Codicology of MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.2', (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1997), p. 118

[2] *The Bruce*, p. 2

[3] *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, eds. J. Stuarts and others (Edinburgh, 1878-1909), vol. 2, p. 385, 428, 597

[4] *The Bruce*, p. 3

in Cambridge.[5] The incomplete manuscript (MS C) is slightly older, dating from around 1487, while the Edinburgh manuscript (MS E) was produced around 1489.[6] However, the work is older than these dates by over a century. MS E was originally bound with the only surviving manuscript copy of *The Wallace*, although they were broken apart when repair work was carried out on them in 1967.[7] The text of *The Bruce* is presented in double columns and comprises seventy folios.[8] The manuscript includes seventy-two legible rubrics written by the scribe – seventeen in Latin and fifty-two in the vernacular – as well as an additional thirty-five marginal notes drawing attention to certain notable passages of the text, such as in the case of the 'battal of banokburn'.[9] The manuscript was commissioned by one Simon Lochmalony, vicar of Auchtermoonzie near Cupar, and was transcribed by John Ramsay. Lochmalony was a minor nobleman whose known activities appear to have been limited to Fife.[10] Ramsay is less easy to positively identify than his patron, but most likely belonged to one of the lesser noble families of Fife.[11] Head has proposed based on his writing style that Ramsay was not a professional scribe but was 'used writing in his everyday work'.[12] Wingfield and Brown have suggested a familial link between the scribe and his patron.[13] Wingfield also suggests that Ramsay may also be the scribe of the Cambridge MS, but states that the differences in the hand are enough to warrant caution.[14] According to the record of ownership in fol. 70v, MS E remained in the Lochmalony family throughout the sixteenth-century, but after that the ownership of the document is obscure until it was acquired by the Advocates Library in the late eighteenth-century.[15] The connection between MS E and Fife is particularly interesting as two of

[5] Cambridge, St John's College, MS G.23 and Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19.2.2 (I)
[6] *The Bruce*, p. 32; MS E has been the subject of an in-depth palaeographical and codicological study in Head, 'Studies in the Language, Palaeography and Codicology of MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.2'
[7] E. Wingfield, 'The Manuscript and Print Contexts of Barbour's *Bruce*', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 37
[8] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19.2.2 (I)
[9] Ibid. fol 40v; Wingfield, 'The Manuscript and Print Contexts of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 37
[10] M. Brown, 'Barbour's *Bruce* in the 1480s: Literature and Locality', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 215
[11] Blind Hary, *The Wallace*, (M.P. McDiarmid ed.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1968-69), p. xxvii, liii–liv; Head, 'Studies in the Language, Palaeography and Codicology of MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.2', p. 27
[12] Head, 'Studies in the Language, Palaeography and Codicology of MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.2', p. 269
[13] Wingfield, 'The Manuscript and Print Contexts of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 42; Brown, 'Barbour's *Bruce* in the 1480s', p. 217
[14] Ibid. p. 40
[15] Ibid. p. 39-40

Scotland's most notable chronicles produced in the late medieval period – Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil* and Bower's *Scotichronicon* – where also connected with that region, both in terms of where they were produced and the patrons who encouraged their production.[16] Furthermore, Brown has noted the association of local elite of Fife and James III both before and during the events that led to the king's death as well as the negative consequences these men suffered in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, suggesting a possible connection between the events of 1488 and the commissioning of the surviving manuscripts of both works.[17]

Naturally, the relative lack of extant manuscripts raise potential issues with regard to the authenticity of the content, especially in the case of Barbour's *Bruce*. However, Head suggests that Ramsay was fairly faithful to his exemplars when copying both works, and may have been working from an older copy of *The Bruce*.[18] Furthermore, Barbour's work was known to Wyntoun in the 1400s, Bower in the 1440s, and of course to Hary writing sometime in the 1470s-1480s, implying a reasonable degree of continuity in the manuscript tradition.[19] Foran attributes Barbour's popularity with later chroniclers to the fact that he communicates an image of the Scottish community understood through the ideals of chivalry.[20] Barbour himself provides a date for the 'compiling' of his work, namely 1375, in a passage that follows his account of the Battle of Bannockburn.[21] This date has been taken for granted by a number of scholars but it is not necessarily as clear-cut as this acceptance implies. In his introduction to the most recent scholarly edition of *The Bruce*, Archibald Duncan has suggested that Barbour completed his work in at least two stages and that 1375 was merely the point at which Barbour completed one iteration of the poem, perhaps under the auspices of the king himself.[22] The passage in which 1375 is mentioned does indeed read like a dedication to the king, and this might suggest that this was Barbour's attempt to close out the poem with a nod to his chief benefactor and the patron of the work. Boardman and Foran have observed that in the passage concerning the 'compiling' of the

[16] Brown, 'Barbour's *Bruce* in the 1480s', p. 219
[17] Ibid. p. 225-229
[18] Head, 'Studies in the Language, Palaeography and Codicology of MS Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.2.2', p. 94, 105
[19] Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, (F. J. Amours ed.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1903-1914), Bk. 8, ll. 177-220, 970-982; W. Bower, *Scotichronicon*, (D.E.R. Watt ed.), (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1993-98), Vol. 6, p. 353, 381; for Hary's direct references to Barbour's *Bruce*, cf. below p. 36 n188
[20] Foran, 'A Nation of Knights?', p. 139
[21] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 709-717
[22] *The Bruce*, p. 10

poem Barbour leaves the maintenance of Bruce's legacy in the hands of his 'offspring', whereas Barbour's remarks at the end of the poem as a whole leaves the governance of the realm in the hands of a wider group including the offspring of all of the poem's main heroes, and they have suggested that this may reflect the change in the political situation between 1375 and the later part of Robert II's reign when his direct influence on government had diminished considerably.[23] Barbour's use of the term 'compiling' is ambiguous enough to allow such discussion. It is true that the early part of the poem, until the Battle of Bannockburn, is generally much more focussed than the remainder of the poem. Royan has also noted the gradual decline of use of romance references and Classical allusions as the poem progresses.[24] From the beginning of the poem until Bannockburn, the narrative closely follows the rise of King Robert from his dispossession by Edward I to his full reclamation of his kingdom from Edward II, and most of the action is centred on the king himself. Following Bannockburn, the narrative suddenly becomes less focussed and the king's prominence diminishes as his closest companions – his brother Edward Bruce, earl of Carrick, his 'nephew' Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, and particularly his champion 'the Good' Sir James Douglas – begin receiving more attention.

Duncan has suggested two possible explanations for how Barbour composed his work. The first is that Barbour completed the final version of the poem in 1378, when he is known to have been granted a £1 pension from the burgh of Aberdeen's annual payment to the crown that may have been in recognition of the ultimate completion of *The Bruce*. In the document granting him this pension Barbour is described as 'our beloved clerk' (*dilecto cleric nostro*).[25] Alternatively, Duncan submits the possibility that the 1378 payment was intended to prompt him into expanding upon the version he had completed in 1375 and the later payment of a more generous £10 pension in 1388 was in recognition of the ultimate conclusion of the project.[26] Of course, both of these explanations assume that *The Bruce* was produced entirely as a result of royal patronage. This is a natural assumption given the subject matter of both *The Bruce* and the other works that Barbour is believed to have penned, and thus this has been taken for granted by most scholars who have studied the text over the years.

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[23] S. Boardman and S. Foran, 'Introduction: King Robert the Bruce's Book', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 15

[24] Royan, 'A Question of Truth', p. 81-82

[25] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 141

[26] *The Bruce*, p. 10; Duncan states that he prefers the second of these explanations

However, that Barbour was in the employ of Robert II is not necessarily as certain as is often claimed. While Barbour certainly served the king, it does not necessarily follow that he did not also produce work for other patrons at other times in his lengthy career. In particular, the prominence of Sir James Douglas, progenitor of one of the most powerful families in southern Scotland in the late fourteenth-century, raises the possibility that the source of patronage for *The Bruce* came from among Douglas' descendants at the time of writing. Again, two possibilities present themselves with regards to the nature of Douglas patronage of Barbour's work. Conceivably, the work was entirely funded, whether in stages or as a single continuous piece, by one of the many prominent Douglases active in Scottish politics in the 1370s, and the various payments from the king were for other services rendered to the royal court. After all, a history of Sir James Douglas' part in the First War of Independence might be expected to include a great deal of information on Bruce's exploits as well, explaining the equal focus on the king as well as on Douglas. Furthermore, patronising a work that lionised the current king's grandfather at the same time as it recounted the greatness of the ancestor of whichever of the Douglases paid for the work was no doubt an attractive way of ingratiating the poem's patron with the king. However, it is also possible that Duncan is right to suggest that a version of *The Bruce* was completed by 1375 under the auspices of Robert II and then Barbour was subsequently persuaded to revise the work with greater emphasis on the exploits of Sir James Douglas by one of his descendants, resulting in the version of the work that we have today. This would at least go some way to explaining the ambiguity caused by the prominence of Bruce and Douglas as joint heroes of the poem, if it was begun as an outright piece of royal propaganda that had a pro-Douglas narrative grafted onto it. Perhaps most interestingly of all, Barbour's discussion of treason is almost exclusively confined to that part of the poem before the apparent dedication to King Robert II.[27] Of forty-one uses of the terms 'tresoun' or 'tratour', only eight occur after Barbour's narration of the Battle of Bannockburn.[28]

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[27] Surprisingly, Taggart does not draw attention to this fact in his thesis.

[28] *The Bruce*, Bk. 14, ll. ll. 351 – Barbour refers to O'Dempsy as 'This fals traytouris men' when he attempts to drown Edward Bruce and his men while they are encamped on O'Dempsy's land; Bk. 15, ll. 125 – Edward Bruce's siege of Carrickfergus is caught off-guard by a sally from the beleaguered garrison because Sir Edward 'off tresoun had he na thoucht'; Bk. 20, ll. ll. 526-578 – Barbour uses the terms repeatedly during his eulogy for Douglas, particularly when comparing him to Fabricius:

> At tresoun growyt he sa gretly
> That na traytour mycht be him by
> That he mycht wyt that he ne suld be
> Weill punyst off his cruelte.

Admittedly the bulk of the poem – 6,845 of the 13,645 lines – deals with events before Bannockburn and the subject matter of this part of the poem – Bruce's attempts to develop a following that will allow him to assert his authority within the kingdom that is his by right – naturally provide Barbour with more opportunities to discuss the subject of treason. Yet strikingly, while Barbour condemns the Soules conspiracy as 'felony' and 'a fell conjuracioun' he never uses the term 'tresoun' or 'tratour' when discussing this incident.[29] This fact may lend credence to the notion that the earlier part of the poem was composed under the direction of the king – who might be expected to have a considerable concern for instilling a firm sense of loyalty in the audience – while the later part was composed under the direction of an aristocrat who had less interest in discussions of loyalty and treason. Each of Barbour's main heroes was the ancestor of men who were deeply involved in Anglo-Scottish relations at the time of writing. Boardman has noted that Barbour's initial audience would have included veterans of Halidon Hill, Neville's Cross and Poitiers, who may therefore have already had a practical understanding of the dangers inherent in facing the English in open battle.[30] The character of Bruce would likely have resonated strongly with Barbour's readers among the royal family, while Douglas must have appealed both to his nephew the earl of Douglas and his illegitimate son the lord of Galloway. Moreover, the earl of March in the 1370s – George Dunbar – was Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray's grandson, and it seems likely that the inclusion of this character served to heighten the appeal of the poem to Dunbar as well. While it is impossible to state definitively at whose direction the poem was produced it is nonetheless difficult to deny the likelihood of Douglas patronage in the composition of *The Bruce* in spite of the work's promotion of the royal figure of Robert the Bruce and the element of pro-Stewart tendencies implied by the many positive references to the ancestors of Robert II. The likelihood that a work composed at the behest of a powerful magnate family might promote the achievements of the royal figure under whose patronage the family had first flourished seems greater than the likelihood that a work composed exclusively under royal auspices would celebrate the accomplishments of a non-royal figure to the extent that *The Bruce* celebrates those of Sir James Douglas.

Consideration of the period in which Barbour was writing not only suggests several likely candidates for his patron, but also offers opportunities for historians to better

[29] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 1-72
[30] S. Boardman, ''Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte': *The Bruce* and Early Stewart Scotland', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 206

understand the content of his work as well. Barbour's reasons for taking such a keen interest in prudence are most likely a product of the immediate historical context in which he was writing, and what this suggests about his intended audience. In 1369 the Scots had entered into a truce with the English that committed them to fourteen years of peace, as well as leaving most of Berwickshire, Teviotdale, parts of Tweeddale and Annandale and the castles of Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh and Lochmaben in English hands.[31] Boardman has observed that the compilation of Barbour's *Bruce* came after around four decades of English military ascendency both in Scotland and on the continent.[32] However by the mid-1370s 'unsanctioned' warfare was being carried out in the English 'pale' – that is, those areas of southern Scotland under direct English control – by the Scots.[33] It is precisely in those areas occupied by the English in which the heroes of *The Bruce* are most frequently active and each of these castles is re-taken by the Scots at some stage in the narrative. A building programme begin in the early 1370s – apparently to shore up the defences of the southern part of the Scottish kingdom – suggests that the Scottish government already recognised the likelihood of renewed conflict in the near future.[34] Barbour's observation that Douglas did not lie idle for long – an attribute for which Barbour thinks 'men suld him love' – could conceivably have been a comment pointed at the aristocracy of southern Scotland to adopt a more aggressive attitude to the recovery of these lands.[35] While it would be a considerable stretch to suggest that Barbour intended his accounts of the capture of places like Roxburgh, Jedburgh and Berwick to inspire his audience to take up arms and seize these places back from the English, let alone that these accounts should serve as instruction on how this should be done, there can be little doubt that tales of how in years past Scotland's heroes had taken them back from the English would have resonated with Barbour's contemporary audience. Cameron and Summerfield have both previously noted that Barbour often seems to be at pains to justify 'controversial' elements of his narrative of the conflict he is recounting, one of which may have been how deeply it resonated with contemporary concerns about the situation in southern Scotland.[36] The many episodes in

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[31] S. Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings: Robert II and Robert III 1371-1406*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), p. 108

[32] Boardman, ''Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte'', p. 192-193

[33] A.J. Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed: Scotland and England at War, 1369-1403* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), p. 39

[34] Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p. 40-41

[35] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 434-436

[36] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', pp. 13-29; T. Summerfield, 'Barbour's *Bruce*: Compilation in Retrospect', in F. Le Saux and N. Thomas (eds.), *Writing War Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), pp. 107-125

The Bruce in which the heroes exhort their followers to achieve great things in spite of the odds may be read as an attempt by the author to address contemporary concerns about the differences between Scotland and England's military capacities.[37]

Macdonald has previously noted that England underwent a diplomatic crisis in the early 1370s and has observed that violence was occurring on a personal level between Scottish and English border magnates from this period, briefly decreasing in frequency after the establishment of a shaky Anglo-French truce mid-way through the decade.[38] Barbour's comment on the tendency of the commons to give their allegiance to whoever could offer them the greatest protection from harm reflects a general tenet of fourteenth-century military thinking – namely that undermining the morale of an enemy's subjects could be a useful way of achieving one's war aims – but it might also be read as a specific reference to the principle behind the acts of violence being periodically carried out in the English 'pale' during the 1370s:[39]

> Sa fayris ay commounly,
> In commounys may nane affy
> Bot he that may thar warand be.[40]

Grant has observed that the Scots always had to be cautious in their military activities in the Marches, as too much success might provoke aggressive English retaliation that the Scots were ill-equipped to deal with given the resources at the disposal of an enraged English king.[41] However, as Edward III grew more infirm with age, and events on the Continent – both military and diplomatic – began to undermine English dominance, opportunities for the piecemeal re-conquest of the occupied zone grew in frequency and attractiveness. That so much of the action in *The Bruce* focusses on the practicalities of recovering those areas of southern Scotland that at the time of writing were still occupied by the English implies that at least the possibility of recovering these areas in reality was an appealing prospect to his audience. By the same token, his instance that this should be undertaken in as prudent a manner as possible, in deference to a set of broader war aims and with care taken not to put oneself at undue risk, would seem to be a recognition by

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[37] Boardman, ''Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte'', p. 199
[38] Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p. 40
[39] C. J. Rogers, 'The Age of the Hundred Years War', in M. Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 151
[40] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 503-505
[41] A. Grant, 'The Otterburn War from a Scottish Point of View', in A. Tuck and A. Goodman (eds.), *War and Border Societies in the Middle Ages*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 37

Barbour of wider issues facing the Scottish aristocracy should the conflict with England be renewed.

There can be equally little doubt that when such a conflict erupted most would have expected that the prosecution of the bulk of the fighting and the diplomacy between the two kingdoms would be led by John, earl of Carrick. After all, Carrick had the most extensive lands south of the Forth of any of the royal Stewarts, and since his father had become king in 1371 Carrick had proven himself to be a vigorous and dynamic figure in the governance of the kingdom – establishing himself as 'the foremost magnate in the kingdom after his father'.[42] The influence of the earl of Carrick can also be seen by John of Gaunt's attempts to cultivate a personal relationship with the earl of Carrick – as well as the earl of Douglas and Archibald the Grim – in order to negotiate redress for various breaches of the truce during the period that Barbour was writing.[43] Barbour's harsh criticism of Edward Bruce as earl of Carrick may therefore have been at least partially directed towards King Robert's heir. It may also reflect suspicions that Carrick's ambitions were not wholly in line with Robert II's. It would not be for some time yet that Carrick would actually challenge his father for control of the kingdom, but it was a common occurrence in many medieval kingdoms for the heir apparent to become the focus of political dissatisfaction among the nobility and even by the mid-1370s Carrick was already beginning to grow independently powerful, especially in the south of the kingdom.[44] Furthermore, Carrick's prominent position in the maintenance of Anglo-Scottish relations put him in a position to dictate how the relationship between the two kingdoms progressed. This could be potentially disastrous if a miscalculation on Carrick's part brought the two kingdoms into conflict at a time when Scotland was not ready for such an undertaking. It may well be that there are hints encoded in *The Bruce* that such a possibility had been foreseen even as early as the mid-1370s and that Barbour, whether directly influenced by the king or not, was trying to diminish the likelihood of this scenario. Certainly the character of the younger family member, more vigorous than his older relative but also less seasoned and less careful in how he conducted his affairs, may have had some degree of resonance with the king and his eldest son. If this is accepted, the fact that Barbour's emphasis on the closeness of the relationship between King Robert and Douglas, and King Robert and Moray, takes on a new significance.

[42] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 55
[43] A. Goodman, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Later Fourteen-Century: Alienation or Acculturation?', in A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 240
[44] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, 1996), p. 55

Edward Bruce is an isolated character in *The Bruce* in the sense that his only close relationship is with his brother the king. In the 1370s however John, earl of Carrick, headed a sizeable affinity that included descendants of both Douglas and Moray, a fact that could threaten to undermine Robert II's authority and would eventually do precisely that in 1384. By presenting the relationships of the main characters in this way Barbour may have been subtly trying to encourage the major political figures in the kingdom to maintain a greater adherence to royal authority. The opposition of Carrick and his affinity – including the earl of Douglas – to Robert II's proposed entailing of the crown is one possible example of the attitude that Barbour may have been attempting to address in his depiction of these relationships in *The Bruce*.[45]

Another frequently noted difficulty raised by Barbour's *Bruce*, aside from the difficulty in dating the work precisely, becomes clear when trying to determine the appropriate genre to assign the work. Saldanha has examined *The Bruce* as a national history and concluded that Barbour rejects Scotland's Gaelic literary heritage in favour of Continental romance models.[46] Similarly, Foran has argued that *The Bruce* 'is not a national history as the genre has become defined', in the sense that it does not account for the mythic origins of the Scottish people or recount their story from the beginning of time to the present, although it did become a foundational text for later Scottish national histories; instead, according to Foran, 'Romance and chivalry are the defining characteristics of this text.'[47] Barbour himself uses the term 'romanys' but the narrative of the poem falls short of this definition in a number of important ways.[48] According to Jaegar, romance literature sought to achieve 'a synthesis of the warrior and the statesman', harmonising the knight's potentially conflicting social roles on the battlefield and at court.[49] This certainly raises issues when considering *The Bruce*, since the work is largely devoid of any significant courtly elements. The broad narrative of Bruce's career from his disinheritance at the hands of Edward I early in the poem to his successful recovery of his kingdom at Bannockburn does reflect the upward trajectory common to romance literature.[50] The focus on more than one hero is not entirely problematic, as Purdie has observed that many of the *romans*

[45] Ibid. p. 56-57
[46] Saldanha, 'Studies in Medieval Scottish Historical Romance', p. 92-94
[47] Foran, 'A Nation of Knights?', p. 138
[48] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 446
[49] C. S. Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1985), p. 196
[50] On the general upward trajectory of romance narratives, cf. Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, p. 242

antiques that influenced Barbour focussed on the careers of more than one individual.[51] However, Bruce's recovery of his rightful inheritance was achieved some time before the end of the poem – with Bruce having effectively reclaimed his kingdom with victory at the Battle of Bannockburn – meaning that much of Barbour's narrative lacks the structure normally associated with romance. The poem's other main character, Sir James Douglas, initially occupies a similar position as the dispossessed hero fighting to reclaim his stolen estates and the narrative of his life does see him progress from an impoverished state to one of the most influential figures in Scotland. But Barbour provides no formal acknowledgement of the reclamation of the inheritance he was denied and once the kingdom has been reclaimed by Bruce Barbour essentially abandons this element of the poem. Jaeger has argued for a model of understanding the production of romance literature by clerics, suggesting that the genre was used primarily as a means to instruct their audience in proper behaviour.[52] This would certainly help to explain the obvious didactic elements of *The Bruce*, but to identify the work exclusively with romance is overly simplistic.

This has led a number of historians to take the work as being primarily useful as a source for reconstructing chronological details about the period it covers. Taggart has identified 119 episodes in *The Bruce*, 91 of which he considered to be broadly historically trustworthy.[53] Wilson goes so far as to state that 'the *Bruce* presents mostly historical fact, while the *Wallace* is mostly fiction'.[54] This tendency is exacerbated by the relative scarcity of narrative sources covering this period in general. However, this has often caused historians to give some episodes in Barbour more credence than they deserve and to miss the significance of these passages as constructions by Barbour to illustrate a particular point or advocate a certain value. Cameron argued that *The Bruce* is better understood as a work of literature and therefore potentially misleading as a source for reconstructing the events of Robert I's reign.[55] Boardman has previously noted that more scholarly attention has been given to establishing Barbour's trustworthiness rather than its effect on its intended audience.[56] This is not to say that Barbour's *Bruce* is not useful for reconstructing historical details but it is important to note that in many instances Barbour's accounts of events are

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[51] R. Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 60
[52] Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, p. 234-235
[53] Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', Appendix 3
[54] Wilson, 'Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*: Complements, Compensations and Conventions', p. 193
[55] Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*'
[56] S. Boardman, 'Robert II (1371-1390)', in M. Brown and R. Tanner (eds.), *Scottish Kingship, 1306–1542: Essays in Honour of Norman Macdougall*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), p. 80

better understood as being more illustrative of Barbour's own attitudes than as diligently reported accounts of actual historical events, and this certainly makes categorising Barbour's *Bruce* alongside chronicles inappropriate.

Barbour's *Bruce* has received a great deal of scrutiny from scholars over the years. The question of how to properly classify the work by genre has proven particularly vexing. Purdie has observed that despite his early claim to be composing a 'romanys', Barbour shows a concern not to allow the romance elements of his work to distract from the historical authenticity of his work.[57] She identifies the tale of the trickster fox that Douglas uses to illustrate a point to Moray during the Weardale campaign as belonging to a literary tradition that is so distinct from the romance genre that it must be a conscious attempt by Barbour to distinguish his poem from romance literature in the minds of his audience.[58] Cameron notes the difficulty of classifying Barbour's *Bruce* by genre, in much the same way as Ebin and Nicolasien have done.[59] Cameron recognises the dissimilarity between Barbour's *Bruce* and other contemporary works that fit more easily into the romantic genre. Instead of the jousting and wooing of ladies that the Knights of the Round Table so frequently indulge in, Bruce and his men occupy their time with the setting of traps, the laying of ambushes and the day-to-day practicalities of conducting the war to reclaim the kingdom from the English.[60] Given-Wilson has noted that romance had exerted a strong influence over the composition of chivalric biographies since their earliest known exemplar – the *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*, produced in the mid-1220s.[61] Consequently, the presence of romance elements in Barbour's narration of Bruce's life and career should not be entirely surprising. Cameron has also observed that Barbour's approach to warfare makes the option of seeing *The Bruce* as a crusading romance appealing but the fact that the heroes are neither fighting for the preservation of Christianity nor struggling against the infidel makes this a difficult position to maintain as well.[62] This is further complicated by Barbour's limited use of Christian imagery and the desecration of churches by both Bruce and Douglas.[63] Barbour does, according to Cameron, portray the English with the same vitriol usually reserved for heathens in crusading literature.[64] However, while Barbour's

[57] Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 52
[58] Ibid. p. 73
[59] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 24
[60] Ibid. p. 14
[61] C. Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 105
[62] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 25
[63] Ibid. p. 26
[64] Ibid. p. 29

criticism of the English can be harsh he is not above praising Englishmen on an individual basis – such as Aymer de Valence – suggesting that anti-English sentiment in *The Bruce* is not quite so extreme as Cameron asserts.[65] Penman for instance has argued that the focus of Barbour's anger was directed more towards Edward I personally than the English generally.[66]

Romance literature is not the only genre with which *The Bruce* has been associated by modern scholars. Cameron observes that ultimately *The Bruce*'s chief usefulness is in providing context to the more mundane facts that can be gleaned from charter evidence, exchequer rolls and annals, and in doing so reinforces an important point about how the poem can be more useful for assessing attitudes than for reconstructing chronologies.[67] Goldstein, in his discussion of the constraints put on Barbour and Hary, strongly associates both works with chivalric biography.[68] Given-Wilson asserts that chivalric biographies were fundamentally products of the nobility and were thus designed to promote their ideals and attitudes.[69] Rather than trying to force *The Bruce* to fit into one of the usual literary models that scholars commonly assign to the work, Ebin advocates seeing the poem as 'an *exemplum* or mirror' intended to illustrate the importance of certain ideals that the writer held dear. This is a particularly useful way of understanding Barbour's *Bruce*, although her contention that freedom and loyalty are the main ideals that Barbour promotes in his *exemplum* is somewhat limited, as this thesis will demonstrate. Mirrors for Princes, often known as *specula principum*, were commonly written by what Bagge calls 'non-specialists', meaning writers who lacked a technical knowledge of canon law and who might thus be argued to represent 'ordinary, educated opinion'.[70] Works of this type found popularity among both secular and clerical audiences and covered a wide range of subjects, much like Barbour's *Bruce*.[71] Goldstein has asserted that both Barbour and Hary 'conceived of history-writing as a branch of ethics that preserves the memory of individual lives as models worthy of admiration and astonishment', which gives the impression that both

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[65] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 200-202, Bk. 7, ll. 505-506, Bk. 11, ll. 183-186; certainly anti-English sentiment is less extreme in *The Bruce* than it is in *The Wallace*

[66] M. Penman, '*Anglici caudati*: abuse of the English in Fourteenth-Century Scottish Chronicles, Literature and Records', in A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 220

[67] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 67

[68] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 42

[69] Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', p. 107

[70] S. Bagge, The Political Thought of The King's Mirror, (Odense: Odense University Press, 1987), p. 19

[71] F. Oakley, *The Mortgage of the Past: Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance, 1050-1300*, (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 119-120

works can to some extent be viewed as *exempla*.[72] Wingfield has observed that the colophon attached to MS E includes a reference to the poem *Psychomachia*, which describes the battle between vice and virtue.[73] Moreover, she has noted that the word *exemplum* appears five times in the marginal notes of MS E to highlight Barbour's Classical references.[74] This may reflect the poem's status as an *exemplum* of sorts, and certainly shows that by the fifteenth-century – if not sooner – Barbour's interest in exploring notions of vice and virtue was recognised by his readership. Van Heijnsbergen, who has conducted a valuable study of the use of rhetoric in *The Bruce*, has observed that Barbour constructs his narrative in such a way as to make his reader compliant in unpacking the social and political lessons encoded in the text by the writer. [75] Barbour's *Bruce* offers its readers what van Heijnsbergen calls 'the didactic pleasure of morally sound interpretation' based on 'the inverse logic of rhetoic'.[76] That is to say, having established that it is pleasing to say true things, Barbour invites his audience to believe those tales that they have enjoyed as true regardless of, or even in spite of, any evidence to the contrary. Interestingly, Ebin directly compares *The Bruce* and *The Wallace*, noting that Hary's narrative is intended 'to move rather than instruct' on the basis that while Hary borrows character descriptions and action from Barbour he does not borrow Barbour's digressions as a means of explaining his moral themes to his audience.[77] Unfortunately, Ebin's comparison of the two works goes no further than this. Van Heijnsbergen also compares *The Bruce* and *The Wallace* but identifies rhetorical similarities between the two, particularly in their opening passages.[78]

Numerous scholars have concerned themselves with questions relating to the composition of *The Bruce*, not least the question of Barbour's primary source of patronage. Goldstein understands Barbour as primarily a court poet in the direct employ of the ruling Stewart dynasty.[79] As noted above, there are good reasons to doubt that this was strictly the case and thus some of Goldstein's conclusions are negatively affected by this. Cameron has famously shed doubt on the existence of the division commanded by Sir James Douglas and Sir Walter Stewart, who even according to Barbour were young and relatively

[72] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 35
[73] Wingfield, 'The Manuscript and Print Contexts of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 38
[74] Ibid. p. 37
[75] T. van Heijnsbergen, 'Scripting the National Past: A Textual Community of the Realm', in S. Boardman and S. Foran (eds.), *Barbour's Bruce and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 79
[76] Ibid. p. 86
[77] Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda,' p. 235
[78] Van Heijnsbergen, 'Scripting the National Past', p. 87
[79] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 140

inexperienced at the time.[80] Instead Cameron argues that Barbour wished to place Douglas and Stewart in the thick of things but did not wish to have to invent actual activities to occupy them, and so by giving them command of the 'phantom division' Barbour is able to put the pair in the midst of the action without having to alter the narrative of the battle. As Cameron herself puts it 'Stewart does nothing…Douglas, in fact, also does nothing, but he does it much more impressively'.[81] The reason that Barbour may have had for wanting to include Walter Stewart is obvious. He was the father of Robert II and through his son's fecundity and use of marriages to cement political networks Sir Walter could boast blood relations among numerous noble families across the kingdom. Douglas' descendants had also become powerful figures in Scottish politics by the mid-fourteenth-century. His nephew William had been made the first earl of Douglas in 1358 and by 1375 his great-nephew James was old enough to be serving Bruce's grandson (the future Robert III) in the Borders. Furthermore, Douglas own illegitimate son Archibald was already a prominent figure in the southern part of the kingdom. Archibald's career was not dissimilar to his father's as recounted in the Bruce. Following his father's premature death and the turmoil into which Scotland was plunged soon afterwards, Archibald spent his formative years in France. On returning to Scotland, he diligently served the new Bruce king and earned a reputation for being a formidable war leader in various conflicts with the English. He even inherited his father's capacity to inspire a kind of grudging admiration from his enemies, earning the by-names 'Blak Archibald' and 'Archibald the Grim' in England.[82] Although he would not reach the zenith of his power for some time, Archibald was already a force to be reckoned with in the politics of southern Scotland by the time Barbour was writing. Boardman and Foran have identified a possible reason that Archibald may have been concerned with preserving the legacy of Edward Bruce – through Archibald's cousin Eleanor, wife of Edward's illegitimate son Alexander.[83] Archibald was Edward Bruce's successor as lord of Galloway and Archibald specifically mentions Edward's soul – alongside those of King Robert and King David and his own late father James – in a list of those to receive prayers from his new foundation at Lincluden, which Archibald claims was to have been founded by Edward himself were it not for the war and Edward's premature

[80] Cameron, 'Keeping the Customer Satisfied', p. 65
[81] Ibid. p. 66
[82] M. Brown, *The Black Douglases: War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland, 1300-1455*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 34, 54
[83] Boardman and Foran, 'Introduction: King Robert the Bruce's Book', p. 13-14

death.[84] This may go some way to explain the inclusion of Edward's Irish adventure if indeed *The Bruce* was primarily patronised by Archibald. Ebin has noted the potential relevance of Barbour's narrative as a whole for an aristocratic audience – aside from Archibald – in the 1370s in light of events from 1332-1371 and in particular she emphasises the notion that events of this period influenced the significance of loyalty for Barbour.[85] She stresses a growing divide between David II and his magnates in the 1360s over the issue of how to deal with his outstanding ransom payments as a source of disharmony in Scotland that Barbour may have been seeking to address with his emphasis on loyalty above all things.[86] Building on this idea, Ebin attributes the 'double focus' on Bruce and Douglas as being reflective of the settlement between the new Stewart dynasty and the earl of Douglas after the incident in Linlithgow in 1371.[87] A further potential link between *The Bruce* and its immediate historical context can be seen in Boardman and Foran's suggestion that Douglas' moral superiority to Moray in *The Bruce* may reflect a pro-Douglas comment on the situation in the borders between the descendants of Douglas and the descendants of Moray – the Dunbars – at the time that Barbour was writing in the 1370s.[88]

Aside from the question of patronage, the structure of *The Bruce* has received considerable scholarly attention. Foran has noted that the narrative structure of Barbour's *Bruce* 'encapsulate[s] chivalric rhetoric, grading, systematization and speech patterns, but the emphasis is always on the story'.[89] This is a marked difference from the likes of Chandos herald and Cuvelier, whose emphasis is far more on simply lionising their respective heroes.[90] Ebin argues that the modern division of *The Bruce* into twenty 'books' has served to disguise Barbour's original intentions to a degree, in particular obscuring the episodic nature of the text in favour of giving the impression of one long linear narrative.[91] According to this line of reasoning, Barbour's intention is to draw the reader to the particular event rather than its overall place in the narrative. To illustrate her point, Ebin examines the personal characteristics of the work's main characters and demonstrating how these characteristics are reinforced by certain episodes within the poem. Ebin notes the

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[84] *RMS*, I, no. 483; *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Petitions to the Pope*, W.H. Bliss (ed.), (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896), Vol. 1, p. 538
[85] Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', p. 240
[86] Ibid. p. 241
[87] Ibid. p. 242
[88] Boardman and Foran, 'Introduction: King Robert the Bruce's Book', p. 8
[89] Foran, 'A Nation of Knights?', p. 146
[90] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ed. D. B. Tyson, (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1975); Cuvelier, *La chanson de Bertrand Du Guesclin de Cuvelier*, (ed. J-C. Faucon), (Toulouse, France: 1990)
[91] Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', p. 220

importance of a balance of virtues in the character of Bruce and also notes the essential imbalance in the character of Edward Bruce.[92] She also insists that Douglas' chief virtue is loyalty.[93] Ebin claims that by recounting the preparations of the two armies, the practicalities of fighting on the terrain and in the particular conditions of the battle, Barbour sets the events of the Battle of Bannockburn apart from the rest of the poem.[94] However, Barbour often concerns himself with these kinds of considerations, as will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter. It is probably more appropriate to say that the digressions surrounding Barbour's account of Bannockburn fit into Ebin's more general observation about the episodic nature of the poem in that all battle scenes are set apart from the broader narrative of the conflict as a whole by these techniques, which in turn identifies these episodes as being moments when Barbour wishes to teach a lesson of some kind to his readers.

Echoing Ebin, Nicolaisen emphasises the essentially episodic nature of *The Bruce* and argues that the selection of what to include and what to leave out was a key feature of story-telling in the work.[95] Nicolaisen provides another literary perspective on *The Bruce*, focussing particularly on the methods Barbour employed in actually recounting the events he was interested in. He argues that Barbour's story-telling serves to delight and entertain the audience as well as to help the audience to better understand their own time.[96] He notes the constant presence of Barbour himself as narrator 'ever present and ready to comment on, mediate, interpolate, intervene, disclaim, compare, verify, deny' and simply recount his story.[97] Nicolaisen observes that sometimes the need for the writer to simply tell a good story can confound the attempts of modern scholars to consider the work in the context of genre.[98] In other words, modern conceptions of how such works should function can interfere with our understanding of the work. Nicolaisen identifies a number of features of Barbour's text more common to the 'folk-cultural register' rather than other courtly literature.[99] Nicolaisen identifies the triad as a structuring element, the principle of 'Two to a Scene' that makes the use of direct or in-direct speech the main method of communication employed by characters throughout the poem, 'rehearsing the future' through the

[92] Ibid. p. 223
[93] Ibid. p. 224
[94] Ibid. p. 232
[95] Ibid. p. 63
[96] Nicolaisen, 'Stories and Storytelling in Barbour's *Brus*', p. 56
[97] Ibid. p. 63
[98] Ibid. p. 57
[99] Ibid. p. 59

recounting of a plot before it is enacted, and the trope of the 'unpromising hero' deprived of his rightful inheritance – best typified in this case by Bruce and Douglas – as elements of folk narrative employed by Barbour.[100] Thus he supports the notion that Barbour was heavily influenced by oral rather than written sources of information. However, this does not necessarily dictate that Barbour was integrating popular folk tales into his work. Much of Goldstein's work is concerned with identifying 'formulas of authenticity' as a way for Barbour to present himself as recording and interpreting material rather than inventing it, which he claims gave a sense of orality to Barbour's account..[101] Goldstein argues that Barbour was writing to fill a void in the historiography in his own time, to meet the need for a work that told the story of Robert I's reign.[102] He attempts to connect Barbour to the clerics who spoke so vociferously in favour of resistance to English domination of Scotland in the early days of the conflict between Scotland and England through works like the Declaration of Arbroath and the *Processus*.[103]

On the subject of how Barbour sought to express his own thoughts in *The Bruce*, one particularly interesting suggestion that Kliman makes is that Sir Ingram Umfraville is intended to act as 'Barbour's spokesman'.[104] Kliman's assessment is an appealing one, especially since it is often Umfraville who offers wise advice to the English commanders before a battle only to be ignored. Barbour's depiction of Umfraville is so positive at times that Duncan has suggested that Barbour may have had access to a pro-Umfraville source.[105] While this may be true at some points in the narrative, the idea runs into problems when considered against Umfraville's many actions throughout the poem for which he is openly condemned by Barbour. Beam has asserted that Barbour is careful not to portray Umfraville as a traitor.[106] This is true when Umfraville is asked to advise Edward II to enact a misleading peace deal as an attempt to hand the initiative in the conflict back to the English – at which point Barbour is keen to show Umfraville's reticence to undertake such an action:

> Schyr Ingrahame maid till him answar
> And said, 'He delt sa curtasly
> With me that on na wis suld I

[100] Ibid. p. 60
[101] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 142
[102] Ibid. p. 137
[103] Ibid. p. 141
[104] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 485
[105] *The Bruce*, p. 28-30
[106] Beam, "At the apex of chivalry", p. 60

Giff consaill till his nethring.'[107]

However, Umfraville is also shown plotting with a man 'in tresoun' to have King Robert assassinated while he is alone in the forest.[108] Beam has suggested a possible positive reading of Umfraville's involvement in this incident, arguing that Barbour may have intended this as a recognition of Umfraville's ability to exploit local knowledge and agents to his advantage in the same way that Bruce and Douglas do.[109] However, while Barbour's heroes do employ local agents for the purposes of gathering information on a particular region, Barbour does not employ the term 'tresoun' in association with them.[110] Thus it is likely that Umfraville's association with a plot to commit treasonous actions against Bruce were intended to implicate Umfraville himself in Barbour's criticism of this episode. Furthermore, Barbour readily addresses the audience directly on numerous occasions in the poem when he wishes to emphasise or expand on a particular point, making a character intended solely as a mouthpiece for the writer largely redundant.

Beyond these broad questions about the nature of *The Bruce* as a piece of work, considerable attention has been paid to the substance of the work and Barbour's particular interests when composing the poem. Ebin notes the unequal distribution of Barbour's interests, particularly in regard to the uneven way Barbour devotes space to recounting the events of the period covered by his work and his penchant for digressions.[111] She rejects the theory put forward by Lorimer that Barbour was accruing all of the stories he could about his main characters and combining them into one narrative, using both oral sources and written sources now lost to modern historians.[112] For Ebin, Barbour's chief concern was to advocate 'freedom and loyalty for the Scottish nation.'[113] The main problem with her article is that it focusses almost exclusively on what Ebin believes to be the 'main' theme of freedom, to the detriment of other themes that Barbour stresses equally, if not more, forcefully. Allmand too has emphasised the theme of freedom in Barbour's *Bruce*, arguing that Barbour attempted to elevate the guerrilla war waged by Bruce against the

[107] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 152-155
[108] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll.515-522 , ll. 549
[109] Beam, "At the apex of chivalry", p. 61
[110] For further discussion of Bruce and Douglas' exploitation of local knowledge and Barbour's attitude towards this, cf. below p. 81-82
[111] Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', p. 218
[112] Ibid. p. 219
[113] Ibid. p. 220

English by connecting it to the Scots' wider struggle for freedom.[114] While this is true to an extent, Barbour also seeks to elevate the principle guiding this type of warfare – prudence – to the level of a chivalric virtue, as will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter.

Naturally, Barbour's interest in chivalry has been the subject of much discussion among scholars. Kliman observes that Barbour uses the term 'chivalry' to mean either a body of horsemen or a remarkable feat of courage, but that nonetheless he still explores the concept as a form of idealised knighthood.[115] Kliman also shows a great deal of interest in the treatment of enemies in Barbour's *Bruce*, using this to argue that Barbour intended to present the events he recounted as occurring against a backdrop of mutual chivalric appreciation. According to Kliman, Barbour shows the cruelty of Edward I as an attempt to undermine his chivalric reputation but notes that in general cruelty is played down throughout the poem, perhaps to give an overall picture of chivalric respect among the knights on both sides.[116] This mutual respect is most explicitly indicated by Mac Nachtan's observation:

> Bot quhether-sa he be freynd or fa
> That wynnys prys off chevalry
> Men suld spek tharoff lelyly,[117]

Penman attributes the magnanimity with which Barbour treats the English to chivalric convention based on the format of the poem and draws a connection between Barbour and Gray.[118] Kliman also ties this in to the pragmatism evinced by Barbour, suggesting that Barbour's detailing of Bruce's treatment of the French knights captured at the Battle of Byland demonstrates an appreciation of the commercial aspect of taking prisoners.[119] Goldstein finds Barbour's use of the Nine Worthies to position his heroes among the great luminaries of chivalry of particular interest and suggests that Barbour places emphasis on Alexander the Great as an alternative to Arthur, whose significance in

[114] C. T. Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', in D. Dunn (ed.), *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 21-22
[115] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 478
[116] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 483
[117] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 174-176
[118] Penman, '*Anglici caudati*', p. 223; *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 523-544
[119] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 484

the late medieval English ideological project was considerable.[120] Goldstein is also very interested in the theme of freedom and states that Barbour's intention was to promote a unified model of Scottish identity as a means of maintaining Scottish liberty.[121] In this Goldstein builds on the earlier observations of historians such as Ebin. He argues that Barbour's conception of freedom was addressed to 'lairds and well-to-do freeholders' not the common people.[122] His primary evidence for the claim is based on the argument that the main transgression that Barbour condemns the English for is essentially a transgression of property rights.[123] Goldstein sees chivalry as a secondary interest of Barbour's by comparison with the writer's interest in promoting national unity.[124] He argues that Barbour had no interest in challenging the status quo in producing his poem, once again drawing on his belief that Barbour was essentially a court poet.[125] As Kliman observed before him, Goldstein notes the realistic setting of *The Bruce* and distinguishes this from the fantasy landscapes more commonly associated with romance literature.[126]

Anne McKim has also devoted considerable attention to chivalry in Barbour's *Bruce*. Her perspective is that of a literary scholar and in her article on chivalry in Barbour's *Bruce* she directs a great deal of attention towards Douglas while largely ignoring many of the other main characters. According to McKim, Douglas typifies Barbour's conception of the ideal knight, in the sense that he possesses all of those qualities that the writer believes such a figure should have and possesses them to a degree that surpasses all others in the poem.[127] McKim perceives Moray as a foil for Douglas, which is at least true during the passages of *The Bruce* dealing with the 1327 campaign into Weardale.[128] McKim stresses the importance of tracing Douglas' development to demonstrate his suitability for his role as the perfect knight.[129] In much the same manner as Ebin and Kliman, McKim also notes that Barbour's ideals go beyond courtly tradition and encompass the realities of war.[130] McKim argues that the use of the term 'deboner' reinforces the moral virtue that augments

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[120] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 148; N. Royan, 'The Fine Art of Faint Praise in Older Scots Historiography', in R. Purdie and N. Royan, *The Scots and Medieval Arthurian Legend*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 43-54
[121] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 151
[122] Ibid. p. 161
[123] Ibid. p. 163
[124] Ibid. p. 152
[125] Ibid. p. 165
[126] Ibid. p. 160
[127] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', p. 75
[128] Ibid. p. 86
[129] Ibid. p. 77
[130] Ibid. p. 79

Douglas' physical characteristics.[131] Aside from her observations on the character of Douglas, McKim also suggests that the chief failing of Edward Bruce was his vanity.[132] Interestingly, Cameron advocates the notion that since Barbour occasionally makes digressions to justify his heroes' actions this demonstrates that he was at times promoting ideas that were at the very least unconventional by contemporary social norms.[133] Cameron argues that for Barbour chivalry could be reduced to 'keeping faith', meaning that any action could be justified so long as the heroes did not break their word when undertaking them.[134] She suggests that Edward Bruce and Moray exist in the poem to reflect 'conventional' wisdom, which dictates a more open-handed approach to warfare. On the other hand, Bruce and Douglas reflect the unconventional wisdom that Barbour wished to promote, a more pragmatic and prudent approach to conducting the war.[135] This idea reflects that of McKim, who suggested that Edward Bruce and Moray are intended to be pale reflections of the 'superior' heroes King Robert and Douglas. If there is one major issue with this model, it is that while prudence may not have been a common convention of chivalric literature it was certainly a convention of actual military practice in the late medieval period. Thus while it is true that the prudent characteristics of Bruce and Douglas would not be familiar to his audience in the context of a 'romanys', his readers would certainly have recognised these characteristics in reality.[136] Far from wishing to promote something with which his audience was uncomfortable or unfamiliar, Barbour's preoccupation with prudence is an attempt to integrate an already recognised convention of real warfare into the more romanticised arena of chivalric literature.

One of Kliman's most notable contributions to the historiography of *The Bruce* is in regard to Barbour's concern with non-knightly characters in the poem.[137] The extent of the inclusion of non-knightly characters in *The Bruce* is certainly notable, whether in terms of the prominence given to the likes of Thom Dicson or the fact that Bruce addresses the nobles and the common soldiery together ('Bath mar and les commonaly') in anticipation

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[131] Ibid. p. 80
[132] Ibid. p. 86
[133] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 15
[134] Ibid. p. 15
[135] Ibid. p. 21; in her PhD thesis, Cameron argued against the likes of McKim, Kliman and Ebin and suggested that brutal episodes such as the Douglas Larder were evidence of Barbour's outright rejection of chivalry, Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 178
[136] Evidence of a comparable appreciation of prudence in the works of Geoffroi de Charny, Christine de Pizan, Honoré Bonet and others will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter
[137] Kliman, 'The Significance of Barbour's Naming of Commoners', pp. 108–13; Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', pp. 477-508

of the second day of battle at Bannockburn.[138] When assessing the relative military strength of the Scots and the English in 1325, Barbour has Umfraville say of the Scots:

> 'That ilk yowman is sa wicht
> Off his that he is worth a knycht.'[139]

The first non-knightly category of characters Kliman focusses on is women, noting the lack of any particular interest in the notion of courtly love on Barbour's part. Kliman notes with some surprise Barbour's possible references to Bruce's mistresses, although she makes a leap in suggesting that Barbour means to imply that all of the women who give Bruce assistance at various points in the poem were his mistresses.[140] Kliman's suggested explanation for Barbour's decision not to excise his few references to women altogether is that this was an attempt on his part to inject some small element of romance literature into his otherwise realistic text.[141] As interesting as this idea is, it is not strongly supported by the text itself as the women in Barbour's *Bruce* do not display the characteristics typically reserved for or fulfil the roles commonly associated with women in romance literature.[142]

With regard to the other notable members of the non-knightly class who receive attention in Barbour's *Bruce* – namely the commons – Kliman notes that the idea that a knight had a duty to protect the weak is underdeveloped in the poem but she convincingly argues that this is due to the fact that for Barbour the defence of the realm as a whole, and by extension its people, obviates the need for this theme.[143] That Scottish armies of the period drew on men from a wide social spectrum is supported by Bower.[144] Kliman identifies three types of relationship in Barbour's *Bruce*: those between leaders and 'officers', those between leaders and their men, and those between leaders and the commons.[145] Each of these, according to Kliman, is based on the mutual reliance of these classes on one another.[146] According to Kliman, the main differences between leader-officer relationships and leader-men relationships are firstly that leader-men relationships generally lack the personal element of leader-officer relationships, or that this aspect is at

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[138] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 273-279, Bk. 12, ll. 303-304
[139] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 165-166
[140] Ibid. p. 480
[141] Ibid. p. 480
[142] E. Archibald, 'Women and Romance', in H. Aertsen and A. MacDonald (eds.), *Companion to Middle English Romance*, (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1990), pp. 153– 169
[143] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 481
[144] *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 7, p. 10-11
[145] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 490
[146] Ibid. p. 501

least diminished, and secondly that leader-men relationships put greater demands on the leader to act as inspiration for his men.[147] Having observed that the commons were not normally a feature of the courtly tradition, Kliman notes that they do play a 'small but significant' role in Barbour's poem.[148] To emphasise this point, Kliman compares Barbour's depiction of the capture of the peel at Linlithgow to Froissart's account of a similar strategy that was used to capture Edinburgh Castle in 1341.[149] While it is more likely that Barbour and Froissart merely based their accounts on the same historical events, rather than that one account influenced the other as Kliman suggests, Kliman is certainly correct to point out the significance that Froissart's report is completely devoid of any reference to the commons whereas in *The Bruce* they are integral to the success of the ploy.[150] The commons are depicted as showing loyalty to those who can protect them, which Kliman argues is yet another instance of Barbour showing an appreciation of real-world situations in his work. But she also notes a difference in the way the Scottish and English commons are portrayed. The Scots fight out of love for their leaders, and for their king particularly, whereas the English commons are effectively forced to do so, in episodes such as the Chapter of Myton, by the failure of the English king to protect them.[151]

Some consideration of *The Wallace* and the relevant historiography is now required. Blind Hary's *The Wallace*, as noted above, survives in a single manuscript written by John Ramsay in 1488 and is 11,879 lines in length. The manuscript is presented in single columns of text, unlike the double columns used for Barbour's *Bruce* in the same volume.[152] The work includes sixty-five additional notes of various kinds as well as twenty-five crosses (✠) scattered throughout the margins of the text.[153] The manuscript runs to one hundred and twenty-four folios, whereas the copy of Barbour's *Bruce* with which it is was originally bound runs to only seventy, but the layout of the text accounts for this as much as length, since *The Bruce* is in fact the longer work at 13,621 lines. As well as this manuscript, McDiarmid – who has produced a scholarly edition of *The Wallace* for the Scottish Text Society – uses fragments found in printed editions made by Chepman and

[147] Ibid. p. 497
[148] Ibid. p. 498
[149] Ibid. p. 500
[150] Barbour's account of the capture of Linlithgow is almost certainly influenced by the account of the 1341 capture of Edinrbugh found in the so-cllaed 'anonymous chronicle', with Barbour's William Bunnock being based on the historical figure of William Bullock referenced at *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 5013, 5472, 5659 and at *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 7, p. 144-146
[151] Ibid. p. 499
[152] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19.2.2 (II)
[153] For example, fol. 84r and fol. 96r, both of which highlight battles taking place;

Myllar around 1509 and by Robert Lekpreuk in 1570, arguing that the differences in the text between these and the copy bound with MS E of *The Bruce* derive from different manuscript copies of *The Wallace* and therefore allow for a more accurate reconstruction of the poem in its original form.[154]

The poem itself purports to detail the life and career of William Wallace and his bitter conflict against the English. The narrative of *The Wallace* is plagued by historical inaccuracies. Hary adapted real history as he pleased, for instance to fit the prediction that Wallace would save Scotland from English rule three times.[155] Edward I did not have a queen when Wallace led his foray into Northumberland and Cumbria in 1298, his first wife Eleanor of Castile having died in 1290 and his second wife, Margaret of France, not being a serious contender for the position of king's consort until Edward ceased his war with Philippe IV in Gascony. The poem also includes the use of horse archers, which were actually a later invention, and features the use of gunpowder.[156] Wilson has argued that Hary invented the meeting between Wallace and Bruce out of a desire to present Scotland's great patriotic heroes of having at least some physical connection, although in fact Hary was likely taking his lead from an earlier invented meeting between the two found in the *Scotichronicon*.[157] Hary's work is not only riddled with historical inaccuracies but also contains contradictions within the text itself. For instance, Wallace is said to be eighteen years old the year before Stirling Bridge but is later stated to be forty-five when he is taken by the English, a mere nine years of 'real time' later.[158] It is fair to assume that Hary was conscious of at least some of these inaccuracies and was therefore using them to purposefully illustrate certain themes or motifs that he felt to be significant, as will be explored in this thesis.[159] Hary is therefore much more useful as a source for attitudes than he is as a record of actual events.

Despite the extensive work conducted on this subject, the question of who precisely the author of *The Wallace* was remains a topic for debate. McDiarmid dates the composition of *The Wallace* to between 1470 and 1488, a timeframe that has become widely accepted among scholars.[160] Neilson uses Hary's reference to Edward I as 'reyffar-king' to date the

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[154] *The Wallace*, p. ix-xii
[155] Schofield, *Mythical Bards*, p.155
[156] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll.795 (horse archers), Bk. 8, ll.808, Bk. 9, ll.292 (gunpowder)
[157] Wilson, 'Barbour's Bruce and Hary's Wallace: Complements, Compensations and Conventions', p. 191; *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 6, p.95
[158] Ibid. Bk. 1, ll.192, Bk. 12, ll.1427
[159] Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*', p.243
[160] Walsh, 'Hary's *Wallace*: The Evolution of a Hero', p.7

poem to c.1482, when a Scottish parliament had denounced Edward IV as 'Revare Edward'.[161] More recently, McDiarmid has placed the date of composition no earlier than 1471 and no later than 1479, arguing for the years 1476-1478 as the most likely period in which Hary was writing.[162] The accounts of the Lord High Treasurer record five payments made to one 'Blind Hary' between 1490 and 1492 for the reciting of poetry and song.[163] On the basis that these payments occur exclusively at Linlithgow Palace, McDiarmid has suggested that this may allow us to conclude that Hary lived in Linlithgow or its environs.[164] This at least gives us a figure, however indistinct, to whom we can attribute the poem, but still gives us little detail about his character. Ultimately, 'Blind Hary' is simply the name modern scholars apply to the writer of *The Wallace*.

Whether Hary was blind is another matter of some debate. Balaban actually questions whether Hary was blind until after the poem's completion, a position that is at least supported by the fact that the writer makes no reference to this disability in the text itself. The image of Hary as the blind minstrel was particularly attractive to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers for its romantic appeal, portraying him as a wandering troubadour, a free spirit, blind from birth, making a living by roaming the countryside reciting his poetry to anyone willing to pay.[165] The romantic potential of this image has allowed it to persist, but this reconstruction of Hary remains a matter of pure speculation. McDiarmid has observed that the term 'blind' could also be roughly synonymous with 'bardic', although he nonetheless favours the notion that Hary had become blind later in life.[166] McDiarmid suggests that Hary may have been a soldier in France, based on his use of French terms in some depictions of fighting.[167] Of course, these may well have been in common use in Scotland already, brought over by the many Scots who made a living through warfare. Given the intricacy of the metric patterns Hary employs, Balaban rejects the notion that *The Wallace* was intended for recitation and casts doubt on whether Hary was ever a bard or minstrel.[168] McDiarmid has even gone so far as to suggest that three other works – *The Ballet of the Nine Nobles*, *Rauf Coilyear* and *Golagros and Gawane* –

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[161] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll.381; Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.109
[162] *The Wallace*, p. xvi
[163] MacQueen, 'The literature of fifteen-century Scotland', p. 195; *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, (T. Dickson ed.), (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1877), Vol. 1, p. 133, 174, 176, 181, 184
[164] *The Wallace*, p. xxix
[165] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.36
[166] *The Wallace*, p. xxviii-xxiv
[167] McDiarmid, '*Rauf Colyear*, *Golagros and Gawane*, Hary's *Wallace*', p.329
[168] Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*,' p.243

can possibly be attributed to the same author as *The Wallace*.[169]

The very name 'Blind Hary' has certain linguistic implications that have been the subject of some interesting discussion among historians. The etymological origins of the phrase 'Blind Hary', being a popular name for the devil, have led Balaban to conclude that the author of *The Wallace* was working under a pseudonym, much as Schofield had suggested earlier.[170] Even if the author's name really was Hary and he was in fact blind at some point in his life, he must at least have recognised the association and used the name with this in mind. Whereas Schofield suggested that the use of an alias was to avoid English reprisals, Balaban has claimed that the use of 'Blind Hary' specifically indicates the writer's intention to place the poem firmly within the popular folk literature tradition.[171] This may be supported by Hary's probable use of folk stories that had grown up around Wallace in the time between his death and the composition of the poem. Schofield refers to the poem as being 'outrageously pagan' in tone.[172] As Balaban points out, Schofield's mythological view of *The Wallace* also helps to explain incidents like Fawdoun's ghost, the meeting with the English queen, Wallace's escape from the English by disguising himself as a woman and maybe even the tale of the Barns of Ayr, which may well have their origins in folk tradition.[173] Such adoption of traditional folk tales may help to explain *The Wallace*'s continued popularity in Scotland over Barbour once the work had been taken out of its immediate context.[174] Such an assessment throws the question of the poem's importance for the study of chivalry into a new light, as it could imply a greater concern for a lower class audience than the nobles. On the other hand, Hary may in fact simply be using folk tradition as a way of discussing chivalry in a new way that his audience – which likely encompassed the lower nobility – would be less familiar with.

As is the case with *The Bruce*, a number of figures mentioned in *The Wallace* had relatives living in Hary's own time who can be used to partially reconstruct Hary's intended audience. Hary seems to have found his patrons among members of the southern nobility and their supporters.[175] MacDiarmid has noted a number of names mentioned in *The Wallace*, mostly belonging to a 'minor class of old landed gentry' who found had

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[169] McDiarmid, '*Rauf Colyear, Golagros and Gawane*, Hary's *Wallace*', p.331
[170] Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*', p.246
[171] Ibid. p.248
[172] Schofield, *Mythical Bards*, p.160
[173] Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*', p.249
[174] Ibid. p. 249
[175] N.A.T. MacDougall, 'Foreign relations: England and France', in J.M. Brown (ed.), *Scottish Society in the Fifteen-Century*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p.111

advancement through government service in the mid fifteenth-century, all of whom have some connection to those areas where the bulk of the action in *The Wallace* takes place – including Ayrshire, Clydesdale, and parts of Perthshire, Fife and Angus.[176] The most notable individuals with an interest in the content of *The Wallace* are William Wallace of Craigie and James Liddale of Halkerston, who Hary mentions as having directly influenced the composition of *The Wallace*.[177] Wallace appears several times in parliamentary records between 1464 and 1479.[178] Liddale served Alexander Stewart, duke of Albany, as his steward and he appears alongside the duke in documents pertaining to the duke's forfeiture in 1483.[179] One of Wallace's most loyal supporters – 'Gud Robert Boyd, that worthi was and wicht' – may have been intended as a reference to Robert Boyd, first Lord Boyd, who had served as Governor of Scotland following a coup in 1466 and was later forfeited for this treasonable act in 1469.[180] McDiarmid has suggested that Stephen of Ireland – another of Wallace's most prominent supporters – may have been intended to appeal to the Dr John Ireland who was promoted to the archdeaconry of St Andrews in 1485.[181] William Crawford of Manuel, who Hary claims 'ay was full worthe', was likely intended to compliment Archibald Crawford, Abbot of Holyrood and King's Treasurer from 1474 to 1479, whose father was called William.[182] References to 'a squire Guthre' and 'Elys of Dundas' may have been aimed at Sir David Guthrie and Sir Archibald Dundas, both of whom died in 1478.[183] Guthrie had served as Comptroller to James III in 1467, Clerk of the Rolls in 1471 and was sent as an ambassador to France in 1473 in an attempt to negotiate the return of Saintonge.[184] Dundas at an assize that found Alexander Boyd guilty of treason in 1469.[185] McDiarmid has also argued for a more general sympathy for the exiled Black Douglases.[186] Brown has suggested that Hary's condemnation of Lady Ferrers may be evidence of a distaste for the contemporary Douglas earls of Angus, and perhaps the higher

[176] *The Wallace*, p. xlviii-xlix
[177] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll.1442-1444
[178] *RPS*, 1464/1/2. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, 1469/2. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, 1472/54. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, 1479/3/74. Date accessed: 26th October 2015
[179] *RPS*, 1483/6/5. Date accessed: 26 November 2015
[180] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 436; *RPS*, A1466/1. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, A1469/2. Date accessed: 26th October 2015
[181] *The Wallace*, p. xxv; *RPS*, 1485/5/14. Date accessed: 26th October 2015
[182] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 1299-1302; Volume I, xv, Volume 2, p. 218
[183] *The Wallace*, p. xvi, Bk. 9, ll. 775, Bk. 12, ll. 534
[184] *RPS*, 1467/10/33. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, 1471/5/51. Date accessed: 26th October 2015; *RPS*, 1473/7/7. Date accessed: 26th October 2015
[185] *RPS*, A1469/2. Date accessed: 26th October 2015
[186] *The Wallace*, p. xxi, p. lii, Bk. 12, ll. 1209-1210

aristocracy in general.[187] Two points emerge from the list. Firstly, that Hary's work was intended to appeal mostly to the lesser nobility, and secondly that it was intended to appeal to those dissatisfied with James III's rule.

As well as reflecting Barbour's direct appeal to his contemporary readership through the characters he chooses to focus on, Hary is undoubtedly indebted to Barbour for the style and much of the substance of *The Wallace*. Hary repeatedly refers his readers to *The Bruce* for further information on the events that unfolded after his narrative concludes.[188] Thom Dickson, who is said by Barbour to have been loyal to Sir James' father Sir William Douglas 'the Hardy', is presented by Hary as having arranged for the rescue of Douglas' father from the siege of Sanquhar Castle.[189] Hary also claims that Longawell – one of Wallace's closest supporters – was the anonymous 'knycht off France' who is awed and inspired by Bruce's leading role in the assault on Perth.[190] There has therefore been a long-standing recognition that the two works are well-suited to comparison.[191] Saldanha has conducted a lengthy comparison of *The Bruce* and *The Wallace*, alongside two other near-contemporary works, particularly focusing on both writers views on kingship and emergent national identity.[192] Morton identifies the comparisons to be drawn between *The Wallace* and *The Bruce* as a key reason why the former has remained the focus of so much scholarly attention.[193] Much debate has been generated in regards to who was the superior poet – Hary or Barbour. Walker accused Craigie of denigrating Barbour's work in favour of Hary.[194] Jamieson, who edited one of the most commonly referenced editions of *The Wallace*, also regarded Hary as a greater poet than Barbour.[195] According to Goldstein's assessment, Barbour's work is lacking in his ability to communicate the

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[187] Brown, 'Barbour's Bruce in the 1480s', p. 224; Hary says of the marriage (*The Wallace*, Bk. 872-874):

> A marriage als thai gert ordand him till
> The lady Fers, of power and hye blud,
> Bot tharof com till his lyff litill gud.

[188] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 902, 1293; Bk. 12, ll. 1147, 1212-1214

[189] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 273-279; *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 1011-1012; McDiarmid has linked Hary's Thom Dickson to an individual associated with the rebellious faction in 1479 (*The Wallace*, p. xxiv), but the connection with the character in *The Bruce* cannot be ignored

[190] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 396-410; *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 1146-1149

[191] Wilson, 'Barbour's Bruce and Hary's Wallace: Complements, Compensations and Conventions', p. 189-190

[192] Saldanha, 'Studies in Medieval Scottish Historical Romance'

[193] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.47

[194] Walker, 'Barbour, Blind Harry, and Sir William Craigie', p.202

[195] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.48

psychological depth of his subject.[196] Morton notes that even the publishing history of *The Wallace* is similar to that of *The Bruce*.[197] Walker has identified that Barbour and Hary used a parallel structure in setting up their work, starting with a prologue or *apologia* in defence of what comes afterwards, followed by an introduction to the hero and the establishment of the historical background.[198] The sentiment of both Barbour and Hary's prologues is the same, in that they both clearly set out the intention of each writer to praise famous men, a typical intention of chivalric literature. Hary parallels Barbour even in his claim to be a true record of events. In fact, he is emphatic in his claims to historical accuracy, perhaps even more so than Barbour.[199]

Inevitably, comparisons between *The Bruce* and *The Wallace* have led many historians to comment on the apparent lack of chivalric sentiment in Hary's work. As Walker puts it, 'whereas Barbour can still extol the medieval and truly supranational virtue of chivalry, Harry [sic] is sufficiently a man of the Renaissance to prize the narrower national quality of patriotism'.[200] Neilson echoes this position, saying that *The Bruce* 'achieves its purpose of patriotism in the spirit of chivalry without the incessant vengeance and refusal of quarter' that defines so much of *The Wallace*.[201] According to Schofield, Hary's obsessive focus on patriotism leaves his work feeling more shambolic.[202] Saldanha has observed that the fact that the conflict between England and Scotland has not been resolved by the end of the poem, the reader is left with the impression that the differences between the two kingdoms are insoluble.[203] With *The Wallace*, Hary may have been seeking to rectify the omission of such a popular folk hero as William Wallace from Barbour's account, which has led some to see Hary's work as an example of certain neglected heroic archetypes being reasserted, especially in the face of the aristocratic bias of sources like *The Bruce*.[204] This may have had the effect of drawing attention away from concepts of nobility as expressed by Barbour.

Keen states his hesitancy in considering the historical Wallace as an outlaw, but

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[196] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.262
[197] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.39
[198] Walker, 'Barbour, Blind Harry, and Sir William Craigie', p.203
[199] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll.1410, ll.1438
[200] Walker, 'Barbour, Blind Harry, and Sir William Craigie', p.203
[201] Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.111
[202] Schofield, *Mythical Bards*, p.148
[203] Saldanha, 'Studies in Medieval Scottish Historical Romance', p. 151
[204] E.J. Cowan and D. Gifford, 'Introduction: Adopting and Adapting the Polar Twins,' in E.J. Cowan and D. Gifford (eds.), *The Polar Twins*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Pub., 1999), p.9

places *The Wallace* firmly in the tradition of outlaw literature.[205] He notes that Wallace tried as an outlaw and, like Hereward, Hary's hero uses the wild countryside to his advantage to rally his people in the face of a foreign tyrant whose legal right to rule he refused to recognise.[206] Scattergood has observed that one of the features that strongly associates *The Tale of Gamelyn* with the genre of outlaw literature is the hero's reliance on his 'physical strength and aptitude for violence', a notion that certainly finds expression in *The Wallace*.[207] Speed has also noted this proclivity for violence in the heroes of outlaw literature, although she notes that this could also be a feature of romance literature as well.[208] Keen identifies a number of episodes in *The Wallace* with antecedents outlaw literature.[209] Scattergood has noted that a key feature of outlaw literature is that it addresses 'corrupt administration of the law and justifiable resistance to the law in a provincial context'.[210] Keen too connects outlaw literature with narratives of the struggle for a righteous cause against an unjust oppressor.[211] Certainly, Wallace's stated reason for fighting during his conversation with Bruce across the River Carron reflects a disappointment at Bruce's failure as Scotland's chief lawgiver, and Brown has recently noted a more general sense of dissatisfaction with the contemporary government in *The Wallace*.[212] While Wallace assumes the role of leader of the entire Scottish community, *The Wallace*'s interests are provincial at least in the sense that the bulk of the action takes place within a relatively confined area of Scotland, a fact that was strongly connected to his intended audience.[213] Furthermore, Keen observes that Scottish chroniclers such as Bower and Wyntoun took tales of Robin Hood seriously – which Keen attributes to his similarity with many of their national heroes such as William Wallace – and Hary appears to have read the works of both of these writers.[214] Thus it is possible that Hary was consciously drawing on elements of outlaw literature when composing his poem, explaining some of the differences between *The Wallace* and *The Bruce*. However,

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[205] M. Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 64
[206] Ibid. p. 66
[207] John Scattergood, 'The Tale of Gamelyn: The Noble Robber as Provincial Hero', in C. M. Meale (ed.), *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), p. 164; *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 400-421, Bk. 12, ll. 151-180, ll. 242-252
[208] D. Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance', in C. M. Meale (ed.), *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), p. 146-147
[209] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 768-796; Bk. 10, ll.1-40; Bk. 12, ll. 149-184, ll. 230-252; Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p. 70, 73
[210] Scattergood, 'The Tale of Gamelyn', p. 169
[211] Keen, *Outlaws of Medieval Legend*, p. 209
[212] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 458-465; Brown, 'Barbour's *Bruce* in the 1480s', p. 224
[213] *The Wallace*, p. xlviii-xlix
[214] *The Wallace*, p. 75

Summerfield has noted similarities between certain passages in *The Bruce* – particularly those detailing the king's adventures between the Battles of Methven and Loudoun Hill – as being strongly reminiscent of outlaw literature.[215] If this is the case, then Hary may once again be drawing on themes and ideas he recognised from *The Bruce*, and the fact that these seem more evident in *The Wallace* may simply be a consequence of Hary's exaggeration of Wallace's feats to present him as a superior hero than Bruce.

Hary's work also lacks a sense of development of virtue that is apparent in *The Bruce*. In Barbour's *Bruce*, knights like Douglas are allowed to make mistakes in order to learn from them, but in *The Wallace* the hero does not undergo such a developmental journey. Throughout the narrative of *The Bruce* Barbour exposits various chivalric virtues and this allows the writer to criticise his heroes when they transgress a given principle. The hardships visited on Bruce by God for the murder of Comyn before the altar or Bruce being admonished for taking on de Bohun are obvious examples of this.[216] In *The Wallace*, Hary rejects such moral prejudice and so does not blame Wallace for his mistakes or crimes, such as his murder of Fawdoun, as almost all things are permitted in pursuit of the greater patriotic mission.[217] Barbour's *Bruce* moves towards peace between the Scots and the English and ends with Douglas embarking on a crusade, an enterprise that traditionally superseded 'national' concerns. In Hary's *Wallace* on the other hand the narrative proceeds to the intensifying of the conflict, the hero's life being given up to ensure not victory but the continuation of the war by the proper authorities.[218]

Barbour is by no means the only source that scholars have identified as inspiring or otherwise influencing Hary in composing *The Wallace*. In fact many have attributed quite a high level of literary knowledge to him. Hary himself takes great pains to emphasise that his chief source was a biography of William Wallace written in Latin by his confessor John Blair.[219] Almost every modern scholar who has written on *The Wallace* has dismissed this 'Latyne Buk' of John Blair as fictitious. Hary may only present John Blair's supposed Latin biography of Wallace for the sake of offering his audience an authority.[220] It was certainly common for medieval writers to make assertions about using authoritative sources in order to give them licence to invent.[221] A more likely source of much of the detail of Hary's

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[215] Summerfield, 'Barbour's *Bruce*: Compilation in Retrospect', p. 119, 121-122
[216] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 43-48, also Bk. 12, ll. 89-95
[217] Walker, 'Barbour, Blind Harry, and Sir William Craigie', p.206
[218] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.219
[219] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll.40
[220] Balaban, 'Blind Harry and *The Wallace*', p.244
[221] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.252

account probably comes from the various stories and songs that had developed between Wallace's time and Hary's own.[222] The real Wallace had already become a legend and such stories as were told of him were mostly transmitted orally until the time of Hary, suggesting that they would already have been fairly detached from actual 'history'.[223] John Mair wrote that during Mair's own childhood Hary 'fabricated a whole book about Wallace, and therein wrote down our native rhymes all that passed current among the people of his day'.[224] Hary also had the chronicles of Wyntoun and Bower to draw on. The chronicle tradition that emerged following the Wars of Independence, beginning with Fordun's *Chronica Gentis Scotorum* and continuing through the works of Wyntoun and Bower, fixed many of the key aspects of the Wallace 'myth' for Hary to work with.[225] Bower's depiction of Wallace in particular imbues the story with new, loftier rhetoric than previous written accounts.[226] The discourse between Wallace and Bruce after the Battle of Falkirk is almost certainly borrowed from Bower, as well as the notion that it was the treachery of the nobility that undermined the Scottish efforts there, which has precedents in Wyntoun as well.[227] Bower too laments that the greatest enemy of the Scots is dissent in their own ranks. Hary's claim that Wallace led an army into England in 1297 seeking battle, as opposed to simply raiding, has its origins in the *Scotichronicon* as well.[228] The original source of the tale of Wallace and his 'lemman' comes from Wyntoun but Hary considerably expands and embellishes the story for his own purposes.[229]

A considerable amount of scholarly work has gone into identifying the connections between the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer and Hary's *The Wallace*. While much of Hary's subject matter is drawn from Bower and Wyntoun, his poetic model seems to have been derived from Chaucer.[230] Wallace's relationship with his wife owes a debt to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.[231] The similarities are striking to say the least. Criseyde is a woman alone in wartime who has found an uneasy refuge under the protection of an enemy; Troilus first sees her in a temple (Wallace first sees his lemman in a church) and immediately falls

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[222] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.270
[223] Ibid. p.216
[224] J. Mair, *A History of Greater Britain as well England as Scotland (1521)*, (ed. & trans. A. D. Constable, A. J. G. Mackay & T. G. Law), (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1892), p.295
[225] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.33
[226] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.218
[227] Walsh, 'Hary's *Wallace*: The Evolution of a Hero', p.14
[228] Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.102
[229] Harward, 'Hary's *Wallace* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', p.49
[230] Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.89
[231] Walsh, 'Hary's *Wallace*: The Evolution of a Hero', p.13

in love with her; he suffers for a time until rebuked by a friend into approaching her; the lovers are separated by war; and when she is killed he seeks vengeance through battle.[232] Neilson also postulates that Chaucer's Shipman in *The Canterbury Tales* shaped Hary's Red Reiver, although here the similarity is much more subtle.[233] Scheps has attempted to cast doubt on the notion that the 'Northern poets', a phrase he uses to refer to Hary, Wyntoun and Gilbert Hay among others, would have been capable of reproducing Chaucer's style, at least intentionally.[234] Yet while it is true that many of these features are not uncommon motifs in romances, the accumulation makes it difficult to dismiss the suggestion that Hary was influenced by Chaucer's work, and *Troilus and Criseyde* in particular.

It may be that Hary's influences are even more wide-ranging than this. McDiarmid proposes that Hary had read at least Barbour, Wyntoun, Bower and Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, possibly *Alexandre* and *Percival*, the *Historia Karoli Magni*, Boethius and Chaucer, perhaps more.[235] The Cotton, Cambridge and Lansdowne manuscripts of the fourteenth-century romance *Thomas of Erceldoune* attribute the victory at Falkirk to Wallace and the connection between this text and Hary's is exemplified by the fact that it is Thomas (called Rimour by Hary) who prophesies that Wallace will three times save Scotland from English rule.[236] Walsh identifies a link between the episode involving Fawdoun's ghost and the events of *Gawain and the Green Knight*.[237] Neilson identifies the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* as a possible source for Wallace's vision, a passage that will be revisited in a later chapter.[238] Hary's adaptations of earlier poetical episodes make the work comparable to Guillaume le Clerc's twelfth-century work *Roman de Fergus*. The ability to shift between genres, including chivalric literature, displays a high level of literary refinement.[239] While the incessant violence and fantastical episodes must have appealed to all readers, the presence of such sophisticated literary techniques in the poem suggests a similar degree of refinement in Hary's intended audience.

The most obvious, and most discussed, element of Hary's narrative is its rampant patriotic fervour. No scholar who has written on *The Wallace* has failed to comment on

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[232] Wallace's lemman has the protection of Edward in *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll.590; For a more detailed comparison of the two works cf. Harward, 'Hary's *Wallace* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', p. 50
[233] Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p. 90
[234] Scheps, 'William Wallace and His 'Buke'', p. 226
[235] McDiarmid, '*Rauf Colyear, Golagros and Gawane*, Hary's *Wallace*' p. 329
[236] Scheps, 'Possible Sources for Two Instances of Historical Inaccuracy in Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.125
[237] Walsh, 'Hary's *Wallace*: The Evolution of a Hero', p.11
[238] Neilson, 'On Blind Harry's *Wallace*', p.90
[239] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.257

this. Stevenson has noted Hary's language is emotive rather than instructive and so concerned with patriotic fervour that it frequently overpowers chivalric ideals and morals.[240] Grant and Watson have argued convincingly that the medieval sense of 'national' identity tended to be tied to the king rather than the geographical area.[241] In Hary's discourse on kingship, Bruce and Wallace occupy contradictory positions for most of the poem. Bruce is the rightful king but refuses to accept this position. Wallace on the other hand is always loyal to the cause of resistance to English rule but has no legitimate right to lead. Goldstein sums this contradiction up as 'legitimacy plus effeminate inactivity versus illegitimacy plus manly action'.[242] As Guardian, Wallace assumes the functions of a king but never puts himself above the law or allows personal ambition to tempt him to retain the role beyond the point when the true king takes office, a point with considerable relevance to this thesis.[243] Goldstein asserts that Hary carefully leaves the rightful king unnamed for most of the poem so as to leave the question of whether Wallace's loyalty is to Bruce or Balliol.[244] This point seems slightly laboured, as there is little doubt that Hary intended to associate Wallace with Bruce, who after all was known by Hary to be the man who would ultimately become the king. Felicity Riddy has noted the connection between the frequent references to fairly obscure geographical locations and the emergent sense of patriotism that is so apparent in *The Wallace*. This reflects the nature of Wallace as a local as much as a national hero, with so many isolated places being granted an association with the national struggle against the English through their connection to Wallace.[245] Geographically, Hary's narrative draws attention away from the traditional centres of power, such as towns and castles, and moves it to villages, some of which Riddy notes may never have been mentioned in literature before Hary included them in his poem, as well as forests, rivers and hills.[246]

A significant contribution to the discussion of patriotism in *The Wallace* has been made by Goldstein and what he refers to as the 'ideology of blood'. The rigid opposition between positive and negative forces are what govern the genres of courtly romance,

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[240] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland,* p.150

[241] A. Grant, *Independence and Nationhood: Scotland, 1306-1469,* (Reprint, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 24-25; F. Watson, 'The Enigmatic Lion: Scotland, Kingship and National Identity in the Wars of Independence', in D. Broun, R. J. Finlay, and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity: the Making and Re-making of Scotland Through the Ages,* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), p. 24

[242] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland,* p.239

[243] For further discussion, cf. below p.217-219

[244] Ibid. p.241

[245] Riddy, 'Unmapping the Territory: Blind Hary's *Wallace*,' p.113

[246] Ibid. p.114

chanson de geste and hagiography.[247] In *The Wallace*, the positive and negative forces are the Scots and the English respectively. The poem opens with a reminder that the English have always had designs on doing Scotland harm.[248] Hary uses blood as a metaphor to take the medieval idea of the tribal nation to its extreme, ignoring the historical realities of the Norman Conquest and its consequences, and views the enmity between Scots and Saxon blood as an historical constant.[249] For example, in his description of Wallace's 'lemman' Hary identifies 'hyr kynrent and hyr blud' as one of the elements that make her an appropriate match for Wallace.[250] Wallace's barbed parting words to Bruce across the Carron accuse him of being the 'deuorar off thi blud' and this becomes the image that brings about Bruce's conversion from the English to the Scottish cause.[251] Hary's sharp distinction between Scottish blood and Saxon blood is in direct contrast with a repeated theme in Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, in which Wyntoun repeated emphasizes the mingling of Scottish and Saxon blood through the marriage of Malcolm III to St Margaret. Wyntoun is keen to recount St Margaret's Saxon genealogy when prefacing her marriage to Malcolm III, and in this instance makes a point of noting that their descendants have ruled Scotland down to 'Robert the Secownd', progenitor of the Stewart dynasty that still governed Scotland in Wyntoun's own time.[252] Wyntoun emphasises the mingling of 'Saxonys and the Scottys blude' when narrating the marriage of Malcolm and Margaret and reiterates the mixture of Saxon and Scottish blood in their daughter Mathilda when she is married to Henry I of England.[253] Hary demonstrates an attitude entirely contrary to Wyntoun, seeing Scottish and Saxon blood not only as distinct but in direct opposition, even in spite of his recognition of the rightful Scottish king as 'Margretis ayr'.[254]

Wallace thrives on the shedding of English blood in revenge for the slaying of his family. In Goldstein's words, the retribution dealt out by Wallace for the execution of the Scottish nobility at the Barns of Ayr makes the Douglas Larder in *The Bruce* 'look like a schoolboy prank by comparison'.[255] Schofield, writing before Goldstein, similarly asserts that Wallace is motivated not only by mere patriotism but of sheer hatred for the English.[256]

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[247] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.252
[248] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll.7-8
[249] Goldstein, *The Matter of* Scotland, p. 232
[250] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 609
[251] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll.492, 535-46
[252] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 6, ll. 2311-2390
[253] Ibid. Bk. 7, ll. 407-412, Bk. 7, ll. 583-586
[254] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 132
[255] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.224. For the Douglas Larder, see *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll.373-413
[256] Schofield, *Mythical Bards*, p.167

Stevenson claims that Hary's descriptions of Wallace's lineage – expressed through references to his 'blud' – demonstrate that heredity was a primary concern regarding the eligibility for knighthood in the fifteenth-century.[257] For Hary the nobility associated with Wallace's blood proceeds from the fact that it is Scottish blood, not because it is particularly aristocratic. Wallace is neither an eldest son nor a knight at the beginning of the poem, but he does have the distinction of having true Scottish blood, which entitles him and even requires him to resist the English with all of his considerable might.[258] Wallace's virtue is inherited in the sense that it derives from his 'blood', but Hary does not connect this point to issues of Wallace's social standing.

The overtly nationalistic aspects of Hary's work may also be explained by consideration of the poem's immediate context. Hary was writing at a time when the king was pursuing a policy that was increasingly conciliatory towards England.[259] In 1474, James III attempted to marry his one-year old son to Edward IV's daughter Cecilia, beginning a major reassessment of Anglo-Scottish relations as a whole.[260] The chief opposition to such diplomatic manoeuvres was centred around James' brother the Duke of Albany, Alexander Stewart, who was twice forced into exile for his attempts to usurp executive power.[261] Hary names Sir William Wallace of Craigie and Sir James Liddale of Halkerton, Albany's steward and fellow exile, as having an influence on his work, and McDiarmid has argued that both of these men had good reason to feel dissatisfied with James III's rule.[262] Based on this, Stevenson notes that Hary may have used Albany as a model for his depiction of William Wallace.[263] Wilson also supports the notion that Hary was objecting to the policy of reconciliation with England.[264] Moreover, it has been suggested that the Duke of Albany actually used *The Wallace* as propaganda to oppose his brother's attempts to treat with England in 1474.[265] According to the proponents of this position, *The Wallace* seeks to recast Albany as 'a popular hero rather than a squalid conspirator'.[266] Hary makes the claim that parliament can chose a king, even in spite of the

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[257] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland,* p.15
[258] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.233
[259] McDiarmid, '*Rauf Colyear, Golagros and Gawane*, Hary's *Wallace*', p.329
[260] *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, eds. J. Stuarts and others (Edinburgh, 1878-1909), vol. 8, p. lviii-lxiii
[261] N.A.T Macdougall, *James III: a Political Study*, (2nd edn., Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), p. 159-160; Macdougall notes that Hary's attitudes may reflect Albany's hostility towards James III's conciliatory foreign policy but he casts doubt on McDiarmid's idea that Wallace is directly modelled after Albany
[262] *The Wallace*, p. xx, Bk. 12, ll.1442-1444
[263] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland,* p.81n
[264] Wilson, 'Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*: Complements, Compensations and Conventions', p. 195
[265] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, p.37
[266] MacDougall, 'Foreign relations: England and France', p.18

issue of heredity.[267] With this potentially revolutionary suggestion that parliament could replace a king that was failing in his responsibilities to uphold the welfare of his people, Hary's *The Wallace* begins to read like an anti-royalist tract, with Wallace standing in for Alexander Stewart and Bruce standing in for James III.[268] However, *The Wallace* may be considerably less revolutionary than has been claimed, and in fact many of the episodes that are commonly used to portray it as a piece of anti-royalist propaganda may in fact be promoting fairly traditional values, as will be addressed in a later chapter.

Some historians have made an attempt to assess what Hary has to say on chivalry, although this remains the least studied aspect of *The Wallace*. Hary occasionally uses the term 'chivalry', usually as 'chewalre', and mostly deploys it to mean a body of horsemen.[269] However, Hary also describes a battle between Wallace and Earl Patrick as being notable for 'dedis chewalrous', that is chivalrous deeds.[270] Vernacular verses, such as Hary's *The Wallace*, were written primarily as 'entertainment for men of violence in their own terms'.[271] Brunsden has noted that Hary's *The Wallace* is historically important not only for its literary merits but also for its instructional and inspirational roles.[272] Brunsden means this in the sense that it has influenced later writers, but it is not unfair to say that the inspirational elements of the poem also encompass Hary's desire to cultivate certain actions and attitudes among his audience.

The narrative boasts many features common to chivalric works. *The Wallace* focuses on a set of characters typical of courtly romance: kings, queens, bishops, magnates and of course knights.[273] The theme of Wallace as a divinely-gifted hero with a mission that must transcend ordinary preoccupations of human existence is certainly a familiar theme of chivalric romances.[274] Hary turns Wallace's 'lemman' into the figure of a courtly lover and Wallace's courtesy is exemplary during his meeting with the English queen.[275] Yet many scholars have been unimpressed by the claim that *The Wallace* has much to reveal about attitudes toward chivalry. Craigie asserted that Barbour's *Bruce* has received more scholarly praise because it is more obviously based in historical fact, but Schofield attributes this to the fact that 'chivalry appeals to us more than cruelty, and gentleness more

[267] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 646-7
[268] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.279
[269] *The Wallace*, Bk. 3, ll200, Bk. 4, ll470, Bk. 5, ll.784, 803, Bk. 7, ll.532, Bk. 8, ll.816, Bk. 11, ll.982
[270] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll.98
[271] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p.168
[272] Brunsden, 'Aspects of Scotland's Social, Political, and Cultural Scene', p.75
[273] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.236
[274] Walsh, 'Hary's Wallace: The Evolution of a Hero', p.10
[275] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 45; Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p.254, 356

than lust for vengeance'.[276] The implication is that Hary lacks Barbour's focus on chivalric virtue. Stevenson also doubts the usefulness of *The Wallace* as a source regarding chivalry, claiming that it is 'not a chivalric tale of glorious knighthood but a story of warfare and violence between the Scots and the English'.[277] However, while it is fair to say that *The Wallace* is less obviously chivalric in tone, and is certainly less didactic, than *The Bruce* it is far from useless for the study of chivalry.

[276] Schofield, *Mythical Bards*, p.165
[277] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p.150

The Promotion of Prudence in Barbour's *Bruce*

This chapter will attempt to give an impression of the range of attitudes relating to prudence in the medieval period, based on a sample of contemporaneous works of literature that deal with broadly similar subject manner – in particular the lives and martial exploits of prominent historical figures. It must be noted that these sources are not presented as necessarily representing all chivalric literature, but rather will be discussed to demonstrate the variety of thought pertaining to prudence that can be identified in contemporary literature, especially where they provide a contrast to Barbour's attitudes on the matter. This will lead into a more specific discussion of the concept of prudence in Barbour's *Bruce* itself, taking into consideration how Barbour used his main characters to explore and indeed advocate prudence as a virtue to be encouraged and valued within the Scottish martial aristocracy. It will be argued that Barbour displayed a distinct attitude that nonetheless drew on more general trends identifiable among contemporary thinkers. Barbour's conception of prudence and its relation to chivalry will then be contrasted with the way the quality was portrayed in Hary's *Wallace*. Hary, despite owing much to Barbour in terms of structure and style, places far less emphasis on prudence and presented Wallace as a far more rash and imprudent figure than Barbour's principal protagonists without reserving particular criticism for these aspects of his character.

Many medieval works lacked any clear focus on the practicalities of military endeavour, preferring instead to concentrate on the individual accomplishments of the main characters. This is particularly common in, although not exclusively limited to, works of chivalric romance.[1] The heroes of chivalric romances were rarely if ever great generals, except in the sense that they were typically tremendously successful on the battlefield. However, their success came not from careful planning or ingenious strategising but rather from their own personal talents as warriors, very often coming down to their individual actions in the field whenever battle is met.[2] Battles in chivalric romance were usually settled in the heat of the moment, frequently by individual combat involving the protagonists, rather than being the result of a well-executed battle plan.[3] Foran observes that 'time and

[1] L. C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Hanning, 'The criticism of chivalric epic and romance', pp. 91-113; M. Mills, 'Chivalric Romance', in W. R. J. Barron (ed.), *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), pp. 113-183

[2] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 22-23

[3] R. Kaeuper, 'Chivalry: fantasy and fear', in C. Sullivan and B. White (eds.), *Writing and Fantasy*, (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 62-73

again in late medieval historical writing, romance is equated specifically with the record of the celebrated deeds of an individual.'[4] For instance, in the anonymous fourteenth-century English romance *Golagros and Gawane*, the conflict between Arthur and Golagros is presented as a series of single combats between the greatest knights in each man's force in an attempt to impress their chivalric virtues on the other, culminating in a duel between the titular heroes.[5] Similarly, Malory's *Morte Darthur* is primarily concerned with the adventures and individual accomplishments of King Arthur and his greatest knights, offering little indication of the practical military thinking of its characters.[6] Arthur's entire career as king ultimately ends in failure, costing him his kingdom and, effectively, his life.[7] Accounts of the Grail Quest – whether in the works of Chretien, his continuers or even in Malory – are littered with examples of celebrated failures and set-backs to the primary cause of recovering the Grail.[8] In these instances, the actions of the knights involved are still celebrated for their own sake, with little or no regard as to whether or not they diminish the success of the wider endeavour.

Aside from romance, certain chronicle writers were keen to record chivalric deeds, and this strand of writing is perhaps best exemplified in the work of Jean Froissart. Froissart is among the most widely studied writers with an interest in chivalry from the late medieval period and his work rarely gives any account of the tactical considerations undertaken by the men whose careers he recounts.[9] Allmand has observed that the way in which medieval chroniclers reported on warfare was dictated by factors such as their personality, upbringing, education and social standing, and Froissart was no exception to this.[10] Above all other virtues Froissart prizes *preux*, which Ainsworth identifies as a guiding spirit of adventure that Froissart believed found expression in all truly great knights but was particularly widespread in his own time.[11] For Froissart, possession of this virtue was more important than prudence in a military context. For instance, the unwillingness of the Scots

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[4] Foran, 'A Nation of Knights?', p. 147

[5] *The Knightly Tale of Gologros and Gawane*, (R. Hanna & W. R. J. Barron eds.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2008)

[6] T. Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, ed. H. Cooper, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

[7] F. Brandsma, 'Arthur', in W. P. Gerritsen and A. G. van Melle (eds.) and T. Guest (trans.), *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 32-44

[8] T. Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*; C. de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, (W. W. Kibler and C. W. Carroll ed. and trans.), (London: Penguin, 1991)

[9] D. Dunn, 'Introduction', in D. Dunn (ed.), *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 3

[10] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 18

[11] P. Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History: Truth, Myth and Fiction in the* Chroniques, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 206; Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 81

to engage in open battle with the English makes them worthy of scorn.[12] Interestingly, Froissart even uses the term *preux* to describe King Robert I of Scotland on one occasion.[13] Froissart's method and intentions in recounting these events in the manner that he did are somewhat unique to himself, in the sense that he largely composed his chronicle from tales he considered to be of chivalric merit as he received them from individuals he had met on his extensive travels rather than adapting previously written material – although he did incorporate material from other written sources occasionally as a means of reinforcing the authenticity of his own account, most notably from Jean le Bel's *Vrayes Chroniques* – or preserving his own account of events he had personally witnessed.[14] Contamine has observed that Froissart's readership included kings and princes as well as noblemen and knights, suggesting that his intended readers were of similar social standard to those whom Barbour expected to address his work.[15] More recently, Dunn has noted that Froissart's focus on the heroism of individual knights is reflective of his desire to appeal directly to this group.[16] According to Ainsworth, Froissart 'wrote above all for the warrior caste' and therefore his work has a tendency to focus on events that appealed to that particular audience.[17] Ainsworth has suggested that given how much of his work deals with incidents involving recourse to the law of arms, Froissart received much of his information from heralds, an idea echoed by Ayton.[18] Keen has also acknowledged Froissart's reliance on heralds as a source of information for the *Chroniques* and has highlighted this fact as demonstrating Froissart's usefulness when considering chivalry, given that by the fourteenth-century heralds 'were dignified figures in the chivalrous world'.[19] Allmand goes so far as to liken Froissart's desire to record noble deeds to inspire future generations to the role of a herald.[20] Froissart's style is fairly poetic, supporting the impression that his work was intended to entertain as well as inform his audience, and while the veracity of the accounts he provides is difficult to determine for modern historians, as much of his

[12] Leiden VGGF 9 (vol. 2) fol. 192r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 10th October 2015
[13] Stonyhurst College, Arundel Library, MS 1 fol. 28r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 10th October 2015
[14] P. Ainsworth, 'Contemporary and 'Eyewitness' History', in D. M. Deliyannis, *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, (Brill, Leiden: 2003), p. 263; Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 18
[15] P. Contamine, 'Froissart and Scotland', in G. Simpson (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries, 1124-1994*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), p. 50
[16] Dunn, 'Introduction', p. 6
[17] Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*, p. 73-74
[18] Ibid. p. 79; A. Ayton, 'Crécy and the Chroniclers', p. 331
[19] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 134
[20] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 20

evidence is essentially anecdotal, to Froissart this only increased their authenticity as they were often based on the testimony of eye-witnesses.[21] For example, Taylor has argued that Froissart's anecdotal style encouraged greater engagement with his work among his intended audience by inviting them to scrutinise the tales he recounted, which were already reflective of contemporary social values.[22]

Froissart's *Chroniques* are littered with examples of a particular tendency to attribute far greater worth to bravery on the part of his heroes than to any shrewdness they demonstrated in their military activities. Froissart's account of the Battle of Otterburn in 1388 for instance gives the impression that the two armies merely stumbled across one another in the middle of the night and portrays the actual fighting as if it were simply a disorganised brawl between the English and the Scots.[23] In fact, the battle itself is presented as having been precipitated by a point of honour between the Scottish commander – James Douglas, the second earl of Douglas and the great-nephew of one of Barbour's main heroes – and Sir Henry 'Hotspur' Percy. Douglas' eventual death in the midst of the fighting is celebrated for the heroism he had displayed throughout the battle and the sacrifice of his life to secure victory for his men. Indeed, Froissart assigns the credit for the ultimate Scottish victory to Douglas on the basis of the final heroic action that left him mortally wounded. However, Froissart does not reserve even a single line to the dramatic consequences of Douglas' death, which reshaped the political landscape within Scotland, a fact that has led Grant to characterise Froissart's account of the entire campaign as 'shallow'.[24] Interestingly, there is a sharply-contrasting narrative established in the earliest surviving Scottish sources recounting the Battle of Otterburn that explicitly attributes Douglas' death to his lack of preparedness, as will be discussed in more detail below.[25]

The example of Froissart's account of Otterburn might simply be dismissed as ignorance on Froissart's part, or a simple disinterest in the intricacies of Scottish politics, but on numerous other occasions when he could be expected to have a much greater appreciation for the social and political ramifications of events he was recording he shows similar disinterest, preferring instead to focus on individual accomplishments of the notable figures involved. Froissart's main interest when recording battles was to recount, as

[21] Ainsworth, 'Contemporary and 'Eyewitness' History', p. 268
[22] J. H. M. Taylor, 'The Fourteenth-Century: Conext, Text and Intertext', in N. J. Lacy, D. Kelly and K. Busby (eds.), *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes, Volume 1*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), p. 109
[23] Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 865, fol. Hv, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 10th November 2015
[24] Grant, 'The Otterburn War from a Scottish Point of View', p. 46
[25] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 144-148

Ainsworth puts it, 'unusually brilliant military exploits by individuals' and thus the broader strategic discussions receive little or no attention.[26] When reporting on the Battle of Poitiers, Froissart was far more interested in recounting the exploits of various knightly combatants, particularly those in the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Star, than he was in explaining precisely how the battle was fought.[27] An even more obvious example of this tendency can be found in his depiction of the Battle of Sluys, which Froissart portrays as a series of bouts of personal combat between the knights and nobleman present when in reality it seems that both sides relied far more heavily on archery exchanges when fighting at sea.[28] During the Battle of Crécy, the blind King John of Bohemia wished to at least strike one blow and so his men tie their horses together and lead him into the melée. The following day, they are all found dead, their horses still tied together but King John's honour remains intact and for this both he and his men are singled out for considerable praise.[29] Froissart does devote a considerable amount of space to the social and political consequences of the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360, but even this is largely used as an opportunity to recount the feats of arms performed by prominent knights and men-at-arms involved with, or occasionally fighting against, the Free Companies.[30] Indeed, Froissart records a great deal of information about the period immediately after the settlement of peace between England and France in 1360 out of chronological order with the rest of his narrative after chancing to meet the renowned freebooter known as the Bascot de Mauléon, using this as an opportunity to celebrate the individual adventures of the Bascot and his associates.[31] Even the Castilian Civil War becomes in Froissart's *Chroniques* little more than a dispute between King Peter the Cruel and his illegitimate brother Henry of Trastámara – offering no indication of the wider political concerns that led to the involvement of the likes of Bertrand du Guesclin and the Black Prince – and the campaigns undertaken there by the French and the English become simply a means of conveying

[26] Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History*, p. 80
[27] Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Case f.37.1, Fol. 157v-161r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 10th October 2015
[28] Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Case f.37.1, Fol. 41v-50v, reproduced in Ibid. Accessed 10th October 2015; A. Ayton, 'Crécy and the Chroniclers', p. 331, in which Ayton notes the 'anachronism and literary contrivance' in Froissart's account of the tactics used in the battle
[29] K. Borrill (trans.), 'Jean Froissart, Chronicles', in Ibid. Translation of Book I, Fol. 138v. Accessed 10th October 2015
[30] Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS. 864, Fol. 213v-224v reproduced in Ibid. Accessed 10th October 2015
[31] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, manuscrits français 2650, Fol. 32v, reproduced in Ibid. Accessed 10th October 2015

Froissart's heroes from one dramatic engagement to another.[32] Froissart has perhaps the greatest tendency of the writers featured here to focus on individual achievement in combat over the practicalities of warfare and the need for prudence when conducting a campaign, and it might be argued that his unique approach to composing his work is responsible for this fact. However, Froissart's *Chroniques* are far from the only example of such a tendency among medieval writers.

Sir John Chandos' anonymous herald, who composed a biography of the Black Prince after his death and had accompanied both Chandos and the Black Prince on many of the campaigns, had a similar tendency to boil his accounts of battles down to the particular feats of arms performed by individual knights. Chandos herald directly addresses his reader as seignour, suggesting that he had a predominantly male, aristocratic audience in mind.[33] Given-Wilson has previously noted how selective Chandos herald's work is, with eighty-five percent of the lines being devoted to warfare, mainly relating to the campaign leading to the Battle of Poitiers and the campaign leading to the Battle of Najera in 1367.[34] The prince's marriage and his seven years of peaceful governance of Gascony are passed over in one short passage of fifty-four lines, which are devoted to reminding the reader of the prince's many virtues as a wise, fair, generous and loyal lord without actual examples of these qualities in practice.[35] Despite his claims to be recounting the life of the Black Prince, by line 93 Chandos Herald has satisfied himself with as much of the prince's youth as he is willing to record and gets straight into the main concern of his work, namely *chivalrie*.[36] In his account of the Battle of Crecy, Chandos herald provides no more detail of the English and French preparations than to report that when the two armies were in sight of each other they cried out bravely and organised and drew up their divisions.[37] This contrasts strongly with Barbour's accounts of pitched battles like Loudoun Hill and Bannockburn, in which he recounts in detail the preparations undertaken by the Scots.[38]

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[32] C. Allmand, 'The War in the Fourteenth Century', in *The Online Froissart*, ed. by P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen, v. 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013), http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/apparatus.jsp?type=intros&intro=f.intros.CA-War, first published in v. 1.0 (2010). Date accessed: 22nd October 2015; Chandos herald echoes this assessment when he calls Prince Edward's Spanish campaign as 'the noblest enterprise that a Christian ever undertook' (ll. 1642-1643) and characterises it as an attempt to restore a disinherited king to the throne that his illegitimate brother had wrongfully denied him. (ll. 1639-1649)

[33] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 1401

[34] Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', p. 106

[35] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 1585-1639

[36] Ibid. ll. 93-96

[37] Ibid. ll. 300-302

[38] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 206, Bk. Bk. 11, ll. 355-380

Chandos herald describes the impressive spectacle of the two armies in full array before Crecy – particularly the bearing of the knights and the finery of their banners – much as Barbour does for the English army before the Battle of Bannockburn.[39] But in terms of the actual events of the battle itself, the Chandos herald provides little beyond a sentence recording that the two sides fought until the English had the advantage.[40] The Battle of Winchelsea is similarly disconnected from any sense of context. After a brief period of respite from war – about which the writer provides little detail beyond the fact the prince and his family enjoy various noble pastimes – Chanos herald gives no indication of the reasons for the resumption of hostilities beyond that the Spanish undertook a naval expedition 'in spite of the king' (*en despit du roi*).[41] Once again, the work offers little by way of detail when it comes to the actual combat that took place, save to inform the audience that the prince's brother John was knighted there, that many of those present acquitted themselves valiantly, that many ships were captured and many men killed.[42] Chandos herald assigns considerable responsibility for the English victory at the Battle of Poitiers to the personal actions of the prince and the inspiration his men drew from this, rather than the tactics they employed.[43] He openly admits a reticence to recount the gory details of the Battle of Poitiers, preferring instead to focus on the personal qualities of his hero.[44]

Chandos herald spends considerable time recounting the journey that the prince's army took to Najera, but gives little insight into the tactical considerations of the prince and treats the campaign as if it were a linear path towards a battle rather than a series of manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres to undermine and outwit the enemy, describing the prince as *desirer de la bataille*.[45] The despicable King Henry on the other hand is counselled to avoid battle in the hopes of weakening the prince's army and forcing him to withdraw from the country.[46] Chandos herald does not explicitly state that seeking open battle is a superior chivalric quality to shrewdness and calculation, but his choice to have his hero pursue the former course of action and his antagonist pursue the latter is striking

[39] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 309-319; *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 471-481; Chandos herald is also at pains to impress upon the reader what an impressive spectacle the French army presented before the Battle of Poitiers, but gives no further information on how the French army was arranged prior to the battle, at ll. 984-997
[40] Ibid. ll. 331-332
[41] Ibid. ll. 479-484
[42] Ibid. ll. 499-508
[43] Ibid. ll. 1342-1346
[44] Ibid. ll. 1409-1414
[45] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2895
[46] Ibid. ll. 2843-2858

nonetheless. Chandos herald addresses the French king's plan to trap the English between the Seine and the Somme and bring the English to battle, and in doing so tacitly reveals that the English were pursuing a strategy of avoiding open battle if possible, but the resolution of this incident gives little indication of the tactics employed by the English to counter this.[47] Similarly, Chandos herald reports that Prince Edward would have preferred to have avoided battle at Poitiers, although his reasoning for this is that he does not wish to see so many knights risk their lives by fighting.[48] It is common before an account of a battle for the Chandos herald to recount that the prince drew up his divisions and knighted a number of squires, and to offer a list of the notable combatants in the vanguard, but not to offer tactical information.[49] In fact, the Chandos herald often takes great pains to record the names of as many of the prominent figures present at a battle as possible – on both sides.[50] The list of participants at the Battle of Najera is so extensive that even the man who carried Sir John Chandos' banner– William Alby – is mentioned by name.[51] To some extent this can be explained with reference to the fact that the writer was an eyewitness to most of the events he recounts, but also signals a difference in intent between Chandos herald and Barbour. Chandos herald was more interested in lionising those who participated in the battles he records than he is in the display of the kinds of military virtues that might determine whether these battles were won or lost. When the writer does show a recognition of the specific tactics employed by one force in order to gain an advantage over another, it is often to condemn them as unfair, such as when he derides the use of ambushes by King Henry to hinder Sir John Chandos' efforts to recruit support from the Great Company for Prince Edward's Spanish adventure and he characterises those who participated in the ambushes as *geneteurs* and *vilains*.[52]

In his *Scalacronica*, Thomas Gray frequently shows a similar lack of interest in recording strategic and tactical information relating to the events he chooses to recount, despite having had an active military career himself. Gray's lack of interest in tactics has already been recognised by scholars, most notably by Prestwich and King.[53] Gray offers no

[47] Ibid. ll. 225-277
[48] Ibid. ll. 835-837, ll. 1066-1069
[49] Ibid. ll. 1070-1095, ll. 2603-2628
[50] Ibid. ll. 107-145; ll. 333-341; ll. 1307-1327; ll. 1351-1387; ll. 1988-1993; ll. 2243-2290; ll. 2315-2344; ll. 2387-2392; ll. 2461-2466; ll. 2727-2732; ll. 3063-3112; ll. 3197-3205; ll. 3229-3245; ll. 3328-3332; ll. 3401-3423; ll. 3345-3353
[51] Ibid. ll. 3155-3156
[52] Ibid. ll. 2001-2005
[53] M. Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience*, (Yale University Press: London, 1996), p. 1; A. King, 'War and Peace: A Knight's Tale. The Ethics of War in Sir Thomas Gray's

detail regarding the tactics employed by either side at the Battle of Loudon Hill, or in Bruce's defeat of Ralph Monthermer three days later.[54] In cases such as these this lack of detail might be ascribed to a lack of available information on Gray's part, but even in those instances where Gray demonstrates an awareness of the tactics employed by one of the belligerent forces he does not draw any moral from this as Barbour commonly does. He does at least note that the decision to launch a surprise attack against the Scots at the Battle of Methven was undertaken on the advice of the Scottish lords (*par counsail dez seignours Descoz*) present in the English army, echoing Barbour's assertion that it was Sir Ingram Umfraville who was responsible for formulating this plan.[55] Gray also cursorily notes that the tactics employed by the Scots at Bannockburn were inspired by those employed by the Flemings at Courtrai, but offers no particular judgment on the worthiness of this approach.[56] Gray mentions in passing the superior numbers enjoyed by Sir Adam Gordon during an attack on Norham Castle, and he also notes that Gordon had the elder Sir Thomas Gray's forces surrounded, but Gray focusses on his father's inspirational leadership as the key to overcoming these factors rather than trying to explain his victory with reference to the tactics he employed.[57] The writer records the defeat of sixty-six Frenchmen by Sir Nicholas Dagworth and thirteen others at Falvigny, and explains this impressive victory with reference to the fact that Dagworth's men had blocked off a narrow street with carts and repeatedly struck out at their enemies from this safe position.[58] However, Gray makes no connection between the ingenuity shown by Dagworth and his men and the worthiness of their victory.

By comparison, Gray's willingness to praise an individual's personal physical prowess is far more apparent, as in the case of Emperor Henry.[59] Gray also notes with approval the chivalric pastimes that Edward III engaged in during his youth, and is even more approving of the fact that his eagerness to reignite open conflict with the Scots in 1333 was based on his desire for arms and honour (*Le Roy desirant lez armys et honours*).[60] Gray's chief intention seems to be to recount tales of martial endeavour. Following his

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Scalacronica', in C. Given-Wilson, A. Kettle and L. Scales (eds), *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150-1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), p. 149

[54] T. Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. and trans. A. King, (Woodbridge: Surtees Society: Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2005), p. 56

[55] Ibid. p. 52

[56] Ibid. p. 75

[57] Ibid. p. 82

[58] Ibid. p. 176

[59] Ibid. p. 62

[60] Ibid. p. 106, p, 114

account of the Battle of Poitiers, Gray's narrative becomes dominated by a series of accounts of largely unconnected military engagements that take up the bulk of the rest of his chronicle and serve little purpose other than to celebrate these encounters for their own sake.[61] In this sense this section of the *Scalacronica* is strongly similar to *The Bruce* and therefore offers a particular illuminating comparison between the two works. However, not only does this section of the *Scalacronica* lack a clear narrative connecting these tales – unlike *The Bruce*, in which the episodes are constantly contextualised as part of Bruce's attempt to recover and secure his rightful inheritance – Gray also does not direct his audience's attention to the possible moral lessons to be learned from the prudence of the individuals whose exploits he is recording. One such account involves five English squires and three archers defending a corn mill near Auxerre from fifty French men-at-arms, and while this feat – jokingly titled 'the Combat of the Fifty against the Five' (*la iourne d .L. countre .V.*) – undoubtedly must have required considerable tactical skill on the part of the Englishmen involved Gray reserves praise for their astonishing prowess and fortitude alone in overcoming such extreme odds.[62] This tale is not unlike a number in Barbour's *Bruce* in which the heavily outnumbered Scots achieve victory in spite of the odds, but unlike Barbour Gray does not invite his audience to consider the moral implications of using prudent tactics to accomplish this. Conversely, Gray states on several occasions an unwillingness to dwell on any events or individuals that do not offer him an opportunity to discuss martial subjects. For instance, Gray largely dismisses the Scottish campaign through Weardale in 1327 as unworthy of much comment as no feats of arms were undertaken (*qi rien ne firent de armys*) except for Douglas' raid on the English camp.[63] This is in stark contrast with Barbour's account, which offers copious detail on the relative movements of the English and Scottish forces and the strategic discussions that supposedly took place between the Scottish commanders, as will be outlined below.

The so-called 'anonymous chronicle', as it survives in Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* and – unacknowledged by the writer – in Bower's *Scotichronicon*, has a similar relationship with prudence as Gray, in that it displays a tacit awareness of the application of prudence in military situations, but does not reserve any particular praise for those that demonstrate it. The 'anonymous chronicle' – insofar as the chronicle can be accurately reconstructed – covers roughly the period from David II's birth

[61] Ibid. p. 148-182
[62] Ibid. p. 174
[63] Ibid. p. 98

in 1324 to the death of Robert II in 1390 and was the principal source of information for Wyntoun's account of the reigns of each of these two kings, as well as being used by Bower to augment his account of this period.[64] In general, the anonymous chronicler shows sympathy for the aristocrats of south and south-western Scotland – many of whom Barbour may also have been seeking to appeal to in *The Bruce* – and he likely draws on eye witness accounts or oral testimony of individuals in events south of the Forth.[65] Wyntoun's comment on the anonymous chronicler's account of the Combat of the Thirty – that 'nobilite of the deid/Is worthy baithe to wryit and reid' and 'That men of armys may reioysng/Haue' from his account – broadly reflects the attitude of the author throughout the anonymous chronicle.[66] This is similar to Froissart's stated aims in producing his *Chroniques*, although Froissart also makes it clear that he wishes to inspire his audience to emulate the deeds he records.[67] The anonymous chronicler does not place particular emphasis on the role played by strategy or tactics in ensuring military success, instead regularly identifying the role that fortune plays in determining the outcome of battles.[68] This is markedly different from Barbour, who – as well as occasionally reminding his audience how God ultimately directed the events he is recounting – is frequently at pains to stress the role that prudence and planning played in achieving victory in a specifically military context.[69]

The anonymous chronicler presents a series of relatively unconnected accounts of combats in which William Douglas of Liddesdale demonstrated his individual prowess, a sequence that is reflective of Barbour and Gray in terms of structure and which closes by noting that this is intended as an illustration of how a man can make his own fortune.[70] This sentiment at least is comparable to Barbour's view on prudence, although rather than being sustained throughout the anonymous chronicle it is largely restricted to this passage. The

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[64] S. Boardman, 'Chronicle Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century Scotland: Robert the Steward, John of Fordun and the 'Anonymous Chronicle'', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 201, (Apr., 1997), p. 25
[65] Ibid. p. 26
[66] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 6579-6584
[67] K. Borrill, (transl.), 'Jean Froissart, Chronicles', in The Online Froissart, ed. by Peter Ainsworth and Godfried Croenen, version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRIOnline, 2013), translation of Book I, fol. 1r. Accessed 30th October 2015.
[68] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 6083-6084
[69] For Barbour's references to God's role in governing events, cf. *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll, 131, ll. 312, ll. 456, ll. 459, ll. 586; Bk. 2, ll. 126, ll. 144, ll. 332, ll. 439; Bk. 3, ll. 202, ll. 234, ll. 256, ll. 366, ll. 657; Bk. 4, ll. 455, ll. 527; Bk. 5, ll. 74, ll. 579, ll. 585; Bk. 6, ll. 311, ll. 674; Bk. 7, ll. 204, ll. 225, ll. 293, ll. 423, ll. 491, ll. 495, ll. 526; Bk. 8, ll. 377; Bk. 9, ll. 32, ll. 69; Bk. 10, ll. 576, ll. 619; Bk. 11, ll. 27, ll. 50, ll. 210, ll. 387, ll. 412, ll. 632; Bk. 12, ll. 172, ll. 236, ll. 255, ll. 324, ll. 364, ll. 481; Bk. 13, ll. 718; Bk. 14, ll. 361; Bk. 17, ll. 825; Bk. 18, ll. 46, ll. 58; Bk. 19, ll. 134, ll. 227; Bk. 20, ll. 160, ll. 175, ll. 198, ll. 243, ll. 461
[70] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 5323-5428

anonymous chronicler also represents the Scots' disastrous defeat at the Battle of Neville's Cross as partially the result of King David's decision to ignore the advice of the 'wys' William Douglas of Liddesdale to retire to Scotland rather than face the English in open battle, instead being swayed by the counsel of 'othir lordis' who lead him to believe that if the English can be defeated then the Scots could raid as far south as London.[71] Once again, the chronicler demonstrates a degree of appreciation for the strategic situation and his identification of Liddesdale as 'wys' implies that he expects his audience to approve of the more prudent suggestion. However, Wyntoun makes no attempt to sustain this attitude towards prudence throughout his work. The decision to present withdrawal as the correct option is most likely a consequence of the fact that the anonymous chronicler may have been writing to redeem the reputation of Robert the Steward from the criticism he received in *Gesta Annalia II*, which had been somewhat critical of the Steward's escape after Neville's Cross.[72]

The anonymous chronicler shows further recognition of prudence as a significant factor in war in his condemnation of James, 2nd earl of Douglas, and his part in the Otterburn campaign in 1388. He presents the Battle of Otterburn as an entirely avoidable confrontation brought about by Douglas' 'rekles' nature and blames the earl's death on his overreliance on his own personal courage rather than surrounding himself with men who could have defended him from harm.[73] The chronicler directly contrasts Douglas' performance with that of Robert Stewart, earl of Fife, who led a parallel incursion into north-western England at the same time as Douglas' raid into the north-east and returned 'With outtyn tynsale of his men'.[74] This association of Fife and prudence is not isolated, as the anonymous chronicler comments approvingly on an earlier instance of the earl 'wysly' leading a raid into north-western England 'but tinsall'.[75] In these instances however, the anonymous chronicler is most likely reflecting pro-Fife propaganda reflecting the subsequent political changes that took place in Scotland immediately following the Battle of Otterburn.[76] These references do not show the promotion of prudence to the same extent that Barbour demonstrates. They do however illustrate the use of prudence as a tool for

[71] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 6137-6152
[72] Boardman, 'Chronicle Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century Scotland', p. 28; John Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, (W. F. Skene, ed.), (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871-1872), Vol. 1, p. 363-364
[73] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 9, ll. 850, 900-907
[74] Ibid. Bk. 9, ll. 957
[75] Ibid. Bk. 9, ll. 596-567
[76] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 148-149

advancing a particular perspective to appeal to a contemporary audience, which Barbour certainly employs in *The Bruce* – albeit more consistently throughout the entire work.

Many of the figures who came to be revered as great bastions of chivalry were in reality very capable military strategists who owed their success to meticulous organisation and discipline. Bertrand du Guesclin for instance, who was frequently praised by Froissart and became the subject of a chivalric biography written shortly after his death by an otherwise obscure author known as Cuvelier, had begun his career as a guerrilla fighter in his native Brittany.[77] Du Guesclin's brilliance as a strategist and tactician had been recognised by Charles V of France and with the king's backing the Breton knight had been instrumental in the piecemeal reversal of English fortunes when hostilities between England and France resumed after the Treaty of Brétigny.[78] This is apparent even in the more popular accounts of his career, though much of this is obscured as he came to be portrayed in a far more conventional light performing increasingly superhuman feats of personal prowess and exhibiting limitless courage in battle upon battle and skirmish after skirmish.[79] Cuvelier's biography of Du Guesclin has been noted as containing numerous instances of exaggeration and many of the tales that Cuvelier narrates appear to have been invented by the writer to lionise his hero.[80] For instance, Cuvelier devotes a considerable portion of the early part of his poem to recounting the various tournament exploits Du Guesclin undertook as a young man.[81] The distinction to bear in mind here is that while C may occasionally mention the actions undertaken in the name of prudence – the setting up of an ambush, the positioning of troops to exploit a particular geographical feature and so forth – it is never celebrated by him and there is no indication of the author attributing any value to such activities. Such considerations precipitate the action in which a knight may increase his reputation but do not enhance it apparently.

It is necessarily the case that prudence was as important for the successful prosecution of military activity and thus it was a valued virtue in military theory in the medieval period.[82] Taylor examines the role of late medieval writers as 'recorders and transmitters of military wisdom' and notes that this is a role which these writers openly

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[77] Taggart has suggested that Barbour may have been aware of Du Guesclin's career, Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 28

[78] R. Vernier, *The Flower of Chivalry: Bertrand du Guesclin and the Hundred Years' War*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 209

[79] Ibid. p. 10

[80] Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', p. 114 n46

[81] Cuvelier, *Chanson*, ll. 562-787

[82] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', p. 85

recognised in their own works.[83] In trying to arrive at a working definition for historians to use when assessing prudence in chivalric literature, Taylor distinguishes prudence from more abstract and theoretical philosophies present in the works of medieval writers, providing a practical kind of wisdom intended to guide knights in the type of situations they might encounter in the day-to-day prosecution of their careers as soldiers.[84] It is interesting to note that Christine de Pizan chose to employ the term prudence ('prudement') to excuse Charles V's lack of military activity in the later years of his reign.[85] Le Saux has argued that Pizan showed an appreciation for wisdom as a key attribute of a war leader in many of her works, but Pizan's specific response to recording the life of a king who did not readily engage in the physical expressions of chivalry found in other types of chivalric literature illustrates her willingness to broaden her definition of chivalry to include the intellectual pursuit of good military sense, 'making a virtue out of necessity' as Given-Wilson has put it.[86] Similarly, Barbour reconciles King Robert's use of guerrilla tactics in his war against the English by advancing prudence as a chivalric virtue to be cultivated by every knight.

That there was a necessary interest among the medieval aristocracy in prudent warfare can be seen in the popularity of certain treatises on warfare that took the principle of prudence and applied it to military activity. Perhaps the most noteworthy of all of these is Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris* ('The Epitome of Military Science'), a work first produced for the late Roman Empire but one that continued to be widely circulated throughout the medieval period.[87] Allmand notes a fundamental but not surprising difference in attitude between Froissart and Vegetius; Froissart recorded notable actions to inspire imitation by future generations, whereas Vegetius was interested only in actions which brought benefit to the common good, which were almost invariably command decisions.[88] Ownership of this work became much wider and varied during the fourteenth-

[83] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 231; this reflects a broader propensity – especially among clerics – to encourage greater wisdom in their audience through their writing, as noted in Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, p. 225
[84] Ibid. p. 232
[85] C. T. Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 285
[86] F. Le Saux, 'War and Knighthood in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des faits d'armes et de chevallerie*', in F. Le Saux and N. Thomas (eds.), *Writing War Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), p. 100; Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', p. 112
[87] Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitome of Military Science*, ed. and trans. N.P. Milner, (2nd ed., Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. xiii; for instance, Christine de Pizan relied on Vegetius' writings extensively in C. de Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry*, S. Willard (trans.) & C. C. Willard (ed.), (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999)
[88] Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius*, p. 28

century, a fact that Allmand attributes initially to Giles of Rome's popular *De regimine principum* – which drew heavily on Vegetius' work – but also more broadly to a growing concern among rulers and the nobility in general about where the right to exercise force of arms lay.[89] For instance, the fifteenth-century Scottish translator of the *Epitoma* modifies Vegetius' claim that men from the country make the best soldiers to the claim that common men make the best infantry while noblemen are best suited for fighting on horseback.[90] The *Epitoma* was commonly associated with and disseminated in chivalric circles. Medieval translators often used words like 'chevalerie', 'cavalleria', 'knychthode' and 'Ritterschaft' when translating the phrase 'res militaris' although it seems to be the case that these terms were more often than not meant to apply in the broad sense to bodies of heavy cavalry or those with some experience of warfare.[91] Such was the popularity of Vegetius in England that it not only attracted the interest of kings – Edward I and Edward III are known to have owned copies – but also the lesser nobility, some of whom had noteworthy military careers in which they would have had the opportunity to put Vegetius' principles into practice.[92]

The work was well known enough in Scotland for Walter Bower to quote it when dismissing as naturally hot-tempered the participants at the clan battle at Strathnaver in 1430.[93] The reference to Vegetius in Bower is verbatim, meaning that the work was available in Scotland by at least the early fifteenth-century and possibly as early as Barbour was writing. A partial translation is known to have been produced by Adam Loutfut in 1494 for Sir William Cummyn of Inverlochly, a herald and future Lyon King of Arms, which is collected alongside a number of treatises on heraldry and chivalric ceremony.[94] This version of Vegetius' work includes only roughly translated selections from Book I – on training and discipline – Book III – on strategy and tactics – and a few pages from Book II on the proper composition of a legion, and completely omits Book IV – on siege warfare – and Book V – on naval warfare.[95] However, even if Vegetius was not available in Scotland in Barbour's lifetime, it is tempting to speculate that he may have encountered the work while studying in Paris.[96] Oakley has noted that one of the ways in which the growth of university education in the late medieval period fostered a richer intellectual environment

[89] Ibid. p. 69
[90] D. Bornstein, 'The Scottish Prose Version of *De re militari*', in *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 8: Iss. 3, p. 175
[91] Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius*, p. 150
[92] Ibid. p. 72
[93] *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 8, p.265
[94] Bornstein, 'The Scottish Prose Version of *De re militari*', p. 176-177
[95] Ibid. p. 174-175
[96] Penman, '*Anglici caudati*', p. 229

was by exposing students to a wider tradition of writing on political and social thought.[97] It is certain that Barbour had an active engagement with Classical literature, as his frequent allusions and digressions into tales from Antiquity – and to the likes of Hector, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar in particular – demonstrate.[98] Duncan and others have already observed that many of these references come from continental sources available to Barbour at the time, including the *Roman d'Alixandre*.[99]

The quality of prudence is a consistent theme in the *Epitoma*, demanding a military leader to be constantly looking ahead in order to anticipate both the needs of his men and the actions of the enemy.[100] The term *prudentia* appears twice towards the beginning of Vegetius' text, which Allmand takes to be an attempt to emphasise its importance in the prosecution of war.[101] Vegetius placed heavy emphasis on the reliance of a military leader on his mental resources and encouraged them to maintain up-to-date information on the movements and preparations of the enemy, principles which have obvious practical advantages in actual military practice. For Vegetius, the application of reason to decision-making in warfare increased the likelihood of success in a given endeavour.[102] This too has shades of what Barbour has to say on the subject of prudence. The practical result of prudence in Vegetius is that less emphasis was laid on the physical activity of an individual knight and more on the end result of his actions. This runs almost directly against the attitude displayed by writers such as Froissart, who celebrated individual achievement for its own sake, but resonates strongly with Barbour's *Bruce*.

Vegetius' *Epitoma* was far from the only treatise on warfare that provide some possible context for Barbour's thoughts on the subject of prudence. Gilbert Hay's fifteenth-century translations of Honoré Bonet's *Arbre des batailles* and Ramon Llull's *Libre del ordre de cavayleria* certainly suggest some engagement with continental treatises on the practicalities of warfare in Scotland by at least the fifteenth-century. It is not unreasonable to assume some familiarity with these texts in Scotland before Hay's translations were produced given the academic interactions between Scotland and the Continent in the later medieval period.[103] Although Llull, writing sometime in the 1270s, did not show a great

[97] Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 64
[98] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 521-548; Bk. 3, ll. 207-284; Bk. 10, ll. 708-740
[99] *The Bruce*, p. 4; Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 59
[100] Allmand, *The* De Re Militari *of Vegetius*, p. 93
[101] Ibid. p. 259
[102] Ibid. p. 255
[103] D. Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: the medieval kingdom and its contacts with Christendom, c.1214-1545*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), p. 34-38

deal of interest in the practicalities of conducting military engagements, he nevertheless advocated prudence as one of the cardinal virtues. The cardinal virtues, including prudence, can also be found in the *Siete Partidas*, an informal set of guidelines for governance drawn up on behalf of Alfonso X of Castile around the same time as Llull was writing and which according to Allmand was heavily influenced by Vegetius' *Epitoma*.[104] For Llull, prudence (*prudentia*) is 'a science through which knowledge of the future and the present is acquired' and 'provides the ability to avoid physical and spiritual harm by using foresight and stratagems'.[105] The concept as expressed in the *Libre del ordre de cavayleria* is similar to Barbour's own understanding of the concept, relying as it does on the use of a knight's good judgement to achieve success in military endeavours. Llull even includes an aphorism on the subject, stating that 'more battles are won by skill and common sense than by masses of people, equipment or knights'.[106] Such sentiments are frequently echoed by Barbour, as is the case when King Robert encourages his men before the Battle of Loudoun Hill by assuring them that the numerical superiority of the English has been negated by the terrain:

> 'And thoucht that thai be ma than we
> That suld abays us litill thing,
> For quhen we cum to the fechting
> Thar may mete us no ma than we.'[107]

Another source similar in style to Llull's *Libre del ordre de cavayleria* but more contemporary with Barbour's *Bruce* is Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de chevalerie*. Charny's lays heavy emphasis on prowess in his work, distinguishing it from earlier treatises like the *Libre del ordre de cavayleria* which had been more clerical in tone and focussed more heavily on the spiritual rather than the pragmatic aspects of knighthood.[108] Much of the earlier part of text is taken up with discussions of the various deeds by which a knight may display his prowess and through which he may increase his reputation. For Kaeuper, this aspect of the *Livre* stemmed from a wider concern about the state of contemporary knighthood in France in light of the repeated military reverses suffered by France in the

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[104] Ibid. p. 102
[105] R. Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, (N. Fallows ed. and trans.), (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), p. 73
[106] Ibid. p. 73
[107] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 246-249
[108] G. de Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, ed. and trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 32

first phase of the Hundred Years' War.[109] At times, Charny's frequent incitements for his readership to pursue feats of martial prowess threaten to move the work into territory that would constitute rashness by Barbour's standards. It is perhaps worth noting here that Charny was killed at the Battle of Poitiers fighting to defend the king and the king's standard from capture.[110] Death in battle is not completely at odds with Barbour's understanding of prudence, particularly if the possibility of honourable escape was no longer an option, but if Froissart's account of Charny's death is to be believed there is at least a suspicion that the French king and his men resolved to defend themselves rather than attempt to withdraw.[111] Charny includes a brief comment on the subject of knights who are bold but who do not bear in mind the wider significance of the martial actions they perform, men who by Barbour's standards would be categorised as rash.[112] He suggests that such men should receive qualified praise for their actions, admitting that their worthiness is diminished by their failure to take into account the consequences of their actions. Interestingly, Barbour's restrained praise of Edward Bruce has echoes of this same attitude.

However, this is not to say that there is no place in Charny's formulation of chivalry for more unqualified advocacy of prudence. Charny devotes a considerable amount of space to discussing the attributes of a good leader.[113] Discussion of practically-minded warfare naturally raised questions of where the line could be drawn between legitimately cunning ploys and outright dishonesty. Aristotle drew a clear distinction between prudence and the kind of pragmatism that could be employed by an individual who wished to achieve their aims without considering the morality of their actions, a point that Thomas Aquinas illustrated with reference to a thief who might draw on his expertise and ingenuity to commit a crime but would not, at least in the sense envisaged by Aristotle, be considered prudent.[114] Geoffroi de Charny argued similarly that traps and ploys were only valid if they were put to good use.[115] The French term commonly employed in the late medieval period for the use of ruses in warfare – *cautelles d'armes* – is derived from the Latin *cautus*, which

[109] Ibid. 49
[110] New York, Morgan Library, MS M.804, Fol. 131r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 17th October 2015
[111] D'A. J. D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: the monarchical orders of knighthood in later medieval Europe, 1325-1520*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 196
[112] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 150
[113] For Charny's comments on the seeking of plunder, see Ibid. p. 98; for his discussion of the characteristics of a good leader, see Ibid. p. 140-144
[114] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 6, Chapter 5; T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 47.13
[115] Ibid. p. 150

means prudent.[116] However, Taylor has noted that the word Charny uses to describe this type of pragmatic cleverness is the ambiguous term *engin*, which was used elsewhere to describe both prudent and underhanded types of intelligence.[117] Gray uses the phrase *mal engin* when describing a disagreement between the captors of one Sir James Pipe and the men who claim to have rescued him, further suggesting that this term was not always necessarily employed in a positive context.[118] This ambiguity of language is echoed in Barbour's *Bruce*, as will be explored in detail below. In exploring this distinction, a number of medieval authors interrogated the notion of prudence in some detail, using case studies as a way to illustrate the lessons they wished to share with their audiences.[119] The same is true of Barbour, who provides numerous examples of his protagonists employing prudent planning to overcome their enemies, and frequently dissects these episodes for the benefit of his audience as we shall see.

The Buke of the Law of Armys, which Hay translated in the 1450s from Honoré Bonet's *Arbre des batailles* (c.1382), offers some context to Barbour's condemnation of rash action on the battlefield in pursuit of personal reward. In this work, attention is paid specifically to the notion that a knight should not seek individual achievement on the battlefield if in doing so he risks the overall success of the cause for which he fights. In particular, Hay warns that to do so would be to risk gaining renown for 'fuliche hardyness and presumptuousness.'[120] This phrasing is particularly interesting, as the term that Barbour employs for one of the two extreme alternatives to prudence that an incautious knight might develop is 'hardyment', as will be discussed below. It would seem then the same type of activity was being discussed negatively in both Barbour's *Bruce* and Hay's *Buke of the Law of Armys*. Katie Stevenson has used examples such as this to further the argument that the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries saw the development of chivalry in Scotland from a formulation that was almost entirely martial in its outlook to a more humanistic model that emphasised the social and political responsibilities of knighthood instead.[121] This argument forms a key part of Stevenson's thesis, and she has used the emphasis placed on discretion over the pursuit of personal glory by writers such as Hay as a primary example in support of this. However, there are elements of this view in Barbour's *Bruce* as well. Barbour's

[116] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 235
[117] Ibid. p. 234
[118] *Scalacronica*, p. 180
[119] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 236
[120] Sir Gilbert Hay, *The buke of the law of armys*, (J. H. Stevenson, ed.), (Scottish Text Society, 1901), p. 84
[121] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p. 190

conception of chivalry is still essentially martial but as will be explored below he was already espousing the principles that would be taken up by later writers such as Hay and developed in the manner that Stevenson has previously suggested.

In Barbour's *Bruce*, one of the author's primary concerns is the way in which knights use their intelligence to guide their actions both on and off the battlefield, a quality Barbour calls 'worschip'. Throughout the poem, Barbour's description of the actual fighting between the English and the Scots tends to be fairly formulaic. There is a great deal of clamour as both men and horses are injured, blows are exchanged on armour and weapons. A great deal of blood is spilled and much confusion is sowed among the two sides as the fury of battle engulfs them. In this *The Bruce* is similar to Gray's *Scalacronica*, where the depiction of actual fighting tends to place the reader directly in the midst of the action, particularly in the case of Gray in those encounters where his father was involved.[122] The Chandos herald too offers some visceral description of actual fighting when it comes to the Battles of Poitiers and Najera, which is more akin to Barbour's depictions of combat.[123] The writer even provides a (literally) blow-by-blow account of a fight between Sir John Chandos and a Castilian named Martin Fernandez during the Battle of Najera, describing a wound sustained by Chandos and the method of Fernandez's death.[124] Following the battle of Najera, Chandos herald expresses a mixture of wonder and sorrow at the state of the battlefield once the fighting is over, similar to Barbour – especially in some of the gory imagery employed.[125] Allmand has provided a possible explanation for the similarities in the descriptions of fighting by Gray, Chandos herald and Barbour. Writing of Thomas Walsingham's account of the Battle of Agincourt, Allmand notes that to account for the fact that he did not witness the events he was recording Walsingham chose to 'generalise' the experience, emphasising sights and sounds that might be found anywhere on the battlefield – such as the clash of weaponry, the noise of men and so on.[126] This is very similar to the descriptions of fighting to be found in the *Scalacronica*, the *Vie* and *The Bruce*, and it may be that the authors of these works were employing a similar technique. In Barbour's *Bruce*, the combatants invariably bear themselves vigorously and manfully until sooner or later one side can no longer stand the prowess of the other and

[122] *Scalacronica*, p. 46, 158
[123] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 1121-1122, 1157-1159, ll. 1205-1244; ll. 3246-3274
[124] Ibid. ll. 3275-3287
[125] Ibid. ll. 3425-3444
[126] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 22; T. Walsingham, *The* Chronica Maiora *of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, (D. Preest ed. & trans.), (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), p. 410-412

they retreat. But individual accomplishments are rarely focussed on, even in the case of the four main heroes of the poem, and passages recounting the fighting remain virtually indistinguishable from one another when taken on their own. This is in contrast to the *Scalacronica*, where individual achievements on the battlefield are more commonly praised for their own sake. One of the most common recipients of individual praise in the *Scalacronica* is the chronicler's father, as in the instance when the older Sir Thomas rescues Henry Beaumont during an assault on the walls of Stirling Castle.[127]

By comparison, Barbour's accounts of the thought process his heroes – especially Bruce and Douglas – undertake before battle is met show a far greater degree of originality and provide far more specific details regarding the tactics the protagonists intend to employ in the coming engagement. Allmand has previously noted that placing the focus on an individual in an account of a battle was a technique used by medieval writers to draw clearer moral lessons from the victories and defeats suffered those whose lives they recorded.[128] In Barbour's case, he attributes responsibility for the tactics employed in a given engagement to an individual – usually Bruce or Douglas – and then vindicates their decisions by having the subsequent battle play out as his heroes anticipated. Barbour is often at pains to record even the most seemingly mundane details of the preparations that precede a battle, right down to describing the lay of the land and the work that the Scots undertake beforehand to exploit the advantages of this further, such as the digging of ditches and other pitfalls before the Battles of Loudoun Hill and Bannockburn.[129] Furthermore, in most cases the specifics of the preparations that the Scots make are unique to the situation they are facing in a given episode, so that the tactics employed become more memorable than the actual battle itself. Barbour frequently stresses details such as the manner of the disguise the Scots might employ to gain entry to a stronghold or the use of an agent to assist them in achieving their aims or even unusual methods of approach to a certain weak point in the enemy's defences that the Scots can exploit to overcome them, many of which will be discussed in more detail below. The particularity of many episodes that Barbour recounts no doubt reinforced the prominence of these tales in the minds of his audience and in turn signify to the modern reader the considerable emphasis that Barbour placed on the issue of prudence.

Furthermore, the descriptions of actual violence in Barbour's *Bruce* are relatively restrained. There are some instances of probably exaggerated violence, for instance in the

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[127] *Scalacronica*, p. 25
[128] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 22-23
[129] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 172-182; Bk. 11, ll. 367-380

case of Bruce's legendary encounter with Sir Henry de Bohun in which the king splits the knight's head open through his helmet.[130] But more commonly Barbour's descriptions of physical violence are rooted firmly in reality. This is true both in Barbour's general descriptions of battles and skirmishes, but also in instances when Barbour choses to detail a particular act of violence, such as when Douglas grapples with Richmond and kills him with a knife after unhorsing him during a skirmish.[131] Such passages are in marked contrast to *The Wallace*, in which Wallace is frequently capable of performing wildly exaggerated acts of violence when in battle. For instance, Wallace regularly beheads opponents with a single stroke of a sword, such as in the case of Fawdoun or John of Lyn.[132] Such exaggerations were not uncommon in works of chivalric literature, especially in the romance genre where the fantasy elements allowed for the greater application of imagination by the writers. There are a number of examples of this in the thirteenth-century work known as the *Roman de Fergus*. When Fergus tilts with the Black Knight he drives his lance so far through his opponent's shoulder that it leaves the tip protruding from his back, but in spite of this grievous injury the Black Knight continues to fight on until his sword is broken by Fergus.[133] Similarly, when Fergus gets into a quarrel with a knight in a forest clearing over the behaviour of the man's dwarf servant, Fergus manages to slice off the back of his opponent's helmet and his hair, all with a single blow.[134] Depictions of violence in Barbour's *Bruce* seem to be generally 'realistic', putting his discussion of warfare more in the realm of actual military practice rather than fantasy.

Barbour's use of the term 'worschip' is instructive for this study. Duncan translates the word 'worschip' as valour, but in this case the word might be better understood as meaning 'prudence' or even 'discernment'.[135] The term 'worschip' is used fifty-two times throughout the text of *The Bruce*, while the term 'valour' is used fourteen times. On three occasions 'valour' is listed alongside 'worschip', among the virtues of Judas Maccabeus and Julius Caesar, and among the virtues for which the earl of Moray's peers 'yarnyt to do him honour' at the end of the first day of Bannockburn.[136] Clearly, Barbour considered 'worschip' and 'valour' to be distinct but related concepts. Barbour repeatedly lists

[130] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 49-56
[131] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 419-422
[132] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 108; Bk. 11, ll. 901
[133] *Fergus of Galloway*, p. 39
[134] Ibid. p. 49
[135] Taggart prefers Duncan's translation of the term in his word analysis of *The Bruce*, cf. Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 247, 305
[136] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 467, ll. 541; Bk. 12, ll. 160-161

'worschip' among the virtues possessed by noble knights, a fact which makes identifying the precise meaning of the term in these contexts more difficult.[137] However, it is clear from this that Barbour considered 'worschip' to be a key attribute of an heroic knight.

In general, Barbour's use of the term 'worschip' strongly implies prudence. On three separate occasions Barbour notes that the circumstances facing his heroes are so dire that 'na worschip' could save them, the implication in these instances being that not even prudent planning could lead them to success.[138] Elsewhere, 'worschip' is listed as the attribute that Bruce employs when defending his men as they flee from the lord of Lorn, the attribute that allows Sir Philip Mowbray to escape after being defeated by Douglas in battle at Edirford, and the attribute that King Robert's victory at Loudoun Hill best demonstrated, an interesting point given the emphasis that Barbour places on the preparations that the king made before the battle – the first pitched battle in the poem for which Barbour does so.[139] Barbour also has Bruce lament that Sir Christopher Seton – executed by Edward I after being captured at Kildrummy Castle – died in such a way that did not allow him to demonstrate his 'worschip'.[140] It is 'Throu his gret worschip' that Douglas is said to have brought Selkirk Forest into the king's peace while the king himself is campaigning north of the Mounth and 'worschippis' is the word used by Barbour to mean the tales of Douglas' great deeds.[141] Douglas is given command of the archers for the battle beneath Ben Cruachan due to his reputation for 'worschip' in an apparent recognition of his capacity for acting prudently in combat, a notion supported by the fact that in the ensuing battle the well-timed intervention of Douglas' company swings the battle in Bruce's favour.[142] Barbour's account of the recovery of Berwick – which places heavy emphasis on the tactics employed by the Scots – concludes with the observation that the town was taken 'Throu gret worschip and hey empris'.[143] Perhaps the most notable instance of 'worschip' being associated with prudence comes when Sir John Hainault lists 'worschip' alongside 'avisé' and 'wysdome' as the attributes that make Douglas worthy of perhaps the most exaggerated praise in the entire poem:

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[137] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 467, ll. 519, ll. 541; Bk. 9, ll. 496; Bk. 10, ll. 786; Bk. 12, ll. 161, ll. 270, ll. 380; Bk. 15, ll. 234, ll. 563; Bk. 16, ll. 494, ll. 538; Bk. 18, ll. ll. 528, ll. 531, ll. 566; Bk. 19, ll. 103; Bk. 20, ll. 223, ll. 277

[138] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 395; Bk. 15, ll. 154; Bk. 20, ll. 476

[139] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 50; Bk. 8, ll. 78, ll. 310

[140] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 174

[141] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 423, ll. 429

[142] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 41-43, 66-78

[143] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 172

> ‘Yone folk ar governyt wittily,
> And he that ledis is worthi
> For avisé worschip and wysdome
> To governe the empyr off Rome.’[144]

Barbour notably contradicts his common usage of the term ‘worschip’ to mean ‘prudence’ on three occasions, when reporting that Sir Neil Fleming, Sir James Douglas and King Robert’s heart are described as having been buried ‘with worschip’.[145] Interestingly, Hary echoes this usage when he describes Graham being carried to hus burial ‘with worschip and dolour’.[146] The term here seems to indicate that the remains were interred with the great honour due to them given the worthy lives they had led.

This association of ‘worschip’ with a sense of honour reflecting one’s accomplishments resonates with other uses of the term in other near-contemporary sources. For instance, when introducing Wallace’s ‘lemman’ Hary notes approvingly that ‘Hyr fadyr was of worschipe and renoune’.[147] The term ‘worschipe’ is used twice again in the speech given by Wallace’s ‘lemman’ to mean ‘honour’.[148] Following the first expulsion of the Englishfrom Scotland Hary observes that ‘The kynryk stud in gud worschip and es’, which McKim interprets as meaning ‘prosperity’.[149] The herald that delivers the letter inviting Wallace to the French court shows deference to Wallace on the basis of his ‘worschip’:

> The harrold than with worschip to devys
> Betuk till him the kingis wryt of France,
> Wallace, on kne with lawly obeisance,
> Rycht reverendly for worschip of Scotland.[150]

Furthermore, in the subsequent exchange between Wallace and the herald Hary repeatedly states that it is Wallace’s ‘worschip’ that has led the King of France to invite him to court, and it is clear that the term here refers broadly to his honourable reputation.[151] During Wallace’s second visit to France, Hary once again uses ‘worschip’ to describe the high esteem the king places on his hero:

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[144] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 471-474; ‘wit and worschip’ are explicitly linked against by Barbour in Bk. 20, ll. 210
[145] *The Bruce*, Bk. 15, 241; Bk. 20, ll. 584, ll. 608
[146] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll.585
[147] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 583
[148] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 689, 701
[149] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 1605; Blind Hary, *The Wallace*, (A. McKim ed.), (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), p. 235
[150] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 44-47
[151] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 55, 59, 69

This ryoll roy a hie worschip him gaiff,
As conquerour him honowryd our the layff[152]

The term 'worschip' appears in the context of honour and renown in several other near contemporary works. In the early part of his chronicle, Wyntoun refers to the heroes of Ancient Greece – the 'floure of Grece' – as being 'off wyrschipe and off chewalry', suggesting a use closer to that used by Barbour.[153] Elsewhere in his text, Wyntoun also uses variations on the term 'worschep' to refer to honour or respect, albeit in a religious context.[154] The term 'wourschip' appears eleven times in *Golagros and Gawane*, and on three occasions the hero is referred to as the 'wourschipful Wawane'.[155] *The Boke of Noblesse* – produced by an anonymous English writer and addressed to Edward IV on his invasion of France in 1475 – twice uses 'worship' to mean honourable reputation.[156] That Barbour uses a term that more generally meant 'worth proceeding from one's reputation' to refer specifically to 'a sense of prudence in military matters' serves to emphasise the fact that Barbour was consciously trying to draw a connection between prudence and broader pursuit of chivalric distinction. Barbour's attempt to reinforce this connection can further be seen when, immediately following Bruce's death, the mourning Scottish lords claim that during Bruce's lifetime 'Off our worschip sprang the renoun', associating the chivalry of Scotland with this quality specifically and tying the two terms together.[157] Barbour is therefore taking a term generally associated with honourable reputation, and modifying it slightly to help him promote his ideas on prudence.

Barbour offers a direct comment on the term 'worschip' in Book 6.[158] According to this, 'worschip' is courage ('hardyment') and intelligence ('wyt') combined.[159] Tyson has observed that the term 'wyt' is present in Chandos herald's *Vie*, but she notes that there is less emphasis on it than there is in *The Bruce*.[160] The praise a knight receives for his

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[152] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 193-194
[153] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 2, ll. 991-992
[154] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 2, ll. 339, ll. 1521; Bk. 5, ll. 571; Bk. 7, ll. 2784
[155] *Gologros and Gawane*, ll. 73, 421, 807, 1049, 1084, 1099, 1140, 1201, 1211, 1291, 1322
[156] *The Boke of Noblesse*, (J.G. Nichols ed.), (London: Roxburghe Club, 1860), p.32 (John, Duke of Bedford gave battle at Verneuil not 'for wynnyng or kepyng worldly goodis, but only to wynne worship'), p.65 (Rome's victory over the Carthaginians in the First Punic War is described as 'of worshipfulle remembraunce')
[157] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 285
[158] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 323-374
[159] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 358-360
[160] D. B. Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', in S. Boardman (ed.), *Barbour's* Bruce *and its Cultural Contexts*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), p. 134

'worschip' is to reflect the difficulty in achieving it. 'Worschip' can be expressed in offensive and defensive actions, depending on the position a knight finds himself in, and it requires great wisdom to know which to pursue in any given situation. Thus 'worschip' is bound up with experience and more importantly with discipline, since it takes self-control to know what needs to be done and when and how to do it. It is not enough to simply possess both boldness and intelligence; a knight's boldness must be governed by his intelligence.[161] And while it may be difficult to achieve this fusion of ideals, the reward is nothing less than success in most endeavours. The stress on success as a reward for those possessing the virtue of prudence is striking, not least because it distinguishes Barbour's interests so clearly from the interests of many other chivalric writers, as noted above. It also might be expected to provide Barbour's ideas with added persuasive power and make the adoption of Barbour's uniquely formulated conception of chivalry as a whole more appealing, especially to those actively engaged in military affairs. Earlier in the poem, Barbour attributes these words, which again sum up the author's thoughts on prudence, to Bruce himself:

> 'Tharfor men that werrayand war
> Suld set thar etlyng ever-mar
> To stand agayne thar fayis mycht
> Umquile with strenth and quhile with slycht
> And aye think to cum to purpos'[162]

Here again we see the combination of strength and guile being emphasised and a reminder that such a combination is designed to maximise the chances of success in any given endeavour.

For Barbour, prudence has two extremely negative alternatives – foolhardiness and cowardice.[163] Van Heijnsbergen has previously noted Barbour's proclivity for relying on the common rhetorical tool of employing binaries to reinforce ideas in the mind of his audience, and the negative alternatives to prudence is one such instance of this.[164] Perhaps more interestingly, Barbour's thoughts on this subject resonate strongly with Aristotle's observations on 'the courageous person'. Aristotle claimed that such a person seeks to overcome their fears for the sake of achieving righteous ends and, like Barbour, he identifies two extreme alternatives – one having a surfeit of courage and the other having a

[161] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 371
[162] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll.259-262
[163] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll.338-341
[164] Van Heijnsbergen, 'Scripting the National Past', p. 89

surfeit of fear.[165] Llull makes a similar distinction between folly and cowardice and advocates the application of common sense to avoid these traits, somewhat similar to Barbour.[166] For Barbour, foolhardiness is a desire to try every means, no matter how dangerous, to achieve a goal. Such rashness increases the danger inherent in any undertaking and decreases the likelihood of success, thereby diminishing the worthiness of an action. Cowardice is even worse, as it actively avoids taking any action at all. Smail has advanced a model of 'conscious acceptance of risk' for understanding medieval military thinking, in which he suggests that the more significant the issue at stake, the more likely it will be that the risk involved will be the primary factor that influences the decision whether to engage in open battle.[167] Barbour's conception of prudence resonates with this idea in that Smail argues that this is where tactical considerations become most important, as the fundamental purpose of such considerations is to limit the risk involved in fighting. Jones has already applied Smail's theory of conscious acceptance of risk to the tactics employed at the Battle of Verneuil, showing that in principle at least it is applicable to warfare in the later medieval period as well.[168] This principle finds expression in Barbour's conception of 'worschip', which he explicitly states requires a knight to understand which risks are worth taking and which are not:

> Forthi has worschip sic renoun,
> That it is mene betuix tha twa
> And takys that is till underta
> And levys that is to leve, for it
> Has sa gret warnysing of wyt
> That it all perellis weile gan se
> And all avantagis that may be.[169]

Questions of what constitute courageous and cowardly acts have received a great deal of attention in certain recent scholarly studies, some of which discussion is relevant here. Writing in response to Burne's theory of 'Inherent Military Probability', which dictates that tactical factors alone determine the outcome of a given confrontation, Jones has argued that tactics should be considered alongside the mental state of the combatants when trying to understand warfare in the medieval period, and consequently he emphasises

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[165] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapter 7, p. 49-50
[166] Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, p.49
[167] R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1995), p.13
[168] M. K. Jones, 'The Battle of Verneuil (17 August 1424): Towards a History of Courage', *War in History 9*, (2002), p. 387-388
[169] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 348-355

the connection between chivalry and the maintenance of courage in a medieval context.[170] William Miller has drawn a distinction between individual and group prudence.[171] Virtuous prudence is related to the overall strategy and tactics of a military force, falling into the category of group prudence, and as a consequence individual soldiers must settle for 'duty, heroism, honor, and glory' as 'moral compensation' for having to sacrifice that virtue in themselves. This understanding of prudence has echoes of Vegetius but also shares some similarities with Barbour's understanding of the concept. Though it is never made explicit in Barbour's *Bruce*, it is readily apparent that Barbour's main concern is with the activities of the men who direct battles and he operates on the basic assumption that it is right for their followers to fall in line. Even otherwise independent heroes like Edward Bruce and Thomas Randolph are no longer expected to display prudence in their actions in deference to the king's own interpretation of what is the most prudent course of action in a given situation – although King Robert's decision is invariably the most prudent anyway.

Miller notes that wisdom could be recognised as a virtue so long as it was used to maintain or increase one's reputation for honour.[172] This is an interesting thought when considered alongside the fact that renown was a key motivation for the heroes of chivalric literature and that the term 'worschip' is closely linked with the notion of honourable reputation. Norman Dixon has dealt with cowardice extensively in his very detailed study *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*. Dixon's conception of what chivalry means is heavily reliant on his reading of Huizinga's *Waning of the Middle Ages* and since his study is far more concerned with the modern period than with the medieval a degree of caution is required when trying to apply his observations to this study. Dixon sees chivalry as a manifestation of intelligent conscience in response to the military context.[173] Miller observes that shame is only temporary as long as it increases the possibility of future successes. This may mean that actions that initially appear cowardly can be reconciled with the preservation of personal honour if they reflect an individual's limitations and secure the best outcome that is reasonably possible in a given situation.[174] Honoré Bonet reflects this sentiment in when he encourages his readers to flee if they can no longer prevent the loss of a battle but can at least save themselves without injuring their fellows.[175] This notion is

[170] Jones, 'The Battle of Verneuil', p. 376
[171] W. I. Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 25
[172] Ibid. p. 136-137
[173] N. Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 197
[174] Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, p. 46
[175] H. Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, (G. W. Coopland ed. & trans.) (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), p. 122

also identifiable in *The Bruce*, during the Scottish retreat following the Battle of Methven. When Bruce sees that he has lost the battle, Barbour puts a speech into the king's mouth explaining the reasons for his decision to withdraw:

> And the king that angry wes
> For he his men saw fle him fra
> Said then, 'Lordingis, sen it is swa
> That ure rynnys agane us her,
> Gud is we pas of thar daunger
> Till God us send eft-sonys grace.
> And yeyt may fall giff thai will chace
> Quyt thaim corn-but sumdele we sall.'[176]

In this speech, the king makes it clear that his intention in retreating is to fight on more favourable terms later. Furthermore, Barbour states later in the poem that while Douglas was fighting in the south – when Bruce was campaigning north of the Mounth – he won fifty-seven battles and lost thirteen but that he always wanted to be busy resisting the English, suggesting that escape was always a legitimate option so long as it afforded other opportunities to damage the enemy at a later date:

> For in his tyme as men said me
> Thretten tymys vencusyt wes he
> And had victouris sevin and fyfty.
> Hym semyt nocht lang ydill to ly,
> Be his travaill he had na will,
> Me think men suld him love with skill.[177]

For Miller, who at times comes close to equating prudence with an unwillingness to fight, prudence should properly involve determining when one can strike back at an enemy most effectively, rather than trying to avoid having to strike back at all.[178] Dixon notes that indecisiveness on the part of leadership has been a frequent cause of military failures over the centuries and he connects this fact to the issues of boldness and caution.[179] This also closely echoes the balance that Barbour advocates with his notion of prudence. Dixon has also observed that what he terms 'butch' characteristics – which include size, strength, physical courage and the like – are often preferred by military organisations to the

[176] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 434-441
[177] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 431-436
[178] Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, p. 163
[179] Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, p. 221

detriment of qualities more suited to achieving success in the field, namely intelligence, problem-solving abilities and resilience under pressure, characteristics that Dixon states have commonly been associated with effeminacy.[180] In his promotion of the concept of prudence, Barbour makes some attempt to address this same problem by encouraging military leaders to use their intelligence to keep these 'butch' characteristics in check. It would be wrong to suggest that the problem as identified by Dixon is entirely recognised by Barbour. Barbour's descriptions of Bruce and Douglas present them both as physically imposing and throughout their adventures they are given ample opportunity to display tremendous strength and physical prowess. Nonetheless, Barbour is constantly at pains to remind his audience that they constantly endeavour to prevent their physical characteristics from overriding their intellect and driving them to commit acts of rashness. It is only by balancing both sets of qualities that a knight can become truly great.

This emphasis on caution is in somewhat stark contrast to a theme that emerges in Gray's *Scalacronica* through a passage in which two knights discuss the relative merits of caution over boldness before settling on boldness, with mixed results. On the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn, Henry Beaumont and Sir Thomas Gray – the writer's father – watch as the earl of Moray approaches their force and Beaumont declares his intention to allow Moray space to arrange his men for battle before the engagement. Gray initially counsels caution in giving the enemy time to deploy properly but when Beaumont questions his honour Gray is goaded into a reckless charge that gets himself captured and his companion William Deyncourt killed.[181] While the passage seems similar to several episodes in *The Bruce* in its set-up, its conclusion is markedly different in that it clearly separates the notion of honour and caution by having Gray feel his honour has been legitimately questioned by Beaumont. The fact that Gray's reckless attack ends so disastrously suggests at least some recognition of the importance of caution in military activity, but it is apparent that Gray distinguishes that type of military prudence from chivalric endeavour. Similarly, Chandos herald offers an interesting if brief exchange between the Marshal d'Audrehem and the Marshal de Clermont at the beginning of the Battle of Poitiers, in which the two men debate whether to engage with the English immediately or allow the English to attack them.[182] Although the Marshal of Clermont initially suggests a more cautious approach the marshals quickly become distracted by the

[180] Ibid. p. 212
[181] *Scalacronica*, p. 74
[182] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 1135-1156

question of which of them can prove themselves to be the bolder of the two, and the passage ends with both charging towards the English, with no criticism of the marshals' actions being made or even implied by the writer.

Macdonald has undertaken a study of courage as it pertains specifically to medieval Scottish armies, which also deserves consideration here.[183] He has noted the general lack of scholarly work on the individual experience of Scottish soldiers in the medieval period, although this is partly to do with the lack of sources that offer insight into the daily lives of the vast majority of men who served in medieval Scottish armies.[184] As there is no reason to think that Barbour himself had experienced life as a soldier *The Bruce* does little to redress this issue, although Barbour does at least attempt to present his heroes in such a way as to provide a personal insight into their experiences of war. Furthermore, Macdonald and others have noted a tendency for Scottish military leaders to be targeted during engagements as a way to 'neutralise an army's command capabilities', such as was the case at the Battles of Dupplin Moor, Halidon Hill, Verneuil and Flodden, suggesting that the threat of personal harm was generally higher for Scottish nobles that those from other medieval kingdoms.[185] Additionally, Macdonald argues that the Scots were more likely to suffer imprisonment – and for longer periods – than their English counterparts, due in part to the fact they suffered more defeats than they inflicted on the English but also because in general the core political aims of the Scottish crown were not so well served as those of the English crown by holding onto prominent captives.[186]

Macdonald notes a number of factors relating to courage that were particularly acute for the Scots in the late medieval period, many of which are directly addressed to some degree by Barbour. For instance, Macdonald suggests that the tight formations in which the bulk of Scottish infantry fought in the medieval period were specifically intended to inspire cohesion and mutual encouragement.[187] Barbour does not press this point too forcefully,

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[183] A.J. Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', in *The Scottish Historical Review*, Volume 92, 2: No. 235: October 2013, pp. 179-206

[184] Ibid. p. 180

[185] Ibid. p. 203; for examples of this tactic being used at Dupplin Moor and Halidon Hill, cf. B. Webster, 'Scotland without a King, 1329–1341', in A. Grant and K. J. Stringer, *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community: Essays Presented to G.W.S Barrow*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 224; For Verneuil cf. Jones, 'The Battle of Verneuil', p. 405–7

[186] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 196; Macdonald bases his argument on the example of Bannockburn, after which it was more expedient for the Scots to exchange their newly-acquired captives for prisoners who had been held the English for many years in most cases, and he contrasts this with the willingness of the English crown to alienate the powerful Percy family by enforcing royal authority over the fate of the prominent Scottish prisoners taken at Humbleton Hill in 1402

[187] Ibid. p. 188

but the term 'worschip' is mentioned as an attribute that keeps men's hearts 'hey' and prevents them from fleeing easily, with Barbour explaining that such men will only flee if they see their leader and their companions flee and thereby demonstrating some awareness that men could take courage from fighting as part of a cohesive unit.[188] Later in the poem, Bruce's 'worschip' is presented as giving encouragement to his men in battle.[189] From these examples it is clear that Barbour not only recognised the fact that soldiers could draw mutual encouragement from those around them, but also saw 'worschip' as a means of bolstering courage on the battlefield. Macdonald has also pointed out the role of religious exhortation in inspiring courage in battle.[190] Barbour recognises this as well, presenting the Scots as collectively hearing mass in preparation for the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn and praying together on the morning of the second day of the battle.[191] Macdonald observes that inspiration could also be taken from the pomp and circumstance associated with warfare, such as heraldic display and even the use of battle cries.[192] Barbour acknowledges all of these factors, although he does not focus too heavily on any of them. For instance, Barbour emphasises the impressive effect given by the appearance of the English army as it marched towards Stirling Castle in 1314:

> Men mycht se than that had bene by
> Mony a worthi man and wycht
> And mony ane armur gayly dycht
> And mony a sturdy sterand stede
> Arayit intill ryche wede,
> Mony helmys and haberjounys
> Scheldis and speris and penounys,
> And sa mony a cumbly knycht
> That it semyt that into fycht
> Thai suld vencus the warld all haile.[193]

Barbour even goes so far as to observe that on the second day of the battle the ranks of armoured English knights 'as angelis schane brychtly'.[194] Similarly, when the Scots encounter the first helmet crest being worn by the English in Weardale in 1327, Barbour notes that these objects were seen as being 'off gret bewté', suggesting that they may also

[188] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 85-90
[189] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 512-513
[190] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 190
[191] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 381-387, Bk. 12, ll. 477-481
[192] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 191
[193] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 132-141
[194] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 428

have played a minor role in bolstering the courage of the English.[195] Barbour also records the use of battle cries on several occasions, for instance when Douglas and his men cry 'Douglas!' while attacking or more general shouts of 'on thaim, thai faile' on the second day of the Battle of Bannockburn.[196] In terms of actual fear, Macdonald observes that fear was not only a problem on the battlefield but could be heightened by factors arising from campaigning, such as hunger, disease and exposure to the elements.[197] Barbour shows an awareness of these factors in his depiction of the misery suffered by the Scots following their defeat at the Battle of Methven, as well as in recording Bruce's attempts to encourage his men during this time.[198]

The context of Barbour's most extensive comment on prudence is an episode in which the king singlehandedly defends a ford against two hundred men.[199] There is no particular reason to believe that the episode with which Barbour's commentary on prudence is associated actually took place, especially seeing as the events it recounts seem so far-fetched at first glance. Furthermore, it may be that Barbour constructed this tale around an earlier classical precedent such as Horatius' defence of the Pons Sublicius, a tale that survived into the medieval period in the works of Livy among others.[200] More pertinent than that, Barbour includes the tale of Tydeus of Thebes in the middle of his account of King Robert's defence of the ford.[201] Barbour's source for this tale is *Roman de Thèbes*, a romance that Purdie has convincingly argued appealed to Barbour both for its practical attitude towards feats of arms and due to its focus on the consequences of Tydeus being denied his rights as ruler of Thebes.[202] Both the episode in Barbour's *Bruce* and the tale he draws upon from the *Roman* involve men who are honestly seeking to reclaim the kingdoms that are theirs by right, are surprised at night by large numbers of men but who nevertheless chose a place to resist them that reduces the effectiveness of the enemy's superior numbers and go on to achieve victory. Barbour goes so far as to encourage his readers to consider which feat of arms they find most impressive.[203] All of this only serves to reinforce the

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[195] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 400-401
[196] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 345, Bk. 16, ll. 411; Bk. 13, ll. 205
[197] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 193
[198] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 496-498; Bk. 3, ll. 299-306
[199] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 67-180
[200] P. Aicher, *Rome Alive: A Source Guide to the Ancient City*, (Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004), vol. 1, 117.2
[201] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 181-270
[202] Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 66-69; for the passage that originally inspired Barbour cf. *Le Roman de Thèbes*, (A. Petit ed. & trans.), (Paris: Champion, 2008), ll. 1467-1834
[203] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 271-286

usefulness of this section of the poem for trying to comprehend Barbour's attitude to the concept, providing as it did an opportunity for him to compose a narrative that specifically illustrates his point rather than having to graft his own thoughts onto historical events. While Bruce's defence of the ford might at first seem to be a rather rash action it is particularly interesting to note that the presence of this commentary on the subject of prudence makes it possible to reinterpret the event in light of Barbour's thoughts on the subject. Although Barbour himself states that the king's first thought was that his choice was between flight and death, Barbour is at pains to stress the tactical considerations Bruce gave to choosing this location. Barbour talks us through the facts of the narrowness of the ford, which forces his enemies to attack him one at a time, and the fact that Bruce's armour precludes the use of arrows to kill him from a long distance. Bruce's first action when battle is met is to kill the horse of the first man to attack him, further impeding his enemies' progress with its corpse. Barbour also makes a point of emphasising the desperate situation Bruce is in at this time and the fact that he fights only to give his own followers time to prepare for battle and come to his aid. Perhaps most obviously, the fact that Bruce mounts a successful defence of the ford serves as pretty indisputable proof that his tactical calculations were valid, even if his actions might at first seem rash.

Aside from this discourse on prudence, Barbour's *Bruce* is replete with examples of this concept in action. The application of prudence is absolutely essential to ensure the king's survival throughout his time on the run between 1306 and 1307. It is during this section of the poem that the defence of the ford takes place. Shortly after this incident, Bruce decides to split his forces into three on the basis that the English cannot pursue them all, allowing them to escape more easily.[204] This leads directly to one of the most memorable episodes of the poem, in which the king is hunted by John of Lorn with a tracker dog. Barbour claims to have heard conflicting reports of how the king escaped the hound, but in the first of the two alternate accounts the king confounds the tracker dog by wading through a stream, masking his scent.[205] Not only does Barbour recount instances of individual prudence, he also takes note of prudence on a wider scale. Barbour records that, on recognising that he cannot relieve Berwick by challenging the English in open battle, Bruce dispatched Moray and Douglas to ravage northern England in an attempt to draw the

[204] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 543-550

[205] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 17-21; in the second account, Barbour emphasises the loyalty Bruce inspires in an archer who shoots the hound, risking death at the hands of John of Lorn's men but giving the king time to escape

English away from the siege in order to protect their lands.[206] When Edward II invades southern Scotland in 1322, Barbour records the scorched earth policy that King Robert adopted in order to discomfort the English as much as possible without having to meet them in open battle while they are at full strength:

> He gert withdraw all the catell
> Off Lowthiane everilkdeill,
> And till strenthis gert thaim be send
> And ordanyt men thaim to defend,
> And with his ost all still he lay
> At Culros, for he wald assay
> To gert hys fayis throu fasting
> Be feblyst and throu lang walking,
> And fra he feblist had thar mycht
> Assembill than with thaim to fycht.[207]

Barbour remarks on the effects of this strategy on the English and the pressure it put them under, illustrating how useful behaving in this manner could be in undermining the strength of a larger invasion force.[208] Most of Barbour's accounts of the taking of castles involve some form of trickery on the part of the attackers to gain access to the castle and bring their prowess to bear on the garrison.[209] Similarly, before recounting many of the various skirmishes and battles that Bruce and Douglas engage in, Barbour is careful to record the tactical considerations his heroes are faced with beforehand.[210] Qualities such as personal prowess are ultimately what gives the Scots the victory – as might be found in the works of Froissart or Chandos herald – but Barbour stresses the fact that it is through the prosecution of a carefully prepared strategy that the Scots are to bring their individual, personal and 'knightly' strengths to bear on their enemies. Bruce's general approach to strategy displays a strong reliance on prudence to maintain the advantage against his well-resourced foes. This is most explicitly articulated in a heated discussion between Bruce and his nephew Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray.[211] Moray has been captured by Douglas while fighting for the English in Ettrick Forest and when he is brought before Bruce he attempts to shame the king for not having the courage to face the English in open battle.

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[206] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 500-530
[207] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 249-258
[208] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 269-290
[209] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 370-379, Bk. 5, ll. 335-372, Bk. 6, ll. 389-432, Bk. 8, ll. 442-487, Bk. 10, ll. 380-411, 535-588, Bk. 17, ll. 22-38
[210] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 355-380, Bk. 16, ll. 388-411, Bk. 19, ll. 317-352
[211] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 731-830

However, Bruce's answer makes it clear that meeting the English in an open confrontation would only ever be a last resort.[212] In this passage, Barbour includes a character description of Moray that specifically praises his 'gret wyt and his avys', that is his great intelligence and judgement – key elements of a prudent character in Barbour's eyes.[213] Summerfield has used this exchange as an illustration of how Barbour adapted his work to fit the circumstances in which the Scots were fighting in the early fourteenth-century.[214]

Prudence is also used by Barbour to justify and promote the use of local knowledge, frequently gained from non-combatants, when campaigning, a common feature of medieval warfare. On one occasion Chandos herald briefly notes that Prince Edward's forces received assistance in finding a place to cross the River Somme, although he is otherwise largely silent on the use of local knowledge by the Black Prince.[215] Moreover, it is the fortitude of the prince and his men (described as *vaillantz chivalers*) in the ensuing engagement that the Chandos herald praises, not the prince's cleverness in successfully carrying out his plan.[216] Christine de Pizan promotes the use of spies in warfare to her readership, drawing on the writings of Vegetius.[217] Barbour frequently presents the Scots as gathering intelligence whenever they encounter a new problem and particularly before undertaking to capture an important castle or town. Typically this involves either receiving information on the disposition of the enemy from an inhabitant of the area in dispute, or else being informed of a crucial weakness in the defences of the castle or town to be taken that can be exploited by the Scots.[218] It is important to note that at no point do Barbour's protagonists employ an agent to clandestinely interfere with the affairs of the English before an attack. The purpose of missions such as these is not to disrupt English operations by destroying equipment or injuring men, but simply to observe them and to provide information that will give the Scots the upper hand in the subsequent engagement. Occasionally it may involve sending someone to scout out an area and report back on the situation there, as in the case of Cuthbert who is sent to investigate the situation in Carrick before the king returns there in 1307.[219] Such scouting activities were naturally a common feature of warfare in the period and are dealt with in the works of other chivalric writers,

[212] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 753-755
[213] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 271
[214] Summerfield, 'Barbour's *Bruce*: Compilation in Retrospect', p. 114-115
[215] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 256-260
[216] Ibid. ll. 264
[217] Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry*, p. 47
[218] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 535-545; Bk. 17, ll. 22-38
[219] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 550-554

such as Chandos herald. In the *Vie*, King Henry's brother, Don Tello, offers to scout out the enemy position before the Battle of Najera and the king approves this suggestion.[220] There is no condemnation of this action, but no praise is reserved for it either. The implication seems to be that this is simply a reality of medieval warfare, with no explicit link to the chivalric qualities that Chandos herald wishes to promote. Chandos herald reports that this scouting mission became an attack on the prince's army while they are still encamped but no attempt is made to suggest that this was Don Tello's original intention, let alone that employing such a tactic made him in any way more or less noble or worthy a knight.[221] The prince too sends out men to scout for him later in the poem, but in this instance their stated task is to find the enemy so that they can be brought to battle rather than to report tactical information as in *The Bruce*.[222]

Barbour presents a telling example of the use of an agent to actively undermine the enemy, when the 'fals lourdane' Hosbarne starts a fire during the siege of Kildrummy Castle, destroying the castle's victuals and forcing the garrison to surrender. Barbour plainly states that he considers Hosbarne to have been 'a tretour' and categorically states that it was through his treachery that the castle and its garrison was lost, making it clear that Barbour condemns this type of behaviour.[223] Thus Barbour clearly drew a distinction between the use of informants and the use of saboteurs. Barbour distinguishes these actions by the purpose they serve, but does not use specific terms to differentiate between them. Barbour employs terms like 'sley' and 'slycht' to describe both appropriately cunning ploys undertaken by his protagonists and the devious trickery carried out by their enemies.[224] Head has noted the association of the term 'slycht' with subtle tactics in his discussion of *The Bruce* as a manual for guerrilla warfare.[225] As noted above when Bruce is attempting to encourage his men by citing the Classical examples of how other famous men have come through adversity to achieve great things, the king employs the term 'slycht' as a perfectly legitimate recourse of soldiers who find they cannot resist their enemies with strength alone.[226] Douglas, on realising that he cannot match the English in Douglasdale in terms of strength, decides to 'wyrk with slycht' in order to overcome the English garrison there,

[220] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2651-2671
[221] Ibid. ll. 2681-2724
[222] Ibid. ll. 3021-3029
[223] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 105-107
[224] The term 'slycht' appears twenty-one times in *The Bruce*, while the terms 'sley' or 'slely' appear eleven times.
[225] Taggart, 'The Historicity of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 249
[226] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 262

leading directly to the Douglas Larder.[227] When fleeing from John of Lorn and his tracker dog, the king is advised by his foster-brother – his only companion at the time – to employ 'slycht' to find a way to escape safely.[228] Bruce employs 'slycht' at the siege of Perth when he realises how difficult it will be to take the town by open assault:

> Bot the gud king that all wytty
> Wes in his dedis everilkane
> Saw the wallis sa styth off stane
> And saw defens that thai gan ma
> And how the toun wes hard to ta
> With opyn sawt strenth or mycht.
> Tharfor he thocht to wyrk with slycht,
> And in all tyme that he thar lay
> He spyit and slely gert assay
> Quhar at the dyk schaldest was,
> Till at the last he fand a place
> That men mycht till thar schuldris wad.[229]

In this case, Barbour explicitly draws connections between Bruce's 'wytty' leadership and his ability to apply 'slycht' to a situation to improve his chances of success. Similarly, Douglas is said to have taken control of Ettrick Forest through a mixture of 'hardiment and slycht', once again tying 'slycht' to other terms Barbour elsewhere associates with 'worschip'.[230] Sir Philip Mowbray suggests using 'sum slycht' to overcome the defenders of Connor, who are too numerous for the Scots to overcome through strength of arms.[231] Interestingly, in this case Edward Bruce takes Mowbray's advice and achieves a celebrated victory. The Scots who make their way back to Carrickfergus after learning of the death of Edward Bruce are noted as having to occasionally rely on 'slycht' to defend themselves from several Irish attacks.[232] Barbour describes John Crab, the engineer who helps the Scots in the defence of Berwick in 1319, as 'sley' when recounting how Crab constructed a moveable crane to protect the walls of the town during the siege.[233] The application of 'sley' and 'slycht' to Crab reveals another layer of ambiguity to these terms, as Barbour occasionally uses them simply to indicate possession of an uncommon skill or talent. For example, the phrase 'slycht off astrology' is used by to mean the ability to predict

[227] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 268-272
[228] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 14
[229] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 346-357
[230] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 677-681
[231] *The Bruce*, Bk. 15, ll. 15-16
[232] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 198
[233] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 607

the future, and in the same passage 'slycht' is used to describe the skill of the Pythoness to raise the spirit of Samuel to speak with Saul – as described in 1 Samuel 28.[234] Barbour declares that 'gret slycht' would be required to adequately describe the sight of the banners of the English army as they advance towards Stirling Castle in 1314.[235] The term 'sleye' is used to describe the wrights who construct Douglas' manor at Lintalee, in this case it means something like 'skilful'.[236] This usage is similar to that found in *Golagros and Gawane*, in which a physician's ability to treat wounds is referred to as 'sle'.[237] If these terms can be applied to craftsmen like Crab or the builders employed by Douglas, then it is likely that in a military context 'sley' and 'slycht' are best understood as referring to the demonstration of a particular aptitude for strategic or tactical skill.

The terms 'slycht' and 'sley' could also be employed in reference to Bruce's enemies, although this does not always imply a negative meaning. When describing how Edward I so completely dominated the Welsh, Barbour notes that what he could not take from them by force he took from them by 'slycht'.[238] Barbour also associates 'slycht' with 'tresoun' when considering how Troy fell.[239] At the Battle of Methven, Bruce himself observes that the English set out to achieve with 'slycht' what they would not dare to attempt with strength.[240] Macdowall – the only survivor of King Robert's attack on the English force encamped at Turnberry – is said to have 'eschapyt throu gret slycht', having used the darkness of the night to cover his flight.[241] Barbour uses the term 'sley' to describe Sir Ingram Umfraville when he hatches a plot to have a man close to the king attempt to assassinate Bruce while the king is alone in the woods.[242] The English constable of Edinburgh castle applies 'wyt and strenth and slycht' to defend the fortress against the earl of Moray, a fact that contributes to the earl's eventual decision to use 'slycht' to overcome the garrison there.[243] Sir Richard Clare prepares 'ane slycht' for King Robert, exploiting Edward Bruce's rashness in riding too far ahead of the main body of the Scottish army.[244] The ambiguity of these terms is reminiscent of the ambiguity of the term *engin* that Craig

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[234] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 725
[235] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 201-202
[236] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 339
[237] *Gologros and Gawane*, ll. 886
[238] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 111-112
[239] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 528
[240] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 327
[241] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 104-106
[242] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 491, ll. 515; the term 'slycht' is also applied to Umfraville's plan in this same passage, Bk. 5, ll. 488
[243] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 336-340
[244] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 84

Taylor identified in the works of Geoffroi de Charny.[245] Interestingly, the term 'slycht' is employed in the tense verbal exchange between King Robert and the earl of Moray over the king's preferred tactics. On this occasion, Moray uses the term 'slycht' in a derogatory way to describe Bruce's method of making war.[246] Bruce notes the rudeness in Moray's speech but does not challenge the actual language that Moray uses, suggesting that there is no question that 'slycht', while having potentially negative connotations, could be applied equally appropriately to legitimately prudent planning as well as low cunning.[247] This exchange serves as a clear illustration of the ambiguity of the terminology that Barbour uses to describe both proper and improper applications of intelligence to warfare. This is not necessarily overly problematic, since as Taylor has shown this is true in other contemporary literature as well.[248] However, it does illustrate the point that for Barbour it was the intention and the consequences of a given scheme that indicated its relative merits, rather than the language used to describe it.

Ultimately Moray's rebuke of the king is dismissed as being the folly of youth on Moray's part and the first time that Moray comes back into the story following his altercation with his uncle he has already been converted to King Robert's way of thinking. Prudence was (and still is) often associated with age and more importantly experience. [249] Geoffroi de Charny reveals a similar attitude in his question to the Company of the Star in 1352 in which he asked the knights whether they valued intelligence or prowess more, which Craig Taylor has suggested was a trap to make the younger knights of the Company reveal their lack of prudence.[250] Training for knighthood would be undertaken from a young age in late medieval Scotland and although no evidence survives of any formal training programmes for prospective knights it is clear that the transmission of knightly skills from one generation to the next was the responsibility of one's elders.[251] Maurice Keen has observed that providing the prospective knight with some conception of the practicalities of war was just as important as teaching them the social niceties and obligations that accompanied the institution. He notes in particular that knights who had some prior experience of actual fighting – as opposed to simply being practiced in more genteel martial

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[245] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 234
[246] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 752
[247] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 755
[248] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 235
[249] Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, p. 107; H. Cooper, 'Good Advice on Leaving Home in the Romances', in P. J. P. Goldberg and F. Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), pp. 101-122
[250] Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War*, p. 233
[251] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p. 20

pursuits such as jousting – were more valued when it came to finding employment in late medieval armies.[252] The value of experienced knights can also be seen in the hefty sums of money that were often exchanged as ransoms when such men were taken prisoner in wartime as was the case with Bertrand du Guesclin after his capture at the Battle of Najera. Whether Froissart's matter-of-fact account or the more florid report given by Cuvelier are to be preferred, there is no doubting that a considerable sum was paid, at the cost of Charles V himself, for his release after the battle because du Guesclin was simply too integral to the French king's attempts to reverse the English gains after Crécy and Poitiers.[253] While the sum itself might be said to be a reflection of du Guesclin's social status and to an extent his own personal wealth, the fact that the ransom was paid by the king himself – and so promptly – suggest that it was primarily an indication of du Guesclin's importance in the wider context of the on-going hostilities.

In considering Barbour's thoughts on age and prudence, it is worth remembering the potential disparities of age among soldiers in Scottish armies in the late medieval period, with men as young as sixteen being expected to serve alongside men as old as sixty.[254] Gray noted in his account of an assault on Norham Castle that the 'young men' (*oefnez gentz*) of the garrison rashly rush out to face the attacking Scots, ultimately putting the entire garrison in jeopardy.[255] Gray notes the many military successes of the Free Companies but expresses a degree of incredulity that they could be so successful given that they were mostly 'young men' (*ioens gentz*), further suggesting a connection between age and military capacity in Gray's mind.[256] Chandos herald on the other hand does not draw any connection between age and prudence – which is not surprising given his general lack of interest in prudence – and neither does he demonstrate a belief that age is any barrier to the possession of the virtues that he does value highly. When introducing the prince at the beginning of the work, he claims that from the day of his birth the prince thought of nothing but loyalty, nobility, valour and bounty.[257]

In *The Bruce*, a trend emerges whereby the heroes grow into prudent soldiers, although this development is not particularly stressed by Barbour and was clearly not of

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[252] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 227
[253] Vernier, *The Flower of Chivalry*, p. 122
[254] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 183; *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2015), 1430/45. Date accessed: 14th November 2015; *RPS*, 1491/4/17. Date accessed: 14 November 2015
[255] *Scalacronica*, p. 82
[256] Ibid. p. 152
[257] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 63-66

primary importance to him. Barbour passes comment on the shortcomings of youth on several noteworthy occasions in *The Bruce*. Barbour's description of Sir John Webiton as 'baith yong stoute and felloun/Joly alsua and valageous' identifies him as a young and impetuous knight and implies a direct connection between these aspects of his character.[258] It is precisely these characteristics that Douglas exploits to draw Webiton and his men out of the castle and overcome them, leading to Webiton's death. Barbour does not directly criticise Webiton, who after all cannot help his youth and inexperience, but there is no doubt that it because of these factors that he is defeated by the more experienced Douglas. Douglas' time in Paris, which is itself necessitated by the fact that when his father is imprisoned by King Edward he is at a loss as to what the best cause of action is, is described as a period spent in low company and indulging in less than savoury activities that he would eventually grow out of. Barbour explicitly states that Douglas' follies were a symptom of his youthful exuberance, a necessary stage in his development into the more mature, responsible and above all prudent individual to be found later in the poem.[259] Barbour follows this passage with the example of Robert of Artois, which he claims demonstrates how 'fenyeyng off rybbaldy' could prove to be a useful learning experience.[260] The implication seems to be that Douglas' bad behaviour in Paris was not an indication of any deeper immoral side to his character but that by mixing with rougher company Douglas was able to gain valuable experience that could be put to good use later in his career.

Obviously, Moray's disagreement with the king over the overall strategy employed in his attempt to reclaim his kingdom and his eventual reconciliation with King Robert is perhaps the most prominent example of a character in *The Bruce* developing from young and impetuous knight into a seasoned campaigner. Sonja Cameron has previously argued that the character of Moray was intended to occupy a position somewhere between the ever-prudent Robert Bruce and Douglas and the courageous but foolhardy Edward Bruce, and has illustrated how his change of heart following his brief time in English allegiance supports this conclusion.[261] But even Bruce himself is allowed to make some mistakes in the early part of his career and learn from them. Strickland has previously noted the essentially conservative nature of Scottish strategy in the period 1296-1307 – involving raids into northern England, the defence of the strong places of the kingdom, and the

[258] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 454-455
[259] *The Bruce*, Bk.1, ll. 330-335
[260] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 339-342
[261] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 21

periodic offering of pitched battles – and has observed that it was only after the Battle of Loudoun Hill that Bruce took to a sustained guerrilla campaign against the English and began slighting the fortifications that he captured.[262] Barbour presents this change as reflecting the lessons learned by Bruce in his earliest encounters with the English. Bruce's defeat at the Battle of Methven, the first engagement of his career as king, may not have anything to do with his age but certainly seems to be an important learning experience for the king in the early part of the poem. When King Edward sends Sir Aymer de Valence to Scotland to punish Bruce for having himself crowned, Bruce gathers a force of men described as 'douchty of deid' and marches to meet him at Perth. In this instance, it is Bruce who actually demands that the English meet him in open battle and Barbour explicitly states that Bruce was relying solely on the 'mekill mycht' of his companions to bring him victory in the ensuing battle.[263] Furthermore, Barbour also notes the relative sizes of the two armies – a common precursor to his accounts of fighting – and states categorically that the Scottish side was the smaller of the two.[264] Statements such as these strongly resemble those employed by Barbour later in the poem when describing Edward Bruce's disastrous adventures in Ireland, especially those leading up to his death.[265] On the day the battle is to be fought, Sir Aymer, acting on the advice of the notoriously devious Sir Ingram Umfraville, attacks the Scots early in the morning when they are still unprepared and sure enough Bruce suffers what turns out to be the worst defeat of his entire career. Bruce actually recognises his mistake, exclaiming 'Now I persave he that will trew/His fa, it sall him sum-tyme rew.'[266]

The next time Bruce makes a similar pact is before the Battle of Loudoun Hill. This engagement is an almost complete reversal of the Battle of Methven, both in terms of its impact on the rest of Barbour's narrative and in its structure within the poem itself. The fact that Bruce's opponent in this battle is once again Sir Aymer de Valence may well have influenced Barbour's decision to model his account of the Battle of Loudoun Hill after his account of the Battle of Methven. At Loudoun Hill, it is Sir Aymer who issues the challenge for Bruce to face him in open battle and who this time relies solely on the strength of his

[262] M. Strickland, 'A Law of Arms or a Law of Treason? Conduct in War in Edward I's Campaigns in Scotland, 1296-1307', in R. Kaeuper (ed.), *Violence in Medieval Society*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 58
[263] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 250-254
[264] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 247
[265] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 45; Bk. 18, ll. 90-93
[266] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 329-330

men to achieve victory.[267] Bruce on the other hand thoroughly scouts out the place where the fighting will occur and undertakes furious preparations to best exploit the lay of the land to give him every possible advantage in the coming battle, and of course this delivers him a memorable victory. Barbour goes into meticulous detail about the king's preparations, spending forty-six lines providing tactical information while devoting only sixty-one to recounting the events of the battle itself.[268] Furthermore, a considerable proportion of those lines devoted to the events of the battle are given over to recounting how Bruce's tactics help to achieve the Scottish victory. This time it is Sir Aymer who is caught out by King Robert, and the victory at Loudoun Hill demonstrates that Bruce has learned a valuable lesson from his defeat at Methven in the previous year. From this point on, Bruce eschews pitched battle whenever he can and prefers instead to fight on his own terms where possible. He even famously chastises his brother for making a pact with the garrison at Stirling Castle that forces the Scots to face the English at the Battle of Bannockburn, demonstrating an understandable mistrust of such agreements based on his past experience.[269] On one other occasion in *The Bruce* does Barbour present Bruce as running into difficulties as a result of imprudent behaviour, when he is so concerned with dealing with a force led by Valence that he 'unwittily' allows John of Lorn to take him in the rear with a second force.[270] This episode occurs between the Battles of Methven and Loudoun Hill and thus fits in with the impression of King Robert as having received a hasty education in prudence through the misfortunes he suffered in the early part of his reign.

For Barbour, prudence goes beyond the king alone and is evident, albeit often to a lesser degree, in his chief lieutenants. Douglas in particular shows the greatest aptitude for this particular virtue, perhaps surpassing even the king himself. Cameron has previously noted the frequency with which the term 'worschip' is applied to Douglas, as well as noting the military connotation of this term and recognising its connection to prudence.[271] Barbour puts a speech into the mouth of Douglas, when he encourages the king to join him in a surprise attack on a village where the English are encamped, in which he further illuminates the basic purpose of prudence in a military context as Barbour understood the concept:

'Perfay,' quod James of Douglas,

[267] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 131-140
[268] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 161-206; Bk. 8, 294-354
[269] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, 37-52
[270] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 519-527
[271] Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 250

‘As I come hyddyrwart per cas
I come sa ner thar herbery
That I can bring you quhar thai ly,
And wald ye speid you yeit or day
It may sua happin that we may
Do thaim a gretar scaith weile sone
Than thai us all day has done,
For thai ly scalyt as thaim lest.’[272]

Here, Barbour presents Douglas as showing the same concern as Bruce that at the very least the cost of a given undertaken should be greater for the enemy than for one’s own forces. This episode is presented immediately after a series of narrow escapes for King Robert and is the first action undertaken when Bruce and Douglas have been reunited following these events, so the surprise attack on the English would seem to be intended as a direct attempt to redress the recent setbacks suffered by the Scots. When the king goes to Ireland to assist his brother, accompanied by most of the poem’s other main protagonists, Bruce leaves the keeping of Scotland in the hands of Douglas and Sir Walter Stewart.[273] Douglas diligently applies his propensity for prudence to the task of defending the kingdom in Bruce’s absence, overwhelming two forces – one led by a rival of Douglas’ named Sir Thomas Richmond and the other led by a clerk named Elias – in short order despite being outnumbered, through the use of ambush and raid.[274] Barbour also celebrates Douglas’ efforts in using his wits to harass the English during the invasion of 1322 despite being heavily outnumbered.[275] During their joint campaign into Weardale, Douglas counters Moray’s ‘gret foly’ for wanting to face the larger English force in open battle by recounting a fable in which a fox deceives a fisherman to escape the fisherman’s hut with his freshly caught salmon.[276] This example convinces Moray to slip away without giving battle after all.

Even seemingly heinous acts like the Douglas Larder begin to make sense when considered in light of Barbour’s understanding of prudence. Douglas persuades Bruce to release him to return to his own lands by convincing the king that it is out of necessity that he must see what the English are doing there, not simply because he wishes to return for

[272] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 313-321
[273] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 30-34
[274] For the ambush on Richmond’s force, cf. *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 388-422; for the raid on Elias the clerk’s camp, cf. *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 444-462
[275] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 294-332
[276] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 639-687

his own sake.[277] Convinced by Douglas' impassioned plea, which will be revisited in a later chapter, Bruce then explicitly charges Douglas not to put himself at undue risk and to return to him if he cannot relieve his lands without sacrificing his life. When he finds the castle that by rights should be his garrisoned by the English, Douglas therefore prudently seized upon the opportunity that is presented to him by the fact that it is a Holy Day to recover his rightful property without putting himself or his followers at undue risk. Thus Douglas attacks the English garrison while they are hearing mass on Palm Sunday with a clear conscience, knowing that in doing so he is fulfilling an obligation that his position as a knight in the service of King Robert places upon him. Douglas shows his aptitude for prudence further when pursuing the remnants of the English army following the Scottish victory at Bannockburn. Bruce's own sense of prudence leads him to withhold the greater part of the Scottish army from pursuing the English and so Douglas chases the survivors with too few men to take them all captive in a single attempt. Nevertheless, Douglas and his men keep pace with the English and constantly harry them, picking off any stragglers all the way to Dunbar.[278]

Douglas' death in battle at the hands of the Moors might seem, at first, a failure to display prudence, but Bruce's statement in an earlier exhortation to his men, that they should be willing to die 'chevalrusly' if the only alternative is to die a coward's death, becomes significant when the circumstances of Douglas' death are examined.[279] Douglas does try to do the prudent thing in not pursuing the retreating 'Saracens'.[280] But in this instance, Douglas is faced not with the choice of either withdrawing to save his men or fighting on against impossible odds, but rather with the prospect of leaving behind a fellow knight to die at the hands of his heathen enemies or to attempt a rescue.[281] To die in the pursuit of valour therefore does not necessarily represent a failure to act prudently, but simply that in certain desperate situations no amount of prudence is enough to rescue an endeavour from ending badly. Furthermore, the actions that lead Douglas to his death do not jeopardise his overall goal, which is after all to carry Bruce's heart into battle against the Saracens.

In an earlier episode, John Stewart advises Edward Bruce to adopt a cautious approach before the disastrous Battle of Dundalk in 1318, suggesting that they wait for

[277] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll.242-244
[278] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll.579-588
[279] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll.263-266
[280] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 446-447
[281] *The Bruce*, Bk.20, ll.456-466

reinforcements to arrive before engaging their enemies.[282] Although this suggestion is rebuffed, it is interesting to note that in a passage so concerned with prudence, and in particular with the contrast between proper prudence and outright rashness, that Barbour chooses to put this prudent advice in the mouth of Robert II's uncle, suggesting that this was an attitude that the writer wished to reinforce. Whether *The Bruce* was produced under the auspices of the king or not, there is no doubt that various members of the royal family would have encountered the work and would presumably have found the association appealing. In the *Scalacronica*, Sir Thomas Gray offers essentially the same reason for Edward Bruce's death – i.e. his refusal to wait for reinforcements from his brother – and attributes this to his 'arrogance' (*surquidery*, the same word Gray uses to explain the French defeat at the Battle of Courtrai).[283] Barbour is far more critical of Edward Bruce than Gray, and is at far greater pains to emphasise the fact that it was his rejection of more prudent courses of action that led him to his death. Even the native Irish kings who accompany Edward Bruce to Dundalk urge caution and suggest using raids to exhaust the enemy without committing to an open battle but Sir Edward rejects this option as well, even though his refusal to accommodate them causes the Irishmen to excuse themselves from the battle and further diminishes the size of his forces.[284] In Barbour's *Bruce* then, prudence is a virtue that is generally appreciated among all those who are actively involved in the prosecution of warfare, albeit more valued and applied more vigorously by the main protagonists such as Bruce and Douglas than by others.

Furthermore, Barbour presents prudence as a means to achieving other typically chivalric virtues. As noted above, a prudent battle plan is the means by which the Scots bring their prowess to bear on their English foes, and to make the most effective use of it when they do. When Douglas and his men manage to capture Roxburgh Castle by approaching the wall on their hands and knees and fooling the guards into thinking they are merely stray cattle in order to get close enough to the wall to deploy their rope ladders and mount the battlements, Moray is inspired to find a similarly devious way to capture Edinburgh Castle:

> Bot fra he hard how Roxburgh was
> Tane with a trayne, all his purchas
> And wyt and besines Ik hycht

[282] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 31-36
[283] *Scalacronica*, p. 76
[284] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 63-75

He set for to purches sum slycht
How he mycht halp him throu body
Mellyt with hey chevalry
To wyn the wall off the castell
Throu sumkyn slycht, for he wyst weill
That na strenth mycht it playnly get 523
Quhill thai within had men and met. [285]

It is almost as if Moray enters into direct competition with Douglas, to demonstrate his own worthiness in comparison to his fellow knight. This is undoubtedly an indicator that Barbour intended to integrate the notion of prudence into the wider theoretical framework of chivalry. Competition is common to many works of chivalric literature and was certainly a popular driving force of real-life knightly activities in the medieval period. This is evidenced by the popularity of tournaments and other forms of chivalric entertainment throughout the period, which as well as providing opportunities for practicing skills that would be useful on the battlefield were also events at which knights could compare their skills against those of their peers.[286] Competition was a common feature of other contemporary works of literature as well. For instance, Thomas Gray notes the peaceable feats of arms that took place at Kenilworth in 1279.[287] Gray also records with approval the formal jousts (*grauntz ioustes de guere*) that took place while the earl of Moray and Sir James Douglas laid siege to Norham Castle in 1327.[288] If, as Huizinga claimed, the life of a knight was supposed to be one of imitation of great figures from history both ancient and recent, and given that works of chivalric literature were often written with the intention of inspiring the audience to adopt the virtues therein, then the fact that Moray is inspired to demonstrate his own prudence after hearing of Douglas' feat is striking.[289]

An aptitude for prudence also presents Barbour's knights with opportunities to extend their renown, another common aspect of chivalric endeavour. As noted above, the term 'worschip' implies that this virtue is connected to the basic 'worthiness' of the knight

[285] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll.517-527
[286] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 206; for the early spread and popularity of tournaments, see D. Crouch, *Tournament*, (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005), p. 9-11, 21-27, 29-33, and J. Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 247-251; for discussion of near contemporary tournaments in English context, see R. Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, (London: Penguin, 2013), p. 67-96, p. 520-524; for discussion of the popularity and functions of tournaments in Scotland in a fifteenth-century context, see Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p. 63-102; also Edington, 'The Tournament in Medieval Scotland', p. 46-62
[287] *Scalacronica*, p. 10
[288] Ibid. p. 100
[289] J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. R. J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 60

who displays this quality. When King Robert scores a noteworthy victory over Richard de Clare, the lieutenant of Ireland, his brother Edward is furious to have missed the opportunity to display his prowess and thereby enhance his reputation. However, the king informs his brother that it was Sir Edward's own rashness that cost him this opportunity, as he recklessly rode ahead and left the king's division behind.[290] Thus Edward Bruce's lack of prudence denies himself the chance to increase his reputation as a worthy knight and in presenting Sir Edward's folly in these terms Barbour connects the virtue of prudence to the chivalric quality of renown. Barbour is explicit in identifying Edward Bruce's lack of 'wyt' and 'mesur' – echoing his earlier observations on what constitutes 'worschip' – in undermining Sir Edward's posthumous reputation:

> On this wis war thai noble men
> For wilfulnes all lesyt then,
> And that wes syne and gret pite
> For had thar outrageous bounte
> Bene led with wyt and with mesur,
> Bot gif the mar mysaventur
> Be fallyn thaim, it suld rycht hard thing
> Be to lede thaim till outraying,
> Bot gret outrageous surquedry
> Gert thaim all deir thar worschip by.[291]

Douglas also gains a great deal of renown as a result of his proclivity for the use of carefully prepared ploys to overcome the English. When the Scots and the English are skirmishing in Weardale in 1327, Douglas lays a trap for the English and then rides towards them wearing a gown over his armour to disguise his true identity. However, a squire recognises Douglas' face and shouts a warning to his comrades, but he does not warn them of Douglas' great prowess or courage but that 'Off his playis ken sum you till'.[292] It is thus Douglas' cunning and his tactical abilities which the English fear most, at least in this instance. Later in the poem, when Douglas visits the court of Alfonso XI of Castille and is well-received by all of the knights and nobleman present, Barbour takes the opportunity to once again emphasise the value of prudence. When a horribly-scarred but highly-esteemed English knight first meets Douglas he is surprised to find that the Scottish knight has never been wounded on his face. Barbour has Douglas answer the Englishman by somewhat

[290] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 246-258
[291] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 175-184
[292] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll.343-366

cryptically stating that he [Douglas] always had hands to protect his head, and then claims that whoever would keep to that answer would know its meaning.[293] It seems to be the case that Barbour is once again alluding to Douglas' use of prudent planning to avoid serious harm, emphasising the benefits of prudence while at the same time demonstrating that prudence could enhance the reputation of a knight.

In *The Bruce*, even enemies are capable of displaying prudence in the way that Barbour envisioned the concept. Beam has argued that by having Umfraville explain the reasoning behind the strategies he suggests to the likes of Aymer de Valence and Edward II Barbour is attempting to liken Umfraville to Bruce and Douglas in terms of virtue.[294] Beam goes on to suggest that by having Umfraville repeatedly put forward prudent strategies to overcome the Scots Barbour was subtly implying that only Scots could defeat Scots, an idea she links to Bower's explanation of the defeat at the Battle of Falkirk was a result of in-fighting among the Scottish leadership.[295] At the end of the Battle of Bannockburn, Barbour claims to have heard reports that Edward II was overcome with rage at his defeat and wished to carry on fighting to the death. It is Aymer de Valence, who as has been mentioned before is the subject of praise from Barbour on several occasions, who leads the king away from the fighting against his will, saving his life and ensuring that the king's cause is not lost along with the battle.[296] It is interesting to note that Barbour choses to contrast Edward's rashness – a grave flaw in Barbour's eyes – with Aymer's readiness to see that the battle is lost and his prudence in making good the king's escape. Similarly, when King Edward tries to take refuge at Stirling Castle following the battle, it is Sir Phillip Mowbray, commander of the English garrison and a Scot who spends most of the poem fighting on the side of the English, who advises the king against coming inside the castle for fear that he will be captured. Mowbray even goes so far as to exhort Edward to take courage and make for a safer place to rest.[297] Of course, these instances are almost certainly included more for the purposes of showing the foolhardiness and cowardice of the English king than they are to show the qualities of his men, but nevertheless they serve to illustrate that Barbour does not consider prudence to be a uniquely Scottish virtue but rather something shared by all worthy knights.

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[293] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll.374-391
[294] Beam, ''At the apex of chivalry'', p. 67
[295] Ibid. p. 68; *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 6, p.95; Hary's account of the Battle of Falkirk shows evidence of Bower's influence and also attributes the result of the battle to Scottish in-fighting
[296] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll.294-298
[297] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll.371

Barbour frequently explores the negative alternatives to the concept of prudence as well. Cowardice is most frequently associated with the English, which should not be particularly surprising given Barbour's subject matter. The refusal of Lord Percy to come out and face Bruce at Turnberry for instance serves as a fairly straightforward example of cowardice.[298] Barbour devotes far more of his poem to considering the opposite end of the spectrum – foolhardiness. The significance of this attribute was noted by other near contemporary writers as well. Thomas Gray observes that it was through 'pride and arrogance' (*orgoil et lour suquydery*) that the French suffered the costly defeat at the Battle of Courtrai in in 1302.[299] It is in Barbour's depiction of the king's brother Edward that we see the most elaborate exploration of the notion of foolhardiness in *The Bruce*. Barbour does not by any means single out Edward Bruce exclusively for criticism, and in fact often heaps lavish praise on him for the many feats of arms he performs. However, he also constantly reminds the audience of Sir Edward's proclivity for rash action and frequently compares him to the superior King Robert, occasionally lapsing into downright criticism. Rashness is part of what Miller calls 'the politics of courage', in other words it is used to critique certain types of behaviour and chastise those who perform actions associated with it.[300] If this is to be believed, then the critical edge to Barbour's presentation of Edward Bruce begins to clarify.

Edward often fails to govern his 'hardyment' with 'wyt', and therefore his actions stray perilously close to foolhardiness at times. It is his brother's boldness in the face of England's vast resources that most impresses King Robert when Edward makes the pact with the garrison of Stirling Castle that leads directly to the Battle of Bannockburn.[301] King Robert criticises Sir Edward, not for the compact per se but rather for not being shrewd enough to ensure that the terms of the agreement favoured the Scots rather than the English.[302] Barbour's criticism of Edward Bruce, particularly in relation to Edward's demise in Ireland, has been the subject of much comment by scholars, most notably McKim, who sees all of the main characters in *The Bruce* as providing an opportunity for Barbour to show the king's knightly virtues by way of a contrast with others who display

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[298] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll.107-116
[299] *Scalacronica*, p. 48; for a thorough analysis of Flemish and French sources relating to the Battle of Courtrai, cf. J. F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302): A Contribution to the History of Flanders' War of Liberation, 1297-1305*, K. DeVries (ed.) & D. R. Ferguson (trans.), (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), pp. 40-124
[300] Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, p. 159
[301] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll.53-59
[302] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll.37-53

the same qualities, but each to an inferior degree.[303] It is certainly true that on occasion Barbour uses Sir Edward to display chivalric virtues, but less impressively than his older brother. Yet what in particular makes the king a greater knight than his brother in Barbour's eyes is that:

> [King Robert] with wyt his chivalry
> He governyt sa worthily
> That he oft full unlikly thing
> Broucht rycht weill to [a] gud ending.[304]

This quote comes from a direct comparison made by Barbour between the king and his brother. Barbour's phrasing is faintly echoed by Andrew of Wyntoun in a coda appended to an account of William Douglas of Liddesdale's many skirmishes against the English in defence of southern Scotland, in which he observes:

> For constans, withe a stedfast thoucht
> To thoil ay noyis, qwha moucht,
> May oftsyis of vnlykly thynge
> Men richt weil to thar purposse brynge.[305]

This statement reflects Barbour's thoughts on prudence in the sense that it encourages the reader to focus one's mind on the attainment of success, but the virtue that Wyntoun associates with this is constancy rather than prudence. Wyntoun advocates persistence as a means for achieving success, whereas Barbour promotes the application of one's intelligence to overcome the specific difficulties in accomplishing a given goal. Furthermore, Wyntoun does not repeat this assertion while Barbour explores the various aspects of prudence, as he understood it, throughout *The Bruce*.

Barbour also occasionally demonstrates an appreciation for the importance of discipline in the achievement of military goals. The need for discipline in armies was unsurprisingly recognised by other medieval writers. Gray for instance attributes the English defeat at the Battle of Myton to the fact that the English force consisted mainly of untrained troops (*gentz mesconisautz de guere*) whereas the Scots fielded a force of professional soldiers, echoing Barbour's account of that engagement somewhat.[306] The

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[303] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', p. 75
[304] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll.673-677
[305] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 5429-5432
[306] *Scalacronica*, p. 86

writer also blames his own capture on the fact that the commoners in his force fled in the face of the enemy.[307] Bonet is also wary of indiscipline and advocates harsh punishment for anyone who breaks ranks without the consent of his commander.[308] Barbour's thoughts on the need for discipline become apparent whenever indiscipline threatens to upset Bruce's plans to regain his inheritance. When Sir Colin Campbell breaks ranks in the pursuit of personal glory during a skirmish in Ireland King Robert is so furious with him that he strikes the knight so hard over the head with a truncheon that it renders Sir Colin unconscious.[309] When explaining his action to the lords who are accompanying him at the time, Bruce explicitly states that disobedience of orders can lead to defeat:

> And [Bruce] said, 'Breking of bidding
> Mycht caus all our discumfiting.
> Weyne ye yone ribaldis durst assaill
> Us sa ner intill our bataill
> Bot giff thai had suppowaill ner.
> I wate rycht weill withoutyn wer
> That we sall haf to do in hy,
> Tharfor luk ilk man be redy.'[310]

The apparent humour of the incident no doubt served to make the episode all the more memorable to Barbour's audience. Shortly afterwards, Barbour has King Robert admonish his brother for riding too far ahead of the rest of the army, leaving the king's division to be ambushed.[311] Furthermore, Barbour presents the failure of the Scots to capture the castle at Berwick on the same day as they captured the town as being a result of a lack of discipline among the common soldiery.[312] In particular, Barbour attributes this lack of discipline to a desire to take booty on the part of those who disobeyed orders and broke ranks. Barbour does not concern himself greatly with the issue of when it was appropriate to seize booty or not, but he does show concern about seeking it too soon in Bruce's address to his men before battle on the second day of Bannockburn.[313] Bruce does not forbid his men from taking booty at all but he does appeal to them to wait until the

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[307] Ibid. p. 141
[308] H. Bonet, *The Tree of Battles*, p. 122-123
[309] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 127-131
[310] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 135-142
[311] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 255-258
[312] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 101-107
[313] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 305-313

battle is over, promising that if they follow his advice they will have a far better chance of achieving victory.

So then, prudence can be said to be one of the central themes of Barbour's *Bruce*. *The Wallace* on the other hand, while not entirely devoid of an appreciation of prudence, shows far less concern for this attribute. Hary employs the term 'slycht' in similar ways to Barbour, generally implying misdirection of some kind.[314] For example, he recounts the use of 'a slycht' to delay a force of fifty Englishmen while Wallace escapes into a wood.[315] Hary presents the possible negative implication of 'slycht' when associated with the enemy, as can be seen in his description of Clifford as 'full sle and ek had mony cast'.[316] When Wallace secretly leaves the home of the woman who nurses him back to health after he runs afoul of the English authorities in Dundee, he does so 'with slycht'.[317] The woman who nurses Wallace back to health after his illness in Ayr is said to have 'wepyt undyr slycht' in order to convince the English authorities that Wallace was dead.[318] Hary also employs the term 'sle' when referring to Wallace's relative lack of experience in the early part of the poem when explaining why he is unarmed during his first confrontation with the English:

> His swerd he left, so did he never agayne;
> It did him gud suppose he sufferyt payne.
> Of that labour as than he was nocht sle;[319]

McDiarmid has argued that Hary had practical experience of warfare and that he used this to add authenticity to his narrative.[320] At one point, Hary has Wallace observe that 'All fors in wer do nocht but governance', a sentiment that reflects Barbour's repeated statements on the ability of tactical organisation to overcome superior numbers.[321] Later in the poem, before the Battle of Biggar, Graham chastises Wallace for putting himself in danger by personally scouting the English positions, although Wallace's respond is rather dismissive:

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[314] For Hary's use of the term 'worschip', cf. above p. 68-69
[315] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 186-189
[316] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 740
[317] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 255-256
[318] *The Wallace*, Bk. 2, ll. 284; this is faintly reminiscent of Barbour's comment on weeping in *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 518-520
[319] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 373-375; this sentiment also suggests Hary's recognition of the association of age and experience, an attitude shared by Barbour as discussed above.
[320] *The Wallace*, p. xliv-xlvi
[321] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 437

> Schyr Jhon the Grayme displessit was sumdeill
> And said till him, 'Nocht chyftaynlik it was
> Throu wilfulness in sic perell to pas.'
> Wallace answered, 'Or we wyn Scotland fre
> Baith ye and I in mar perell mon be,
> And mony other the quhilk full worthi is.'[322]

McDiarmid has claimed that Hary's references to the 'maxims of warfare' are more explicit than Barbour's but all of the examples he cites have direct parallels in terms of content in *The Bruce*.[323] For example, the destruction of Kinclaven Castle in *The Wallace* shares obvious similarities with the slighting of Douglas Castle in *The Bruce*.[324] Hary's thoughts on the need for provisions to conduct a campaign are reminiscent of Barbour's account of the hunger experienced by Bruce and his followers immediately after the Battle of Methven.[325] Even Hary's references to the mundane details of camp life have parallels in Barbour's accounts of camp life before the Battle of Methven.[326]

Hary offers no observations on prudence that cannot be found in *The Bruce*, and he does not emphasise prudence to the same extent as Barbour. Hary notes that the Scots were outnumbered six to one at the Battle of Stirling Bridge but gives no impression of that tactics employed by the smaller force to overcome the larger one, or even that the Scots made any effort to adapt their tactics to deal with the situation.[327] Similarly, when Wallace captures Perth for the second time, the first twenty Scots into the town have killed sixty Englishmen before the main body of the Scottish force has even reached the gate.[328] After driving Bishop Bek and Robert Bruce out of Scotland, Hary claims that Wallace led an army into England with the specific intention of provoking a pitched battle with the English, and Hary condemns the English strategy of depriving the Scots of provisions to force them to withdraw as 'falsheid and…subtilite'.[329] These examples illustrate a fundamental contrast between Barbour and Hary on the subject of prudence. Hary differs from Barbour

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[322] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 488-493
[323] *The Wallace*, p. xlii
[324] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 505-511; *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 411-413, Bk. 10, ll. 499-502
[325] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 331-332; *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 571-584; it is worth noting that Hary's comments on the need for provision – as well as his comment on the importance of 'governance' in war – appear in a passage detailing Wallace's adventures in Methven Forest, a passage likely inspired by Barbour
[326] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 619, Bk. 8, ll. 1179-1181; *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 305-310
[327] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 1165
[328] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 41-42; William Hamilton of Gilbertfield changes this ratio to twenty-one to forty, possibly out of a desire to offer more believable odds, W. Hamilton of Gilbertfield, *Blind Harry's Wallace*, (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 1998), p. 151
[329] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 709-717

not only in that he does not associate prudence with chivalry but that he shows no apparent interest in prudent action in the prosecution of warfare at all.

One explanation for this may be found in the likely audiences for the two works. Specifically, in the social standing of the readers at whom each work was aimed. Whether a Stewart patron or a Douglas patron is accepted as being responsible for the composition of *The Bruce*, it is more than likely that Barbour's poem was intended for an audience that included the royal court and the aristocracy. It is true that his work may have appealed to the lower levels of the nobility as well, and it certainly became a popular work in the centuries after its completion, but the poem itself is not addressed to these groups. *The Wallace* on the other hand seems to have been directed to the lesser nobility, with no apparent attempt to appeal to the groups that Barbour had in mind. In Barbour's case, his audience might therefore be expected to take a greater interest in the subject of prudence and the practicalities of warfare, since in the event of renewed fighting between Scotland and England they would be called upon to act as the kingdom's war leaders. On the other hand, although the main character of *The Wallace* – Wallace himself – was a military commander the audience Hary expected his poem to be read by were not themselves likely to find themselves in a position where they needed to demonstrate a particular appreciation of strategy or tactics. Sir William Wallace of Craigie's father was given some credit for the Scottish victory at the Battle of Sark in 1449, but even this is a relatively minor military accomplishment by comparison to the martial responsibilities of John Stewart, earl of Carrick, or even Archibald Douglas, lord of Galloway.[330] Put simply, Barbour was writing for Scotland's most prominent war leaders whereas Hary was writing for men with less exalted military expectations, albeit using one of Scotland's most famous war leaders as a mouthpiece.

[330] *The Wallace*, p. lii; *The Auchinleck Chronicle*, (T. Thomson ed.), (Edinburgh: Printed for private circulation, 1819), p. 40; furthermore, the account in the *Auchinleck Chronicle* makes it clear that Hugh Douglas, earl of Ormonde, was in overall command of the Scottish army during the battle

Loyalty, Treason and Oath-making: Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*

The maintenance of public morality was a central aspect of aristocratic life throughout the medieval period.[1] Literature provided a means of discussing issues of public morality and particularly for citing examples of the obligations it imposed on the audience. In the literature at least, actions are repaid in kind so that 'proper' behaviour meets with generous rewards and success whereas 'improper' actions lead to harsh punishment, defeat and, often, death. Literary presentations of social obligations are a useful resource for historians to analyse this issue as the mostly fictive nature of these sources allows the writers to present an idealised form of such interactions. This points to the existence of similar tension in the historical reality, in which much of the conflict in late medieval Scotland could be explained as deriving from the breakdown of reciprocal relationships between members of the aristocracy, including the king himself. Obligations such as loyalty and treason were universal, whereas oath-making referred to a specific arrangement – usually between nobles. Perhaps more than any other transgression, the breaking of a publicly sworn oath was regarded as an almost unforgiveable act. If a person could be made out to be an oath-breaker then there could be no punishment too great to fit that crime.[2] Discussions of social obligation in literature thus become a way for writers to address existing tensions and offer ways of either resolving on-going conflicts, preventing future eruptions of violence and to demonstrate that infidelity could threaten the fellowship between knights on which successful interaction between aristocrats in the medieval period relied.

Loyalty as a virtue is a subject that Barbour in particular is keenly interested in. Barbour famously presents loyalty as the greatest virtue of all in when describing Douglas to his audience for the first time:

> With a vertu and leawté
> A man may yeit sufficyand be,

[1] F. Oakley, *The Watershed of Modern Politics: Law, Virtue, Kingship, and Consent (1300–1650)*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 2-3, 91

[2] E. Powell, 'The Strange Death of Sir John Mortimer: Politics and the Law of Treason in Lancastrian England', in R. E. Archer and S. Walker (eds.), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays presented to Gerald Harris*, (London and Rio Grande: Hambleton Press, 1995), pp. 83-97; J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 23-58; Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 150

> And but leawté may nane haiff price
> Quether he be wycht or he be wys,
> For quhar it failyeys na vertu
> May be off price na off valu
> To mak a man sa gud that he
> May symply callyt gud man be.[3]

Similarly, in his euology for Douglas after his death Barbour notes Douglas' extreme love of loyalty and is keen to emphasise what an enemy of treason he had been while he was alive:

> Our all thing luffit he lawté,
> At tresoun growyt he sa gretly
> That na traytour mycht be him by
> That he mycht wyt that he ne suld be
> Weill punyst off his cruelte.[4]

As Barbour notes, no-one more easily deceives than one whose loyalty is already trusted.[5] The issue goes deeper than national ties. Barbour is willing to praise Aymer de Valence for his loyalty even when he has been sent to Scotland to 'byrn and slay and rais dragoun', that is give no quarter in his pursuit of Bruce.[6] It may be worth noting that Aymer was distantly related to Bruce through his mother, but there is nothing to suggest that this influenced Barbour's portrayal of Aymer – or that Barbour was even aware of this fact.

The ideal relationship between a lord and his vassals needed to be a reciprocal one.[7] A vassal was expected to show loyalty and in return expected to be rewarded for his service by his lord.[8] Elements of this can be seen in Charny's encouragement to his readers to be generous in rewarding their supporters.[9] Barbour's description of Bruce and Douglas' relationship when they first meet typifies the ideal reciprocal relationship between lord and vassal, noting that Douglas 'servyt ay lelely' and that in return the king 'Rewardyt him weile' for his service.[10] The anonymous 'hostess' who gives her sons over to Bruce on

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[3] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 367-374
[4] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 526-530
[5] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 531-532
[6] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 200-206
[7] S. Reynolds, 'Trust in Medieval Society and Politics', in S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Middle Ages without Feudalism: Essays in Criticism and Comparison on the Medieval West*, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), p. 3
[8] S. Reynolds, 'Some Afterthoughts on Fiefs and Vassals', in S. Reynolds (ed.), *The Middle Ages without Feudalism: Essays in Criticism and Comparison on the Medieval West*, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), p. 7-8; Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 157
[9] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 128
[10] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 170-74

Arran does so on the understanding that Bruce will respect his obligations as a lord and be generous in his rewards to his followers once he achieves power.[11] Of course, this comes at the cost of having to put themselves through danger and hardship on their lord's behalf. The motif of a mother giving her sons to Bruce on the basis that he is known to be a fair lord is repeated when, after escaping John of Lorn's tracker dog, Bruce takes shelter with a woman who, seeing that the king is without followers at this point, gives her two sons in service to him.[12] In an episode that is no doubt inspired by examples from *The Bruce*, a widow gives two of her sons to Wallace in similar circumstances in Hary's poem, but in this case she does so on the understanding that in serving Wallace her sons will have ample opportunity to 'wyn wesselage', meaning honour.[13] Later, a widow with nine sons makes all of them swear an oath to serve Wallace.[14] Hary gives no indication in the second instance of precisely what the motivation of the widow and her nine sons is but it seems safe to assume that it is similar to those expressed earlier in the poem. Thus while both Barbour and Hary employ the motif of women giving their sons in service to their respective protagonists, a subtle difference can be seen in the manner in which they employ it. In *The Bruce*, the giving of their sons into Bruce's service is a show of loyalty on the part of the women who give them, but Barbour also uses these episodes to reinforce the image of Bruce as fulfilling the requirements of idealised reciprocal lordship. In *The Wallace* on the other hand, the emphasis is placed on the demonstration of loyalty on the part of the woman and their sons and the reasons given for the oaths taken reflects on Wallace's reputation for having an active military career rather than his reputation for loyalty to his men.

Many scholars have recognised that chivalry was tightly bound up with the idea of social obligation in general, and loyalty in particular. In England, the High Court of Chivalry, which is often presented as dealing almost exclusively with military matters and particularly heraldry, is known to have handled cases involving treasonous soldiers and other breaches of pact. In fact, in 1389 the High Court of Chivalry heard so many cases of this nature that parliament itself complained that the court was hearing cases regarding 'contracts, covenants, trespasses, debts, detinues' and other cases that were supposed to be within the purview of common law. Even when trying to redress this issue, parliament left the court with the power to arbitrate in cases of 'contracts touching on deeds of arms and

[11] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 665-7
[12] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 264-268
[13] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 429-432
[14] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 697-698

of war'.[15] All of this serves to demonstrate the contemporary perception that the issue of loyalty was closely connected to the subject of chivalry. The fluid nature of chivalry as a concept made it ideal for this purpose. As Chance has pointed out, as a metaphor for social obligation chivalry was an elastic term that could be stretched to accommodate social and historical changes.[16] This meant that it could be employed as a tool by various writers for the advocacy of certain ideas on the subject of loyalty, as a critique of such ideas or of common practices in a given society at a given time, and also used to reinforce moral lessons regarding the consequences of not fulfilling one's obligations. For instance, Chance has identified a 'democratising' or 'humanising' of chivalry by Continental figures like Honoré de Bonet and Christine de Pizan, whereby these writers attempted to dissociate chivalry from class, wealth and so forth and reconstruct it as an educational programme for the greater good of social harmony and order.[17] Discussing Bouvet's *Tree of Battles*, Gies notes that it is a work that makes an appeal to an 'ancient custom' of chivalry as a means of encouraging desirable moral actions and adds to them the demands of contemporary warfare.[18] There are perhaps echoes of that in both Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*, where we see members of the lower orders participating in the adventures alongside noblemen.[19] Pardon and Wasserman have suggested that the extension of homage to the non-noble classes in Barbour's *Bruce* was a means by which Barbour sought to unite his readership behind the greater cause of Scottish independence.[20] Of particular note for this study is their ability to make oaths like any knight would do, as in the case of Thom Dickson and the men who flock to him when Sir James Douglas returns to his lands and begins to gather a following:

> Sa wrocht he throu sutelte
> That all the lele men off that land
> That with his fadyr war dwelland
> This gud man gert cum ane and ane
> And mak him manrent everilkane,
> And he [Dickson] himselff fyrst homage maid.[21]

[15] H. Janin, *Medieval Justice: Cases and Laws in France, England and Germany, 500-1500*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2009), p. 195
[16] J. Chance, 'Chivalry and the Other', in L. O. Pardon and C. L. Vitto (eds.), *The Rusted Hauberk: Feudal Ideals of Order and Their Decline*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 309
[17] Ibid. p. 316
[18] F. Gies, *The Knight in History*, (London: Hale, 1986), p. 205
[19] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 292-297
[20] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 86
[21] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 292-297

This also implies that such men can be held to their word for honour's sake, just like a knight. There are possible parallels to *La Chanson de Bertrand Du Guesclin*, in which the hero is not of noble birth but is nonetheless clearly capable of participating in all of the activities associated with knighthood, a fact that Given-Wilson attributes to the increasing role of the non-noble classes in warfare at the time of writing.[22]

The seriousness of social obligations such as loyalty made it desirable to make the villains of a given work appear to be traitorous. For instance, in the *Vie*, King Philip suspects *traisoun* when his forces are scattered by Prince Edward in a skirmish on the banks of the Somme.[23] As Jost puts it, 'after murder, infidelity may rank as the greatest human transgression [as it] forever sows seeds of suspicion and distrust'.[24] Thus if a man could not be trusted to live up to his word medieval society had no use for him and so the harshest punishments were reserved for traitors.[25] For example, Strickland has argued convincingly that Edward's often brutal treatment of Scottish prisoners during the period 1296-1307 should be seen as reflective of his perception of them as traitors and not merely adherents to a rival sovereign.[26] This is supported by Ruddick's observation that standard English governmental rhetoric for referring to Scots after 1296 termed them 'rebels'.[27] Strickland has gone on to speculate that Sir John Haliburton's decision not to capture Bruce – as recorded in Gray's account of the Battle of Methven – was motivated by the fact that Haliburton could not condone the harshness with which he knew Bruce would be treated in the event of his capture.[28] By the fifteenth-century, actions being condemned by the Scottish parliament as treasonous included the provision of hospitality to Englishmen or anyone suspected of treason, communication with the English or anyone suspected of

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[22] Given-Wilson, 'Chivalric Biography and Medieval Life-Writing', p. 108
[23] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 280
[24] J. E. Jost, 'Chaucer's Vows and How They Break: Transgression in The Manciple's Tale', in A. Classen (ed.), *Discourses on Love, Marriage, and Transgression in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004), p. 267
[25] Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England*, p. 116-123
[26] Strickland, 'A Law of Arms or a Law of Treason?', p. 40
[27] A. Ruddick, 'National and Political Identity in Anglo-Scottish Relations, c.1286-1377: A Governmental Perspective', in A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 199
[28] M. J. Strickland, 'Treason, Feud and the Growth of State Violence: Edward I and the 'War of the Earl of Carrick', 1306-7, in C. Given-Wilson, A. J., Kettle, and L. Scales, (eds.), *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150-1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), p. 100; *Scalacronica*, p. 52; the historicity of this incident is debateable, since in *The Bruce* it is Sir Philip Mowbray – who will later command the garrison at Stirling Castle at the time of the Battle of Bannockburn – who almost captures Bruce at Methven, and rather than willingly releasing the king he is forced to do so by the intervention of the king's brother-in-law Sir Christopher Seton, *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 414-428

treason, and even travelling into England without a royal licence.[29] Such was the case when James Douglas, 9th earl of Douglas, his wife, his sons and their supporters were condemned for treason in 1455.[30] Two months later, when reviewing the case parliament issued a general warning against helping the earl or his adherents on pain of condemnation for treason and the imposition of the same punishments that the earl and his adherents were already sentenced to suffer.[31] James Liddale of Halkerston – whose connection with *The Wallace* has been discussed above – was implicated in the duke of Albany's treason for conducting the duke's correspondence with the English authorities, including passing into English without a royal license.[32] These examples demonstrate that just as loyalty was a natural obligation applied to all, so treason was a transgression that could be committed by anyone – commons included.

The harshness with which treason was met in the medieval period was both a reflection of the revulsion felt towards those whose loyalty could not be counted upon and a means of reinforcing the importance of loyalty to those who might be tempted to behave in a treasonous manner. This is the stated reason for pursuing the supporters of the duke of Albany so as to make an example of them to deter future treasons against King James III.[33] The need of the English government to make William Wallace out as a traitor during his trial in 1305 is a particularly pertinent example of this. Convicting Wallace of treason both undermined his reputation and served to justify the brutality with which he was executed.[34] Chandos herald is unambiguous in his condemnation of treachery.[35] Treason and falsity (*traisons et fauxetée*) are blamed for the prince's military defeats in Aquitaine in the last years of his life, even more so than his growing illness.[36] Later in the narrative he claims that it was *par traisoun* that Calais was almost sold back to the French by a Lombard known as Amery of Pavia before the Black Prince prevents this turn of events.[37] Chandos herald also reports that in light of the prince's weakened state when he first contracted the illness

[29] *RPS*, 1430/42. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1430/43. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1430/46. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1436/10/6. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1450/1/31. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1455/10/5. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1455/10/8. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; RPS, 1455/10/9. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[30] *RPS*, 1455/6/6. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[31] *RPS*, 1455/8/15. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[32] *RPS*, 1483/6/5. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[33] *RPS*, 1484/2/32. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[34] F. Watson, *Under the Hammer: Edward I and Scotland, 1286-1306*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 213-214; A. A. M. Duncan, 'William, Son of Alan Wallace: The Documents', in E. J. Cowan (ed.), *The Wallace Book*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), p. 56
[35] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 3828-3830
[36] Ibid. ll. 3908-3912
[37] Ibid. ll. 418

that would eventually kill him, 'falsity and treason' (*fauxetée/Et traisons*) began to manifest against him.[38] *The Bruce* is replete with instances of Barbour identifying opponents of his heroes as traitors. Barbour employs the terms 'traytouris' and 'tratouris' when describing the men from his own earldom who try to assault the earl of Lennox after he becomes separated from the king near Bute.[39] Similarly, the three men who try to kill Bruce and his foster-brother while they are resting are referred to 'tratouris'.[40] Edward Bruce's force besieging Carrickfergus is caught off-guard by a sally from the beleaguered garrison because Sir Edward 'off tresoun had he na thoucht'.[41]

The term 'tresoun' – or minor variations thereon – is used twenty-five times throughout *The Bruce*, and the word 'tratour' appears in one form or another a further sixteen times. As mentioned above, references to treason become far less frequent after the supposed 'dedication' to Robert II in Book 13, possibly supporting the notion that the poem was completed in two phases and for two patrons with differing interests. The construction of the tale of the man and his two sons who try to murder the king at the end of Book 5 of *The Bruce* serves as a useful starting point to explore Barbour's understanding of the concept and to illustrate Barbour's desire to associate the enemies of King Robert with treason. While hunting for Bruce in Carrick, Sir Ingram Umfraville seeks out a man who is described as being 'to the King Robert mast prevé/As he that wes his sibman ner'.[42] Duncan reads this as meaning that the man was Bruce's actual kinsman but a more accurate reading suggests that Barbour is saying that this man was as close to Bruce as a kinsman would be, implying that he was not in fact truly a blood relative. However, Barbour does refer to the man's actions as 'tresoun' and describes his plan as 'His tresonabill undretaking', so it is clear that Barbour is explicitly talking about treason in this case.[43] Bruce is warned about the treason, possibly 'Throu wemen that he wyth wald play' and so he is prepared when they come to attack him.[44] Having addressed the man as 'tratour', Bruce engages in a brief but bloody fight with the man and his two sons, killing all three of them, concluding that 'Had thai nocht bene full off tresoun,/Bot that maid thar confusioun.'[45] Duncan has suggested that rather than happening as Barbour reports it, this incident in fact involved

[38] Ibid. ll. 3822-3824
[39] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 599-603
[40] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 196, 224
[41] *The Bruce*, Bk. 15, ll. 125
[42] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 494-495
[43] *The Bruce*, Bk.5, ll. 518, ll. 523, ll. 553
[44] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll.544
[45] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 657-658

three men who innocently approached the king and were killed by him in a fit of paranoia.[46] Afterwards, it was expedient to present the victims as traitors and this is how the story is passed on to us. However, it seems more likely that this is a tale that Barbour has constructed himself to explore the issue of treason.

That the story is Barbour's own invention is further supported by the fact that it is effectively repeated, albeit with a few changes to give the impression of a different incident, later in the poem.[47] In the second of these episodes, Barbour gives no indication that Bruce's attackers have been sent by the English, simply stating that their intention is to take revenge for John Comyn.[48] These men initially intend to kill the king with bows but are goaded by King Robert into facing him in close combat, and are dispatched in typically gory fashion, one being killed by the king's hound.[49] Much like in the first incident, Barbour refers to the actions of the three men as 'tresoun' and he again has Bruce observe that 'Thar tresoun combryt thaim', reinforcing the notion that treason ultimately leads to defeat and disgrace.[50] Ruddick has advocated a model of 'allegiant identity' that corresponded with 'subjecthood', extending to include not just those who considered themselves to be subjects of a king but also those who *ought* to be subject to him.[51] Thus the treason of the three men who attack Bruce while he is hunting is two-fold, in the sense that they rightfully owe their allegiance to Bruce given that they are Scottish – judging by their stated association with Comyn – and also in the sense that they use such clandestine methods to achieve their aim of killing Bruce. In the former example, the chief treason committed by the man and his two sons is that, having been brought into Bruce's confidence enough to know his daily routine, they personally betray him by using this knowledge to the benefit of his enemies. Bukowska has noted a recurring theme in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* in which treasonous knights are rightfully and brutally punished by more heroic characters such as Lancelot, their treason having singled them out as villains deserving of the most extreme punishments conceivable.[52] Similarly, Barbour frequently has punishment for the treasons committed by villainous characters in his poem meted out

[46] *The Bruce*, p. 220 n615-7
[47] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 410-494
[48] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 429-430
[49] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 458-461
[50] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 493, echoing *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 657-658; interestingly, Hary adapts this sentiment into an accusation presented to Bruce by Wallace when they meet across the River Carron in *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 459: 'Throuch thi falsheid thin awn wyt has myskend.'
[51] Ruddick, 'National and Political Identity in Anglo-Scottish Relations', p. 203
[52] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken: the power of a spoken word in the chivalric world of *Le Morte Darthur*', in *Studia anglica Posnaniensia*, Volume 38 (2002), p. 67

by his main characters, particularly Bruce. Not only does this reinforce Bruce's moral character generally, but it also emphasises the fact that he is a just king. That treachery is the crime that is ascribed to these men is very significant, because this was the crime for which summary execution was perfectly valid.

It is common for heroic knights to meet their deaths as a consequence of treachery in Barbour's *Bruce*. Macnab, the man who betrays Christopher Seton is condemned as 'a discipill off Judas' and 'a fals tratour' and his actions are described as 'fer wer than tratoury'[53] Treachery was also the means by which the English were able to burn and capture Kildrummy Castle.[54] Barbour is at pains to stress King Edward's untrustworthiness at the beginning of his poem. Edward is presented as having literally sworn not to judge falsely in the Great Cause, so the fact that he breaks this oath allows Barbour to paint him as a true villain.[55] Edward enters into his agreement with the Scottish nobles all the while secretly hoping to find a way to turn this situation to his advantage.[56] It seems that this is precisely the sort of conniving behaviour that Barbour seeks to dissuade knights from pursuing. In Barbour's *Bruce*, Comyn is portrayed as having made an agreement with Bruce to support Bruce's claims to the kingship of Scotland if Bruce would in turn cede all of his lands to Comyn, having even gone so far as to make 'endenturis' and sworn 'aythis' to this effect.[57] Ultimately Comyn betrays Bruce's intention to claim his rightful inheritance to King Edward and in doing so provokes the confrontation in Greyfriar's Kirk during which he is killed by Bruce. When Bruce is summoned by King Edward to answer for the indenture, Barbour plainly characterises Comyn's decision to inform the English king of the pact as 'tresoun'.[58] The most likely explanation for Barbour's decision to present Comyn as having broken a sworn oath and actively gone against his word is to reinforce the essential wickedness of Comyn and, by extension, to undermine the seriousness of Bruce's crime in killing Comyn before the altar.

After recounting the specifics of the agreement between Comyn and Bruce Barbour provides a lengthy warning about treason, addressed directly to his audience, during which the word 'tresoun' – sometimes spelled 'tresoune' – is used six times to reinforce the fact

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[53] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 16-22
[54] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 105-117; the terms 'tresoun' and 'tratour' are used in the condemnation of Hosbarne, the man responsible for starting the fire, at ll. 106-107, 109
[55] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 74
[56] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 149-52
[57] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 491-494, ll. 513
[58] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 597

that Barbour considers this to be the crime for which Comyn deserved to die.[59] The meaning of the term here – as throughout the poem – is unambiguously associated with the betrayal of trust and Barbour is at pains to emphasise the fact that it can affect individuals across a wide social spectrum:

> Bot of all thing wa worth tresoun,
> For thar is nother duk ne baroun
> Na erle na prynce na king off mycht
> Thocht he be never sa wys na wycht
> For wyt worschip price na renoun,
> That ever may wauch hym with tresoune.[60]

In the same passage, Barbour provides a list of notable examples of great men from history who were brought low by treachery, including Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and King Arthur.[61] By including this list of comparable cases Barbour is able to demonstrate the applicability of his observations on the nature of treason as well as to draw positive comparisons between these great heroes and his own – King Robert. This implied comparison does not simply refer to their respective characteristics, but to the very struggles that shaped them and moulded them into the respected figures they would have been recognised as by Barbour's audience.

Pardon and Wasserman have claimed that the Irish campaigns of Edward Bruce provided Barbour with 'an appropriate historical means of demonstrating the inherent weakness of the chivalric ideal and the strength of feudal obligation'.[62] In their own words, Edward Bruce's activities in Ireland 'put into relief Robert Bruce's careful, nearly systematic way of building alliances through feudal obligation'.[63] As he is first campaigning through Ireland, Edward Bruce forms alliances with the petty kings of Ireland based on the exchange of verbal bonds with his potential enemies.[64] Pardon and Wasserman seem to see this as Barbour critiquing the use of verbal bonds to make such agreements, based on the fact that the deals ultimately break down and lead to further violence.[65] Drawing on the work of Kertzer, they claim that in *The Bruce* Edward Bruce enters into contracts with the petty kings of Ireland in a theocratic manner, whereas Robert Bruce

[59] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 511-568
[60] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 515-520
[61] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 521-560
[62] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 79
[63] Ibid. p. 83
[64] *The Bruce*, Bk. 14, ll. 100-104
[65] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 81

adopts the feudal model of kingship when making agreements and alliances.[66] They distinguish such arrangements from feudal obligation, which they say was based on three elements – 'homage, fealty and fief', with the most important of these being homage.[67] However, it is in these terms that the chiefs of Ireland are said by Barbour to have entered into their agreements with Edward Bruce, having 'maide fewté' when Edward arrived in Ireland. Other relationships in the poem – such as those of Bruce and Douglas – are regularly bolstered by verbal bonds without material exchanges and do not suffer or break down because of this. Rather, it seems more likely that the case of the treacherous Irish chiefs is yet another example of Barbour aiming a critique towards oath-breakers and the problem of untrustworthiness among members of the aristocracy more generally. For example, the term 'fewte' is used again in reference to an agreement between Edward Bruce and an Irish king named O'Dempsey.[68] Sir Edward camps on O'Dempsey's land but contrary to the oath he has taken O'Dempsey not only denies the Scots any food or succour but also conspires to try to drown Sir Edward and his men while they are encamped on his land. Barbour actually refers to O'Dempsy as 'This fals traytouris men' when he enacts his plan to kill the Scots.[69] However, there is nothing in Barbour's account of these events to suggest that Sir Edward was in the wrong but rather it is O'Dempsey's treachery that is being singled out for criticism, in much the same way that Barbour repeatedly cites examples of treachery throughout the poem. A more probable reading is that Barbour is once again demonstrating how treachery can undermine the ambitions of good men, and thus reinforcing the importance of loyalty.

While providing service to the king's enemies could be an extremely serious matter, there remained the possibility of reconciliation in certain circumstances. In reality, the willingness of the king to forgive acts of treason led parliament on several occasions to urge James III to forego his right to grant pardons for this crime for fixed periods for fear that this was actually encouraging loose loyalties.[70] For Barbour, switching sides in the middle of a conflict did not always qualify as treason, as the example of Moray illustrates. He is on the Scottish side when Bruce is crowned but is taken captive at Methven and remains 'English' until being taken captive again by Douglas at the Water of Lyne.[71]

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[66] Ibid. p. 85
[67] Ibid. p. 83
[68] *The Bruce*, Bk. 14, ll. 331
[69] *The Bruce*, Bk. 14, ll. 351
[70] *RPS*, 1478/6/80. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1484/2/34. Date accessed: 8th September 2015; *RPS*, 1487/10/5. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[71] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 237; Bk. 2, ll. 408; Bk. 9, ll. 722

However, Barbour asserts that the choice Moray faces after Methven is to switch sides or be killed.[72] Barbour never makes this explicit, but it his likely intention was to imply that since Moray's oath was made under duress it was not as binding as an oath that had been made willingly. This idea is supported by Hary, who suggests that William Douglas 'the Hardy' – Sir James Douglas' father – entered English allegiance 'throuch force', justifying his subsequent decision to break this bond.[73] Barbour even extends this to the common people when he observes that the reason they feared to openly support Bruce was Whenever Moray is mentioned in service of the English, such as when John of Lorn sets his tracker dog on Bruce, he is simply listed as one of the notable knights present, rarely taking an active part in events.[74] He also receives praise for capturing the king's banner, although Barbour chooses not to go into detail about the feats of arms that Moray must have carried out against his fellow Scots to accomplish this.[75] When Moray is eventually reconciled, Barbour provides a description of the earl's character that specifically emphasises the earl's love of loyalty and his distaste for treason:

> He [Bruce] knew his [Moray's] worthi vasselage
> And his gret wyt and his avys
> His traist hart and his lele service…
> … Lawté he lovyt atour all thing,
> Falset tresoun and felony
> He stude agayne ay encrely[76]

This seems to give Barbour the opportunity to record the fact that Moray did indeed switch sides during the course of the conflict but avoids tarnishing Moray's reputation because of this fact. The importance of Barbour's decision to include the fact that Moray briefly fought on the side of the English is illustrated by the fact that Barbour ignores Bruce's time in English allegiance. That Barbour does not even acknowledge that Bruce had previously served the English king testifies to the fact that the writer was not necessarily beholden to record anything that he found embarrassing or awkward, so the fact that he includes the fact about Moray suggests he had a point to make by doing so. Walter Ullman has defined the term *diffidatio* – a term used in later legal documentation – as

[72] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 466-7
[73] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 893-894
[74] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 512
[75] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 87-90
[76] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 270-272, 290-292

referring to the legitimate repudiation of a previously sworn oath.[77] This meant the withdrawal of loyalty on the basis that a lord had not fulfilled his responsibility to a particular vassal. This would fit with Moray's repudiation of Bruce when he is eventually captured and brought before the king. According to Barbour, Moray was dissatisfied with Bruce's guerrilla tactics when he was originally captured by the English. Of course, once he has been convinced that Bruce's strategy is the most appropriate he is welcomed back into the king's inner circle, where he remains for the remainder of the poem.

Barbour also presents Umfraville – who had already switched sides following the Battle of Bannockburn – as politely withdrawing his allegiance from Bruce over the treatment of Sir David Brechin in the aftermath of the Soules conspiracy:

> He [Umfraville] said agane, 'Schyr, graunt mercy
> And I sall tell you planely,
> Myne hart giffis me na mar to be
> With you dwelland in this countre,
> Tharfor bot that it nocht you greve
> I pray you hartly of your leve.
> For quhar sua rycht worthi a knycht
> An sa chevalrous and sa wicht
> And sa renownyt off worschip syne
> As gud Schyr David off Brechyn
> And sa fullfyllyt off all manheid
> Was put to sa velanys a ded,
> Myn hart forsuth may nocht gif me
> To dwell for na thing that may be.'[78]

Bruce graciously allows Umfraville to leave and Barbour reserves no criticism for the manner of his departure.[79] Barbour's apparent desire to present Umfraville as having returned to English allegiance on a point of principle is particularly interesting in light of Penman's suggestion that in reality Umfraville left Scotland out of fear that his association with Brechin and the other conspirators would incriminate him.[80] In the *Fierabras* romances, at least one of which Barbour was familiar with, the character Ganyelon is presented as being initially loyal to Charlemagne but his hatred of Roland ultimately leads

[77] W. Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages*, (London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 64
[78] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 95-108
[79] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 109-118
[80] M. Penman, ''A fell coniurecioun agayn Robert the douchty king': the Soules conspiracy of 1318-1320', in *The Innes Review*, Vol. 50, no. 1, (Spring 1991), p. 50

him to commit treason against the king.[81] This notion of conflicting obligations is faintly echoed here by Barbour, although in this case Umfraville acts out of admiration for one of his peers rather than jealousy of them. Barbour also presents the possibility that switching sides could lead to conflicting obligations when Umfraville is constrained to offer advice damaging to his former lord – King Robert – on the basis of his obligation to his current lord – Edward II.[82]

The Scots also benefit from a person switching sides during the conflict on one particularly notable occasion, namely the capture of Berwick in 1318. The opportunity to finally capture Berwick is presented to King Robert when a burgess, Syme of Spalding, offers to betray the town to the Scots. Syme is provoked into the course of action by the captain of the town, whose suspicion and mistreatment of the Scots in the town has become unbearable.[83] It may simply be that since Syme of Spalding is not a knight that he is not held to as high a standard of behaviour as the more noble characters in *The Bruce*, and thus his change of heart is not taken as seriously as it might otherwise be. On the other hand, it may also reinforce the notion that, like Moray's brief period of service to the English, switching sides was acceptable so long as no lasting damage was done to the 'right' cause. However, more importantly than that, this episode has something to say about King Robert's status as a man who inspires loyalty in his vassals. When faced with the cruel regime of the English captain of Berwick, Syme looks for and finds in Robert the Bruce a figure to whom he can offer his loyalty, knowing that King Robert will behave in the proper manner of a lord to his vassal.

Hary's *Wallace* is also replete with examples of treachery. Hary observes that English domination of Scotland following the death of Alexander III is a consequence of 'tresoune and falsnas'.[84] Hary condemns as 'fals tresoune' the attempt by a woman to hand Wallace over to the English.[85] Like Barbour, Hary frequently choses to portray Wallace's enemies as traitors in order to emphasise their villainy. For instance, Sir 'Amar Wallange', who counsels Percy to apply pressure to Wallace's uncle to force Wallace to accept a truce, is described by Hary as 'a fals traytour'.[86] Similarly, Macfadyan secretly enters English

[81] M. Ailes, 'Ganelon in the Middle English *Fierabras* Romances', in P. Hardman (ed.), *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), p. 78
[82] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 152-157
[83] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 22-30
[84] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 39-42
[85] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 735-736, and again as 'tresoune fals' at ll. 770
[86] *The Wallace*, Bk. 3, ll. 261; Grant has suggested that 'Wallange' is likely a reference to Aymer de Valence, who appears prominently, in the early part of *The Bruce*, A. Grant, 'Bravehearts and Coronets: Images of

service and kills many Scots, a fact that leads Hary to explicitly condemn him as 'fals'.[87] Macfadyan's treachery against his own people weighs heavily on Wallace's mind, leading him to take the slight personally, and he swears to take revenge for it.[88] Alexander Ramsay – who receives considerable praise from Hary – is ultimately killed by 'tratouris tresonably'.[89] The better part of Book 8 of *The Wallace* is spent with Wallace chasing the traitorous Scottish nobleman Corspatrick around the Highlands and it is clear throughout this section of the poem that Wallace intends to show no mercy to this man who has publicly reneged on the loyalty he owes as a Scot.[90] The incident with Corspatrick is referenced in William Dunbar's *The Flyting of Dumbar and Kennedie*, which draws heavily on *The Wallace* for its version of these events.[91] Not only is Dunbar's brief narration of these events a clear re-telling of Hary's account, he also identifies Corspatrick as a 'tratour' and repeats Corspatrick's rebuke of Wallace as 'king in Kyle' found in *The Wallace*.[92]

Of course, Wallace's life is ended by treachery. Naturally enough, Wallace's eventual betrayer, Sir John Menteith, is held up by Hary as an example of a thoroughly treacherous individual. Menteith is specifically mentioned as publically consenting to Wallace's role as Guardian and making an oath to be loyal to both Wallace and Scotland.[93] This serves to heighten his eventual betrayal and makes it clear that his treason is not just in turning Wallace over to the English but in breaking his previously sworn word. Hary makes it abundantly clear that he considered Menteith's chief crime to be treason:

> Thus treasonably Menteth grantyt thartill;
> Obligacioun with his awn hand he maid.
> Syn tuk the gold and Edwardis seill so braid
> And gaiff thaim his, quhen he his tym mycht se
> To tak Wallace our Sulway, giff him fre
> Till Inglismen. Be this tresonabill concord
> Schyr Jhon suld be of all the Lennox lord.[94]

William Wallace and the Scottish Nobility', in E. J. Cowan (ed.), *The Wallace Book*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), p. 95

[87] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 626-639

[88] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 733-736

[89] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 911-915

[90] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 5-411; McDiarmid has suggested that Hary based this passage on the rebellions of John, Lord of the Isles, Ibid. xv-xvi

[91] W. Dunbar, *The Flyting of Dumbar and Kennedie*, in J. Conlee (ed.), *William Dunbar: The Complete Poems*, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2004), ll. 257-288; for further discussion of Dunbar's debt to Hary in this passage, cf. Ibid. p. 413-414 and P. Bawcutt (ed.), *The Poems of William Dunbar*, (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1998), Volume 2, p. 439

[92] Ibid. ll. 282, 284

[93] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 1259-1262

[94] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 824-830

Menteith's betrayal is reinforced further by mention of that fact that, according to Hary, Wallace was Menteith's 'gossop' (godfather).[95] Hary claims that 'cowatice' was the main reason that led Menteith to betray Wallace and cites numerous historical examples of this involving other great figures from history.[96] Interestingly, Hary's list is almost identical to the list of historical examples that Barbour provides in the wake of Comyn's betrayal of Bruce, suggesting that Hary modelled it after that section of *The Bruce*. Hary mentions Hector, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and King Arthur, all of whom appear in this same order in *The Bruce*, and adds to the list 'the traytour Ganyelon' (who betrayed Charlemagne to his Muslim enemies according to *La Chanson de Roland*) and Godfrey de Bouillon. Interestingly, Ganyelon also appears in the Middle English adaptations of *Fierabras* as well the original French *chanson de geste* on which these adaptations were based, at least one of which Barbour seems to have been familiar with.[97] Of course, both Barbour and Hary's lists also draw on the established list of the Nine Worthies.[98] At the very least this demonstrates a degree of agreement between Hary and Barbour on the significance and danger of treason and the need to reinforce their warnings against this phenomenon.

Comyn is once again presented as a treacherous, villainous figure in Hary's *Wallace*. At the Battle of Falkirk, Comyn is behind the Steward's attempt to take command of the vanguard from Wallace due to Comyn being envious of Wallace's position.[99] Wallace responds to the Steward's demand by angrily swearing an oath to give his fellow Scots no further assistance for the remainder of the day and he moves his own men off to an elevated position from which to watch the ensuing battle.[100] When he sees that the Scots are losing the battle, a curious debate ensues between Wallace's 'wyll' and his 'kyndnes', which provides a fascinating insight into how Hary envisages oaths to be constructed and how he envisages them functioning in reality.[101] Hary claims that it was Wallace's 'wyll' that made the oath in the first place and so naturally it is his 'wyll' that makes the case for keeping his vow. Its case revolves around the treachery of Comyn initially but Wallace's

[95] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 793-795
[96] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 833-848
[97] Ailes, 'Ganelon in the Middle English *Fierabras* Romances', p. 75; for the source of Barbour's familiarity with the story of Fierabras, cf. Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 59 n31
[98] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 121-124; Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, p. 200
[99] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 99-107
[100] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 143-158
[101] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 208-242

'kyndnes' disputes this as a good reason for not helping his fellow Scots on the basis that if only one among them is treacherous then Wallace should take up his quarrel with that individual and not make the rest suffer for it. However, his 'wyll' then claims that Wallace's personal honour is at stake if he does not stand by his word, and it is this point that wins the debate in the end. Wallace 'turnyt for Ire in teyn' at this point, but despite the deep hurt it causes him he resolutely refuses to move against the English until the other Scots have been defeated.[102] In this instance then we see the clearest indication yet that Hary prized a knight's word as the most important factor to be protected in cases of oath-making.

A desire to portray enemies as inherently treacherous is clear in the Scottish chronicle tradition as well. The debate over the actions of Edward III at the siege of Berwick shortly before the Battle of Halidon Hill is telling in this regard. Edward had led an army into Scotland to protect the interests of Edward Balliol, rival to the throne of David II, and the Disinherited, English and Scottish nobles who had lost land after 1328. He laid siege to Berwick and made an agreement with Sir Alexander Seton the governor of Berwick that he should surrender to him if a relief force did not reach the town by 4th July. Thomas Seton, Sir Alexander's son, was given to Edward as a hostage to guarantee the agreement. A relief force was duly dispatched and after a confused period of manoeuvring between the English and Scottish forces a handful of Scots made it through the siege works and into Berwick. When the townsfolk declared that this fulfilled the agreement in their favour, Edward hanged Thomas Seton in sight of the gates and threatened to hang a further two prisoners every day until the town surrendered.[103] MacInnes has observed that both Scottish and English chroniclers attempted to portray the other group as oath-breakers.[104] Scottish writers emphasised the partial success of the relief force and claimed that Edward shifted the arranged date of Berwick's surrender to suit himself, while English sources accuse the Scots of trying to retain the town by underhand tactics. It is apparent that to make your enemies into traitors was a sure way to legitimise for your cause, and the fact that Edward felt justified in executing Thomas Seton is a clear demonstration of the seriousness of the charge of oath-breaking. Penman has argued that many Scottish works produced in the fourteenth-century were heavily influenced by David II's pro-English foreign policy, which consciously suppressed the Anglophobia that almost certainly permeated Scottish society

[102] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 241-242
[103] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 8, ll. 3875-3882
[104] I. A. MacInnes, 'Shock and Awe: The Use of Terror as a Psychological Weapon during the Bruce-Balliol Civil War, 1332-8', in A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 51

during this period.[105] It was not until the fifteenth-century, with works like the *Scotichronicon* and *The Wallace* that Scottish hatred of and frustration with the English was given full voice. When this did happen, the most frequent criticism was that the English were inherently treacherous.

The frequency and ease with which Scots, and Englishmen, switched sides during the fourteenth-century conflicts between England and Scotland may have led to this interest in loyalty and treason, particularly in Barbour's *Bruce*. Dissatisfaction and dissention among Scotland's nobility was a frequent cause of concern for writers in late medieval Scotland. Bower regularly bemoans the constant in-fighting among the aristocracy and blames this for the troubles experienced by the Scots in the early part of the Wars of Independence. Barbour too identifies envy as the main reason for the failure of the Scots to find a successor for Alexander III without calling on English aid.[106] MacInnes has argued that the targeted raiding carried out by Edward Balliol by the 1330s, and which was a key feature of medieval warfare as a whole, was carried out in order to compel southern Scottish nobles and dignitaries to shift their allegiance from the Bruce camp to the Balliols.[107] For a member of the Scottish nobility, showing loyalty to the English crown often offered more lucrative rewards in terms of patronage that showing loyalty to the Scottish king, since the English crown was undoubtedly wealthier.[108] Political expediency was a major factor in determining whether a Scottish landholder switched sides. William Douglas, so-called Knight of Liddesdale, did homage to Edward III in 1352 after his kinsman had taken advantage of William's time in captivity following the Battle of Neville's Cross to usurp his authority in the Marches.[109] James Stewart submitted to the English king in 1306 before returning to Scottish allegiance.[110] Geogre Dunbar, earl of March and a descendant of Thomas Randolph, submitted to Henry IV in 1400 when[111] Scottish nobles might also find it expedient to change sides when the English were in the ascendancy in Lowland Scotland. A.J. Tuck described the Anglo-Scottish cross border conflict as 'something of a civil war,

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[105] M. Penman, *David II, 1329-1371*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2004), p. 228
[106] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 47-8
[107] MacInnes, 'Shock and Awe', p. 42
[108] A. King, 'Best of Enemies: Were the Fourteenth-Century Anglo-Scottish Marches a `Frontier Society"?', A. King and M. A. Penman (eds.), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century: New Perspectives*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), p. 125
[109] *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londinensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi*, (D. Macpherson ed.), (London, 1814-1819), i, 752-753
[110] *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, et cujuscunque generis Acta Publica*, (T. Rymer ed.), (London, 1704-1735), iv, 62
[111] *Foedera*, viii, 149

in which it could not be entirely clear to which side a man's loyalty should be given.'[112] Alistair Macdonald has noted a considerable amount of evidence suggesting cross-border cooperation among noblemen with a great deal to be gained by limiting the effects of warfare in the Marches on their own lands.[113]

When listing the reasons for his men to keep fighting against the English even when they are still on the run in the Western Isles, Bruce includes the joy that they will feel if they succeed.[114] It may be that Barbour includes this in his list of reasons for fighting simply to remind his audience that the benefits of success could only be enjoyed by those who stayed true to their cause. Pardon and Wasserman have suggested that when constructing *The Bruce* Barbour was faced with a need to balance a desire to present a pro-Scottish account of the historical events but at the same time avoiding undermining Scottish unity by pushing too much to the fore those aspects of chivalry that advocated the quest for personal glory over collective action. In the view of these two scholars, the strategy Barbour adopted was to separate feudal obligation, and with it the sublimation of individual ambition to a greater cause, from personal glory through individual endeavour, and emphasising the former over the latter.[115] This assessment of *The Bruce* is perhaps a little too straightforward as Barbour's approach to the question of loyalty is more nuanced and complex than this, and he did not so much downplay chivalry in favour of the common good so much as he tried to refocus the ideals of chivalry towards a more harmonious end than in other comparable works.

The obligations that have been considered so far are general, but Barbour and Hary also provide evidence for the specific obligations implied by oath-making. Benham has observed that oath-making made a direct appeal to an individual's sense of personal honour, suggesting a strong connection between oath-making and chivalry.[116] In practice, the swearing of oaths would often be accompanied by a religious ceremony – sometimes even a full mass – and might include 'material formalities' such as touching a Bible or the cross or a relic of some kind.[117] For instance, the Scottish nobles who submitted to Edward I in the so-called Ragman Rolls kissed the Bible and were thus said to have made a 'bond of

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[112] A. J. Tuck, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250-1400', *Northern History* Volume 22 (1986), p. 7
[113] Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p. 223
[114] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 542-5
[115] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 78
[116] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 152
[117] Lesaffer, 'Peace treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', p. 22; Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 184

bodily oath' (*corporalis vinculo juramenti*) to the English king.[118] Those present at the assembly at Ayr at which the succession was settled gave bodily oaths (*juramentis prestitis corporalibus*) to uphold the decision made.[119] Similarly, Moray and Douglas made their oath to serve as guardians of King Robert's heir should he succeed in his minority while touching the Bible and saintly relics, and the other noblemen present also made an oath to uphold this decision.[120] Those present at the council in 1365 at which it was agreed to that Scotland might accept a treaty of mutual aid with England were swore 'bodily oaths' (*corporalia juramenta*) to uphold this decision.[121] A 'great bodily oath' (*magnum juramentum corporaliter*) was performed by the nobles present at a parliament in Scone on 2nd March 1372 to observe the legislation passed at that meeting, as was customary according to this document.[122] John, earl of Carrick, swore to execute justice in the kingdom on behalf of his father while touching the gospels and those who witnessed this were also swore on the gospels to assist the earl in his duties.[123] When renegotiating the Franco-Scottish alliance in 1428, it is noted that previously this arrangement has been 'solemnly bolstered by oaths' (*juramentis solempniter vallatorum*) and suggests the renewal of the agreement should be accompanied by 'bodily oaths' (*corporale juramento*) sworn on the gospels and moreover states that this should be done in public – specifically in front of the community of the realm at a general council (*in nostro generali concilio*).[124] The inclusion of God (or some other figure of devotion, such as the Virgin Mary) in an oath added a profound moral dimension to the process. By bringing God into the equation, the breaking of an oath brought the promise of damnation as God Himself would be considered among the injured parties.[125]

All manner of public ceremonies were accompanied by oath-making of some kind, including coronations, the conferring of public offices, royal entries, weddings and even funerals.[126] Other forms of ritual and ceremony that were prominent features of civic and courtly life in the medieval period include processions, pageants, biblical re-enactments, and of course the pageantry associated with late medieval tournaments.[127] The coronation

[118] *RPS*, A1296/8/1. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[119] *RPS*, 1315/1. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[120] *RPS*, 1318/30. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[121] *RPS*, 1365/7/3. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[122] *RPS*, 1372/3/12. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[123] *RPS*, 1384/11/16. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[124] *RPS*, 1428/7/3. Date accessed: 10 September 2015
[125] Lesaffer, 'Peace treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', p. 164
[126] Offenstadt, 'The rituals of peace during the Civil War in France', p. 88
[127] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 8

oath of Edward I survives in the Dublin Dominican Annals of Pembridge, with Bernadette Williams arguing for its authenticity based on the assertion that oaths were taken so seriously, especially by particularly pious groups like the Dominicans, that the author would have paid special attention to recording the oath as accurately as possible.[128] Weddings not only involved the obvious swearing of an oath between the couple being married but could also be accompanied by parental agreements, the exchange of a dowry and so forth, all of which might be sealed with oaths involving the interested parties.[129] It was common for oath-making ceremonies to be accompanied by feasting, especially in the context of peace-making oaths.[130] Offenstadt has recognised that diplomatic meetings and peace rituals can also be useful sources for historians to analyse oath-making practices, an area that had previously been largely ignored.[131] Certainly it was common for oaths to be exchanged when arranging peace treaties and truces, and consequently ambassadors were given the power to swear oaths on behalf of the individuals they represented. Such was the case when Henry Percy and William la Zouche of Ashby where empowered to act as English ambassadors in negotiations with the Scots in 1328.[132] Similarly, Sir Alexander Mowbray and Sir John Felton were granted the power to make oaths on behalf of Edward Balliol in 1334.[133] Robert the Steward granted these same powers to the ambassadors sent to negotiate for the release of David II at Berwick in 1357.[134] In 1423, Murdoch Stewart, in his role as governor of Scotland on behalf of James I, empowered ambassadors to – among other things – make oaths on his behalf while negotiating the release of the captive King of Scots.[135] Similarly, when recording the renewal of the Franco-Scottish alliance in 1428 the phrase 'passionate bond' (*ferventissimo vinculo*) is used to describe the basis of the historical relationship between the two kingdoms.[136]

The swearing of an oath would very often be accompanied by complex and sometimes flamboyant ritual. The culture of many late medieval kingdoms, Scotland included, was publically-orientated, where performativity counted for a great deal and a

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[128] B. Willaims, 'The lost coronation oath of King Edward I: rediscovered in a Dublin manuscript', in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin IX: proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), p. 88
[129] Jost, 'Chaucer's Vows and How They Break', p. 267
[130] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 81-84
[131] Offenstadt, 'The rituals of peace during the Civil War in France', p. 88
[132] *RPS*, A1328/3. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[133] *RPS*, 1334/3. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[134] *RPS*, 1357/9/1. Date accessed: 9 September 2015
[135] *RPS*, 1423/8/1. Date accessed: 10 September 2015
[136] *RPS*, 1428/7/3. Date accessed: 7 September 2015

person's words and actions could be invested with considerable ideological weight. Bukowska, drawing on J. L. Austin's model of speech act theory, has placed emphasis on the fact that an oath as a performative act is also by necessity a public act.[137] In other words, for an oath to mean anything it must necessarily be witnessed by others in order that the knight who has made the oath might be held accountable to it.[138] This serves to further emphasise the social nature of oath-making in the medieval context. One notable example of public ritual being used to reinforce an agreement between men of note occurred outside Kildrummy Castle on 9th December 1404. The incident took place as part of the settlement of a long-standing dispute between the Erskine family and Alexander Stewart, and the presence of men on both sides of the dispute as well as numerous local notables with a vested interest in the peaceful conclusion of the agreement served both to reassure them that the matter was settled and as an acclamation of the legitimacy of the decision reached.[139]

The most flamboyant rituals associated with oath-making usually accompanied vows taken to perform a particular feat of arms in a tournament setting but men might also swear to undertake certain actions in battle as well, a fact that Keen uses to illustrate the close connection of tournament and warfare in the minds of those concerned with chivalry in the late medieval period even as these became increasingly distinct endeavours.[140] Keen has identified a number of instances in which knights took oaths – both collectively and individually – to perform specific feats of arms during tournaments, and to emphasise how seriously such oaths were taken he lists a number of examples in which knights would wear prisoner's chains as a symbol of the binding nature of the vow.[141] Katie Stevenson has previously noted that during the fifteenth-century the regularity of tournaments in Scotland was very much dictated by the tastes of the king, being fairly popular under James II, disappearing almost entirely during the reign of James III and once again becoming a key part of the king's public interaction with the nobility under James IV.[142] Stevenson has also observed the development of tournaments during James IV's reign in particular from lavish but still relatively spontaneous affairs to more heavily choreographed events in which

[137] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 66
[138] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 71
[139] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 264
[140] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 213
[141] Ibid. p. 212
[142] For further discussion of contemporary criticism of James III's lack of interest in chivalric display, cf. Macdougall, *James III*, p. 269-272

chivalric values could be re-enacted and promoted.[143] While a number of frustrating gaps exist in the relevant records that make it difficult to reconstruct many of these events in great detail, it is nonetheless clear that the nobility of Scotland actively engaged in this aspect of chivalric endeavour, and thus may very well have taken an interest in the kind of flamboyant oath-making that is known to have accompanied it.

Keen has identified a number of instances in which oaths were publically taken to perform specific feats of arms outwith tournament as well. For instance, Edward I and his men famously swore to avenge the death of John Comyn on two swans at a feast in 1306 during preparations for another campaign into Scotland.[144] Vale has attempted to reconstruct this event and has suggested that the symbolism of the swan may have reflected the feeling that this vow would be the ailing king's final undertaking – or 'swan song'.[145] In a manner that echoes that of his grandfather, in a poem known as the *Vows of the Heron* Edward III is said to have held a feast on the eve of the Hundred Years War at which he and his knights promised to perform great deeds of arms in France.[146] It is interesting to note than Keen has traced the influence of these vows taken on birds to the *Roman d'Alixandre*, a work that also had an influence over Barbour's composition of *The Bruce*.[147] Purdie has argued convincingly that Barbour was familiar with the work known as the *Voeux du paon* ('The Peacock Vows'), an early fourteenth-century *chanson de geste* in which the motif of an oath made on a bird is given particular prominence.[148] Tyson has suggested that Chandos herald may also have been familiar with the *Voeux*.[149] Chandos herald also records that on his deathbed the Black Prince is keen to extract oaths that his son's position will be respected and maintained after his death, first from his followers and then from his family.[150]

Oaths also played a part in diplomacy. Oaths taken as part of peace settlements were incumbent not only on rulers but also on their subjects, and therefore they required a degree of collective agreement in order to be effective.[151] In the case of significant peace accords,

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[143] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland,* p. 96
[144] M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 32
[145] M. Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-Western Europe, 1270-1380,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 218-220
[146] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 213
[147] Ibid. p. 121; Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 59
[148] Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 60-66; *Les Voeux du Paon de Jacques de Longuyon: originalité et rayonnement*, C. Gaullier-Bougassas (ed.), (Paris: Klincksieck, 2011)
[149] Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', p. 122
[150] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 4135-4152
[151] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 153

Offenstadt observes that copies of the agreements would be circulated and read aloud in towns across the kingdom with a preamble intended to present those who had made the agreement as committed peacemakers.[152] In the Treaty of Brétigny, negotiated in 1360 between Edward, Prince of Wales, and the dauphin and regent of France, the future Charles V, the two parties swore oaths to uphold the provisions of the treaty while touching copies of the Gospels, and the treaty specified that their fathers – King Edward and King John respectively – should approve, swear and confirm the treaty in writing within a month of the original ceremony.[153] In an example closer to Hary's time, the Treaty of Barcelona, concluded on 19th November 1493 between Ferdinand II of Aragon and King Charles VIII of France, specifically mentioned the fact that the two parties made their oaths while touching copies of the Gospels.[154] According to Offenstadt, the public ritual of peace-making did not necessarily play a significant part in the establishment of practical peace but rather allowed the main actors to present themselves in a favourable light, enhance their reputations and appease their fellow noblemen and subjects alike.[155] No doubt this could also be true for oath-making more generally.

Keen devotes a considerable amount of time detailing just how extravagant and flamboyant the taking of oaths could be, but he is also at pains to stress the seriousness with which oaths were treated after they had been made.[156] The exchange of gifts, or even the exchange of hostages in some cases, added a tangible element to the interaction between powerful individuals.[157] Otherwise, oaths were concerned with the less material consequences of making and breaking relationships among the medieval aristocracy.[158] Bukowska has observed that in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* the vows made by Malory's knights are not accompanied by extravagant gestures but they do have dramatic consequences when carried through to their logical conclusion.[159] This is true of Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace* as well. Neither writer presents the swearing of oaths as involving a great deal of pomp and ceremony, but the consequences of their main characters carrying out the deeds they have sworn to undertake are invariably significant. It is rare for Barbour to note any material exchange or benefits for his heroes when they make an oath,

[152] Offenstadt, 'The rituals of peace during the Civil War in France', p. 95
[153] Lesaffer, 'Peace treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', p. 149
[154] Ibid. p. 150
[155] Offenstadt, 'The rituals of peace during the Civil War in France', p. 100
[156] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 215
[157] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 81
[158] Lesaffer, 'Peace treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', p. 164
[159] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 62

and even rarer for Hary to do so. It is interesting to note that one of the few instance in which Barbour choses to include details of an actual material transaction being sealed with an oath is in an episode involving Sir Ingram and a traitor who is close enough to Bruce to know and exploit his personal habits to kill him, with Sir Ingram promising the man forty pounds worth of land for him and his heirs if he kills King Robert.[160]

The significance of oath-making and breaking is clear in the literature of the time. Childs for instance notes the importance of digressions and asides in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* for providing an insight into the author's understanding of treason.[161] Cooper too observes that in England the fifteenth-century saw a gradual generic trend in romance literature away from narratives about the restoration of familial and political order and towards narratives constructed around unresolved treason, perhaps best typified in Malory's *Morte Darthur*.[162] Leitch has noted the use of censure and repetition to discourage the audience from undertaking treasonous actions in the prose romances *Godeffroy of Bolojne*, *Gharles the Grete*, and *The Four Sonnes of Aymon* alongside Malory's *Morte Darthur*, all of which were among the first works printed by William Caxton in the 1480s.[163] It can at least partly be seen in King Edward's keenness to gain oaths from Balliol and Bruce. In the thirteenth-century *Roman de Fergus*, the jealous Sir Kay goads Fergus to swear to seek out the wicked black-clad knight who has killed so many of Arthur's knights in the past.[164] Gawain admonishes Kay for taking advantage of Fergus' naivety and both he and the king think that Fergus is heading for certain death, but neither tries to stop him once he has made an oath to go on this quest.[165] He must follow it through regardless of the danger it puts him in or the anguish it causes the court. This is much like *The Wallace*, where swearing to undertake a certain action in public frequently leads the hero into dangerous situations that might otherwise have been easily avoided.

Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* provides one of the most extreme examples of a chivalric oath and the lengths to which a knight might go to in order to fulfil such a vow. This example is all the more notable for having apparently been based on the reminiscences

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[160] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 515-522

[161] W. R. Childs, 'Resistance and treason in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*', in M. Prestwich, R.H. Britnell and Robin Frame (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England, VI: Proceedings of the Durham Conference*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1995), p. 177

[162] H. Cooper, 'Counter-romance: civil strife and father-killing in the prose romances', in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. H. Cooper and S. Mapstone (Oxford, 1997), p. 148

[163] M. Leitch, 'Thinking twice about treason in Caxton's prose romances: proper chivalric conduct and the English printing press', in *Medium Ævum* 81:1 (2012) pp. 41-69

[164] *Fergus of Galloway*, p. 13

[165] Ibid. p, 13-14

of the writer's father and is thus at least supposed to be a real world example of this phenomenon. A knight called Sir William Marmion is given a richly-decorated helmet by his lady-love with instructions to use it in combat in the most dangerous place in Britain to increase its fame and prove his love for her. After consulting with a group of fellow knights Sir William decides that the place that best fits this description is Norham Castle and he arrives there four days before a Scottish force under the command of Sir Alexander Mowbray appears before the walls.[166] The constable of Norham Castle – the writer's father – charges Sir William to ride out to face the enemy alone, promising to rescue the knight should he get into difficulty – which he inevitably does.[167] Although Sir William's attack on the enemy does not achieve much in material terms, getting him wounded and forcing the garrison to come to his rescue fairly quickly, Gray reserves no criticism for Sir William's actions and it is clear from the context of the tale that Gray considers this feat to have been a very worthy one. Of course, by the end of the tale Sir William has achieved his previously stated objectives. He has used the helmet in battle and in doing so has proven that he loves his lady and increased the fame of the helmet, a fact demonstrated by the act of recording the tale in the chronicle. But more than that Sir William has remained true to his word despite the hardship and suffering it has demanded of him, and this is truly what makes his actions so worthy. An episode with a similar moral can be found in *The Bruce*. After Douglas retakes his castle from the English for a second time, a letter is found on the body of the English captain Sir John Webiton, in which a lady promises him 'Hyr amouris and hyr drouery' if he can hold the castle for a year.[168] Once again, this is an example of a knight making a promise to undertake a hazardous task for a lady he loves, and once again Barbour reserves no criticism for the oath that Webiton made. This is all the more striking in *The Bruce* because, as has been noted elsewhere, Barbour is usually so concerned with prudence and frequently encourages his audience to be careful in how they deport themselves in warfare. However, as with Marmion Webiton has undertaken his oath in good faith and has stuck by his word, even at the cost of his own life. That Barbour declines to comment negatively on the outcome of his oath serves to reinforce the point that standing by one's word was the key element of oath-making in the late medieval period.

Barbour advocates a particular idealised way of formulating an oath throughout *The*

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[166] Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, (Sir H. Maxwell ed. & trans.), (Glasgow: J. Maclehose & sons, 1907), p. 61
[167] Ibid. p. 62
[168] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 488-499

Bruce. When his protagonists swear an oath it is always worded so as to anticipate both the positive and negative consequences of making it, binding them to fulfil their promise even if it means disaster or even death for them. Such oaths are chiefly concerned with recognising the practical realities of their fulfilment and are seemingly intended to deny those who make them the option of abandoning their responsibilities if a more beneficial alternative is presented to them. The oath Douglas makes on leaving the Bishop of St Andrews' service reflects the reality of the situation and anticipates good and bad consequences:

> Tharfor, schir, giff it war your will
> I wald tak with him gud and ill.[169]

In this way Barbour makes it explicit that oaths are to be kept even when they go badly. Barbour notes that Bruce was 'dredand for tresoun ay' and is said to have trusted no one until he knew them 'utraly'.[170] This is to guard against the possibility of treason and adds a further layer of calculation to his social interactions. Bruce shows a similar distrust of his unnamed 'hostess' on Arran, even after she has given him and his men shelter and entrusted her two sons to his care.[171] Barbour attributes the treachery of the men of Ross on their unwillingness to accept blame or danger in their actions, linking with Barbour's ideal expression of an oath.[172] Even the Mac na Dorsair brothers express their oath to murder Bruce in the ideal formulation.[173]

Interestingly, Wallace expresses his oath to take revenge against the treachery Macfadyan in terms of either accomplishing his goal or dying in the attempt, which echoes the form that Barbour advocates:

> Wallace avowide that he suld wrokyn be
> On that ribald or ellis tharfor to de.[174]

Wallace's single-minded commitment to fulfilling his oath contrasts sharply with the ease with which Macfadyan gives up his loyalty to the Scots in favour of the rewards promised by serving the English. Bukowska has observed that in Malory's *Le Morte*

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[169] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 109-110
[170] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 671-4
[171] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 671
[172] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 49-56
[173] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 96-8; Edward Bruce makes a similar vow in Bk. 5, ll. 64-70
[174] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 735-736

D'Arthur by having his knights adopt a standard formulation for how their oaths are expressed – typified by Bukowska by the Pentacostal oath that all of the Knights of the Round Table make – the writer imbues all those who swear oaths in that manner with a common, pre-determined model of moral behaviour.[175] The same might be said of Barbour's idealised structure for the making of an oath. By having certain knights use this standardised form of oath Barbour highlights the fact that these men adhere to a common, fundamentally moral model of how knights should behave. By extension, those knights who do not make oaths in this manner or do not carry their oaths through are thus fundamentally immoral.

Barbour is not overly concerned with ritual as it pertains to oath-making in *The Bruce*. He occasionally makes passing references to common aspects of chivalric display, such as incidental references to a knight's 'cot-armour' or noting that during the 1327 raid in Weardale was the first time the Scots had encountered helmets with crests.[176] This contrasts strongly with Chandos herald, who makes a point of describing the celebrations Prince Edward enjoyed while staying in Gascony.[177] Furthermore, Barbour's *Bruce* is almost entirely devoid of any courtly elements, which is to say that rarely does Barbour give an indication of King Robert holding court – another important arena for ritual and oath-making to take place. On two occasions Barbour does refer to Bruce calling parliament and on both of those occasions the issue of oath-making and loyalty feature prominently in the discussion. Roland Tanner has compiled a list of twelve parliaments, five councils, one colloquium and one unidentified assembly that Bruce is known to have held in reality, and he suggests that there were more such meetings the records of which have since been lost.[178] Parliaments were an important arena at which oaths might be exchanged, and Tanner has argued convincingly that for Bruce these meetings were a useful way for the king to gain legitimacy for his decisions and the documents produced at these gatherings often belie the level of influence the king himself had over their creation.[179] Bumke has also observed that one important motivations for kings to gather their magnates together was to generate a greater sense of unity among them and, more importantly, to bind them closer to him, while

[175] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 65
[176] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 400
[177] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 616-622; ll. 657-664
[178] R. J. Tanner, 'Cowing the community? Coercion and falsification in Robert Bruce's parliaments, 1309–1318', in K. M. Brown and R. J. Tanner (eds), *The History of the Scottish Parliament , vol. 1: Parliament and Politics in Scotland, 1235–1560*, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2004), p. 50; detailed records of these gatherings can be found at *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K. M. Brown et al eds. (St Andrews, 2007-2015) < http://www.rps.ac.uk/>
[179] Tanner, 'Cowing the community?', pp. 50-73

Oakley has suggested that the tendency for rulers to use parliaments in this way grew out of developments in governance beginning in the early thirteen-century.[180]

Barbour's accounts of the two parliaments he chooses to record reflect Tanner's model more closely than Bumke's, although elements of both are identifiable. The first time Bruce calls parliament is to try William Soules and his fellow conspirators for plotting to overthrow the king.[181] Interestingly, the conspiracy is referred to as 'felony' and 'a fell conjuracioun', but not directly as 'tresoun', although the punishment the majority of the conspirators suffered – hanging, drawing and quartering – was usually reserved for traitors.[182] The trial of the conspirators in open parliament serves to validate the brutal punishment meted out against them. This was indeed one of the purposes of such undertakings in reality, and Barbour's reference to suggests that he recognised this fact.[183] The second time that Bruce calls parliament is shortly after the marriage of David and Joan of the Tower. The purpose of this parliament is two-fold. The parliament is to oversee the coronation of David and secure 'manredyn and fewté' from the lords and the community of the realm, and to secure the succession – including appointing Guardians in the event of King Robert's premature death.[184] Although according to Barbour King Robert did not fall ill until after this parliament, it is fairly clear that Barbour intends this passage to reassure his audience that the king made ample arrangements for the administration for his kingdom before he died, and to affirm the line of succession leading from Robert I down to the king at the time Barbour was writing – Robert II. Not only are the lords present expected to swear to King Robert and his son that they will fulfil his wishes, but they are also expected to swear to the two Guardians – the earl of Moray and Sir James Douglas – as well.[185]

Barbour's account of the 1328 parliament is not entirely accurate to the historical event it records but it does reflect an apparent awareness of broader elements of parliamentary activity in late medieval Scotland. According to the brieve of summons for the last parliament held by Bruce – held in Edinburgh in 1328 – the main subject of discussion was to be the peace settlement with England rather than the question of succession but a pair of tailzies entailing the crown are known to have been produced in

[180] Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 209; Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 155
[181] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 46-49
[182] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 3-6; for the means of execution of all of the conspirators apart from Soules himself, cf. *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 56-57; for the use of hanging and drawing as a punishment for treason in a Scottish context – albeit in the mid-fifteenth-century – cf. *RPS*, 1455/10/3. Date accessed: 8th September 2015
[183] Tanner, 'Cowing the community?', p. 50
[184] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 199-147
[185] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 148-152

Robert I's reign – one at Ayr in 1315 and one at Scone in 1318.[186] The extraction of oaths of loyalty from the assembled prelates and nobles, as was the case in the 1315 and 1318 tailzies, seems to have been a means of subverting the 'community of the realm' in favour of pursuing King Robert's personal agenda, implying – as Tanner argues – that the loyalty of those involved could not be taken for granted and placing on the community an obligation to fulfil the demands of the decision.[187] The list of people whose seals were attached to the 1315 tailzie includes far more names of individuals known to have been of dubious loyalty – or indeed to have been in outright opposition to King Robert – and in fact excludes a number of noted loyalists including the likes of Sir James Douglas.[188] The implication seems to be that the document was intended to force those of questionable loyalty to adhere to its prescriptions, and to present an image of greater cohesion than was in fact the case. The establishment of Robert Stewart as Bruce's legitimate successor, based as it was on his relationship to King Robert through his mother, must have seemed controversial at the time it was first proposed at the parliament at Scone in 1318, given the nature of the dispute between King Robert's grandfather and John Balliol over the question of succession in 1292.[189] Consequently, it is unsurprising that securing broad aristocratic support for the younger Robert's succession in particular would be a high priority for King Robert. Once again, parliament is used by Barbour in much the same way as parliaments were used in reality, to provide a public forum in which oaths could be given and, perhaps more importantly, witnessed.

The parliament called to try Soules and his accomplices adds legitimacy to the brutal manner in which the conspirators were dealt with and shares the responsibility for the decision between the king and the community at large. More pertinent to this study, in the second instance parliament is used to demonstrate the wider recognition of the line of succession down to the time that Barbour was writing. This may have seemed particularly pertinent in the mid-1370s, as in 1373 Robert II had entailed the crown to his sons and their male heirs at a parliament in Scone.[190] It is possible that Barbour had this model in mind when composing the second passage, and wished to suggest that Robert I had set a precedent that Robert II was mimicking in his own time. Goldstein has used the –albeit

[186] *RPS*, A1328/1a. Date accessed: 24th October 2015; *RPS*, 1315/1. Date accessed: 24th October 2015; *RPS*, 1318/30. Date accessed: 24th October 2015
[187] Tanner, 'Cowing the community?', p. 65
[188] Ibid. p. 65-66; although a number of seals on the 1315 tailzie are broken and therefore illegible, *RPS*, 1315/1. Date accessed: 23 October 2015
[189] Tanner, 'Cowing the community?', p. 71
[190] *RPS*, 1373/3. Date accessed: 24th October 2015

relatively rare – episodes in which Barbour emphasises the art of governance to suggest a direct connection between the exemplary nature of the works and the politics of their time.[191] By recording that the whole community made a series of oaths to uphold the succession Barbour makes it clear that it was not merely by the will of King Robert that the kingship descended to Robert II, but rather something communally recognised as beneficial. Many of the men giving their consent in the second parliament would have been fathers and grandfathers of Barbour's intended audience. The parliaments are in effect set-dressing intended to bolster the legitimacy of decisions that might otherwise seem less acceptable if they had been arbitrarily taken by the king without consulting the wider aristocratic community and getting their consent.

Ritual and display do not feature prominently in *The Wallace* either, but the work is not devoid of it entirely. Hary provides a detailed account of a character's heraldry on two separate occasions, once in the case of the so-called Red Reiver and again in the case of John of Lyn.[192] Interestingly, in both cases the men whose arms are described happen to be notorious pirates, and their stories essentially mirror one another. In each case, their arms are given as the chief means of identifying them – perhaps the most fundamental reason for a knight to adopt a coat of arms – and their arms communicate, in symbolic form, a great deal of information about the two men. The connection between a coat of arms and the characteristics of the man who bore them was often more acute in literature than in reality, but even in reality heraldic devices were expected to communicate something of the man to whom they belonged. If nothing else, this shows an appreciation of the basic functions of chivalric display on Hary's part.

Hary presents the most detailed impression of his thoughts on common chivalric ritual in the vision that Wallace receives of St Andrew and the Virgin Mary.[193] The passage in *The Wallace* also has echoes of an arming scene, such as that in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.[194] However, the episode also mirrors some of the common aspects of a knightly dubbing ceremony. The prominence of Mary in this passage ties *The Wallace* into broader trends with knightly culture in the later medieval period, through the growing association of Marian devotion – which was already widespread by the time Hary was

[191] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 37
[192] For the description of the Red Reiver's coat of arms, cf. *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 236-241; for the description of John of Lyn's coat of arms, cf. *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 835-836
[193] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 71-152
[194] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkein and E.V. Gordon, 2nd edn. ed. Norman Davis. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), ll. 566-669

writing in the fifteenth-century – and knighthood. As early as the 1270s, Ramon Llull showed signs of devotion to Mary in his treatise on chivalry.[195] By the 1350s, Geoffroi de Charny made the connection between devotion to Mary and idealised knighthood explicit when he states that knights should serve the Virgin Mary 'with all their hearts' (*de touz leurs cuers*).[196] Furthermore, Mary was selected as patron for at least two prominent orders of lay knights – the Company of the Star (founded as *Les Chevaliers de Nostre Dame de la Noble Maison* or 'the Knights of Our Lady of the Noble House' in 1352) and the Order of the Collar (also known as the *Ordre de l'Annunciation Notre Dame* or 'Order of the Annunciation of Our Lady', founded around 1364).[197] Mary was also associated with the Order of the Garter through the rededication in 1348 of the order's devotional centre at Windsor Castle to Edward the Confessor, St George (the order's primary patron) and the Blessed Virgin.[198]

On the surface, the vision represents the bestowing on Wallace of the spiritual authority to lead the resistance against the repeated English attempts to dominate Scotland. However, when read as a dubbing ceremony the scene offers the deeper implication that no one on earth is worthy enough to grant Wallace the honour of knighthood and so it must instead be bestowed directly from the spiritual authority from which knighthood gains its moral force. The dubbing of a knight was one of the most elemental rituals in medieval aristocratic society, one which all medieval aristocrats would be familiar with and one invested with considerable significance in the life of a knight.[199] The specific elements of the dubbing ceremony were subject to change both geographically and temporally throughout the medieval period and indeed could even be modified depending on the individual taste of those involved. As a consequence of this, drawing up a 'definitive' set of features that typified the knightly dubbing ceremony in the medieval period virtually impossible. However, certain common aspects can be identified and used to judge whether Hary intended Wallace's vision to stand in for his dubbing by an earthly superior. The *Ordene de chevalerie* was a popular work dealing with the dubbing ceremony that Keen uses to set out his summation of the standard elements of the dubbing ceremony, having observed that it was used as an authoritative source well into the fifteenth-century.[200] This

[195] Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, p. 44, 63
[196] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 184
[197] Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown*, p. 189, 261
[198] Ibid. p. 124
[199] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 64-82; Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p. 41-62
[200] Keen, *Chivalry*, p.7

source has the prospective knight taking a bath, to remind them of their baptism; reclining on a bed to symbolise the repose of paradise that the knight must strive for; dressing in a white robe for purity; wearing a scarlet cloak to remind the knight to be ready to shed his blood in a righteous cause; putting on brown stockings to make him contemplate the earth in which he will be buried after his death; putting on a white belt to signify purity (or more specifically virginity); equipped with gold spurs to enable him to be swift in his response to his duty; the new knight is given a sword, the two sharp edges of which were to remind him that justice and loyalty go together, and he is told to defend the poor from oppressors; and finally the knight receives a blow from the one who dubbed him.

Geoffroi de Charny also offers a description of the rituals that he believes should accompany the dubbing of a knight 'in order that it should be better understood' (*pour ce que l'on entende miex*).[201] According to Charny, prospective knights should receive confession; bathe, reflecting on the need to cleanse themselves of sin; rest in 'a new bed in clean sheets' (*un lit tout neuf et les draps blans*), symbolising the rest that comes from a clear conscience; and be dressed in new clothes (symbolising the renewal the knight is about to undergo), including a red tunic (representing his pledge to shed his blood in defence of God and the Church), black hose (reminding the knight of the earth from which they came), a white belt (signifying purity), and a red cloak (which Charny believes to be an ancient symbol of humility).[202] Charny states that a prospective knight should spend the night in a Church at prayer and then, after hearing mass in the morning, should have gold spurs fixed to their feet (symbolising that worldly thoughts of wealth should be removed as far away from the knight's mind as possible) and be given a sword (the two edges of which should remind the knight to 'maintain right, reason and justice on all sides' (*maintenir droiture, raison, et justice de toutes pars*).[203] Finally, those whose role it is to confer the honour of knighthood on the candidate are to close the ceremony by reminding them of the responsibilities that their new title bestows on them.[204] The similarities between Charny's presentation of the dubbing ceremony and the *Ordene* are clear, and while the vision Hary describes in *The Wallace* does not contain every element of either of these earlier works the parallels are still striking as much of the symbolism is the same.

[201] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 166
[202] Ibid. p. 166-168
[203] Ibid. p. 168-170
[204] Ibid. p. 170

In *The Wallace*, the Virgin Mary and St Andrew means that the thought of paradise is a constant throughout the scene. In fact, Hary takes this point further than the *Ordene* or Charny by giving Wallace a guarantee of 'lestand blys' from the Blessed Virgin herself.[205] The clerk who interprets Wallace's vision afterward claims that the silver letters represent 'cleyne lyff and hewynnys blys'.[206] The gold lettering of the Virgin Mary's book is said by the clerk to represent the distinctly chivalric qualities of honour, worthiness and prowess, or 'wictour in armys' as Hary puts it.[207] Wallace receives a sword from St Andrew who informs him 'Gud sone…this brand thou sall bruk weill'.[208] The clerk who explains Wallace's vision to him describes St Andrew as 'wowar off Scotland'.[209] This is mirrored in Hary's description of Wallace as 'conuoyar' of Scotland following his victory at Stirling Bridge, which occurs shortly after the vision.[210] In the *Roman de Fergus*, Fergus is presented with his sword by Perceval during his dubbing ceremony.[211] Since *Fergus* drew so heavily on Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval*, this episode has been interpreted as representing the symbolic appointment of Fergus as Perceval's successor.[212] Similarly, St Andrew hands Wallace the sword, with which he is to fulfil his role as Guardian, and in this way bestows Wallace with the same privilege and responsibility of Andrew's own supernatural guardianship of the nation.[213] Keen has previously noted that ritual girding symbolised not only the knight's increased social importance but also served as a 'commission of authority', bestowing upon the knight the rights and responsibilities his new social status entailed.[214]

Hary makes it explicitly clear that these attributes are given to Wallace directly by the grace of God. The symbolism of red remains the same in *The Wallace* as it does in the *Ordene* and Charny's *Livre*, but instead of being associated with a cloak as in the *Ordene* it is associated instead with the wand given to him by the Virgin Mary.[215] The wand itself

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[205] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.104
[206] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.149
[207] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.147-8
[208] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.76
[209] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.124
[210] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 1253; the battle occurs, according to Hary, on the Feast of the Assumption and Hary notes 'Ay lowyt be our lady off hir grace!', implying the Virgin Mary's involvement in securing victory for the Scots and tying the event back into the vision that Wallace received so recently.
[211] *Fergus of Galloway*, p. 23
[212] Ibid. p.119
[213] Among the most notable identifications of St Andrew and the Kingdom of Scotland as a whole can be seen in the Seal of the Guardians of Scotland, first created c.1286, one side of which features the saint on his cross, Birch, *History of Scottish Seals*, vol. 1, illustration 14
[214] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 72-73
[215] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.93

is interesting as this equipment would usually be more suited to the coronation of a king than the dubbing of a knight. This may mean that the commission of Wallace is doubly subversive. It bestows on Wallace the right to be a knight by divine consent – as opposed to it being bestowed by a more experienced knight – but also carries with it the possibility of divine sanction for Wallace's usurpation of the king's authority in his role as Guardian. It thus becomes both dubbing ceremony and, at least temporarily, coronation. The fact that the clerk claims the mountain from which Wallace sees Scotland burning symbolises the endowment of 'knowledge to haiff off wrang that thow mon rycht' attests to this notion of Wallace being given divine permission to stand in for the king.[216] Traits like prowess, honour, loyalty, courtesy or largesse are what might be expected of any knight, either by the kingdom or simply by the rigours of chivalric practice. But the authority and wisdom to pass judgement on the community at large with justice is a more kingly virtue.

The 'dubbing' vision is imbued with nationalistic overtones. The scene includes a vision of Scotland 'fra Ros to Sulway san' burning.[217] St Andrew's speech to Wallace encourages him to go and resist great wrongs. In his translation, William Hamilton turns this into an exhortation to revenge the wrongs committed against Scotland.[218] But in the original the 'mekill wrang' is not specifically applied to Scotland. The Virgin Mary similarly tells Wallace:

> Thou art grantyt be the gret god abuff
> Till help pepill that sufferis mekill wrang'.[219]

The Virgin Mary also paints the sign of the cross on Wallace's face with a sapphire.[220] This has been by some taken to mean painting his face with a saltire, which is the position adopted by Elspeth King in her annotations on William Hamilton's translation.[221] Again, it is not entirely clear from the original that this is Hary's intention, but it would certainly lend credence to the notion that the writer is deliberately introducing a strongly patriotic element to the process of making Wallace a knight. It is Mary who gives Wallace the injunction to save Scotland in particular, telling him 'This rycht regioun thow

[216] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.126
[217] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.88
[218] Hamilton of Gilbertfield, *Wallace*, p. 80
[219] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.96-7
[220] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll.94
[221] Hamilton of Gilbertfield, *Wallace*, p. 80

mon redeme it all'.[222] Keen has noted, with some surprise, that the *Ordene* portrays the dubbing ceremony as a largely secular rite, albeit with a strong inclination towards the pursuit of Christian salvation but with no need for it to take place in a church or for a member of the clergy to be present.[223] In *The Wallace*, on the other hand, not only is the event imbued with religious overtones but Wallace's 'dubbing' is literally divinely-appointed. In this sense Wallace's 'dubbing' is even more overtly religious than the dubbing ceremony envisioned by Charny, despite not taking place in a church. He is equipped for his quest by St Andrew, Scotland's patron. His quest is then commissioned by the Virgin Mary herself, whose spiritual authority is only surpassed by God Himself, and Hary is very clear on the point that it is God who has granted Wallace the vision and is sanctioning Wallace's future actions.

While these isolated instances are the only appreciation of the two writers with ritual associated with oath-making, both of them engage with oath-making in other ways. Protection of property rights was a key element of oath-making. Indeed, forfeiture of property was commonly employed as a punishment for traitors in fifteenth-century legal documentation.[224] This can be seen in Barbour's *Bruce* as well. For instance, Bruce makes an oath to his men on the second day of the Battle of Bannockburn that should any of them die in his service he will guarantee that their property will not be alienated from their heirs.[225] In medieval European society the exchanging of oaths were a key part of ensuring political allegiance, securing lands and titles, maintaining authority and protecting inheritances.[226] David Kertzer, who is an anthropologist by training, has claimed that there were two aspects of kingship, the theocratic – by which the king was positioned above his subjects as their divinely-appointed ruler – and the feudal – by which the king behaved much like his tenants-in-chief and entered into contractual relations with them on more or less equal terms.[227] Oath-making and the kinds of agreement that it usually accompanied would fall squarely into the second of these aspects.

Pardon and Wasserman have identified three key elements that might be expected to accompany the establishment of lord-vassal relations in this period – the paying of homage by the vassal, the swearing of fealty, again by the vassal, and the investiture of the

[222] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, 101
[223] Keen, *Chivalry*, p.7
[224] *RPS*, 1430/41. Date accessed: 8th September 2015;
[225] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 318-322
[226] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 62
[227] D. I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power*, (New Haven London Yale University Press, 1988), p. 66

vassal with a fief of some kind by the lord.[228] Not all of these elements necessarily needed to be present in every instance of such relations being established but, according to Pardon and Wasserman at least, the most important of these elements was the paying of homage. These scholars have sought to identify the paying of homage in a number of episodes in Barbour's *Bruce*. For instance, they claim that the paying of homage is implied when the housewife gives her two sons into the service of the king.[229] They also suggest that Barbour implies that Moray pays homage to Bruce at the same time as they exchange their views on how the war against the English should be prosecuted immediately after Moray has been captured.[230] This claim is not entirely convincing, since at the end of the exchange Barbour tells us that Bruce had Moray placed in custody and denied him the freedom even to see to his own lands.[231] Homage was most effective when it was specific and personal as it bound both parties with reciprocal obligations.[232] There are numerous instances of the paying of homage and the swearing of fealty in Barbour's *Bruce* but notable examples include King Edward's attempts to make Robert Bruce and John Balliol pay homage to him for the Scottish crown and the English king's refusal to accept Sir James Douglas' fealty in return for the restoration of his lands.[233] In Barbour's *Bruce* it is almost always the case that the oaths made by the main protagonists are personal in nature. In other words, they are sworn by an individual to another individual, rather than to an organisation or something more abstract. It has been suggested that the various examples of specific vassal homage and oath-making in *The Bruce* is evidence of Barbour's familiarity with the practicalities of feudal obligation.[234]

In *The Wallace* on the other hand, it is more common for Wallace to make more general oaths that rely on his own sense of personal honour or fulfilment. The most well-known oath made in the entire poem is that of Wallace to kill ten thousand Englishmen in revenge for the murder of his wife.[235] Wallace is not the only character in *The Wallace* to swear an oath that determines their behaviour for the remainder of the poem and his closest companions – Sir John Graham and Sir Thomas Longawell – are bound to him by oaths that Hary choses to include in the text. When Graham, Wallace's closest and most loyal

[228] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', in p. 83
[229] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 266-268
[230] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 87
[231] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 759-762
[232] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 83
[233] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 154-156; Bk. 1, ll. 415-436
[234] Pardon and Wasserman, 'Chivalry and Feudal Obligation in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 87
[235] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 221-222

follower besides Longawell, first appears his dying father makes him swear on a shield to serve Wallace faithfully for life:

> On a braid scheyld his fader gert him swer
> He suld be trew till Wallace in all thing
> And he till him quhill lyff mycht in thaim ryng.[236]

This is echoed in Longawell's oath on his sword later in the poem, after he has been captured by Wallace and given his weapons over to his captor:

> Bathe knyff and swerd scharply he tuk fra him onon,
> Up be the hand as prisoner has him ton,
> And on his swerd scharply he gert him swer
> Fra that day furth he suld him never der.[237]

Despite the unequivocal nature of these oaths, there are lingering questions over whether a knight should employ shrewdness when about to enter into an oath and how the oath should be phrased for Hary. A similar tension has previously been noted in other prominent works as well. For instance in *Sir Tristrem*, a Middle English translation of Thomas of Britain's *Roman de Tristan* produced around 1330, Yseut is put on trial for her adulterous affair with Sir Tristan but she constructs a judicial oath with such ambiguous phrasing that she is able to satisfy both her divine and mortal witnesses without lying outright or incriminating herself or her lover.[238]

There are notable instances where calculation is actively discouraged by both Barbour and Hary. Even Barbour equates loyalty with simplicity early in the poem:

> Bot ye traistyt in lawté
> As sympile folk but mavyté,
> And wyst nocht quhat suld efter tyd.[239]

Bruce's response to Edward's offer of the crown demonstrates a kind of openness and honesty, in sharp contrast to Edward's clandestine offer.[240] Such attitudes can be identified in other works of chivalric literature. In the *Roman de Fergus*, Fergus is un-

[236] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 446-448
[237] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 287-290
[238] J. Gilbert, 'Gender, Oaths and Ambiguity in Sir Tristrem and Beroul's *Roman de Tristan*', in A. Putter and J. Gilbert (eds.), *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, (Harlow: Longman, 2000), p. 238
[239] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 125-7
[240] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 157-164

calculating to a fault. It is his inability to dissimulate the petty courtly jealousies of Sir Kay that first propels him into the main action of the poem.[241] It is in *Golagros and Gawane* that we can see the most obvious discourse in opposition to the idea of calculation. Here, knightly virtue is shown not through coercion or physical force but rather restraint, which is the public expression of a knight's moral force.[242]

Yet criticism of impulsive oaths is also evident in late medieval literature. Bukowska has identified several instances in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* in which an unwise oath leaves a knight faced with an irresolvable conflict in which their very honour is at stake.[243] Often the main weakness of these oaths is that they are unconditional; they do not set out clear parameters regarding what is expected of the knight, what the oath is intended to achieve or what consequences the oath-taker anticipates. Barbour shows some awareness of this issue when he has Moray swear to fight the English in Weardale even though they are more numerous than the Scots. Douglas praises his bravery but advises that they should only fight with the English if they can adopt a superior position:

> The erle his ayth has sworn then,
> 'We sall fecht with thaim thocht thai war
> Yeit ma eftsonys than thai ar.'
> 'Schyr, lovyt be God,' he said agayn,
> 'That we haiff sic a capitayn
> That sua gret thing dar undreta,
> Bot, be saynct Bryd, it beis nocht sua
> Giff my consaill may trowyt be,
> For fecht on na maner sall we
> Bot it be at our avantage,
> For methink it war na outrage
> To fewar folk aganys ma
> Avantage quhen thai ma to ta.'[244]

Hary at first seems deeply concerned with the criticism of rash oaths, which he uses to highlight a serious tension in the chivalric attitudes of his protagonists:

> Bot for thi liff and all his land so braid
> I will nocht brek this promes that is maid'.[245]

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[241] *Fergus of Galloway*, p. 13-15
[242] *Gologros and Gawane*
[243] J. Bukowaska, 'Promises kept and broken', p. 71
[244] Ibid. Bk. 19, ll. 296-308
[245] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 903-4

This statement comes to define so many key moments later in the poem. Affronted by Stewart's demands for command of the army at Falkirk, Wallace rashly swears that 'reskew off me thow sall get nane this day'.[246] Once battle is met Wallace immediately regrets this decision but is bound by his honour to uphold his vow, even though it hurts him deeply. There follows a serious debate between Wallace's 'wyll' and his 'kyndnes', a debate that threatens to undermine the foundations of Wallace's quest and illustrates the potential tensions inherent in the position Wallace has adopted.[247] Wallace's return from France in the final book of the poem is also the consequence of a rash vow, made in a fit of rage and without full consideration of the facts.[248] Hary notes Wallace's hastiness in responding to the French king's supposed challenge to fight with the lion.[249] The tension here is even more keenly felt as his return to Scotland ultimately leads to his execution. However, in both of these instances the episode is instigated by the conniving of characters other than Wallace, with Wallace being presented as an innocent victim of other people's scheming.

The Wallace is littered with examples of Wallace's simplicity and straight-forwardness when facing adversity. When confronted by five men in the service of the lord Percy to give up some of the fish he has recently caught to feed his uncle, Wallace initially offers to share half of his catch with them, apparently not realising their obviously malicious intent.[250] Of course, when they do eventually attack him he quickly disarms one of them with his fishing pole, uses this man's sword to kill three of them and sends the other two fleeing in terror.[251] Wallace's brief time as lord of Guyenne in France is dogged by political intrigue but throughout this section of the poem Wallace continues to meet every challenge with typical earnest simplicity. Firstly, he finds himself fighting fifty knights with only fifteen of his own men, none of whom are wearing armour and are armed only with swords and knives, in order to defend his claim from a man who out of jealousy claims the right to his lordship.[252] Shortly after this he kills two French champions with his bare hands for accusing Scots of all being false.[253] The Frenchmen speak in their own language to further alienate Wallace. The brutal manner with which Wallace dispatches the

[246] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 157
[247] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 217-240
[248] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 254-262
[249] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 226
[250] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 385-387
[251] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 401-417
[252] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 71-95
[253] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 167-180

two French champions – dashing their brains out against a pillar – displeases many French nobles, although Wallace is pardoned by the king.[254] This leads directly to two squires, who are specifically mentioned as being motivated to revenge the two French champions, to bring Wallace to grief through 'frawd and sutelte'.[255] The squires convince the king that Wallace wants to fight the lion and make Wallace believe it is the king's wish to see Wallace fight the lion.[256]

The theme that unifies Wallace's trials in France, and indeed the incident involving Comyn and the Steward at the Battle of Falkirk, is that of 'inwy', to use the term Hary himself employs. 'Inwy' quite unsurprisingly carries with it connotations of jealousy, and this concept can be used to explain the actions of many of Wallace's most prominent personal enemies. In the brief commentary on 'inwy' that Hary provides following the incident with the squires and the lion, he compares 'inwy' to a dragon that burns inside those who let it into their lives:

> Lordis behald, Inwy the wyle dragoun,
> In cruell fyr he byrnys his regioun:
> For he is nocht that bonde is in Inwy.
> To sum myschieff it bryngis him haistely.
> Forsaik Inwy, thou sall the better speid.[257]

In this passage, Hary emphasises the fact that those who succumb to 'inwy' will be brought to mischief by it. He makes it explicit that it was because of 'inwy' that both the champions and the squires were punished.[258] Hary places considerable emphasis on the importance of wrongdoers facing proper punishment elsewhere in the poem, such as in the case of John of Lyn who is properly punished – albeit summarily – for his transgressions when Wallace beheads him in battle. Thus the notion that 'inwy' brings about upset and disaster for those who give in to it is consistent with Hary's wider views

Key to any discussion of how these works deal with an issue is the question of whether the authors are offering an opportunity for their audience to modify their behaviour. Barbour observes that Douglas' knightly virtues inspire the same virtues in his men.[259] Barbour also closes both versions of the tale of the three traitors with an interesting

[254] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 187-189
[255] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 202-207
[256] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 211-216; Bk. 12, ll. 223-225
[257] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 287-291
[258] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll.285-286
[259] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 359-66

statement attributed to Bruce that makes treason the corrupting force that defined them as evil men.[260] This warning against treachery is tinged with the possibility of redemption, for Barbour's audience at least, if they renounce their treacherous ways. Barbour states categorically that even men innately given to evil can change their nature with the application of intelligence and that they are obliged to do so.[261] Before sailing back to the mainland after having spent the winter on the run since his defeat at the Battle of Methven, Bruce decides to send a spy named Cuthbert ahead to ensure that it is safe for the king and his men to land.[262] Unfortunately, another party inadvertently gives the signal that Cuthbert was supposed to use to bring King Robert back to the mainland and so the king arrives prematurely. When Bruce finds that he has returned to Carrick at an inopportune moment he berates Cuthbert for his apparent treachery but gives the man a chance to defend himself and is understanding when Cuthbert explains the situation.[263] Barbour here seems to be encouraging some degree of honesty and openness among knights as a means of assuaging tensions, and also advocates the possibility of redemption for those who have been wrongly accused of treason. At the very least, this incident demonstrates the importance of retaining a measure of calmness when facing difficulties, which is directly opposed to Wallace's tendency to react hotly to any perceived slight. In *The Wallace*, when Wallace defeats the Red Reiver, the Reiver makes a public confession of his misdeeds and tells Wallace that if he will intercede to the King of France to pardon the Reiver he will not only mend his ways but also give himself in service to Wallace.[264] Despite knowing that this man is a pirate and a murderer, Wallace not only agrees to plead on the Reiver's behalf to the king but also offers the Reiver friendship instead of servitude. It is not only that Wallace unquestioningly accepts this oath that makes it interesting, but also the fact that the Reiver, thereafter known by his real name as Longawell, does indeed mend his ways.

In reality, noblemen could be calculating in all of their social interactions. Some authors, such as Barbour, sought to adapt attitudes to make calculations more open and honest, but did not seek to remove a degree of calculation from the oaths that a knight might make. Others tried to discourage calculation altogether. This is certainly true of *Golagros and Gawane*, and seems to be at least partially identifiable in the *Roman de Fergus* as well. Some authors simply used their works as a forum for criticising rash oaths in general, as

[260] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 655-8; Bk. 7, ll. 493
[261] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 735-9
[262] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 550-554
[263] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 51-61
[264] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 274-390

was the case with Blind Hary's *The Wallace*, but retained an admiration for a kind of earnest simplicity among the knightly class. This fits into the overall picture of chivalric literature as a genre that reflects the attitudes of the individual author more than any broad trends in thought, although we can make some general observations. In much the same way, works like Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace* were adapting to the changing nature of the challenges Scotland was experiencing at the time they were writing and the new demands this put on the martial class, using chivalry as a basis for this discussion.

Friendship in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*

Friendship has become a very popular field of study in recent years as scholars have started to appreciate the level of sophistication with which this concept was understood in the medieval period. The term 'friendship' has come to be seen as describing a primarily formal relationship between members of the gentry that could be used to regulate social interactions. Literary historians have also begun to note complex discussions of friendship within the romance literature that was so popular among the medieval aristocracy. However, Barbour's *Bruce* has received little attention in this regard. In order to conduct a study of Barbour's conception of 'proper' friendship, it is important to set out the intellectual history of friendship in the medieval period to contextualise Barbour's thoughts on the subject. Specifically, it will be necessary to explore the strands of Classical thought that inspired thinking on the subject of chivalry in the Christian age. Along with this, some consideration must be given to the tradition of chivalric writing relating to friendship, which was especially prevalent in the romance genre. Furthermore, the actual practicalities of how friendship operated in the medieval period will have to be examined in the hope of demonstrating friendship's basic functions in reality. Naturally, the primary example of a friendship in Barbour's *Bruce* is that between King Robert and 'the Good' Sir James Douglas. Consequently, the bulk of this chapter will focus on the main episodes that illustrate this relationship and Barbour's understanding of it, particularly their first meeting, the episode leading up to the Douglas Larder, an incident on the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn and the events surrounding the king's death. Where appropriate, attention will also be given to other, less prominent friendships in Barbour's *Bruce*, especially those involving the other main heroes of the work. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the ways in which Barbour evinces the 'standard' medieval understanding of friendship as a formal relationship between aristocratic men, consider the episodes that challenge this model and attempt to explain how these seemingly contradictory ideas co-existed in the same work. In particular, the chapter will demonstrate that, while his main intention may not have been to espouse an exemplary masculine friendship between Bruce and Douglas when he composed his work, Barbour did draw upon a tradition of chivalric friendships as outlined in romance literature.

Naturally friendship, being something so fundamentally part of human experience and relationships, is a subject that has been widely-discussed in literature stretching back

into antiquity. By far the most influential model of friendship in the medieval period was that evinced by Aristotle and further developed by Cicero, as encapsulated in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, written in the fourth-century BC, and Cicero's *De Amicitia*, which was originally written around 44BC. In both works, friendship is seen as the basis for the development of public morality. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, several sections of which are devoted to the examination of proper friendship, Aristotle identified three levels of friendship. The first, and most base, is founded on utility and mutual gain; the second is based on emotional pleasure and can even include sexual desire; and the third, and most admirable, is based on 'mutality in will and desire for the good'.[1] For Aristotle then, friends are benevolent reflections of one another, who complement one another perfectly and want only to increase the good and happiness enjoyed by one another for its own sake.[2]

Similarly, Cicero expected true friends to agree in ethical terms and their relationship should manifest itself in good deeds done for each other's sake with no expectation of profit or reward.[3] As such, he was of the opinion that true friendship could only be maintained among the truly good. Cicero believed that a life lived without friends was, as well as lonely and unhappy, also devoid of virtue.[4] True friendship is not free of trouble, as even true friends may find themselves in disagreement over what the right course of action is at times, but according to Cicero good people will be drawn by instinct to agree with one another due to the fact that they will share a desire for virtue.[5] Cicero was primarily concerned with using his considerable education to distil earlier, more philosophical musings on friendship into something with practical application that his readers could put to use when governing their own inter-personal relationships.[6] *De Amicitia* therefore promotes the essential unity of friendship and political life. According to Cicero, political behaviour was determined by the ideals of friendship that rested on principles such as honour and morality. If the demands of a friend should put one at odds with the public good or a principle, then that friendship was never true in the first place.[7] Furthermore, Cicero discouraged friends from saying or doing anything that would cause grief or shame to one another.[8]

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[1] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, (R. Crisp ed. & trans), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Book 8, Chapter 3, p. 165-166; Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 7
[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 4, Chapter 6
[3] Cicero, *On friendship*, x-xiii, 33-48
[4] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 14
[5] Ibid. p. 12
[6] Ibid. p. 9
[7] Cicero, *On friendship*, vi, 20
[8] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 111

Drawing on Ciceronian ideas, Charny also emphasises the mutuality of friendship, advising his readers to 'love and serve your friends' and 'avoid quarrelling' (*Amez et servez vos amis…fuyez tençon*).[9] In Froissart's account of the Battle of Crécy, the blind King John of Bohemia convinces his companions to undertake the extreme risk of tying their horses to his and leading him into battle so that he can have the honour of striking a foe by addressing them as 'mi home et mi ami et mi compagnon'.[10] By having the blind king employ the language of friendship to appeal to his men Froissart is able to emphasise to his audience the profound nature of the relationship they share with the king and this serves to further explain why they would consent to such a dangerous undertaking. Friendship should not be confused with unquestioning dedication or an unwillingness to critique the other person, but rather friends were able to offer honest and constructive advice to assist one another in achieving the greatest good possible, and friendship demanded a willingness to listen as well as to provide counsel.[11] This principle was reflected in reality, as Neville as observed that those listed as *amici* in thirteenth-century Scottish charters could be called upon to mediate disputes at the assemblies where such documents were produced.[12]

Cicero's writing on friendship had a huge influence over Christian thinking regarding exemplary friendship and churchmen frequently reiterated this idea in their writings on the matter. The early Church Fathers such as Augustine of Hippo translated the secular conceptions of friendship into religious ones, while maintaining the emphasis on the practical application of the notion.[13] For many of these churchmen, the concept of friendship was used as an effective tool for illustrating the nature of the relationship between God and man.[14] The writings of Aristotle had a great deal of influence over Thomas Aquinas' understanding of friendship.[15] Aquinas emphasised the need for friends to offer and be receptive to constructive advice and like Aristotle dismissed the value of friendship for profit or pleasure in favour of friendship for the advancement of good.[16] However, Aquinas' examination of friendship was not part of an attempt to promote

[9] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 124
[10] Brussels II 88 (Book I), fol. 5r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 10th November 2015
[11] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 11
[12] C.J. Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) p. 191-192
[13] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 7
[14] Ibid. p. 37
[15] T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Second Part of the Second Part, Question 114
[16] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 38

friendship for its own sake, but rather to use this discussion as a means to promote a deeper understanding of man's relationship with God.[17]

The attraction of Cicero's conception of true friendship was bound up with the fact that in medieval political thought friendship was chiefly concerned with social relations rather than the emotions of an individual. This formal, objective understanding of friendship contrasts sharply with our modern understanding of the term as describing an informal, subjective, emotional and most of all personal relationship. The language of friendship was most frequently deployed to create social networks that influenced many aspects of life, from political allegiance to dispute resolution, career advancement and so on. Consequently, modern scholars have increasingly come to see friendship as one of a number of formal relationships – like kinship or patronage – that technically operated outwith the strictly constitutional sphere but nonetheless exerted an influence over the practicalities of medieval politics.[18] For instance, Wormald has observed that the use of the term 'friend' in a later medieval Scottish context referred to those who could be trusted to act as kinsmen even though they were not related by blood.[19] Barbour was familiar enough with Aristotle to mention him once in the work, when discussing how intelligence can override the innate evil in people.[20] However, Duncan attributes this to Barbour's familiarity with the *Roman d'Alixandre*, and suggests that the reference does not demonstrate that Barbour had a direct knowledge of Aristotle's own philosophical works. Nonetheless, Aristotle had such an influence over medieval conceptions of friendship that Barbour's own conception of this could not help but be influenced by it as well, especially given his clerical training.

Reginald Hyatte has conducted a great deal of research into the subject of friendship in the medieval period over recent years and, of particular interest to this study, has devoted a chapter of his book *The Arts of Friendship* to the close analysis of three thirteenth-century French prose romances and attempted to identify some common themes in the way works of this genre deal with the subject of friendship. In each of the texts analysed he found a two-fold structure to the way friendships were constructed. Firstly, a biblical or traditionally Christian ideal is identifiable somewhere within the work as an ideal measure for representing friendship, and then this is combined with an in-text model of friendship

[17] Ibid. p. 39
[18] D. Clark, *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval English Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Reynolds, 'Trust in Medieval Society and Politics', p. 15
[19] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 86
[20] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 740-743

to develop an ideal measure that gives some insight into the author's own ideal measure for representing such relationships.[21] Oakley has connected the notion of idealised, spiritual friendship to wider social and legal developments in the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries.[22] Hyatte has stated that the spiritual value of friendship is often all but absent in chivalric romance. In fact, the spiritual element of friendship is not only absent but also impossible, since according to Hyatte friendship in chivalric romances causes the companions to 'act foolishly, sin, and hold nothing dearer than their earthly love'.[23] While it is true that in Barbour's *Bruce* the higher spiritual element is at least de-emphasised in favour of other facets of the relationship between the two main characters, it would be wrong to say that this absence is the source of a moral deficiency in Bruce or Douglas. In fact, their friendship is wholly positive and is frequently described as such by Barbour. 'Ordinary friendship', as Hyatte puts it, was based on mutual usefulness and the pleasure the parties got from being in one another's company. The superior aspect of spiritual friendship came from loving those excellent qualities that a friend possessed that were common to one's own.[24] In the arena of chivalric literature, these qualities tended to be those commonly associated with knighthood, such as prowess, loyalty, largesse, courage, honour and so forth.[25] Wormald has found evidence of a similar pattern in bonds of manrent, where the loss of one's honour was commonly cited as a consequence of breaking a bond of friendship.[26] Often the superior aspect of friendship can be expressed, in romance literature at least, by one of the knightly companions serving as a go-between in a secret love affair undertaken by his friend.[27] Such acts demonstrate the depth of affection between the two, given the great deal of trust needed to ensure secrecy in such matters. Somewhat contrary to the Christian concept of friendship that developed out of Aristotelian-Ciceronian thought, chivalric romances allowed for a moderate amount of jealously in friendships between knights. The idea of moderation was crucial here however, as too much jealousy could cause offence to all parties involved but too little might be seen to indicate indifference.[28]

Of the three works that Hyatte explores in his chapter on chivalric romance, the one that is most similar to Barbour's *Bruce* is *Amis et Amiles*, a French romance written around

[21] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 133
[22] Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 73
[23] Ibid. p. 87
[24] Ibid. p. 92
[25] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 2
[26] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 98
[27] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 92
[28] Ibid. p. 115

1200, and is the only one of the three that presents a fundamentally positive attitude towards chivalric friendship. Like *The Bruce*, *Amis et Amiles* presents issues for historians in assigning it to a particular genre, being composed in the style of a *chanson de geste* but also including features of romance and even hagiography.[29] In this work the heroes – both of whose names are quite obvious cognates of the Latin word for friend – frequently engage in actions that contravene the law of God but ultimately through their devotion to God their friendship is sanctified and their salvation is secured. The goal of the activities that the knightly companions undertake and the will of God are expected to be the same in the sense that both seek the triumph of good over evil. Consequently, the triumph of good over evil repeatedly coincides with confirmations of the pair's friendship, reinforcing the notion that God favours the pair's friendship in spite of their personal failings.[30] *Amis et Amiles* even ends with the two heroes going on crusade together to the Holy Land to atone for the sins they have committed in the course of the narrative.[31] Of course, there are significant differences between *Amis et Amiles* and Barbour's *Bruce* as well. In *Amis et Amiles,* the friendship of the two main characters is seemingly ordained from birth, with both of them being born on the same day and angels being sent to announce their births to their respective families.[32] Unlike the other works that Hyatte analyses, and indeed unlike *The Bruce*, the trials that the heroes must face are very diverse, including the affliction of Ami with leprosy and Amile's subsequent immolation of his two infant sons in order to cure his friend of the disease.[33]

Aside from these observations about how friendship is dealt with in literature, considerable investigation has also been conducted into the practicalities of friendship in the medieval world. Wormald, Boardman and Neville have demonstrated that friendship was a fairly ubiquitous concept in late medieval Scottish socio-political life.[34] The terms 'freyend/frend' appear thirty times throughout the text of The Bruce, suggesting a familiarity with the concept by both the writer and his audience. Benham has noted that the establishment of friendship between lords and their vassals could be used to stabilise and control aristocratic relations in the medieval period.[35] According to Gerd Althoff, the

[29] Ibid. p. 122
[30] Ibid. p. 124
[31] Ibid. p. 129
[32] Ibid. p. 125
[33] Ibid. 125
[34] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*; S. Boardman, 'Politics and the Feud in Late Medieval Scotland', (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1989), p. 55-97; Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, pp. 186-205;
[35] Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 103-104

phenomenon of lords and vassals making pacts of friendship became particularly frequent in times of crisis, suggesting an underlying assumption that this bound political communities together in a way that made the consequences of these crises applicable to the entire community and therefore encouraged cooperation to ensure a satisfactory conclusion for all.[36] In his doctoral thesis, Boardman has demonstrated the symbolic role of friendship in conflict resolution in a specifically Scottish context.[37] As well as providing numerous examples of formal bonds of friendship being used to reconcile antagonistic noblemen, Boardman also identifies the use of such bonds to ensure support for powerful individuals during times of crisis.[38] Wormald has examined the effect that the fall of the Black Douglases in the 1450s had on the production of bonds of manrent, suggesting that such arrangements had a part to play in the settlement of crises in a Scottish context.[39] Cynthia Neville has conducted an enlightening study of friendship in late medieval Scotland in her book *Land, Law and People in Late Medieval Scotland*. In it, she examines the use of the term 'friend' in Scottish charters over the period 1200-1400 and found considerable nuance in the way in which the term was deployed, even identifying changes in the style and preferences of scribes that produced these documents.[40] Wormald has previously observed that the term 'friend' was frequently employed in bonds of manrent to refer to those who could be counted upon to act in the same manner as one's kin, or who at the very least might be expected to do so.[41]

Neville has not only extended the study of friendship in a Scottish context even further into the past than Wormald, she has also demonstrated that the terminology of friendship was fluid enough to cover a wide range of personal relationships that even imagined kinship could not.[42] Not only did friends come to frequently occupy the witness lists of charters but also in a religious context there was a trend for mentioning friends in clauses of commemoration.[43] Such techniques might be used to place oneself into the 'social space' of individuals whose patronage or service was worth cultivating, such as in the case in 1350 of John Graham's grant of land to Lady Agnes de Munford, through whom he might have cultivated connections with the powerful Douglas family.[44] Friendship

[36] Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', p. 93
[37] Boardman, 'Politics and the Feud in Late Medieval Scotland', p. 55-56
[38] Ibid. p. 93-96
[39] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 49-50
[40] Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, p. 188
[41] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 90
[42] Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, p. 198-199
[43] Ibid. p. 190
[44] Ibid. p. 195

played an important role in diplomacy as well.[45] Barbour recognises this fact when he talks of the 'freyendschip' between Edward I and Alexander III as the reason behind the decision to invite the English king to mediate the Great Cause:

> For that at the king off Ingland
> Held swylk freyndschip and cumpany
> To thar king that wes swa worthy,
> Thai trowyt that he as gud nychtbur
> And as freyndsome compositur
> Wald have jugyt in lawté
> But othir-wayis all yheid the gle.[46]

Here, Barbour uses Edward's contravention of the expectations of friendship to undermine the English king's moral character. Barbour shows further awareness of the association of friendship and diplomacy when he employs the term in relation to the peace negotiations with England:

> Quhen men thir thingis forspokyn had
> And with selis and athis maid
> Festnyng off frendschip and of pes
> That never for na chaunc suld ces[47]

The establishment, or re-establishment in some cases, of peaceable relations between magnates and even between kingdoms often drew on the language of friendship.[48] For instance, the settlement of a dispute between David Lauder of Papple and James Ogill was concluded with the establishment of friendship between the two men.[49] In Froissart's *Chroniques* Prince Edward employs the language of friendship when discussing the negotiations that he expects to take place between his father and John II of France following the French king's capture at the Battle of Poitiers.[50] In 1373 a formal bond of friendship was drawn up between Robert Stewart, then earl of Fife and Menteith, and Sir Robert Erskine as part of a deal to transfer the heritable custodianship of Stirling Castle from Erskine to Fife. The deal was part of a careful strategy by the recently crowned Robert II

[45] The use of the term *amicitia* is discussed in detail in Benham, *Peacemaking in the Middle Ages*, p. 191
[46] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 84-90
[47] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 55-57
[48] Boardman, 'Politics and the Feud in Late Medieval Scotland', p. 59-72; Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, p. 197
[49] *RPS*, 1483/10/36. Date accessed: 7th September 2015
[50] J. Froissart, *Chroniques*, S. Luce et al. (ed.), 15 volumes, (Paris: J. Renouard, 1869), Vol. 5, p. 68

to remove the chief supporters of his predecessor David II in key positions in royal government, and the bond of friendship was designed as compensation for the loss of influence King David's favourites suffered because of this.[51] The earliest surviving vernacular bond of friendship in Scotland dates from 1409 and was concluded between Robert Stewart, duke of Albany, and Archibald Douglas, fourth earl of Douglas, in which they agreed to aid one another in controlling their dependents and settling cases of civil dispute.[52] However, Wormald has shown that bonds expressing comparable attitudes can be traced to the fourteenth-century and therefore the practice may well pre-date the agreement between Albany and Douglas.[53]

Furthermore, the terms 'friend' and 'friendship' appear in legal documentation throughout the fourteenth and fifteen-centuries. A charter produced in 1471 to confirm the dowry of Queen Margaret of Denmark states that bonds of friendship are undertaken 'so that, defended by double power, their domains may be rendered stronger, and the attacks of foes and enemies more fiercely resisted'.[54] Throughout the late fourteenth and early fifteenth-centuries Scotland courted the friendship of France and indeed counted on it to put diplomatic pressure on England during this period of intermittent conflict.[55] For instance, in the letters patent issued narrating and ratifying the Franco-Scottish alliance in 1296, both King John of Scotland and King Philip of France was the term 'friendship' (*amicitie*) was employed to describe the relation being established between them by the proposed marriage of King John's son and King Philip's daughter.[56] When William Monypenny of Concressault, Master John Kennedy, provost of St Andrews, Patrick Fochart, and Robert Patillo of Claremont were appointed as ambassadors in 1458, James II granted them to power to conclude 'friendships' (*amicicias*) with the King of Castile on his behalf.[57] The term 'frendeschip' was used for the preferred relationship between the King of Scots and the King of France in 1473, and the term 'frendschep' was used the following year when discussing the maintenance of the truce between England and Scotland.[58]

Althoff has also noted the importance of public displays and ritual in maintaining practical friendships in the medieval period, through means such as gift-giving and

[51] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 53
[52] *ER*, Vol. 4, ccix; Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 39
[53] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 3, 35
[54] *RPS*, A1471/5/1. Date accessed: 7th September 2015
[55] Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p. 164
[56] *RPS*, A1296/2/1. Date accessed: 7th September 2015
[57] *RPS*, 1458/11/1. Date accessed: 7th September 2015
[58] *RPS*, 1473/7/6. Date accessed: 7th September 2015; *RPS*, A1474/5/2. Date accessed: 7th September 2015

feasting.[59] In a Scottish context, one particularly noteworthy physical example of the practice of maintaining friendships in this way survives – namely the Bute Mazer. The Bute Mazer, sometimes referred to as the Bannatyne Mazer, is in particularly good condition by comparison to other surviving examples of the same type of drinking cup from elsewhere in Britain.[60] It is one of the larger of the two types of mazer known to have existed, suggesting that it was for convivial purposes.[61] The purpose of the mazer was for it to be passed around at feasts and celebrations and drunk out of by each of the company as it was circulated.[62] In the interior of the mazer is a boss that is thought to be fourteenth-century on the basis of the technique with which it was cast and the arms depicted correspond to arms displayed by prominent noblemen in south-west Scotland in the early part of that period.[63] The lion in the centre of the boss represents the king, the shields represent his loyal vassals in the Stewartry, chiefs presented towards the lion so that the king is above them all.[64] In most cases, heraldry included on a communal vessel such as the Bute Mazer was intended to reflect an on-going relationship between those whose arms were included in the decoration. Stevenson offers an alternative explanation for why the mazer may have been made – to commemorate a company that once met – and notes that the period in which the mazer was produced was a time of great promise for the Steward with many opportunities for these prominent figures to be gathered together, such as at the marriage of Marjory Bruce – King Robert's daughter – or her arrival at the Steward's castle at Rothesay are possibilities.[65]

Whether made to reflect a continuing arrangement among the figures represented or to commemorate a particular event, the Bute Mazer constitutes a physical representation of the friendship enjoyed by those whose arms appear on the boss. Several of the men represented on the Bute Mazer actually make an appearance in Barbour's *Bruce*. The specific families represented by the coats of arms are Stewart, Menteith, Douglas, Crawford, FitzGilbert of Hamilton, and a FitzGilbert cadet.[66] It has been suggested that the Steward represented may be either Walter Stewart or his son Robert, based on the fact that

[59] Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', p. 96
[60] J. H. Stevenson, 'The Bannatyne or Bute Mazer and its Carved Bone Cover,' in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Volume 65 (1931), p. 217
[61] Ibid. p. 218
[62] Ibid. p. 237
[63] Ibid. p. 220
[64] Ibid. p. 238
[65] Ibid. p. 249
[66] Ibid. p. 232

it is missing the royal tressure that appears to have been received in 1369.[67] The fact the Steward's arms are positioned between the lion's paws might equally denote Robert Stewart's position as heir apparent to Robert I or David II as much as it might his father being King Robert's son-in-law. However, given the likely identity of some of the other figures represented it is more likely that the Steward in question is the Sir Walter also depicted in *The Bruce*. The Douglas arms are missing the 'bludy hart of Bruce' and although no seal of his survives the lack of the heart confirms that these arms predate 'the Good' Sir James' death in 1330.[68] The presence of the Crawford arms, as opposed to the Campbell arms, puts the dating of the mazer no later than 1317 based on Stevenson's analysis. According to Stevenson, it is entirely possible that the Crawford arms are representative of Susanna Crawford, daughter of the Sir Reginald Crawford who had been executed by the English at Carlisle in 1307-8. In 1317-8 Susanna married Sir Duncan Campbell, who also took possession of her inheritance, but in the interim Susanna administered her father's lands and offices herself and Stevenson suggests that there would have been nothing to stop her participating in the same public ritual with the other figures represented on the mazer.[69] This is particularly interesting as it would suggest that it was possible for women to participate in public rituals relating to friendship such as would be enacted with the Bute Mazer alongside men. The first of the FitzGilbert arms on the mazer are most likely the Walter FitzGilbert who surrendered Bothwell to King Robert after Bannockburn, which would date the mazer to no earlier than 1314 since before this point Sir Walter was in English service.[70] The second FitzGilbert coat of arms is slightly more difficult to identify. However, the presence of decorative details associated with the FitzGilberts coupled with the prominence of the Steward's shield has led Stevenson to suggest that the second FitzGilbert coat of arms belonged to a man who occupied an official position in the Steward's household and was responsible for furnishing the Steward's high table, possibly the 'John son of Gilbert' named as Bailie of Bute in 1322-5.[71]

Since mazers such as this were intended to be passed around at feasts, it is reasonable to assume that the connections implied by the heraldry depicted would be read and understood by all who were exposed to it. In the case of the Bute Mazer, it was intended for 'the members of a circle of friends or allies, perhaps the feudal superior and his

[67] Ibid. p. 239
[68] Ibid. p. 240
[69] Ibid. p. 243
[70] Ibid. p. 243
[71] Ibid. p. 245

vassals'.[72] In other words, it advertised an existing relationship rather than commemorating a past one. The intense personal importance of heraldic bearings suggests that all those represented had consented to their use together in this manner, as to assume them without permission would be a grave dishonour to whoever had not given consent to their arms being used.[73] This ties into more ancient notions of how friendships were maintained, as Classen notes, through 'festive dinners, hunting parties, or political collaboration'.[74]

In Barbour's *Bruce*, the relationship between the king and Douglas is a key element of the narrative. Neville makes a brief note of this in her study of friendship in late medieval Scotland.[75] The Bruce-Douglas relationship is by no means the only instance of friendship in *The Bruce*; indeed the poem is littered with illustrations of knightly camaraderie. For example, the king's brother, Edward Bruce has a friend – Sir Walter Ross – 'That as himselff him luffyt he'.[76] Similarly, Sir Edward is presented as having experienced intense sorrow over the death of Sir Neil Fleming during the Siege of Carrickfergus Castle.[77] But it is the relationship between Bruce and Douglas that occupies the greater part of the poem:

> Thusgat maid thai thar aquentance
> That never syne for nakyn chance
> Departyt quhill thai lyffand war.
> Thair frendschip woux ay mar and mar,
> For he servyt ay lelely,
> And the tother full wilfully
> That was bath worthy wycht and wys
> Rewardyt him weile his service.[78]

This seems to be a fairly typical expression of friendship as a reciprocal, primarily political relationship for the mutual benefit of both parties, a capitulation of ideal friend heavily influenced by Aristotle.[79] The references to Douglas' loyal service and Bruce's generous rewards serve to tie the notion of friendship into wider notions of proper lord-vassal relations. The emphasis on reciprocity is reflected in surviving bonds of friendship from the century after Barbour was writing.[80] Entry for Douglas into Bruce's circle of

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[72] Ibid. p. 238
[73] Ibid. p. 238
[74] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 6
[75] Neville, *Land, Law and People in Medieval Scotland*, p. 197
[76] *The Bruce*, Bk.13, ll.480
[77] *The Bruce*, Bk. 15, ll. 231-238
[78] *The Bruce*, Bk.2, ll.167-174
[79] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8, Chapter 8, p. 172
[80] Boardman, 'Politics and the Feud in Late Medieval Scotland', p. 77

friends is immediate on the completion of an unmistakeable display of subordination. Such public displays of subordination were not uncommon either in the romantic literature of the period or in reality, with both parties at pains to physically represent their differing social standings.[81] According to Althoff, friendship in reality served to guarantee public order, which rested on a strict hierarchy based on rank.[82] The immediacy of the protagonists' affection for one another is another typical feature of knightly relationships in romance literature, reflecting Aristotle's principle of *amicitia perfecta*.[83] Barbour is at pains to assure the audience that the demands of service made by Bruce and the demands of favour made by Douglas were mutually reinforcing.

When discussing the handling of friendship in Barbour's *Bruce*, there are two episodes which demand special attention. This is because on these occasions the friendship between Bruce and Douglas causes them not only to contravene some basic social mores of their time but also to actually invert the standard lord-vassal relationship that they might be expected to follow. The first incident occurs in the build-up to the infamous Douglas Larder. Douglas approaches the king with a request to be given leave to visit the lands that are his by right, which at the time are held by the Englishman Clifford. At first, Bruce rejects this request as he fears for Douglas' safety if he goes into such a dangerous area. But when Douglas assures him that he is willing to face any danger for the sake of his inheritance the king not only gives him dispensation to go but tells him that if anything 'anoyis or scaithfull' – that is, 'distressful or hurtful' – should happen to him there, he is to return to the king at once so that they may face the tribulation together.[84] The second incident occurs on the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn. The English send an advance party – led by the same Clifford mentioned in the first episode – to circumvent the Scottish position and relieve Stirling Castle. Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, who had been expressly ordered to prevent such a thing from happening, challenges this English force and quickly becomes surrounded. After a truly visceral account of the bitter struggle between Moray's men and the English, Barbour has Douglas approach King Robert again, this time with a proposal to assist the king's beleaguered nephew. At first Bruce refuses, having already chided Moray for his failure to spot the English approach, but yet again Douglas talks Bruce into allowing him to take his men to help Moray repulse the English.[85]

[81] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 115
[82] Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', p. 91
[83] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 109
[84] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, 224-254
[85] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 634-659

The turnaround in Bruce's position is so sudden that Barbour's most recent editor Archibald Duncan expresses bemusement as to what is going on in this episode given how quickly Bruce changes his mind.[86]

In both instances, Douglas appeals to the king by pointing out the consequences that Bruce's decision will have for Douglas. In the earlier episode, Douglas first reminds Bruce that his inheritance is at stake and assures the king that he is personally willing to die if this is what fate has in store for him. At Bannockburn, Douglas points out that if King Robert does not allow him to give aid to Moray then Douglas' own honour will be called into question. On both occasions, it is the consideration of Douglas' needs and desires that changes Bruce's mind and convinces him to pursue a different course of action. The first of these episodes in particular has Bruce showing remarkable confidence in Douglas, trusting that even when he is pursuing the recovery of his own rights Sir James can still be relied upon not to forget Bruce's overall aim of recovering his kingdom or to undermine it through selfish action. Bruce's behaviour in both of these instances goes far beyond a mere responsibility on his part to take the interests of Douglas into consideration before undertaking a course of action – which any vassal might reasonably expect from their lord – but rather show the king elevating the interests of Douglas even above his own.

It was often the case that friendships in chivalric literature were based not only on their personal similarities but also related to their social identity as well. As such, affirmations of a knight's identity as a friend of another might also prove to be conscious violations of fundamental social obligations and even laws, as evidenced in the example of *Amis et Amiles*.[87] In the two incidents outlined above, it is readily apparent that in Barbour's *Bruce* both Bruce and Douglas are willing to break social boundaries for the sake of their friendship. This is perhaps less acute in the case of the episode at Bannockburn. However, in this instance Bruce not only risks undermining his overall strategy for the coming battle by allowing Douglas to break ranks and rescue Moray but also inverts a basic tenet relating to how the relationship between a lord and his vassal was expected to work in the medieval period, which will be explored in more detail below. In the case of the Douglas Larder however, the pair's contraventions of the fundamental social order are easier to identify. Firstly, the fact that Bruce agrees to let Douglas return to his lands to satisfy his own concerns as a landholder serves as an inversion of traditional lord-vassal relations just as

[86] *The Bruce*, p. 436n
[87] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 129

the example from the Battle of Bannockburn does, with Bruce putting the concerns of his vassal above his own as Douglas' lord. But more than that, Bruce goes so far as to tell Douglas that if he cannot recover his lands on his own then he is to return to him so that the king himself can lend assistance, effectively promising royal help in the recovery of Douglas' rightful inheritance.

This is potentially a huge concession on the part of the king, especially since Bruce's primary aim of recovering his kingdom is far from complete at the time. Of course, ultimately Bruce does not have to deliver on this promise because Douglas takes the even more extreme action of attacking the English garrison of his former castle while they are hearing Mass on Palm Sunday, contravening not only contemporary social conventions but also the law of God as well. Perhaps the fact that Bruce had made such a bold and potentially costly offer of assistance was intended by Barbour to inform Douglas' decision to engage in an activity that was so anathema to the thinking of contemporary society. Thus in the episode surrounding the Douglas Larder we see Bruce transgressing social norms in order to grant a considerable concession to his friend Douglas and Douglas in turn transgressing both social and moral norms to save his friend Bruce from having to follow through on his transgressive promise. One possible implication of the presentation of friendships as leading to contraventions of social mores was that such relationships had no place within the conventional order of society.[88] Certainly instances when friends transgressed normal social practice for the sake of one another would seem to support Althoff's assertion that, in reality as in literature, acting as both a lord and a friend could be contradictory, particularly when balancing the demands of justice as a lord with demands of favour from a friend.[89]

What is most striking about these incidents is that Barbour presents us with an inversion of the traditional lord-vassal relationship. The association of friendship and lordship in Barbour's *Bruce* is clear from Barbour's frequent use of terms like 'freyend' or 'frendschip' when referring to the supporters of a particular individual.[90] For instance, Bruce calls on his 'freyndis' to join him immediately after killing Comyn.[91] Bruce's followers at Methven are referred to as his 'freyndis', and 'frendschip' is what Bruce seeks

[88] Ibid. p. 130
[89] Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', p. 94
[90] This is similar to the way these terms are employed in *Golagros and Gawane*, ll. 56, 121, 202, 359, 423, 789, 912, 1082, 1176, 1190, 1219, 1332
[91] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 74-75

in support of his campaign to recover the kingdom.[92] Barbour's followers are also referred to generally as 'freyndis' while the king is on the run following the Battle of Methven.[93] Douglas calls on the 'freyndis' of Thom Dickson to support him during the events of the Douglas Larder.[94] When Bruce look for support north of the Mounth, Barbour says that he looked for those who would be his 'frend'.[95] Those who Philip the Forester leads in the assault on Forfar Castle are described as his 'freyndis', as are those who help William Bunnock capture the peel at Linlithgow, demonstrating that friendship was such a ubiquitous concept that even commoners could participate in it.[96] The earl of Buchan calls on his 'frendis' to help him exploit King Robert's sudden illness in 1308.[97] Walter Stewart calls on his 'frendis' to garrison Berwick when Bruce gives him command there, and it is in support of their 'frendis' – under attack from Moray and Douglas – that the English ultimately decide to lift the siege of the town.[98] According to Barbour, support from friends was not limited to the military sphere, as is shown by the fact that Douglas charges his 'frendis' to administer his lands while he takes the king's heart on crusade:

> His testament divisyt he
> And ordanyt how his land suld be
> Governyt quhill his gayn-cummyng
> Off frendis, and all other thing
> That till him pertenyt ony wis[99]

Ordinarily, a vassal would be expected to serve with complete loyalty, aligning his desires with those of his lord, and in return the lord should be generous in rewarding this service from the fruits of their endeavours.[100] Indeed, in a number of chivalric romances one friend might issue a dishonouring command to another as a test of the other friend's loyalty and willingness to make sacrifices for their companion.[101] But in the two episodes outlined above we see clear examples of the lord setting his own intentions aside in order to facilitate the wishes of a subordinate. Particularly interesting is the fact that on neither

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[92] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 177, 188
[93] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 144
[94] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 274
[95] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 394
[96] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 314, Bk. 10, ll. 162
[97] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 118
[98] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 234, ll. 521, ll. 847
[99] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 319-323
[100] Reynolds, 'Some Afterthoughts on Fiefs and Vassals', p. 7-8; Oakley, *Mortgage of the Past*, p. 157
[101] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 110

occasion does this either benefit or hinder Bruce's quest to regain his kingdom. While it is true that Douglas' visit to his own lands is successful in removing the English garrison from Douglas Castle, within a short time the castle is garrisoned again and Douglas must return to recover it a second time. Similarly, when Douglas approaches the fray on the first day of Bannockburn he finds that the English are already close to defeat and so he holds his men back for fear of diminishing the renown due to Moray for this victory. With the outcome of both events so neutral, it is difficult to say with certainty whether Barbour is praising or criticising his heroes at this point. But the mere inclusion of events that serve so little purpose other than to show the influence that Douglas had over the king cannot fail to push us toward the conclusion that Barbour looks upon these exchanges as fundamentally positive.

Often in chivalric romances, friendships would not be between social equals but rather between men of different social statuses, albeit still invariably noblemen. The same was true even in early medieval literature dealing with similar relationships.[102] Even when characters are more or less alike in status, it was common in chivalric romances for one to subordinate himself in favour of the other.[103] This principle can be identified in surviving bonds of mutual support as well. Wormald has argued that the making of bonds of manrent tended to see the heads of lesser kindreds coming together under the heads of greater kindreds, with influence flowing both up and down the social scale.[104] According to Wormald, bonds of manrent were generally only extended to include family members when unusual circumstances dictated, such as geographical remoteness.[105] Perhaps then in the case of these two incidents Barbour is, intentionally or not, demonstrating the use of friendship to bind a social inferior – in this case Douglas – into the king's political network. Naturally Douglas is of lower social standing than the king and under normal circumstances would be expected to subordinate his will in favour of Bruce's. However, thanks to his relationship with King Robert when Douglas makes a request that has such personal repercussions for him Bruce feels obliged as a friend to subordinate his own will in favour of Douglas'. Aristotle had previously that friendships between different classes tended to counteract the social distinctions between them, as is the case with the two main protagonists in *The Bruce*.[106]

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[102] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, p. 130
[103] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 108
[104] Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland*, p. 89
[105] Ibid. p. 82
[106] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 8, Chapter 7, p. 149-150

Not only is Barbour's presentation of the closeness between Bruce and Douglas a powerful illustration of the depth of the relationship that he envisages between them, it is also a demonstration of what a useful tool friendship could be in medieval aristocratic life. Interestingly, Barbour includes one noteworthy example of the contrary aspect of friendship, in which the friend of lower social standing puts himself through hardship and difficulty without the expectation of immediate reward. While the king is in hiding on Rathlin after his defeat at the Battle of Methven, and is thus in no position to offer generous reward to any of his men, Douglas and Sir Robert Boyd undertake to discomfort the Englishmen holding Arran.[107] This is partly out of restiveness on the part of the two knights but the fact that they gladly deliver the island into Bruce's hands when he eventually arrives demonstrates that this is not intended entirely as a matter of personal aggrandisement on the part of Douglas and Boyd.[108] It offers at least the suggestion that Barbour recognised the possibility of friendship working in the favour of the superior party as well.

Barbour seems to have perceived the real Bruce-Douglas relationship through the lens of knightly comradeship learned from chivalric romances. The fact that the historical Robert Bruce and James Douglas were closely connected cannot be denied. For instance, in 1318 Douglas was named as a potential guardian of King Robert's heir in the event that both King Robert and the earl of Moray died while the king's heir was still in his minority.[109] On 6th May 1320 Bruce granted Douglas the Sheriffdom of Roxburgh as well as the towns of Jedburgh and the keeping of Jedworth Forest.[110] Douglas was also granted the constabulary of Lauder as part of the redistribution of the hereditary holdings of the Balliols.[111] Perhaps the most noteworthy expression of the relationship between these two men the granting in 1324 of the 'Emerald Charter', so called because as well as granting Douglas extensive powers of justice in all his lands and exemptions from royal exactions on goods and revenue to all of his holdings, it was also accompanied by the gift of an emerald ring – a powerful symbol of both Bruce's favour to Douglas and those 'of his name' and of the union of the Bruce and Douglas fortunes.[112] The context of this charter – the release of French knights captured at the Battle of Byland – is mentioned by Barbour, although Barbour does not acknowledge the connection with Douglas or the recompense

[107] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 340-351
[108] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 508-515
[109] *RPS*, 1318/30. Date accessed: 8th October 2015
[110] *RRS*, v, nos. 166, 167
[111] *RRS*, v, no. 40
[112] Brown, *The Black Douglases*, p. 26; *RMS*, I, Appendix I, no. 38

he received for allowing the knights to be released without ransom.[113] The following year, Douglas was granted the lands of Buittle in Kirkcudbrightshire.[114] In a charter granting Douglas the right to collect funds to pay for construction work to be undertaken at Melrose Abbey in 1325, the king refers to him as 'our beloved and faithful James, lord of Douglas' (*dilectum nostrum et fidelem Jacobum dominum de Douglas*).[115] The *Buke of the Howlat*, produced in the mid fifteenth-century as pro-Douglas propaganda, makes it abundantly clear that the later Douglas family identified James Douglas as the true founder of the dynasty and saw Robert Bruce as its royal patron, as can be seen in its account of how the 'bludy hart' of Bruce came to be on the Douglas coat of arms.[116] No doubt Barbour's sources were clear on the close connection between these two men. It was thus left up to Barbour to understand this relationship and find a way to present it in a manner that his audience would find not only recognisable but also compelling. Since Barbour states at the beginning of his work that he is writing a romance, it should be of no surprise that he adopts a model of friendship that is closer to that of the chivalric heroes common to this genre. It is worth noting here that there was a theme in philosophical writings on friendship running as far back as antiquity that true friendships could be carried across the generations, especially as friends married into one another's families.[117] It is therefore at least possible that in constructing the friendship between Bruce and Douglas in the manner that he chooses that Barbour had his patrons, or at the very least some of the more prominent contemporary figures among his readership, in mind.

Chivalric friendship in medieval romances very often ran contrary to the standards of Christian friendship, and indeed many romance writers did not present exemplary knightly companionship as possessing any spiritual value.[118] This is certainly true of Barbour, whose work is notable for lacking any significant discussion of the divine element to his heroes' careers, save for occasional references to the providence of God in ensuring that all things work out for the best.[119] The obvious exception comes at the end of their lives when the fates of their immortal souls are secured through participation in a crusade. This is significant because very often friendships in other romances will end tragically with

[113] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 523-536
[114] *RRS*, v, no. 267
[115] *RPS*, 1325/1. Date accessed: 8th October 2015
[116] R. Holland, *The Buke of the Howlat*, (R. Hanna ed.), (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), ll. 430-546
[117] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 6
[118] For the tensions between Christian and secular notions of friendship, cf. Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, p. 4-5
[119] For a full list of Barbour's references to the providence of God in *The Bruce*, cf. above p.56 n69

the ultimate separation of the companions by death, which has been seen by some modern commentators such as Hyatte as recognition of the absence of Christian values in the formulation of the relationship.[120] Barbour on the other hand has the opportunity to ensure that his heroes will enjoy eternal companionship, as Douglas' death on crusade with Bruce's heart hanging from his neck guarantees both men a place in heaven. Many medieval writers from a religious background wrote in praise of friendship between people who were both engaged in the same profession. An anonymous French prose work from around 1225 known as the *Quest of the Holy Grail* maintains that spiritual friendship contained within a specific profession – such as knighthood – serves the ideals of love of God and of one's fellow man.[121] Such friendships were thought to begin here on earth but ultimately continued eternally in Heaven, and thus had a strong redemptive element.

The typical elements of knightly friendships in romance literature include fierce loyalty, deep affection, mutual admiration, heroism, deep joy when in one another's company and extreme sorrow when apart, and it is not unusual for friendship with another knight to equal or even surpass the measure of erotic love a given hero has for his lady in chivalric romance.[122] Barbour's *Bruce* is remarkable for the almost complete lack of any references to the women in the lives of any of its main heroes. Bruce's wife and daughter are mentioned as having been taken into English custody and are mentioned again as being released after Bannockburn, but neither of them takes any more active part in the narrative than this.[123] In fact, even while they are in captivity their safe return is not presented as a motivating factor in the on-going struggle between Bruce and the English. Marjory at least receives a further mention as being married off to Walter Stewart and giving birth to the future Robert II, but other than that both women do not feature in the narrative again and Barbour offers no insight into their relationships with the king.[124] One possible explanation for this can be inferred from the suggestion that, in earlier works of literature, having a hero chose between heterosocial and homosocial bonds could result in the 'feminisation' of the character, and this may simply have been an area that Barbour did not wish to explore.[125] Hary expresses a similar sentiment in his lengthy digression on Wallace's 'lemman' and the potential risks of committing himself to this relationship rather than the conflict with

[120] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 88
[121] Ibid. p. 82
[122] Ibid. 87; Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, p. 157-158
[123] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 39-40; Bk. 13, ll. 659-696
[124] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 699-705
[125] Clark, *Between Medieval Men*, p. 136

England.[126] Chandos herald does not devote a significant proportion of his poem to exploring the prince's relationship with his wife, but when she does enter the narrative the writer offers greater insight into the emotional aspects of their relationship than anything found in *The Bruce*. For instance, Chandos herald notes the grief experienced by the prince's wife when he leaves for Spain.[127] Not only does he give the princess a speech in which she laments the loss of the prince, he also has Prince Edward offer her a few lines of comfort before he departs.[128] In fact, Chandos herald even takes note of a number of women bemoaning the departure of their loves and husbands as the prince's army sets off for Spain.[129]

However, the lack of any significant male-female relationships in *The Bruce* does not necessarily mean that Barbour constructed the relationship between Bruce and Douglas as a substitute for a courtly romance element to his work. But it is certainly the case that in *The Bruce* it is the relationship between these two men that receives the focus at the expense of any of the male-female relationships, which are all but erased. Women in general do not come in for a great deal of criticism in Barbour's *Bruce*. The somewhat strange exception to this come in the form of a reflection on weeping in which Barbour claims that women can weep on a whim, as opposed to men who can only do so when they are sorrowful and merely take on the appearance of weeping when they experience deep joy or pity.[130] Generally however women tend to show up in Barbour's *Bruce* simply to further the plot. Sometimes they will serve as guides or spies for Bruce and his men when they arrive in unfamiliar territory or as hostesses when the men are seeking shelter. For instance, when King Robert returns to his lands in Carrick a kinswoman comes to him with a force of forty men to bolster the king's forces and to inform him of the various disasters that have befallen his supporters on the mainland while Bruce has been in hiding.[131] Once a woman even appears as a prophetess who foretells Bruce's success and this gives Barbour the opportunity for a lengthy digression on the dangers of paying too much heed to supposed prophecies.[132] On more than one occasion, a woman who has provided some service for Bruce will also give her sons into his service, which allows Barbour to reiterate a recurring point about Bruce's largesse and loyalty towards those who serve him faithfully. Overall

[126] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 579-710
[127] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2050-2056
[128] Ibid. ll. 2057-2071; ll. 2083-2086
[129] Ibid. ll. 2087-2092
[130] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 515-530
[131] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 133-157
[132] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 632-667

then, women serve a functional role in Barbour's *Bruce*. They passively facilitate the progress of the narrative but they are not actors with the capacity to influence in anything but a superficial way.

Hyatte has also observed that it is not uncommon for chivalric romances to present friendships between knights as being in conflict with the relationship between a knight and a courtly lady. In Andreas Capellanus' *De amore*, written around 1185, the author advised readers to eschew a woman's love because it could turn friends into enemies.[133] In Thomas of Britain's *Tristan*, another twelfth-century work, a marriage between Tristan and his beloved companion Kaherdin's sister, a marriage that was originally supposed to cement their friendship, threatens to tear the companions apart.[134] Both of these works are considerably older than Barbour's *Bruce* but nonetheless contain themes that permeated much chivalric literature up to Barbour's own time. Still, this explanation does not fit with the odd position of male-female relationships in *The Bruce*. There are at least hints of this in Barbour's brief comment on the friendship between Edward Bruce and Sir Walter Ross, which is said to have been so strong because of an affair that was taking place between Edward and Sir Walter's sister.[135] It is tempting to see here an echo of the friendships of chivalric romance in which one knight serves as a go-between for his comrade and his lady. But as in many chivalric romances the relationship between Edward and Sir Walter's sister alienated David Strathbogie, earl of Atholl, whose sister Barbour claims was Edward's wife. This ultimately led Strathbogie to side with the English and ambush the Scottish baggage train the night before the Battle of Bannockburn, killing Sir William Airth among others.[136] Here then there is at least an oblique suggestion of two noble men who might have been friends could come into conflict due to the romantic relationships of one of these men and thereby come to grief. However, this receives only the briefest mention in *The Bruce* and thus was certainly not an idea that Barbour had any great interest in promoting.

A typical feature of this sort of knightly friendship is exaggerated displays of affection on meeting and similarly exaggerated displays of sorrow when parting. The friends often cannot bear to be separated even for short periods of time. As an illustration of how overblown shows of affection could be in chivalric romance, in the *Prose Lancelot* Arthur at one point claims that he would share anything he has with Lancelot, except

[133] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 93
[134] Ibid. p. 94
[135] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 488-490
[136] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 492-500

Guinevere, in exchange for his company, while Galehout says that he would exchange all his honour for shame for the same privilege.[137] Similarly, Chandos herald records a dramatic display of joy and affection when the prince and his brother the Duke of Lancaster reunite after a brief period of separation.[138] Sir Thomas Felton receives a similarly exaggerated display of affection when returning from a simple scouting mission, with the prince bidding him 'be welcome more than one hundred times (*Pluis de cent foitz bein veignez vous*).[139] Chandos herald also notes the extreme sorrow and dismay felt by the prince on hearing of the deaths of his close friends Sir James Audeley and Sir John Chandos in quick succession.[140] *The Bruce* does not have any such grandiose outpourings of emotion from its protagonists, although it comes closest when Bruce is dying and even then Douglas is at first simply included in the group of lords 'greting' at the thought of the loss of so great a king.[141] But there is certainly a strong sense that the two prefer to be in each other's company rather than apart. The first of the episodes detailed above in particular shows Bruce's unwillingness to be parted from Douglas, both in his initial refusal to allow Douglas to go for fear of the danger involved and in his insistence that Douglas return once he had assessed the situation so that they could deal with it together. Barbour does hint at more overt shows of emotion among men when they have been parted for a long while, such as when King Robert returns from the Western Isles having been in hiding after his defeat at the Battle of Methven and is fortuitously reunited with the earl of Lennox.[142] Similarly, when Edward Bruce learns of the death of Sir Walter Ross at Bannockburn, Barbour states that Edward would have rather the entire day had been undone than that Sir Walter had died.[143] Edward Bruce responds in a similar fashion to the death of Neil Fleming, who is mortally wounded during the siege of Carrickfergus Castle.[144] Sir Edward laments Fleming's death so fiercely that his men are astonished and Barbour notes the great solemnity with which Sir Edward buries the body before moving on. However, Barbour does not linger on these moments and in some cases, again such as the reunion between Bruce and Lennox, actively downplays the significance of these outbursts afterwards.

[137] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 105
[138] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2159-2161
[139] Ibid. ll. 2575-2580
[140] Ibid. ll. 3943-3954
[141] *The Bruce*, Bk.20, ll.201
[142] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 506-509
[143] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 482-485
[144] *The Bruce*, Bk. 15, ll. 225-242

The most obvious expression of genuine affection between Bruce and Douglas occurs shortly before Bruce's death. It is perhaps the case that here Barbour senses the greatest opportunity to highlight the similarities between the real-life relationship between the two men and exemplary chivalric friendship. When Bruce knows that he is dying he calls together 'the lordis of his countrre' and asks them to choose from among their number a knight to take the king's heart on crusade against the enemies of God.[145] Douglas is chosen and when he hears this Bruce expresses extreme delight, admitting that he had hoped that Douglas would be the man to carry his heart ever since he formulated this plan. When Douglas is informed of the king's reaction, he kneels by the king's bedside and thanks him for all that the king has done for him since they first met. He also thanks the king for entrusting his heart to him, which Douglas esteems as the greatest honour Bruce has bestowed upon him. It is clear from the text that Barbour intends this to be a genuinely tender exchange between his heroes. Such deathbed scenes are common to many chivalric romances and are always highly emotive affairs where the characters can review the great victories and tragic failures of the lives the comrades have shared. One such deathbed scene from Thomas of Britain's *Tristan* has the dying Tristan encouraging his comrade Kaherdin to grant Tristan his dying request based on the solemn vows of friendship, love and vassalage they have made during their lives together.[146] In Barbour's *Bruce*, the knightly comrades rehearse the qualities that they find admirable in the other, and in this way Barbour is afforded the opportunity to both reemphasise the genuine affection between the two men and to restate those virtues that truly great knights should seek in a friend.

In *Amis et Amiles*, Hyatte has identified a three-way relationship between the two main characters – Ami and Amile – and God, which he has used to explore the theme of friendship within the work.[147] In that work, the friends in truth love each other more than they love God and at times this causes them to act against His divine will. However, God repeatedly tests their friendship throughout their lives and, having proven their willingness to undergo ordeals involving considerable self-sacrifice for the sake of the other, in the end sanctions their friendship in spite of the transgressions they have committed because of it. As Hyatte puts it, God 'foreordains and tests the pair's friendship, which develops as a loyal secular relationship and only in its final stage takes on a religious character *per se*'.[148]

[145] *The Bruce*, Bk.20, ll.162
[146] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 99
[147] Ibid. p. 91
[148] Ibid. p. 123

This too is somewhat true of the relationship between Bruce and Douglas in *The Bruce*. As noted before, God does not take an active role in the events of the work but rather operates in the background ensuring that everything comes to a beneficial conclusion. By contrast, Ami and Amile frequently receive active guidance from God, who on occasion sends dreams and even angels to assist the heroes in their endeavours. Furthermore, every act of disobedience to God is accompanied by affirmations of belief in God's justice on the part of Ami and Amile and because of this God forgives the pair their transgressions and shows them favour in their future adventures. In fact, Hyatte suggests that the anonymous author of *Amis et Amiles* consciously used his accounts of the sins committed by his heroes for the sake of friendship to provide himself the opportunity for God to demonstrate His justice and mercy, and to an extent to justify the heroes' actions.[149]

Devotion to God does not become an important motivation for the characters in Barbour's *Bruce* until close to the end of the poem, when Bruce's thoughts turn to the destination of his immortal soul after his death and Douglas undertakes the crusade to ensure that Bruce's, and also his own, soul finds salvation. On occasion, the friends find themselves committing acts that are not by traditional Christian standards good, most obviously in the case of the Douglas Larder but more generally in the sheer amount of bloodshed that their quest to reclaim their respective inheritances incurs. Bruce explicitly recognises his illness as being inflicted upon him by God in kind for the suffering his wars have caused to others.[150] It is of course precisely these acts that Barbour tells us that Bruce hopes to atone for by sending his heart on crusade after his death. But in the end, they both prove their devotion to God and they are sanctified because of this. Bruce demonstrates his devotion to God by arranging for his heart to be taken on crusade to atone for his wrongdoings, and Barbour includes a reference to the fact that the king would have wished to go on crusade in person if his health had allowed. Barbour is also at pains to stress the fact that Bruce spent his final days making the relevant preparations for his death expected of a 'gud Crystyn man'.[151] Bruce shows his devotion to Douglas when stating that although he had asked all of the noblemen of Scotland to choose from among their number one to take on the duty, he would have preferred Douglas out of all of them to be the one to take his heart on crusade. Douglas in turn proves his devotion both to God and to Bruce by accepting the duty of taking the king's heart into battle against God's enemies and

[149] Ibid. p. 124
[150] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll.177-181
[151] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll.257-262

ultimately sacrificing his life in the effort, interestingly enough in an attempt to rescue another of his companions from a Saracen ambush. It is essential to note that it is because of the deep friendship between the two men that this is possible and it is this above all that proves to be the true test of the friendship between Bruce and Douglas as one ultimately sanctified by God.

As noted above, it was rare for knightly companions in chivalric romances to be of the same social status. One was almost always inferior to the other, just as Douglas is of inferior social standing to Bruce. This is vital for understanding the reasons for forming such a friendship in reality – the cultivation of social and political advancement. It is necessary to recall that in medieval Scotland, as in any western European kingdom, political decision-making was limited to a very small group of people, with supreme political power resting (at least theoretically) with one man – the king. Political communication thus relied on confidentiality with the king and being a friend of the king meant one could speak openly and frankly with him. In Althoff's words, 'decisions were made by common counsel and thus became the basis for common action'.[152] Bumke too has noted that effective governing of medieval kingdoms was impossible without the advice and support (*consilium et auxilium*) of the magnates.[153] In the *Vie*, there is evidence of individuals using their familiarity with the prince for the purposes of personal advancement. For example, Sir Thomas Felton's closeness to the prince allows him to ask for and receive a boon, namely to be allowed to ride ahead of the army and scout out the disposition of the enemy.[154] Members of the council appointed to advise David, duke of Rothesay, in his duties as the king's lieutenant were specifically warned against allowing friendship to influence their judgment when discharging their responsibilities.[155]

In Barbour's poem, Douglas is one of the few people to personally interact with Bruce during the course of the narrative and there can be no doubt that Douglas uses this intimacy to influence the king's decision-making. Through the establishment of friendship between the two men, the duties of both parties become transformed into service not only for the sake of duty, but also out of a kind of comradely affection. A friend occupies a privileged position of being able to request aid and also act as a mediator in disputes that his comrade gets involved in. The aid that a friend offers is not normally given blindly

[152] Althoff, 'Friendship and Political Order', p. 95
[153] Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, p. 203
[154] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2450-2456
[155] *RPS*, 1399/1/3. Date accessed: 7th September 2015

however. The socially inferior friend must present his case and convince his comrade to give him assistance, but it is the opportunity to do so that is unique to friendship. Again, we see instances of this in the episodes from *The Bruce* that are explored above. In both, Douglas uses his privileged position in Bruce's affection to gain concessions from the king by appealing to his own needs and desires. At Bannockburn, Douglas also works to repair the relationship between Bruce and his nephew, Thomas Randolph, using his influence over Bruce to soften the king's attitude towards Randolph by allowing Douglas to render him assistance. Yet despite the privileged position he occupies in Bruce's affection, Douglas is always humble in his speech when talking with the king. He puts himself at King Robert's service and is always at pains to emphasise that he will act only on the king's will, whatever it may be. The Bruce-Douglas relationship is the only one of the main relationships in the poem that is not confirmed through marriage or secured by familial relation. It is clear from this that the relationship between Bruce and Douglas was one of friendship, in the sense that it was not something that either one of them is maintaining due to ties of literal kinship. This is of course true of the historical relationship between Bruce and Douglas, as well as that recorded by Barbour.

While it is without doubt the most obvious and most deeply-explored friendship in Barbour's *Bruce*, the relationship between Bruce and Douglas is not the only friendship to receive attention by Barbour. This is in striking contrast to the romances that Hyatte focussed on, all of which emphasise the exclusivity of the friendships that they explore.[156] In certain passages there are also hints of a more developed friendship between James Douglas and Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray. This relationship is perhaps best understood in light of Anne McKim's observation that the secondary heroes of Barbour's *Bruce* are intended to display similar qualities to King Robert himself but always to a lesser degree. It is certainly true that the relationship between Douglas and Moray carries far less emotional weight for either man than that between Douglas and Bruce. Yet it is perhaps significant that it is in order to come to Moray's aid that Douglas asks the king for permission to abandon his post at the Battle of Bannockburn. Thus there is yet another level of social transgression in this event, as Douglas is not only asking the king to break with social convention for Douglas' own sake but also for the sake of another friend of Douglas'. Perhaps even more crucially, when Douglas reaches the scene of the battle between Moray's men and the English vanguard and sees that Moray has almost beaten the English

[156] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 132

without his help, he decides to hold off from joining the fighting for fear that it will be said that he rescued Moray and thereby diminish the earl's reputation.[157] In this instance, Douglas foregoes honour and renown for himself in order that another might receive greater renown, an act of self-sacrifice that would be recognisable to anyone familiar with chivalric romance.

Later, when Moray and Douglas are in joint command of a Scottish force sent to harry Weardale, Barbour includes an exchange between the two that is in keeping with Cicero's principle that a true friend should not say anything that would shame the other. On discovering that the English are approaching with a larger army to confront the Scots, Moray states that he will face them no matter what size their army is. Douglas immediately responds by praising the earl's bravery, before quickly discouraging him from pursuing this course of action and taking a lead in the effort to outmanoeuvre the English army and bring the Scottish force home without an outright battle.[158] Here, Douglas effectively countermands Moray's order but without shaming the earl or upsetting him. This exchange has echoes of Cicero's further assertion that while a true friend should not say anything to upset a companion he should not shy away from giving honest advice even if it goes against that friend's wishes, and Moray in turn behaves as a true friend to Douglas – at least by Cicero's standards – by heeding Douglas' advice and acting upon it.

Like Barbour, Blind Hary recognises the basic social functions of friendship in the period he is writing. When Wallace is reunited with his uncle after a long period apart his uncle greets him 'rycht freiendfully' and summons 'other freyendis' to celebrate with him.[159] The widow who makes her nine sons to swear an oath of loyalty to Wallace – an obvious attempt by Hary to surpass Barbour's account of the widow who – is said to be 'frendfull till our men'.[160] Wallace describes his relationship with the French king as 'frendschip'.[161] In his first, unintentional confrontation with the English, Wallace attempts to placate the men who attempt to steal the fish he has caught by addressing one of them as 'frend'.[162] He also notes the role that the 'frendschipe' between Edward I and Corspatrick had in securing Corspatrick's position as 'Protector' of Scotland when the English invade the kingdom at the beginning of the poem:

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[157] *The Bruce*, Bk. 12, ll. 110-129
[158] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 295-308
[159] *The Wallace*, Bk. 2, ll. 430-435
[160] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 688; *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 264-268
[161] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 161
[162] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 394

Till Erle Patrik thai gaif full gret gardoun.
For the frendschipe King Edward wyth him fand,
Protector haile he maid hym of Scotland.[163]

But Hary primarily explores the theme of friendship through several relationships in *The Wallace*. Three relationships in particular are relevant in this regard, namely Wallace's relationship with Fawdoun, Wallace's relationship with Sir John Graham and Wallace's relationship with Sir Thomas Longawell – also known as the Red Reiver. None of these relationships is explored as deeply as that between Bruce and Douglas in Barbour's poem and the issue of friendship is not one that so heavily occupies Hary's mind. Nonetheless each of these relationships does give some insight into Hary's conception of what 'proper' friendship entailed and is useful more generally when considering how friendship was understood in late medieval Scotland. It is worth noting that unlike the friendships presented in Barbour's *Bruce*, not all of these relationships are portrayed positively in Hary's *Wallace*. In particular, the friendship between Wallace and Fawdoun is presented as being fundamentally flawed from the beginning and therefore provides a valuable insight into the possible negative elements that could arise in medieval aristocratic relationships of this nature.

The friendship between Wallace and Fawdoun is the only instance in which Hary explores the consequences of what occurs when individuals enter into friendly relations for the wrong reasons. It is fairly clear that Wallace and Fawdoun's relationship is doomed from the start. Hary implies that Wallace took Fawdoun into his service more out of a need for men rather than any real affection between them and suggests that Wallace had his reservations about Fawdoun from their first meeting.[164] Furthermore, Hary's description of Fawdoun's appearance and character does not suggest a great deal of compatibility with Wallace and in some senses is quite opposed to the characteristics Wallace himself exhibits. As discussed above, similarity of character was a key element of friendship as commonly expressed in medieval thought, and the lack of any great similarity between Wallace and Fawdoun is a strong signifier that their relationship is doomed to failure. When describing Fawdoun, Hary emphasises his morose outlook, his lack of humour and his sorrowful countinance and suggests a sombre, almost lethargic attitude to the task in hand:

[163] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 138-140
[164] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 189

To Wallace thar came ane that hecht Fawdoun.
Malancoly he was of complexioun,
Hewy of statur, dour in his countenance,
Sorowfull, sadde, ay dreidfull but pleasance.[165]

In contrast, Hary's description of Wallace portrays him as a man of vigour, passion and enthusiasm, a man wholly committed to the cause of ridding Scotland of the English – and of course Hary's presentation of Wallace throughout the poem reinforces this image.[166] Where Wallace is described in terms that make him seem strong, athletic and warrior-like, Fawdoun is merely 'hewy', a term that suggests a much less intimidating type of physicality. Thus their very characteristics make establishing a truly solid friendship between the two men virtually impossible from the very beginning.

Sure enough, Wallace and Fawdoun's friendship quickly falls apart when it is put under pressure and the breakdown of this relationship ends in bloodshed. When Wallace and his men are fleeing from a superior English force that has attacked them from Perth – in one of the rare instances when Wallace makes a retreat, Fawdoun tires and refuses to go any further. Unable to convince Fawdoun to press on – Wallace flies into a rage and beheads him with a single stroke of his sword:

Fawdoun tyryt and said he mycht nocht gang…
…Wallace in ire on the crag can him ta
With his gud swerd and straik the hed him fra.[167]

Hary is keen to stress before this incident that Wallace's reason for fleeing is not for his own sake but because he sees that his men are hard-pressed and in danger of being killed. Thus, Wallace's anger here stems from the fact that Fawdoun's actions endanger the other men who Wallace must care for and on whom he relies and to whom he has a responsibility as their leader. Although Hary does not explicitly call Fawdoun's actions treasonous, when William Hamilton of Gilbertfield came to adapt the work in the eighteenth-century he did go so far as to call Fawdoun a traitor for his behaviour.[168] This seems to be the implication in the original text as well, in the sense that Fawdoun is betraying not only his lord – Wallace – but also his brothers in arms by exposing them to

[165] *The Wallace*, Bk. 4, ll. 185-188
[166] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll, 1221-1246
[167] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 103, 107-8
[168] Hamilton of Gilbertfield, *Wallace*, p. 42

unnecessary danger by his lack of physical fitness and his refusal to cooperate. Furthermore, immediately after the event Hary makes a point of justifying Wallace's actions before moving on with his tale. Firstly, he points out a practical benefit in that Fawdoun's blood will distract the hounds that the English are using to pursue Wallace and his men. More importantly, Hary gives another strongly negative assessment of Fawdoun's character, pointing out that Fawdoun was held in suspicion by Wallace due to his fickle nature:

> Als Fawdoun was haldyn at suspicioun
> For he was haldyn of brokill complexioun.[169]

Hary even goes so far as to hint at Wallace's suspicion that Fawdoun was hindering the retreat on purpose, presumably with the intention of turning Wallace and his men over to the English in return for his life.[170] All of this reinforces the essential weakness of Wallace and Fawdoun's relationship and the inevitability of its ultimate failure. Hary outlines an interesting calculation that Wallace is supposedly faced with before killing Fawdoun. Either Fawdoun would throw himself on the mercy of the English when they arrived, in which case Fawdoun would 'become English' and might possibly become yet another enemy for Wallace to fight at a later date, or else the English would kill him outright as soon as they caught up with him:

> That Wallace wist had he beyne left allayne,
> And he war fals to enemys he wald ga,
> Gyff he war trew the Sothroun wald him sla.
> Mycht he do ocht bot tyne him as it was?[171]

Here we see Wallace treating Fawdoun like a commodity, considering only the uses to which Fawdoun can be put. This links very obviously and clearly to Hyatte's notion of 'ordinary friendship' as explained above. Wallace and Fawdoun's relationship was founded on the usefulness of Fawdoun to Wallace, not on mutual admiration or the fact that they shared certain admirable characteristics. Thus once Fawdoun no longer served a purpose for Wallace their relationship was effectively ended, demonstrating the fundamental weakness of 'ordinary friendship' by comparison to the deeper friendships enjoyed by

[169] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 115-6
[170] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 17
[171] *The Wallace*, Bk. 5, ll. 118-121

knights elsewhere in the text. Ultimately, it is the lack of any spiritual dimension to their relationship that defines the friendship between Wallace and Fawdoun.

Contrary to this, the friendship between Wallace and Sir John Graham is a far deeper relationship. From the early part of the poem until his death at Falkirk, Graham is the knight who appears most frequently at Wallace's side. In fact, of all of the characters in the poem Wallace and Graham have the longest standing friendship, although frustratingly Hary does not provide a great deal of depth to their relationship. As a consequence, their closeness is more implied than explicit in most of their interactions. However, on a number of notable occasions Hary provides brief glimpses of their closeness and in doing so provides insight into how their friendship functioned. For instance, it is to Graham that Wallace makes his famous vow to kill ten thousand Englishmen in revenge for the murder of his 'lemman'.[172] Graham is not simply present when Wallace makes his oath, rather Wallace addresses the oath directly to his companion. The importance of this point is that it signifies the high degree of trust that Wallace puts it Graham. By addressing him directly, Wallace makes Graham a witness to the fact that Wallace has made this oath and thus gives him a degree of responsibility to ensure that Wallace fulfils his vow. That Wallace has chosen Graham in particular is an indication of the trust that exists between the two characters.

Hary also includes a number of instances in which Wallace and Graham demonstrate the exaggerated displays of emotion towards one another that often characterises chivalric friendship. This can be seen in Graham's intense sorrow over the death of Wallace's 'lemman', which matches Wallace's own grief.[173] Graham also shares in Wallace's sorrow at seeing the Scots being attacked by Bruce on the first day of the Battle of Falkirk.[174] Not only does this illustrate the heightened emotions experienced by Wallace and Graham when in each other's company but it also hints at their fundamentally similar characteristics, another common indicator of profound friendship among knights. Hary reports that Wallace feels 'pytuous payn' when he sees Graham killed at Falkirk and he is sent into a murderous rage similar to the one inspired by the murder of his 'lemman'.[175] As Hyatte observed, it was not uncommon in works of chivalric literature for the love between two knightly companions to parallel the love between a knight and his lady.[176]

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[172] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 221-222
[173] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 203-204
[174] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 243-244
[175] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 393-404
[176] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 93

Wallace's reaction to Graham's death reflects the extreme emotional bond between the two men:

> [Wallace] kyssyt [Graham] and criyt full oft: 'Allace!
> My best brother in warld that euir I had,
> My afald freynd quehen I was hardest stad,
> My hop, my heill, thou was in maist honour,
> My faith, my help, my strenthiast in stour!'[177]

Of all the relationships in Hary's *Wallace*, the friendship between Wallace and Sir Thomas Longawell, the so-called Red Reiver, is the most illuminating in regard to Hary's attitude towards the subject of what constituted 'proper' friendship among knights. Although Longawell does not appear until relatively late in the poem, his friendship with Wallace provides the best comparison from *The Wallace* to the relationship between Bruce and Douglas in *The Bruce* and comes closer than any other to mirroring the key relationship of the earlier poem. Wallace specifically states when they first meet that he desires Longawell's friendship, rather than merely his service.[178] Although Hary does not emphasise this point to the same degree as Barbour does with Bruce and Douglas, in this instance we see the instant affection of the two knightly companions from their very first meeting that so often accompanied chivalric friendships in medieval literature. Furthermore, Wallace's offer of 'frendschip' in particular resonates with the explicit association of friendship and conflict resolution that Boardman has identified in the late fifteenth-century.[179] After surrendering his weapons to Wallace, Longawell swears on his sword never to harm Wallace and he effectively submits himself and his men wholly to Wallace's service.[180] The rage-fuelled murder that led to Longawell being exiled from France in the first place is not unlike those committed by Wallace in the earlier parts of the poem, which first brings him into conflict with the English occupying forces.[181] This emphasises the similarity in character between the two men and this in turn serves to strengthen their relationship for the audience.

One thing that helps to establish friendly relations between Wallace and Longawell is the fact that the Red Reiver is already familiar with Wallace's reputation as the greatest

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[177] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 566-570; Wallace's lament for Graham continues until ll. 582
[178] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 389-390
[179] Boardman, 'Politics and the Feud in Late Medieval Scotland', p. 82-83
[180] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 287-291
[181] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 317-321

knight of his age.[182] This recognition serves a dual function. From Wallace's perspective, Longawell's admiration of Wallace's glowing reputation identifies Longawell as a man with whom he shares similar values and can thus take into his confidence. For Longawell on the other hand, not only does his recognition of Wallace also signify they are both men with similar values but it also presents Longawell with an exemplar to aspire to and through which to achieve atonement for the sins he has committed while living as a pirate. Thus by revealing that Longawell knows Wallace by reputation and admires him for his great deeds, Hary fulfils the criteria of both 'ordinary' and spiritual friendship between the two men to borrow Hyatte's terminology. Longawell's elation on learning that it is Wallace who has captured him confirms his commitment to the relationship and the complimentary nature of their characters.[183] Wallace in turn responds by offering to ask the French king to reconcile with Longawell at last, which he subsequently does.[184] Both of these instances reinforce the similarity and mutual admiration between the two characters. Furthermore, Wallace and Longawell display an unwillingness to be separated from one another that also often typified knightly friendships in chivalric literature. When Wallace goes to attack the English in Guyenne he refuses to take any Frenchmen with him except Longawell, who is clearly by this point one of the closest men to him.[185] On returning to Scotland to deal with the English threat that has arisen in his absence Wallace brings Longawell with him, and this time not only is Longawell the only Frenchman to accompany Wallace he is also the only follower of Wallace's to be mentioned by name.[186] Longawell is once again mentioned on Wallace's return to France following the Battle of Falkirk and is the only man named as travelling with him from France for the last time.[187] When Wallace is finally captured and executed, Longawell reacts with the impassioned response common to a number of other works of chivalric literature. Longawell is overcome with rage and grief at the loss of Wallace and swears never to leave Scotland or see his native France again until he is revenged for Wallace's death.[188]

Barbour and Hary share a similar philosophical perspective on the issue of friendship. Both writers consider 'true' friendship to be the result of mutual admiration between individuals who possess a similar set of idealised characteristics, which make them

[182] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 359-360
[183] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 376-380
[184] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 381-384, ll. 547-548
[185] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 563-565
[186] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 807
[187] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 789; Bk. 12, ll. 322
[188] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 1139-1144

great men independently and also make them so well-suited to one another as companions. For Barbour, this model – borrowed largely from Classical thinking – is best exemplified by the relationship between King Robert and Sir James Douglas. Hary presents Wallace's closest relationships with his followers as conforming to this model as well, but he does not explore these relationships to the same extent that Barbour does for his two main heroes. Unlike Barbour, Hary also provides a perspective on the subject of 'improper' friendship and the potentially disastrous consequences of pursuing such a relationship. Once again, the model that Hary espouses in this instance has Classical precedents and constitutes a warning against focussing only on the 'functional' element of friendship. The full extent of the 'functional' element of friendship in a late medieval context is most clearly illustrated in Barbour's *Bruce*, in which the usefulness of the relationship between the two men is readily apparent. For Bruce, Douglas serves unfailingly as the king's most loyal companion, bound not only by duty but also by affection. For Douglas, friendship with the king offers a tremendous amount of influence and social advancement. This of course was a particularly attractive element of such friendships in reality, and by recognising this aspect of friendship both Barbour and Hary evince their engagement with the practicalities of aristocratic friendship in the medieval period, albeit to differing degrees. However, the fact that both writers primarily promote the spiritual aspects of friendship – and that Hary openly discourages pursuing friendship for mutual usefulness exclusively – serves to emphasise the fact that even though such relationships were recognised as having a practical element it was believed that they must nonetheless be governed by a more theoretical framework in order to be lasting and successful.

The Limits of Acceptable Behaviour in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*

Discussion of what constituted acceptable behaviour for knights is an important element of both *The Bruce* and *The Wallace*, and is an especially significant aspect of Barbour's work. As this chapter will attempt to demonstrate, Barbour in particular frequently draws moral lessons out of the events that he recounts. There are a number of subjects that require attention in this regard. Firstly, Barbour's presentation of Robert I as a 'good' king is illuminating in what it suggests about broader conceptions of ideal kingship. This is put in particular relief when Barbour's presentation of Bruce is compared to his presentation of Edward I. For Barbour and other contemporary Scottish writers the king's personal qualities 'set the character of Scottish life' and so the particular characteristics that make Bruce a good king in Barbour's eyes will be given consideration.[1] Several notable events also present themselves for attention, especially the murder of Comyn and the Douglas Larder. How Barbour records and to a degree justifies these actions sheds considerable light on his attitude regarding what constituted acceptable behaviour. Furthermore, Barbour's approach to dealing with the practicalities of the conflict and the actions this forces his heroes to undertake, particularly in the setting of traps and the laying of ambushes, provides further evidence of Barbour's thoughts on the subject of acceptable behaviour.

Hary too offers numerous insights into what he believed constituted acceptable behaviour. The most obvious, and most commented upon, source of justification in *The Wallace* is nascent patriotism and in particular the idea of 'trew' Scottish blood. Another similar major component of Hary's work focusses on Wallace's simplicity by comparison to the conniving villains he is frequently forced to dispatch. A fascinating case study into Hary's thoughts on acceptable behaviour is presented in the instance of two parallel tales towards the end of the poem, one involving the so-called Red Reiver and the other involving John of Lyn. Both of these men are pirates who are challenged by Wallace, but their responses to this challenge and their subsequent treatment by Hary are illustrative of the writer's thoughts on the subject of acceptable knightly behaviour. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly of all, the theme of loyalty to the crown, which runs throughout *The Wallace*, may offer insight not only into Hary's conception of what constituted acceptable

[1] M. Brown, 'Introduction', in M. Brown and R. Tanner (eds.), *Scottish Kingship, 1306–1542: Essays in Honour of Norman Macdougall*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), p. 4

behaviour but also serve as a subtle encouragement to his audience to seek security in the institution of the crown in times of uncertainty.

Jaeger has said of eleventh and twelfth-century courtly literature that the ideals therein 'were those of the French feudal nobility'.[2] Similarly, *The Bruce*'s sympathy lies primarily with royalty and the ruling class. While Hary's work is less clearly aimed at the upper eschalons of the Scottish nobility, neither writer challenges the right of the king and his tenants-in-chief to hold property and collect revenues, but rather they challenge the legitimacy of the English attempts to take these rights from the Scottish aristocracy.[3] Barbour's *Bruce* pits the Scottish nobility against the English nobility and there is little to no suggestion, as it might be argued there is in a work like Blind Hary's *Wallace,* that anyone from a lower class background would be fit for the task of securing Scottish freedom or governing the kingdom after this has been achieved. In Goldstein's words, 'If any unfree peasants chanced to hear Barbour's poem read aloud, they would have known that *The Bruce* was not addressed to them.'[4] The work also serves as a more in-depth study of the personalities of the historical figures it portrays. Nicholson claims that Barbour's *Bruce* is one of the first works in Scottish literature to record a more human side of Robert the Bruce and his chief followers, suggesting that in this work 'Bruce and his companions emerge from documentary impersonality and assume flesh and blood.'[5] This would seem significant for this study as Barbour gives his subjects greater depth by exploring, among other aspects of their personalities, the justification for their actions and the principles that drove them to act in the way they did. Moreover, the emotional depth of these characters no doubt increased the appeal of these characters – and the ideals they embodied – to the royal and noble figures who comprised the work's original audience. McKim argues that less highly-praised characters like the earl of Moray and Edward Bruce are used not to contrast Douglas' qualities but to serve as an example of those same qualities in lesser amounts.[6] Cameron on the other hand has suggested that Moray and Edward Bruce exist as mirrors to the real heroes of the work, namely Douglas and the king.[7] However, whichever explanation of these characters is preferred the point stands that by fleshing his heroes out

[2] Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness*, p. 113
[3] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 160
[4] Ibid. p. 162
[5] R. Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1974), p.276
[6] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', p. 86
[7] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 21

with personalities Barbour makes the main characters of his poem easier to identify with, both for modern and even more so contemporary readers.

There has been a long-standing question facing historians regarding how to categorise *The Bruce* stylistically. The problem here is that since it is difficult to easily assign either *The Bruce* or *The Wallace* to a clear genre it is equally difficult to apply common methods for assessing such works. Barbour himself refers to his work as 'romanys' though it is common for historians to look to *The Bruce* as a reasonably accurate record of real historical events.[8] Yet it is unwise to treat this work as if it was a chronicle. Hayden White distinguished chronicles as being essentially open-ended works that begin whenever the author chooses to begin them and reach no definitive conclusion, ending only when the author stops recording events or when the author dies.[9] If this definition is accepted, then it would seem to be insufficient when applied to Barbour's *Bruce*. *The Bruce* has a very definite beginning and end, following its central characters from the circumstances that instigate their illustrious careers to their deaths. White also provides a definition of romance as 'a drama of self-identification symbolised by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it and his final liberation from it.'[10]

This seems to fit Barbour's *Bruce* more easily. *The Bruce* is not as metaphysical as most Arthurian romance and it remains firmly fixed in more or less natural phenomena for the most part, perhaps as a consequence of the fact that Barbour was dealing with relatively recent history. As Goldstein points out, the action of *The Bruce* takes place in a realistically Scottish landscape that his audience would have recognised, not the 'enchanted' realms normally associated with romance.[11] But the trajectories of Bruce and Douglas' careers are certainly upwards away from the earthly concerns of land and power and towards more godly matters. There can be no doubt that Barbour intends for Bruce and Douglas to go to Heaven at the end of his work. Indeed, Douglas' final exploits before his own death are undertaken to ensure Bruce's favour in the eyes of God, which would seem to speak to the last part of White's definition. What White has to say on romance is especially relevant to this study as he also notes that such literature deals with 'the triumph of good over evil'

[8] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 446
[9] H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 6
[10] Ibid. p. 8
[11] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 160

further demonstrating the importance of moral frameworks for judging such sources.[12] Borrowing as heavily as it does from Barbour, *The Wallace* is similarly difficult to categorise for largely the same reasons.

Barbour's claims to truthfulness are closely tied into the issue of classification and require some consideration. Most scholars take note of Barbour's own apparent eagerness to stress the 'suthfastnes' of his work. It is also commonly noted that Barbour frequently repeats 'formulas of authenticity', like 'as I herd say', in order to portray himself as arranging, as opposed to making up, the stories he recounts.[13] For one campaign, Barbour even records the name of a knight who supposedly witnessed the events he is recounting and passed the tale on to the author himself.[14] Purdie has argued convincingly that Barbour's contemporary audience may have harboured doubts over the accuracy of some of Barbour's tales given the strong resemblance of his work to a romance, using Wyntoun's caution when borrowing material from the romances of 'Huchown of the Awle Ryale' as an example of a similar attitude being evinced in another near contemporary work.[15] Given that contemporary readers may have shared Wyntoun's hesitancy to automatically trust tales narrated to them in the context of a romance, it may be that Barbour's repeated protestations of his own 'suthfastness' were a means of counteracting this. Barbour is less than truthful with certain historical facts than he is with others, especially when it comes to the real Bruce's period of service to the English king. As Goldstein puts it, he 'refuses to taint the character of his primary hero by representing him as a temporary ally of the English.'[16] This itself speaks to the codification of a certain type of morality into Barbour's *Bruce*. The question of the extent to which Barbour sought to present a historically accurate record of events and how far he sought to fictionalise them is relevant to this study as the answer will dictate the extent to which Barbour felt free to use his characters to provide his audience with a set of moral examples.

Most of Hary's claims to accuracy are even more questionable than Barbour's. Despite his frequent assertions that he was basing his account on a Latin biography written by John Blair, Wallace's confessor, no such work is attested anywhere other than Hary's poem and Henry Summerson has suggested that Hary may have borrowed the name of a possible associate, a royal chaplain of James III, for Wallace's purely fictitious

[12] White, *Metahistory*, p. 9
[13] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 142
[14] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 780-1
[15] Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 57
[16] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 150

contemporary biographer.[17] As well as borrowing from many episodes in Barbour's *Bruce*, McDiarmid has identified a number of portions of Hary's text that the author modelled on other stories that would have at least been available to him at the time he was composing *The Wallace*. Furthermore, Hary applied a great deal of his personal imagination and inventiveness to his account of Wallace's life and career, especially in the case of events that might have been construed as embarrassing for his hero. For instance, Hary turns the Battle of Falkirk into a two day long running battle in which Wallace refuses to participate in the first day of the fighting – and which the Scots conspicuously lose – and then arrives to save the day and force the English to withdraw on the second. However, the presence of such inaccuracies in both works is not necessarily an insurmountable barrier to analysing the types of behaviour that each author considers to be acceptable. In fact, the way that each author manipulates the facts at their disposal can be particularly illuminating with regards to the types of behaviour they wish to promote or discourage.

In order to properly assess the limits of acceptable behaviour underpinning these two poems it is necessary to consider how historians have explored morality and how this reflects on the study of the two main works in question. In his broad and very philosophical study of the nature of truth and how historians can deal with it, Williams discussed the significance of trust and its relationship to matters of individual freedom and the avoidance of manipulation, both of which are important themes in Barbour's *Bruce*. However, he balances all of this with a warning against the adoption of a Moral Law encapsulated by a simple rule or set of rules applicable to everyone.[18] This would seem to relate to Barbour's *Bruce* in a number of ways. Barbour is keenly interested in issues of trust, insofar as this interfaces with loyalty, and his work serves to recount how trust and loyalty affect the relationships between the king and his knights, knights and their fellow knights and noblemen and their followers. Yet the latter point about the unreliability of Moral Law speaks to Barbour's treatment of the lower classes in his poem. This has been noted by Goldstein, who observes Barbour's unwillingness to speak in terms of freedom for Scottish peasants as well as for lords and knights.[19] Duncan has also noted the way in which Barbour draws the attention of the audience to 'the captains and generals' in his depictions of

[17] H. Summerson, 'John Blair', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/view/article/2566?docPos=1 (accessed 15 August 2015)
[18] B. Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 122
[19] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 164

battles.[20] Indeed, we can trace some explanation for this fact when we look at the failure of chivalric ideas to penetrate the consciousness of the lower class, as far as it is possible to gauge this from the sources available to us.[21] Here we see another dichotomy of moral principles, one for the aristocracy and another for the lower orders. What can at least be concluded from this is that when Barbour composed *The Bruce* his concern was to explore the moral qualities of the nobility as opposed to that of commoners, even when recounting interactions between these two groups. So already it is clear that to try to understand the poem historically requires us to assess the morality of the culture in which it was produced.

The question of whether Barbour is espousing the morality 'of his time' can be approached via his attempts to explain and even justify the actions of his protagonists. Cameron and Summerfield have already identified a number of 'controversial' episodes in *The Bruce* that Barbour seeks to justify.[22] For instance, the fact that Bruce chooses to justify the massacre of sleeping Englishmen at Turnberry to his men suggests that such behaviour was not considered to be conventional.[23] Chandos herald makes brief mention of a night attack that the Black Prince launched against the men of France and Picardy in order to save Calais, confirming that use of such tactics was not unique, but it is for their *vaillantement* that Prince Edward and his men receive praise from the writer, making no attempt to justify their choice of tactics.[24] That Barbour does make a point of explaining Bruce's reasoning demonstrates that he was seeking to draw morals from the tales he was telling that other writers – such as Chandos herald – did not. The need for historians to draw moral judgements about sources proceeds from the tension that is often shown in the moral values these sources espouse. The character of Edward Bruce serves as an expression of the moral tension in Barbour's narrative.[25] Stevenson takes up this idea, pointing out that Edward Bruce possessed many of the physical characteristics necessary to be a knight but lacked the corresponding moral characteristics, leading to Barbour's harsh criticism of him after his death in Ireland.[26] Cameron has suggested that what have been perceived as criticisms of Edward Bruce or even of Moray in fact serve to reinforce the notion that Bruce and Douglas are justifiably violating the norms of chivalric behaviour.[27]

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[20] *The Bruce,* p. 13
[21] Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed,* p. 190
[22] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', pp. 13-29; Summerfield, 'Barbour's *Bruce*: Compilation in Retrospect', pp. 107-125
[23] *The Bruce,* Bk. 5, ll. 83-8
[24] *La Vie du Prince Noir,* ll. 434-441
[25] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's Bruce', p. 16
[26] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland,* p. 157
[27] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's Bruce', p. 20

Even given this, in Barbour's *Bruce*, knights are allowed to make mistakes and fall short of the ideal virtues of chivalry so as to learn from these experiences. The extended confrontation between a Scottish army under the joint command of Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, and Sir James Douglas and a larger English force commanded by the young Edward III in 1327 is the most 'civilised' – and arguably most conventional – encounter in the poem. Barbour describes the immediate exchange of prisoners after the skirmishes that occur between the English and the Scots, as in the case of Sir William Erskine who is captured by the English on the same day that he is made a knight.[28] Barbour also mentions the many 'justyn' and feats of arms between the two sides to pass the time during the stalemate that ensues when the Scots make camp in the bishop of Durham's deer park and refuse to meet the English in the open.[29] Yet even in this section of the poem Barbour presents a number of incidents that evince novel variations on the social norms of Barbour's own time, as will be explored below. Barbour includes a brief discourse on the nature of morality and virtuous behaviour while reflecting on the nature of prophecy in the build-up to Bruce's return to Carrick.[30] In this passage, Barbour makes a point of emphasising the fact that while he believes that men can be born with an inclination for either good or evil, it is possible for them to suppress this inclination 'throu nurtur or thru skill' for better or for worse. Barbour even cites the example of Aristotle as an historical figure who demonstrates this principle. What is clear from this portion of the text is that Barbour not only envisages morality as being something that can be taught, developed and adapted but also shows that he had an awareness that through his writing he could influence the behaviour of his audience in a manner that he perceived as being generally positive.

Naturally, a major moral concern apparent in Barbour's *Bruce* is the issue of what constitutes 'good' kingship. Barbour's differing presentations of Edward I and Robert I offer an illuminating insight into Barbour's conception of what the proper conduct for a king should be. Perhaps the most noteworthy point of comparison is in Barbour's description of the deaths of each of these kings. According to Goldstein, the narration of a character's death provides a sense of the significance of that character's life.[31] Morse has noted that commonly in deathbed scenes 'the dying man displayed humility, made his

[28] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 376-384
[29] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 524-528
[30] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 730-743
[31] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 41

confession, and, if he were powerful, made provision for his successor or heir'.[32] Deathbed scenes were often an opportunity for medieval writers to offer brief summaries of the successes and failures that their heroes have enjoyed during their lives, and to reinforce their moral character, as in the case of the Chandos herald's account of the death of the Black Prince and Cuvelier's account of the death of the death of Bertrand du Guesclin.[33] Tyson has previously noted the fact that both Chandos herald and Cuvelier were careful to remove any discordant element from the deathbed scenes of their heroes, although she has not made a comparison between the two deathbed scenes in Barbour's *Bruce*.[34] When Edward's death occurs, he is on his way to mount yet another attack on Scotland in answer to Neil Bruce's defence of Kildrummy Castle against the English. Saldanha and Van Heijnsbergen have each independently observed that Barbour purposefully gets the chronology of his events wrong here in order to present these two events side-by-side to increase the rhetorical impact of Edward's decision to execute the prisoners taken at Kildrummy Castle.[35] His illness comes on him suddenly and he is left with little time to contemplate his fate, to make arrangements for the governance of his kingdom after his death or to seek absolution for his sins. King Robert's death on the other hand comes after the success of his long struggle to gain English recognition of his rights as king and he has time to gather the noblemen of the kingdom to not only confirm the succession of his son David but also to make specific arrangements for the care of his immortal soul by posthumously undertaking an act of armed pilgrimage. The importance of ensuring the position of one's posterity can be seen in the Black Prince's deathbed scene as well, in which the prince is keen to ensure that his son's position will be respected and maintained after his death, leading him to extract oaths to this effect first from his followers and then from his surviving family members.[36]

Of course, Barbour's accounts of the deaths of King Edward and King Robert are strongly influenced by the historical facts relating to these events that were available to Barbour at the time of writing, but it is the way in which Barbour presents these details that is particularly informative. In his dying hours, Edward is reduced to being barely able to breathe and can only speak in a low voice, denying him a meaningful, emotional death

[32] R. Morse, 'Medieval Biography: History as a Branch of Literature', in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Apr., 1985), p. 262
[33] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 4109-4183; Cuvelier, *Chanson*, ll. 24235-24324
[34] Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', p. 127-128
[35] Saldanha, 'Studies in Medieval Scottish Historical Romance', p. 29; Van Heijnsbergen, 'Scripting the National Past', p. 99
[36] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 4135-4152

scene like Bruce enjoys.[37] Long, tearful farewells to friends and family were a common feature of medieval literature when recounting the death of great chivalric figures. For example, not only does the Chandos herald note the dramatic displays of grief by his vassals at the prince's death, he also includes a comment on the particular anguish experienced by the prince's wife at his passing.[38] Cuvelier notes the sorrow of both high-born and low-born soldiers at the death of Bertrand du Guesclin.[39] Furthermore, when du Guesclin knows that his death is approaching he specifically calls for his friends to gather round him so that he can bid them farewell.[40] In *The Bruce*, the absence of any mention of the sorrow felt by his followers at his loss robs the death of King Edward of the emotional impact that Bruce's has and clearly signals to the audience Edward's lack of moral worth. Both King Edward and King Robert express regret at their failure to fulfil their crusading aspirations by the time of their death. However, Bruce is famously able to at least fulfil these aspirations vicariously thanks to his closeness to his followers, and to Douglas in particular.[41] Edward on the other hand is left to vainly lament the fact that he is dying in some otherwise insignificant town instead.[42] This passage is made even more striking by the fact that Edward I had of course actually been on crusade in his youth, and in fact received word of his father's death while returning from the Holy Land.[43]

The impression that is given is of a life wasted and the fact that he does not make provisions for a crusade in his honour after his death may be an attempt by Barbour to imply that the crusading aspirations expressed on his deathbed may not have been entirely genuine. Morse has observed that expressions of piety and a concern for one's immortal soul in deathbed scenes served to reinforce the holiness of the figure in question and assure the audience that salvation awaited the character after death.[44] Piety is an important element of the Black Prince's deathbed scene, which opens with the prince asking his followers to pray for his soul and concludes with him praying to God for pardon for whatever misdeeds he has committed during his life.[45] In Cuvelier's account of the death of Bertrand du Guesclin, the dying knight repeatedly calls out to God and expresses the hope of salvation

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[37] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 198-200
[38] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 4130-4133; ll. 4156-4158
[39] Cuvelier, *Chanson*, ll. 24323-24324
[40] Ibid. ll. 24248-24251
[41] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 183-199
[42] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 205-214
[43] M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 6
[44] Morse, 'Medieval Biography', p. 263
[45] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 4112-4118; ll. 4165-4170

based on his loyal service to God.[46] Barbour casts further doubt over Edward's spiritual state at the end of his life by mentioning a rumour that the English king consulted a spirit that supposedly gave him glimpses of the future, followed by a cautionary tale demonstrating how misleading such revelations can be.[47] Edward's last act before his death is to order the brutal execution of the prisoners taken at the recently-captured Kildrummy Castle and at this point Barbour specifically asks his audience to consider whether such a man could hope to enjoy eternal bliss.[48] This is in direct contrast to Barbour's account of the immediate circumstances of Bruce's death, which is couched in very religious terms and makes it clear that Barbour's expectation is that Bruce is immediately taken up to Heaven to be 'In joy solace and angell gle'.[49] Goldstein observes that tying Bruce's violent struggle in pursuit his rightful inheritance to his eternal heavenly reward, Barbour sought to make sense of the king's life and the suffering he endured.[50] The image that Barbour presents of Edward at the end of his life is one of a bitter, frustrated and foolish tyrant whose ambitions have ultimately come to nothing and who is left to spitefully lash out at enemies and friends alike, impeding his chances of achieving eternal bliss. Wholly contrary to this, Barbour's impression of Bruce's final days of King Robert is of a calm, pious king ending his days in peace and satisfaction, surrounded by the many loyal companions he has attracted during his life and assured of taking his place in paradise.

Not only does Barbour present Bruce as an ideal king by comparison with his English rivals, he also portrays Bruce as an ideal king judged against more abstract models of kingship. Similarly, Tyson has shown that the terms employed by Chandos herald in praise of the Black Prince can be broadly divided into physical and moral categories.[51] In the aftermath of King Robert's victory against Aymer de Valence at Loudoun Hill in 1307, Barbour provides a quick character description of Bruce and why people followed him:

> A folk that mery wes and glaid
> For thar victour, and als thai haid
> A lord that sa swete wes and deboner
> Sa curtais and off sa fayr effer
> Sa blyth and als weill bourdand

[46] Cuvelier, *Chanson*, ll. 24243-24247
[47] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 219-306
[48] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 327-331
[49] *The Bruce*, Bk. 20, ll. 257-262
[50] Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald'', p. 43
[51] Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', p. 120; Tyson also notes that while a greater number of different terms were employed by Chandos herald to describe the prince's moral qualities, the terms regarding the prince's moral qualities were employed more frequently

And in bataill sa styth to stand
Sua wys and rycht sua avisé
That thai had gret cause blyth to be.[52]

These qualities range from his steadfastness in battle to his courteousness, his fine bearing, his good humour and even touches on his mental qualities such as his wisdom and prudence. These are the key qualities that Barbour identifies as being those of not only a good knight, but a good king. Barbour stresses the fact that when a king exhibits these qualities he will inspire happiness in his subjects. Later Scottish writers such as Walter Bower promoted the notion that the maintenance of royal authority was best achieved through intimidation and the vigorous prosecution of the king's desires at the expense of those powerful men within the kingdom who opposed them. Bower in particular, when looking back on the reign of Robert III, presented the late king as a man of considerable personal internalised virtue who lacked an interest in the temporal, secular affairs that a king was required to deal with in order to maintain his authority.[53] The views of Bower have had considerable influence on modern historiography, with many historians until fairly recently tending to argue that successful Scottish kingship relied on the conscious damaging of aristocratic ambitions in favour of the king's aspirations.[54] It is interesting to note then that while Barbour does clearly place a high value on personal strength and dynamism in a king, he also praises personal, internal moral virtue as well.

Certain of the characteristics that elevate Bruce to the position of the ideal king are given extensive consideration by Barbour. Bagge has argued that by the thirteenth-century writers on the continent had begun to formulate a model of kingship that saw the king as a human reflection of the state itself, an idea drawn both from Roman canon law and from Aristotelian ideas.[55] Charisma is clearly a very important element of a good king's personality from Barbour's perspective and he is careful to give Bruce plenty of opportunities to demonstrate this. As Potts has pointed out, medieval concepts of charisma developed from a religious concept that understood charismatic individuals to possess 'extraordinary gifts of the spirit'.[56] Furthermore, heredity was a guiding principle in the medieval understanding of royal charisma, meaning that charisma was vested in the

[52] *The Bruce*, Bk. 8, ll. 379-386
[53] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 303
[54] R. L. Mackie, *A Short History of Scotland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 162-164; Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages*, p. 287-288; G. Donaldson, *Scottish Kings*, (2nd edn.) (London: Batsford, 1977), p. 64
[55] S. Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror*, p. 17
[56] J. Potts, *A History of Charisma*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3

institution that the king represented and therefore the ability to demonstrate charisma served as proof of one's right to hold that position.[57] This likely served as a compelling reason for Barbour emphasise Bruce's charismatic qualities in order to reinforce the impression that he possessed the innate characteristics of a king. In the early part of the poem in particular, Bruce on a number of occasions makes a point of telling his men tales of great heroes, which usually have some specific relevance to the situation he and his men find themselves in.[58] Narratively, these moments allow Barbour to reinforce the moral lesson of the situation that Bruce and his men find themselves in and give him an opportunity to link Bruce to heroes such as Caesar or Fierabras, or liken the struggle of the Scots against the English to the conflict between Rome and Hannibal. However, in the context of Barbour's tale Bruce's story-telling serves to comfort his men and strengthen the bond between the king and his followers.[59] Barbour states this plainly in the text on more than one occasion.[60] Furthermore, the fact that Bruce directs his attention to the examples of the great heroes of the past emphasises the importance of good examples in the life of a knight, and in that sense reinforces the point that Barbour's intention was to influence the behaviour of his audience in composing *The Bruce*.

Barbour also recognises the need for a king to have a capacity for dissembling when dealing with the men at his command, a notion that found expression in other writing on kingship.[61] For instance, as the English army approaches Stirling in 1314, Bruce orders his captains to tell their men that the enemy was advancing in poor order so as to give comfort and encouragement to them in anticipation of the battle to come.[62] Later in the poem, 'the marchell' – presumably meaning Robert Keith – comes to hear of a burgess of Berwick who wishes to betray the cruel English captain of the town and deliver the town to the Scots, and the marshal brings letters from the burgess to the king. When the marshal presents the letters to the king himself Bruce praises him for coming to the king rather than his chief lieutenants at that time – Moray and Douglas – saying that if he had chosen one of them it might have inspired jealousy in the other. Bruce even makes sure to give both Moray and Douglas equal position in the attack on the city so that neither man will think the other is being advanced before him.[63] Before the Battle of Byland, King Robert holds

[57] Ibid. p. 101
[58] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 207-266; Bk. 3, ll. 273-282; Bk. 3, ll. 435-462
[59] Summerfield, 'Barbour's *Bruce*: Compilation in Retrospect', p. 116-119
[60] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 267-273; Bk. 3, ll. 463-466
[61] F. Oakley, *The Watershed of Modern Politics*, p. 76
[62] *The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 489-498
[63] *The Bruce*, Bk. 17, ll. 49-60

a council at which he consults his men on what seems to them to be the best course of action.[64] Barbour does not any details of the discussion that took place at this council, but the fact that Barbour includes this point at all suggests that Barbour recognised the need for a good king to take counsel from his men and to take their advice into consideration before making decisions. In recognising the need for a good king to be willing to take counsel, Barbour was echoing a theme common to other near contemporary sources as well. In his preamble to his account of the civil conflict in Spain, Thomas Gray notes the suffering that will inevitably be inflicted on a country's people when their king rules only for his own ends, and subsequently stresses the need for a good king to take counsel.[65]

It is clear then that Barbour advocates the notion that a good king should be charismatic and charming, concerned with the comforting and encouragement of his men but careful to ensure that he does not unintentionally sow dissention among them by showing undue favouritism. That is not to say that Barbour does not recognise the importance of a degree of honesty and openness in a king, especially in the case of diplomatic matters. For example, when ending the three and a half year truce in 1327 Barbour has Bruce 'planly' and 'opynly' end the truce before sending Moray and Douglas into England to reopen hostilities.[66] This contrasts sharply with Edward's behaviour in the same period. The pretext that Barbour gives for the Scots to resume the conflict with England in 1327 is that the English have been harassing Scottish shipping throughout the period of truce between the two kingdoms.[67] In fact, Barbour presents the entire truce as being in bad faith on the part of the English king, who simply wished to make the Scots turn their efforts to peaceful pursuits before making war on them again when they were least prepared for it.[68] Echoing Barbour, Christine de Pizan warns her readers to beware of the misuse of peace treaties and truces as a way for an enemy to deceive one into weakening their position.[69]

Barbour's presentation of Bruce as the ideal king also promotes certain vigorous and dynamic qualities to be expressed on the battlefield as well as in social interaction. Boldness in the face of danger is to be valued in a king as it gives comfort and courage to his men and can inspire them to undertake similarly bold feats of arms. The notion that bold

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[64] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 378-381
[65] *Scalacronica*, p. 195
[66] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 239-251
[67] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 192-198
[68] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 167-189
[69] Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry*, p. 57-61

leadership could be a decisive factor in combat finds expression in sources other than *The Bruce*. For instance, Gray is keen to stress the inspirational value of Henry Beaumont's personal leadership in achieving victory at the Battle of Dupplin Moor and frequently stresses the significance of his father's ability to inspire his men to victory against the odds.[70] While neither Beaumont nor Gray's father were kings, the same principle – namely that a great leader can inspire similar greatness in his men – is at work in these examples as well as in Barbour's *Bruce*. Allmand has argued that this emphasis on emphasis on inspirational leadership explains the tendency of medieval writers to focus on individual accomplishments in their depictions of combat.[71] In *The Bruce*, when fighting in Glen Trool Bruce is at the forefront of the fighting and Barbour tells us his followers 'Tuk hardyment off his gud deid'.[72] In another well-known episode, Bruce personally leads the assault on Perth, carrying a ladder to the walls himself, and in this instance Barbour states Bruce's intention as being 'Ensample till his men ta ma'.[73] When reflecting on King Robert's many successes in battle despite almost invariably being outnumbered by the English, Barbour notes that he always fought so hardily that 'the mast coward hardy wes'.[74] In the build-up to the Battle of Inverurie in 1308, when Barbour reports that King Robert fell so ill that he could neither eat nor drink nor walk, Barbour includes a passage in which he considers the importance of strong leadership. In this passage Barbour notes that a people led by someone who is willing to put himself at risk in order to achieve his goals will take example from him and fight all the harder for it.[75] Conversely, a leader who is weak or cowardly will infect his men with these same vices and they will 'vencusyt in thar hartis be' before any fighting has even begun.[76] It is clear that Barbour advocates the notion that a king should be willing and able to engage in feats of martial prowess, especially if he expects his men to do so on a regular basis as well. Bruce is given a number of notable opportunities to demonstrate his incredible prowess in *The Bruce*. Memorably, he successfully defends a ford against no fewer than two hundred men, after which Barbour explicitly invites his audience to compare the performance of the king in this feat to a Classical parallel.[77] On three separate occasions, Bruce is forced to defend himself against three attackers who have

[70] *Scalacronica*, p. 69, p. 82, 108
[71] Allmand, 'The Reporting of War in the Middle Ages', p. 23
[72] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 601
[73] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 390
[74] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 193
[75] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 69-74
[76] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 79-84
[77] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 271-286; for further discussion of the classical source on which Barbour modelled this tale, cf. Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 67-69

managed to isolate him in an attempt to take his life, and in each case he overcomes all three of his assailants.[78] Following the third of these episodes, Bruce's men express their admiration for the king's prowess, thereby demonstrating the beneficial effect such displays of prowess can have on a body of men.[79]

As well as being dynamic, bold and a proficient warrior, Barbour gives the impression that a good king must also be compassionate, as much to his defeated enemies as to his own subjects. Following the capture of Perth from the English, a victory that cements Bruce's control of all of Scotland north of the Forth, Barbour recounts how the king's men took a great deal of booty from the town but had been given specific orders not to kill anyone who could not be taken without a fight.[80] In this instance, Barbour's emphasis on the compassion of the Scots may be inspired by a desire to redress a point of historical contention, as it seems that in reality the capture of Perth had been a rather bloody affair.[81] In the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Bannockburn, Barbour not only has Bruce make arrangements for the burial of the earl of Gloucester despite the earl's prominent role in leading the English against the Scots, but Barbour also takes note of Bruce's treatment of the prisoners taken during the battle. In particular, when Sir Marmaduke Tweng surrenders to the king personally Bruce responds graciously and treats him courteously while Sir Marmaduke is in captivity. Barbour comments on the fact that this behaviour earned King Robert great esteem and explicitly encourages his audience to follow Bruce's example in this.[82] All of this is in stark contrast to King Edward's treatment of prisoners. Barbour twice mentions King Edward's brutal execution of the prisoners taken at the capture of Kildrummy Castle, once when recounting the events surrounding the English king's death and again when Bruce receives a report of the incident from a woman on his return to Carrick.[83] In the first instance, it serves to highlight the English king's wickedness and reinforce the fact that he is bound for hell. When Bruce receives word of these events, Barbour is able to present Bruce's acute sorrow at the loss of such loyal followers, and furthermore has him swear that their deaths will be avenged.[84] Bruce's reaction

[78] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 112-146; Bk. 5, ll. 623-647; Bk. 7, ll. 453-478; the last of these has been identified by Duncan as being essentially a repetition of the second.
[79] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 486-490
[80] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 449-454
[81] G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), p. 194
[82] *The Bruce*, Bk. 13, ll. 530-541
[83] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 316-322; Bk. 5, ll. 147-157
[84] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 161-174

demonstrates not only his recognition of the value of loyalty in his followers but also displays a genuine compassion for them.

At times Bruce's displays of chivalrous compassion are so grand as to be almost absurd. For instance, while in Ireland to support his brother, Bruce at one point puts the entire campaign on hold when he overhears a laundress in childbirth.[85] Rather than leave her behind, he delays the campaign, sets up a tent for her to give birth in and even provides attendants for her. Barbour is explicit in his praise for this act, noting how it showed 'full gret curtasy' for such a great man as King Robert to go to such an effort for a lowly laundress. This episode is made all the more mystifying by the fact that it takes place in the midst of an extended discussion of prudence. The digression regarding the laundress is immediately preceded by a scene in which the king angrily chastises his brother Edward for advancing beyond the sight of the rest of the army in the hopes of engaging the enemy sooner and winning acclaim for himself, leaving the king's division to be ambushed by Richard de Clare.[86] The events concerning the laundress are then shortly followed by a reflection on Edward Bruce's failings as king, chief among them being his lack of prudence.[87] It may be that Barbour means the episode with the laundress to serve as a generic example of Bruce's extreme courtesy, in which case it would stand as an example of how important Barbour felt this virtue was for a king. Kliman has previously noted the incident with the laundress as an example of Bruce's kingly compassion and has suggested that to contemporary readers 'laundress' may have been roughly synonymous with 'camp follower'.[88] This fact may have been intended to heighten the impression of Bruce as the supremely compassionate king, and there is almost certainly a degree of humour included in this tale as well.[89] However, there may be yet another element to this story relating to Barbour's interest in compassion as a kingly virtue. In both of the framing episodes involving Edward Bruce, Sir Edward displays a type of self-indulgence that seeks to aggrandise himself by vigorously applying himself to problems that he perceives. When upbraiding his brother, Bruce advocates a more thoughtful, restrained approach to the prosecution of his claims in Ireland. In his reflection of Sir Edward's shortcomings, Barbour states that he lacked 'mesur' and reacted too quickly and hotly when faced with

[85] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 274-296
[86] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 246-258
[87] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 325-334
[88] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 481
[89] For an alternate reading of this passage as a comment by Barbour on the limitations of romance as a genre see Purdie, 'Medieval Romance and the Generic Frictions of Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 70-71

difficulties. In the episode with the laundress, Barbour has King Robert pause rather than proceed, demonstrating a more careful, measured approach that may be closer to what Barbour felt Edward Bruce was lacking. Halting the army for one day more does not necessarily put it at greater risk and at the very least taking more time than is needed is preferable to proceeding rashly from Barbour's perspective. Ultimately, Bruce achieves the same goal as his brother was so interested in – the improvement of his reputation, albeit for virtues such as 'curtasy' and 'mesur' – by choosing the thoughtful action over the rash one, demonstrating the superiority of the king's approach over Sir Edward's.

Much of Barbour's character advice for kings is applicable to the other knightly heroes of *The Bruce*, particularly Barbour's leadership advice since all of the poem's heroes were leaders of men. In much the same way that Barbour chose to compare and contrasts the qualities of Bruce as a hero king with the vices of King Edward he also frequently drew direct comparisons between other, non-royal heroes and villains in his poem. Sir James Douglas and Sir Ingram Umfraville are two such characters whose actions are often a source of contrast in *The Bruce*. Umfraville is in many ways a reflection of Douglas, and receives a great deal of praise from Barbour despite being almost always on the English side and ultimately abandoning King Robert's cause despite being reconciled after Bannockburn. Umfraville's main role while in English allegiance usually involves making prudent suggestions to Sir Aymer de Valence in the early part of the poem or Edward II in the later sections, most of which are rejected. For example, it is Umfraville who advises Sir Aymer on how to act before the Battle of Methven, and thanks to Umfraville's advice to the English commander King Robert suffers his only major military defeat in the poem.[90] This instance is particularly noteworthy as Umfraville suggests that the English promise to meet the Scots – who have arrived at Perth with the intention of challenging the English to open battle – at a pre-determined time, only to attack early in order to catch the Scots when they are still unprepared. This kind of deliberate deception marks this ploy out as contravening Barbour's understanding of the proper way to arrange traps and ambushes for the enemy, as will be explored later in this chapter. Interestingly, Gray mentions that the decision to take Bruce's force by surprise at Methevn was taken on the advice of certain unnamed Scottish lords (*par consail dez seignours Descoz*), who are described simply as *beinvoillauntz* of Comyn.[91]

[90] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 260-300
[91] *Scalacronica*, p. 52

Unlike Barbour, Gray ascribes no particular value to this action, neither praising the English for their ingenuity nor condemning them for their duplicitousness. On the second day of the Battle of Bannockburn, Umfraville advises a feigned retreat to break up the Scottish formations although in this case Edward II rejects this suggestion in a vain attempt to prove his own boldness. It is Umfraville who in 1323, having left Scotland and resumed his service to the English king over the treatment of William de Soules and the other conspirators in 1320, suggests that King Edward enter into a truce with King Robert.[92] Umfraville's reasoning for the truce is that since the English cannot currently contend with the Scots militarily, by forcing a long truce on them the Scots will grow less used to war, their equipment will rust and deteriorate and the great men who have led them to so many victories against the English will grow old and die, leaving the kingdom easier to conquer at a later date:

> Sua that thar armyng sall worth auld
> And sall be rottyn stroyit and sauld,
> And fele that now of wer ar sley
> Intill the lang trew sall dey
> And other in thar sted sall rys
> That sall conn litill of that mastrys.[93]

It is difficult not to speculate that in this passage Barbour was talking directly to the leading men of Scotland in the 1370s, suggesting that the same might be true of the English and that the time might be approaching for the Scots to reclaim those areas of southern Scotland that were at the time occupied by the English. Macdonald has noted how collective resolve diminishes during peacetime and he has suggested that this may have had a particularly acute effect in medieval Scotland, where practical experience in war seems to have been relied upon more heavily than written materials for honing the skills of the martial class.[94] The feebleness of Scottish power and the lifelessness of its nobility was given as a point in favour of accepting a proposal to acknowledge Edward III as a potential heir to David II during a parliamentary debate in 1364.[95] Barbour's comment on the purpose

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[92] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 158-186
[93] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 177-182
[94] Macdonald, 'Courage, Fear and the Experience of the Later Medieval Scottish Soldier', p. 189; Furthermore, Macdonald suggests that this blunted the military effectiveness of Scotland's aristocracy during the fifteenth-century as conflict with England became less frequent and was conducted on a smaller scale, which may help to explain the inclusion of a work like Barbour's in Adv.MS.19.2.2(i) in 1488, a point at which – according to Macdonald's model – Scotland's military effectiveness was perhaps noticeably waning
[95] A. A. M. Duncan, (ed.), 'A Question about the Succession, 1364', *Miscellany XII* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1994), p. 30-31

of the 1325 truce would seem to reflect a concern that this was in fact the case, and may also serve as a subtle incitement to his contemporary audience to preserve their martial skills even in times of peace.

Despite the instances in which Umfraville is presented in a less than favourable light, Barbour also gives a very positive appraisal of Umfraville on a number of occasions. At one point, Barbour goes so far as to describe Umfraville as being 'Into the hycht off chevalry' and notes that he carried a red bonnet on his lance as a symbol of his great prowess and prudence.[96] Beam has noted an incident recorded by Froissart in which Sir Eustace de Ribemont is awarded with a 'chappellet' by Edward III for acquitting himself bravely (vaillemment) at the Siege of Calais, suggesting an association between headgear and chivalric accomplishment.[97] Beam has also identified two occasions in *The Bruce* on which Barbour uses imagery involving headgear to reflect the failure of an individual to fulfil their chivalric responsibilities, and she argues that the reference to Umfraville's bonnet demonstrates Barbour's belief that Umfraville had never failed in this regard.[98] Barbour does suggest that, due to the common cause that chivalry bestows on all knights, even if a man is an enemy his noble and chivalrous deeds should be praised equally as if he was a friend.[99] Of course, it may be that Barbour's account of Umfraville's impressive knightly qualities is intended to further emphasise these qualities in Bruce and Douglas, since the fact that they overcome him repeatedly would seem to imply that their chivalric characteristics are superior to his own. It is interesting to note when describing Umfraville's attempt to employ a treacherous follower of Bruce to assassinate the king, that Barbour characterises him as 'sley', meaning sly.[100] This term did not necessarily have the decidedly negative connotations it does to modern ears but most certainly was often used by Barbour to describe low cunning, as Cameron has previously noted.[101]

There are a number of notable events in Barbour's *Bruce* that highlight other aspects of Barbour's thinking on the nature of morality and what constituted acceptable behaviour.

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[96] *The Bruce*, Bk. 9, ll. 513

[97] Beam, "At the apex of chivalry", p. 64; New York, Morgan Library, MS. M.804, Fol. 118r, reproduced in *The Online Froissart*, P. Ainsworth and G. Croenen (eds.), version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRI Online, 2013). Accessed 6th November 2015

[98] Ibid. p. 64; the first of these episodes sees Bruce observe 'That a rose of his chaplete/Was fallyn' when Moray is caught off-guard by an advance party of Englishmen on the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn (*The Bruce*, Bk. 11, ll. 553-554); the second episode sees Douglas take the furred hat from Richmond's helmet after defeating him in combat, symbolising Douglas' superiority over Richmond as demonstrated by Douglas' victory (*The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 423-425)

[99] *The Bruce*, Bk. 3, ll. 172-180

[100] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 515

[101] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 16

Of these events, Bruce's murder of Comyn is perhaps the most noteworthy such episode. In reality, the fact that Bruce was responsible for the death of his chief rival, John 'the Red' Comyn, in Greyfriar's Kirk at Dumfries was an embarrassing and potentially damaging fact for pro-Bruce chroniclers to deal with and led to Bruce's excommunication, but in the longer term certainly facilitated his attempt to seize control of the kingdom in the early years of his kingship.[102] In *The Bruce*, Barbour sheds a more favourable light on Bruce's actions by transforming Comyn from an outright political rival of Bruce to a confidant of Bruce who initially proposed to assist Bruce in claiming his rightful inheritance as king, only to ultimately betray him and thus earn the punishment of death that Bruce bestows on him. The pursuit of recognition for a right wrongfully withheld was an important element of medieval conceptions of what constituted just war, a fact that Barbour uses to justify Bruce's conflict with Comyn and the wider conflict against the English as a whole.[103] Charny asserted in his *Livre de chevalerie* that armed struggle on an individual level was justified in defence of one's rights, an attitude that Bonet also defended in his *Arbre des Batailles*.[104] Christine de Pizan also advocated violence as a means to restore one's rights and adds the notion that violence can also be legitimately carried out in order to punish misdeeds.[105] Pizan's thoughts on the matter are interesting as they appear to reflect Barbour's own justification both for Bruce's killing of Comyn and the war with England in general.

Barbour even goes so far as to have Bruce and Comyn draw up indentures to the effect that Bruce will give up all his lands to Comyn in return for Comyn's assistance in seizing and governing the kingdom, a notion that Duncan dismisses as preposterous given the danger of encapsulating such an agreement in a form that could be discovered by the English authorities, and they swear oaths to maintain this agreement.[106] However, despite these sureties Comyn immediately rides to Edward and tells him of Bruce's plan to seize

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[102] For general discussion of how the incident was dealt with in the earliest narrative sources, cf. A Grant, 'The Death of John Comyn: What was Going On?', in *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2, (2007), pp. 176-224; Matthew Strickland has argued that killing Comyn handed Edward I a minor propaganda victory in that by emphasising the need to punish Bruce's crime the English king could present himself as pursuing a sacrilegious murderer without raising the troublesome issue of Scotland's future as a kingdom, cf. Strickland, 'Treason, Feud and the Growth of State Violence', p. 101

[103] E. Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, and Medieval Laws of War: a Reconsideration', in *Nottingham Medieval Studies 27*, (1983), p. 58-60; C. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c.1300–c.1450*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 37-42; for in-depth analysis of Barbour's use of medieval just war theory, cf. Foran, 'A Great Romance', p. 13-24

[104] Charny, *The Book of Chivalry*, p. 165; H. Bonet, *The Tree of Battles*, p. 139

[105] *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry*, p. 14, 17

[106] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 511-514; p. 70n

the kingdom, Barbour adding the suspicion that Comyn tried to keep his own part in these proceedings a secret even from King Edward.[107] Barbour specifically states that it was for this reason that Comyn 'tholyt ded' and implies that Bruce merely doled out the correct punishment that Comyn's crime deserved.[108] That Barbour justifies Bruce's murder of Comyn is further emphasised by the fact that after detailing the agreement reached between Bruce and Comyn Barbour warns his audience to beware of treason and lists a number of historical examples of great men brought low by treason, including many popular chivalric heroes such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and King Arthur.[109] In Barbour's *Bruce*, Bruce goes to Dumfries fully intending to kill Comyn for his treachery.[110] Barbour is not wholly willing to absolve Bruce of all wrong-doing for Comyn's murder but the only consequence of this that Barbour alludes to is that it brought about some of the hardships that befell Bruce in the early years of his kingship and had no obvious lasting repercussions:

> He mysdyd thar gretly but wer
> That gave na gyrth to the awter,
> Tharfor sa hard myscheiff him fell
> That Ik herd never in romanys tell
> Off man sa hard frayit as wes he
> That efterwart com to sic bounte.[111]

Alexander Grant has produced a detailed study of the earliest sources to recount the murder of Comyn and has noted a general lack of divine agency in *The Bruce* that has struck a number of scholars who have commented on the work.[112] However, Grant has also observed that social order and unity were highly-valued by medieval Christian writers and thus clerical sources tended to repeat the claim that discord provoked God's wrath while harmony brought redemption and peace.[113] *Gesta Annalia* II is especially concerned with this theme of discord vs harmony and blames the discord between the Bruce and Balliol-Comyn factions for much of the hardship that the kingdom underwent in the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-centuries.[114] *The Bruce* weakly echoes this theme in its muted condemnation of Bruce's action and the suggestion that this brought about temporary

[107] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 562-566
[108] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 567-568
[109] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 515-560
[110] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 28-30
[111] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 43-48
[112] Grant, 'The Death of John Comyn: What was Going On?', p. 198
[113] Ibid. p. 195
[114] Ibid. p. 192

punishment from God, but this is not a point that Barbour wishes to stress. Furthermore, when word reaches the bishop of St Andrews the clergyman shows no condemnation of Bruce's actions and instead expresses hope that Bruce might be the man prophesied to rule Scotland.[115] That Barbour justifies Bruce's murder of Comyn by presenting Comyn's actions as treacherous should be no great surprise, given the heavy emphasis that Barbour places on the virtue of loyalty throughout his poem. Barbour goes so far as to claim that loyalty is the most important virtue of all, which can make a man 'gud' even if he has few other virtues and without which he cannot hope to have any moral worth to his character.[116]

The so-called Douglas Larder is another episode that has attracted scholarly attention over the years but has long stood out as a curiosity given the brutality of the actions of the hero, 'the Good' Sir James Douglas.[117] Essentially, Douglas returns to the lands he should have inherited had King Edward not denied him and finds his castle strongly garrisoned by the English. Having gathered a following of local men previously loyal to his father, Douglas conspires to attack the English garrison when they are hearing mass, unarmed, on Palm Sunday. He seizes them without much resistance and takes them to the castle, where he brutally executes them in the wine cellar, pollutes the well and burns 'all outakyn stane'.[118] Douglas' actions in this episode are far more brutal than any undertaken by the 'heroes' of Barbour's *Bruce* in the rest of the poem and yet Barbour does not criticise Douglas for his behaviour. Royan observes that the only part of Douglas' actions at the Douglas Larder that Barbour does not apparently approve of is the despoiling of the stores – particularly the mixing of blood and food into 'a foule melle' – and even then this is only implied by the fact that Barbour makes no specific attempt to justify this aspect of the attack.[119] On closer examination the justification of Douglas' actions in this episode gradually becomes clear. Firstly, before going to check on his lands Douglas seeks the king's permission. Although Bruce is initially reluctant to let Douglas go due to the danger he will face there, Douglas convinces the king to release him.[120] Bruce stipulates that if Douglas finds his lands in distress he inform the king, who will join him in trying to reclaim these lands:

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[115] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 78-90
[116] *The Bruce*, Bk. 1, ll. 367-374
[117] Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 174-179
[118] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 401-413
[119] Royan, 'A Question of Truth', p. 92
[120] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 237-244

The king said, 'Sen it is sua
That thou sic yarning has to ga
Thou sall pas furth with my blyssing,
And giff the hapnys ony thing
That anoyis or scaithfull be
I pray the sped the sone to me
And tak we samyn quhatever may fall.'[121]

Two elements of this are important to note here. Firstly, that the king makes clear his concern for Douglas' physical safety when travelling in his family's lands, and secondly, the king's promise to unite his efforts with Douglas' own in regaining these lands. Bruce's concern for Douglas' physical safety serves to justify Douglas in pursuing a strategy that puts him in the least possible danger while also maximising the likelihood of success. Bruce's promise of aid to Douglas in retaking his lands opens the possibility that Bruce's own plans to reclaim his kingdom might be put on hold or even derailed altogether in order for the king to assist Douglas in reclaiming his own inheritance. As discussed in earlier chapters, Bruce's promise might well be construed as a sworn oath, to which Bruce would be forced to adhere regardless of its negative consequences, and the strength of Bruce and Douglas' friendship makes such a possibility all the more plausible as an outcome of this promise. As a loyal follower of the king, not to mention Bruce's personal friend, Douglas could be expected to recognise these possible ramifications and, given the negative impact such an outcome might have on King Robert, Douglas would also be expected to wish to avoid a scenario whereby Bruce was essentially forced to upset his own plans in favour of Douglas' own. Thus he seizes an opportunity to quickly and easily retake his own lands with minimal danger to himself and his men, and in doing so relieves Bruce of any responsibility of doing so himself.

There is within *The Bruce* itself a noteworthy precedent for the notion that a seemingly immoral act may be undertaken in order to protect the reputation of a respected individual. This occurs when Douglas leaves the service of the bishop of St Andrews after hearing that Bruce has murdered Comyn and is planning to press his claim to be king. The bishop instructs Douglas to behave as if he is acting of his own volition so as not to implicate the bishop:

'Thou sall tak Ferrand my palfray,
For thar is na hors in this land

[121] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 245-251

Sa swytht na yeit sa weill at hand.
Tak him as off thine awyne hewid
As I had gevyn tharto na reid,
And gyff his yhemar oucht gruchys
Luk that thou tak him magré his,
Swa sall I weill assonyeit be.'[122]

In the event, Douglas is confronted by a groom but Douglas 'Fellyt him with a swedys dynt' in order to take the horse without explaining himself.[123] It is true that in the earlier episode the bishop is more explicit in giving permission for Douglas to act outside social norms than in the latter episode, but in both instances Douglas takes the most extreme action available to him and in doing so allows the men who have dispatched him to save face. Barbour also details Douglas' reasoning for his actions in attacking the English in church and for slighting the castle, providing further rationalisation for the incident. Immediately on returning to his lands, Douglas realises he cannot overcome his enemies by strength and he therefore begins looking for a more subtle method of achieving his aim:

Sua did it her, bot he wes wys
And saw he mycht on nakyn wys
Werray his fa with evyn mycht
Tharfor he thocht to wyrk with slycht[124]

Similarly, in the aftermath of the Douglas Larder Barbour explains that Douglas recognised he was lacking the key resources required to hold the castle against the English and so he chose not to continue his struggle against the English by other means, having denied them the use of the castle:

And it is to peralous thing
In castell assegyt to be
Quhar want is off thir thingis thre,
Vittaill or men with thar armyng
Or than gud hop off rescuyng,
And for he dred thir thingis suld faile
He chesyt furthwart to travaill
Quhar he mycht at his larges be
And sua dryve furth his destane.[125]

[122] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 113-125
[123] *The Bruce*, Bk. 2, ll. 134-143
[124] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 267-270
[125] *The Bruce*, Bk. 5, ll. 420-428

In the case of the Douglas Larder then there can be seen an interaction of a number of themes that were of considerable importance to Barbour – prudence, friendship and loyalty – which are combined by the writer to justify what might otherwise seem to be a transgression of social norms.

Many episodes featured in Barbour's *Bruce* involve the laying of traps and the setting of ambushes, usually in order to circumvent the enemy's larger numbers and deliver yet another victory for the Scots. In exploring the acceptability of this kind of behaviour in warfare, Barbour touches upon matters connected to the law of arms, which as Allmand observes was tightly bound up with the practicalities of chivalry and sought to set standards by which individual behaviour in combat could be judged in the context of wider practices in warfare.[126] Christine de Pizan advocates the use of tricks and ruses in her practical advice to military commanders – drawing on examples from Classical literature to justify such actions – and Barbour echoes her attitudes in his work as well.[127] Douglas is particularly fond of setting ambushes and frequently receives praise from Barbour for being so adept at using ploys such as these to overcome superior numbers of enemies. For instance, when Douglas and Sir Robert Boyd take it upon themselves to retake Arran on behalf of the king they lie in ambush outside Brodick Castle, hoping to observe the habits of the garrison and thereby find a way to overcome them.[128] Eventually they seize an opportunity to threaten the men bringing supplies to the castle, drawing the garrison out so that the Scots can defeat him. On a similar occasion, this time when fighting near his own castle again, Douglas sends men to steal the cattle from nearby the castle, drawing the garrison out into an ambush and utterly defeating them.[129] When Sir Thomas Richmond comes into southern Scotland specifically looking to test his mettle against Douglas, who has been given the keeping of the marches while King Robert is assisting his brother in Ireland, Douglas uses his knowledge of Jedworth Forest to trap the English force in an ambush and personally kill Richmond.[130] When harassing the English in Lothian in 1322, Douglas even employs a friar, who wears armour concealed under his robes, to watch out for the English approach and then alert Douglas' men so that they can successfully ambush them at Melrose.[131]

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[126] C. T. Allmand, *Society at War: the Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years War*, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973), p. 186-187
[127] Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and Chivalry*, p. 36
[128] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 354-363
[129] *The Bruce*, Bk. 6, ll. 399-432
[130] *The Bruce*, Bk. 16, ll. 388-422
[131] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 300-305

This willingness to encourage and indeed praise the use of ambushes in *The Bruce* may be contrasted with a trend apparent in the *Scalacronica*, where unsuccessful ambushes are frequently recorded as a means of celebrating the martial qualities of those who had fought their way out of such a situation. For instance, Gray recounts am ambush set by Sir Walter Bickerton for Sir Thomas Gray when the latter was returning from the coronation of Edward II, but the chronicler's concern in recording this is clearly related to the physical prowess and courage his father showed in overcoming his foes.[132] When recounting the events of 1332, Gray offers a perfunctory account of a failed attempt by Archibald Douglas to ambush Edward Balliol's forces near Jedburgh.[133] Similarly, Lord Berkeley receives muted praise for defeating William Douglas of Liddesdale despite being ambushed by him.[134] The Earl of Stafford is also praised for successfully defending himself from a night attack by French knights.[135] Gray offers a fairly lengthy description of an attempt by the King of Navarre to seize Amiens by conspiring with some of the townsfolk but the unexpected arrival of the Count of Saint-Pol thwarts this plot. The king is not condemned for his scheming, but Gray does note with approval the fact that the count overcomes it through force of arms. Gray even notes that the plot is foiled by the fortunes of war (*auenture de gere*), making it apparent that the writer intends reserves no praise for the act of uncovering the king's scheme.[136] The implication of these tales seems to be that Gray believed that manfully defending oneself from an unexpected attack was a more impressive – and at the very least more interesting – accomplishment than overcoming a more powerful opponent by carrying out a successful ambush. Chandos herald expresses some satisfaction in the ability of the Black Prince to deceive the French when saving his father from being captured at Calais, but once again it is the prince's puissance, nobility and almost perfect (*parfite*) prowess that the writer singles out as making the prince so worthy of remembrance and emulation.[137] The distinction in this case is that while Chandos herald may occasionally and incidentally recognise that prudence has a part to play in military endeavours, he does not consider it to be an element that makes the prince a praiseworthy knight.

Of course, there is an obvious practical justification for the heroes of *The Bruce* to employ tactics such as laying traps and setting ambushes. Given that the English invariably

[132] *Scalacronica*, p. 69
[133] Ibid. p. 110
[134] Ibid. p. 122
[135] Ibid. p. 171
[136] Ibid. p. 156
[137] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 442-444; ll. 451-453

field larger forces than the Scots can, the likes of Bruce and Douglas need to find ways of limiting the effectiveness of the enemy's numerical superiority. Gray's apparent indifference to the setting of ambushes might pose a possible challenge to this, given that his *Scalacronica* provides an insight into the attitudes towards warfare of one who actually fought in such conflicts.[138] However, Gray's perspective is that of an Englishman who – in the context of warfare with Scotland at least – might less regularly face overwhelming odds in battle. In *The Bruce*, the setting of ambushes allows the Scots to inflict damage to any English force before they can organise for battle and the efficacy of this tactic is proven by the frequency with which it allows the Scots to achieve victory in the field. But this does not necessarily imply that there are no moral concerns attached to the chief tactic of the heroes in Barbour's *Bruce*. Setting up an ambush necessarily involves a degree of deception, in the sense that its success is dependent upon the enemy not knowing about the attack until the trap is sprung.

This brings up certain questions regarding how the notion of honesty applies to Barbour's heroes, a fact that Barbour was not ignorant of and did address in the way he composed these tales within his work. The issue of honesty in relation to the setting of ambushes was a concern for other near contemporary writers, and such tactics were not always viewed as favourably as they are in Barbour's *Bruce*. For instance, Chandos herald derides the use of ambushes by King Henry to hinder Sir John Chandos' efforts to recruit support from among the Great Company for Prince Edward's Spanish adventure, and he characterises those who participated in these attacks as *geneteurs* and *vilains*.[139] Cameron has suggested that in *The Bruce* 'slycht' is 'approved when the Scots use it, and condemned when employed by the English'.[140] However, Barbour's attitude towards 'slycht' is more subtle than that. The key point to note is that Barbour's heroes do not openly deceive their enemies so much as they exploit their (mistaken) expectations. Such is the case when during the Scottish campaign into Weardale in 1327 Douglas undertakes a short night attack on the English camp to make them suspect that the Scots still intend to give open battle and has his men keep fires burning all night to give the impression that the Scots are feasting, when in fact they are slipping away under cover of darkness.[141] It is worth noting that in this example, as in those earlier in the poem, Douglas does not openly deceive his enemies

[138] King, 'The Ethics of War in Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*', p. 152
[139] *La Vie du Prince Noir*, ll. 2001-2005
[140] Cameron (Vathjunker), 'A Study of the Career of Sir James Douglas: The Historical Record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 176
[141] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 698-717

in the sense of deliberately misinforming them of his intentions. He does not lie to them, make any false promise or give his word to do something and then renege on it. Rather he allows his enemies to think one thing and then behaves contrary to their expectations, giving him the upper hand and allowing him to get the best of the exchange. For Barbour, 'slycht', when properly applied, therefore relies more on misdirection than deliberate deception.

Miller identifies 'classes of deceit' in the thinking of pre-modern writers, some of which were absolutely wrong – like the breaking of an oath – and some of which were ambiguous enough for prudent individuals to use to their advantage – such as exploiting an enemy's mistake.[142] Gray for example records an incident in which Sir James Pipe is 'rescued' by his comrades after being allowed to walk outside the castle where he was being held prisoner as a courtesy to ease his suffering in confinement. His captors accuse him of acting contrary to his good faith (*encounter sa fiaunce*) by actively misleading them into letting him leave the castle, and when they charge him openly with this he is duly made to pay his ransom in full.[143] Douglas' actions in setting up ambushes and traps for his enemies are in stark contrast to those of Sir Ingram Umfraville at Methven in 1306 and when advising King Edward II to make a truce with the Scots in 1323. In both of these cases, the English say they will do one thing and then behave other than they have indicated verbally. The verbal element of the indication is key here, as misleading physical indicators such as a feint are occasionally employed by the Scots without condemnation from Barbour. Much like Douglas, they seek to take advantage of the incorrect expectations of their enemies, but in these cases the Scots have been given the wrong impression by a direct lie on the part of Sir Aymer de Valence and King Edward respectively. Douglas on the other hand may encourage his enemies to make incorrect assumptions about his intentions and actions but he does not achieve this by making false promises or breaking his word, and once his opponents have made up their own minds on what they believe Douglas is doing it is clear that Barbour considers him free to act contrary to their expectations.

The tale involving the friar wearing armour under his robes being used as a look-out raises a subsidiary question regarding the issue of whether concealing one's true identity is acceptable or not according to Barbour's standards. This is not the only case in which a character disguises himself in order to gain an advantage over his enemies. When

[142] Miller, *The Mystery of Courage*, p. 164-167
[143] *Scalacronica*, p. 180

seeking to capture Roxburgh Castle in 1313, Douglas and his men wear black cloaks and proceed up to the walls on their hands and knees under cover of darkness, leading the defenders to believe that they are stray cattle and let their guard down.[144] Of course in this case the justification is fairly obviously tied into the need for a prudent way to seize the castle and harks back to the earlier examples in which a degree of deception can be permitted so long as a knight's word is not compromised. In the case of the episode at Roxburgh, it may well be that Barbour also intended to inject some humour into his work, especially given the strongly ironic exchange that he includes between two guardsmen on the wall who spot Douglas and his men approaching but fall for the ruse that they are simply stray cattle.[145] Douglas conceals his identity a second time as part of a ruse to draw the English into an ambush during the Weardale campaign in 1327, wearing a gown over his armour as a disguise.[146]

This is particularly remarkable as a knight's coat of arms was not only the main means by which they could be identified on the battlefield but also a powerful symbol of their status.[147] In the *Scalacronica* for instance, Gray notes that Bruce was almost captured at the Battle of Methven by Sir John Haliburton because the king's coat of arms was obscured beneath a white shirt, illustrating the importance of a knight's arms for the purposes of identification in battle.[148] However, concealing his identity plays an important practical role in Douglas' ruse during the campaign in Weardale. By this stage in Barbour's poem Douglas' reputation has risen greatly and in particular he has become renowned for his prudence and a proclivity for laying traps for his enemies. When an English squire recognises Douglas' face it is Douglas' proficiency at tricking his enemies that the squire warns his compatriots about, and this revelation almost causes the English to withdraw before the ambush can be sprung.[149] Thus by this point Douglas must necessarily conceal his true identity if he is still to employ his preferred tactics against his enemies, since the very fact that they know it is Douglas they are facing might induce the English to be so cautious as to avoid battle altogether. Furthermore, by having Douglas wear the gown over his armour Barbour leaves open the possibility that Douglas may have intended to throw off the gown and reveal his true identity once the fighting started, and it is possible that this

[144] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 373-387
[145] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 391-399
[146] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 353-356
[147] Strickland, 'Treason, Feud and the Growth of State Violence', p. 85
[148] *Scalacronica*, p. 52
[149] *The Bruce*, Bk. 19, ll. 361-369

implication would have been more obvious to his contemporary audience than to modern readers.

The third instance in which a character conceals their true identity occurs at the Battle of Faughart in 1318. In a sense this example is the most ambiguous, since the figures in question do not conceal their identity as part of a ruse to gain some advantage over their enemies, and the fact that they do so actually contradicts a point made by Barbour in the same passage. According to Barbour, at the Battle of Faughart Edward Bruce's 'cot-armour' – his coat of arms – was worn not by him but by Gib Harper, his minstrel.[150] This would seem to directly contradict Sir Edward's claim only a few lines earlier that his intention in fighting at Faughart was to defend his 'noble nam', a promise that was closely associated with his heraldic apparel.[151] This contradiction makes it difficult to determine what Barbour's intentions were in recording this specific example, especially with regard to his thoughts on the acceptability of this behaviour, although he reserves no apparent criticism for this aspect of the tale. In all likelihood, Duncan is correct in his suggestion that the main attraction for Barbour in presenting Gib Harper as wearing Sir Edward's coat of arms was that it spared Sir Edward the mistreatment that his body supposedly endured after his death.[152]

Barbour's willingness to accommodate an action as acceptable based on practical considerations is particularly apparent in the way the Scots exploit local and specialist knowledge in the form of spies and informants. For instance, while planning to return to the mainland from Arran, he suggests to his men that they send a man named Cuthbert to see if it is safe to land.[153] When looking for a way to capture Edinburgh Castle in 1314, the earl of Moray consults with William Francis, a local man who shows the earl and his men a way to approach the castle walls without being seen.[154] The English engage in the use of spies to gather information on the movement of the Scots. When Sir Aymer de Valence comes to Glen Trool he sends a woman to infiltrate the Scots' camp and report back on their disposition.[155] When she is eventually captured by the Scots, she quickly switches allegiance and reveals details of the approaching English army to the Scots.[156] The presence of so many spies and informants in Barbour's *Bruce* serves a mostly narrative function.

[150] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 94-98
[151] *The Bruce*, Bk. 18, ll. 56
[152] *The Bruce*, p. 670n
[153] *The Bruce*, Bk. 4, ll. 550-554
[154] *The Bruce*, Bk. 10, ll. 543-582
[155] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 541-546
[156] *The Bruce*, Bk. 7, ll. 565-570

They tend to provide quick summaries of the situation the Scots find themselves in, or present simple digests of a plan that the Scots are about to enact to prime the audience for the adventure that Barbour is about to recount. As such, Barbour does not devote time to moralising about their conduct.

Much like Barbour, Blind Hary reveals many of his own concerns regarding what constitutes acceptable knightly behaviour in the way he composes *The Wallace*. Hary's description of Wallace according to the 'wyt of Frans' demonstrates that Hary was not only familiar with but also accepted some of the conventional values often associated with chivalric literature. In his physical description of Wallace, Hary mentions a number of standard features of chivalric heroes common to many works of chivalric literature, *The Bruce* included. Hary depicts Wallace as tall, strong and handsome, with a number of visible wounds on his body – though none on his face – and a pleasant countenance.[157] All of these qualities make him well-suited for life as a warrior while at the same time denoting his inherent nobility in a physical manner. In Hary's description of Wallace's inner virtues, which is noticeably shorter than his description of Wallace's physical characteristics, the author makes direct comparisons with famous heroes of the past, Alexander the Great and Hector in particular, to tie Wallace into a tradition of chivalric greatness.

One of the major themes of Hary's *Wallace*, and one that has drawn a great deal of attention from scholars, is the issue of patriotism, often expressed through references to blood – be it Scottish or English. For Hary, much of what makes an action acceptable is whether or not it is undertaken in a patriotic cause. Hary for example in praising William Douglas 'the Hardy', Hary observes that 'Ay Scottis blud remaynyt in to Douglace'.[158] William Douglas' marriage to the English Lady Ferrers led to his downfall according to Hary.[159] When recounting the supposed assessment of Wallace by the 'wyt of Frans', Hary lists among his virtues that to 'Scottis men a gret credens he gaiff'.[160] Throughout the poem, Hary has Wallace setting great store in his fellow countrymen on the basis that they share the same blood and this fact is a powerful motivator of his actions.[161] As noted earlier in this study, this is directly opposed to an attitude expressed in Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, in which the mingling of Scottish and Saxon blood through the

[157] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 1221-1240
[158] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 881
[159] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 872-874;
[160] *The Wallace*, Bk. 10, ll. 1245
[161] Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 232

marriage of Malcolm III and St Margaret is a foundational element of Scottish kingship.[162] In the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Stirling Bridge Wallace petitions a parliament that has been called in Perth to forgive Corspatrick, the traitorous earl of Dunbar, for refusing to attend if he admits his fault and swears loyalty to the crown.[163] It is Corspatrick's continued refusal to accept reconciliation and his adherence to the English king despite his Scottish heritage that leads to the bitter feud between himself and Wallace and ultimately inspires Wallace to chase Corspatrick through the Highlands in an attempt to drive him from the kingdom.

In keeping with the notion that it is distasteful to have to fight one's countrymen, after Macfadyan, a native-born Scotsman who entered English service in return for lands and titles from King Edward, is defeated in open battle by Wallace, the Scots who fought for him throw down their weapons and beg 'to tak thaim in his grace', Wallace responds by ordering that those 'Off our awne blud' (i.e. Scots) should be spared.[164] Richard Moll has noted the fragmentary nature of Scottish national identity in the medieval period due to differences in language and ethnicity in groups across the kingdom.[165] Despite this fact, Hary identifies all ethnic groups as possessed of Scottish blood so long as they support the cause for which Wallace fights and Moll connects this to founding myths of the late medieval period that defined people's by political boundaries rather than ethnicity.[166] Moll has observed that the events concerning the traitors Corspatrick and Macfadyan are Hary's own inventions and argues that Hary has a point to prove by including them, namely that 'national ideology' could overcome differences of ethnicity, language and even political affiliation, allowing for the reconciliation of those who had previously fought for Corspatrick and Macfadyan into Wallace's army for the 'national' project of driving the English out of the kingdom.[167]

Furthermore, Hary's presents the chief failure of Robert the Bruce as being his betrayal of his countrymen by entering the service of Edward I rather than leading his people in resistance to the English king. This was used repeatedly by Hary as a justification for Wallace's actions. This is particularly noticeable whenever the issue was raised of whether Wallace should be made king, or when Wallace's actions bring him into direct

[162] *Chron. Wyntoun*, Bk. 6, ll. 2311-2332
[163] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 8-11
[164] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 849-856
[165] Moll, ''Off quhat nacioun art thow?'', p. 121
[166] Ibid. p. 127
[167] Ibid. p. 134

conflict with Bruce. When the two men confront one another across the River Carron after the Battle of Falkirk, Wallace calls Bruce 'Thow renygat deuorar off thi blud' in an attempt to shame Bruce into renouncing his allegiance to the English and accepting his proper role as defender of the Scottish kingdom.[168] This pays off in a scene shortly afterwards when Bruce sits down to eat without removing his armour or washing the gore from his fingers and an English knight sitting around the same campfire jokes that Bruce 'ettis his awn blud'.[169] It is having an Englishmen point out that he is physically consuming the blood of his own people that shames Bruce into forsaking his place among the followers of the English king and refusing to fight against the Scots again. Shared blood is thus a powerful motivator in Hary's *Wallace* and gives the poem's characters a basis from which to begin to discern the correct course of action in a given situation.

Of course, this theme carries with it the implication that the spilling of foreign blood, and English blood in particular, is entirely legitimate. In one of the most famous episodes of *The Wallace*, following the murder of his 'lemman' by Hesilrig, Wallace swears an oath to kill no less than ten thousand Englishmen in revenge for her death.[170] Despite his orders not to spill the blood of any of the traitor Macfadyan's Scottish adherents after defeating him in battle, Wallace specifically tells his men that any foreign prisoners taken there should be executed immediately.[171] After putting Corspatrick out of Scotland Wallace leads a host into England and remains there for the best part of a year in the hopes of forcing King Edward to meet him in open battle to permanently settle the question of his supposed right to govern Scotland. During the preparations for this staged battle, which of course never takes place, one of his followers says of Wallace 'For Inglismen he settis no doym bot ded'.[172] In *The Wallace*, the hero has no moral qualms whatsoever about the spilling of English blood. Furthermore, the author is quick to justify the killing of Englishmen on the basis of their own bloodthirstiness. For Hary, any Scottish brutality he recorded was justified by the brutality of the English, which equalled – and often exceeded – it. When Wallace's men seek absolution from Bishop Sinclair for the English blood they have spilled while re-taking Perth – and by extension throughout the whole of the poem up to that point – Wallace laughs at them, giving them mock absolution himself and reminding them of the bloody crimes the English have previously perpetrated against the Scots, in particular

[168] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 492
[169] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 530-546
[170] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 221-222
[171] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 857
[172] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 691

mentioning Barns of Ayr.[173] In a similar vein, Hary mentions that Wallace and his men thought it 'na syn' to burn and ravage Northumberland, Durham and York on the basis that they were simply repaying in kind the suffering the English had imposed on Scotland while enjoying military ascendency over the kingdom.[174] Sonja Cameron has previously noted the similarities between Barbour's *Bruce* and crusading romances, and there are comparable elements present in *The Wallace* as well.[175] The shedding of English blood becomes almost an atoning act, as if the conflict between Scotland and England were a form of crusade. When Sir John Graham is killed fighting the English at the Battle of Falkirk, Wallace goes so far as to call him a martyr for Scotland.[176]

Hary's promotion of Scottish 'blud' is not limited solely to a comparison between Scottish virtue and English vice however. It is true that the English are the only group to be portrayed as straightforwardly iniquitous by comparison to the moral rectitude of the Scots. However, it is clear from Hary's portrayal of Wallace's time in France that he wished to promote the notion of Scottish moral superiority more generally in his work. After living in luxury at the French court for only thirty days, Wallace begins to yearn to fight again and thus he leads his men to Guyenne, specifically hoping to shed English blood.[177] This not only ties into the idea that bloodshed is a noble and worthy cause for a knight, but fits in with a recurring theme in Hary's *Wallace* that presents an image of the French court as a decadent place better suited for scheming courtiers to inhabit than chivalrous knights. Later, while living in France as lord of Guyenne, Wallace fights – and kills – two French champions simply because 'Rycht gret despyt thai spak oft off Scotland'.[178] This leads two squires at court – cousins of the two champions – to begin plotting Wallace's downfall:

> In the court dwelt twa squieris of gret vaill,
> At cusyngis war on to thir campiounis twa,
> The quhilk befor Wallace hapnyt to sla.
> A band thai maid in preva illusioun
> At thar power to wyrk his confusioun
> Be ony meyn, throu frawd or sutelte.[179]

[173] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 1060-1064
[174] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 518-519
[175] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's Bruce', p. 25
[176] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 581
[177] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 555-561
[178] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 153
[179] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 203-207

When finally provoked into leaving France, due to the scheming of the two courtiers, Wallace's declaration that he will return to Scotland after fighting the king's lion is presented in terms that there are greater deeds of arms to be done in Scotland than in France:

> It gaynd full weill I graithit me to Scotland;
> Fer grettar deidis thair men has apon hand
> Than with a dog in battaill to escheiff.[180]

It is worth noting here that Hary specifically mentions that he took no Frenchmen with him in the force he led into Guyenne other than Sir Thomas Longawell, who is later singled out as being the only non-Scottish individual to accompany Wallace back to Scotland after his brief sojourn to France.[181] Longawell's acceptance by Hary despite the fact that he is not a native-born Scot seems best explained by the fact that he is already an outsider in French society before meeting Wallace. When he first appears in the poem he is an outlaw and pirate, having been exiled from France for many years. The further significance of this will be explored later in the chapter. Longawell immediately falls in with Wallace and his men and serves Wallace more faithfully than any other man up until Wallace's death. Ultimately, Longawell renounces his 'Frenchness' after Wallace is captured, taking Scotland as his adoptive homeland and swearing never to see France again before he has avenged Wallace:

> Los of Wallace socht till his hart so sor
> The rewlm of France he vowit he suld never se,
> Bot veng Wallace or ellis tharfor to de.[182]

It is interesting to note that Hary claims that Longawell is the same French knight who was inspired to forsake his indolence in order to pursue a life of greater chivalric worth by the example shown by King Robert at the siege of Perth.[183] In Barbour's *Bruce*, this anonymous French knight serves as a way to highlight the superiority of Scottish chivalry over that of foreigners, as well as give Bruce some international acclaim, and this may well have influenced Hary's decision to co-opt the character for his own purposes. The

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[180] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 259-262
[181] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 807
[182] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 1142-1144
[183] *The Bruce*,Bk. 9, ll. 396-408; *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 1146-1149

construction of Longawell's character and his alienation from his French roots in order for him to fulfil the role of secondary hero should emphasise the importance of blood to Hary's concept of what made men good, in the sense that he commits to the same common cause that Hary, through Wallace, calls all 'trew Scottis' to. Thus, blood is a powerful image in *The Wallace*, which Hary uses to emphasise not only the importance of a sense of patriotism in moral decision-making but also to justify those acts carried out in patriotic causes.

Another recurring theme in Hary's *Wallace*, and one that is used to lend a degree of moral weight to the hero's actions, is Wallace's essential 'rudeness', his simplicity born from the fact that he is not born into the upper aristocracy. The figure of the simple country knight who emerges from the wilderness to stun the established chivalry of the kingdom with his knightly virtues is common to a number of works of chivalric literature, including the *Roman de Fergus*.[184] In the earlier part of the poem, each new episode serves as a reminder of Wallace's earnest directness that is usually contrasted with English arrogance and pretence. Quite often a consequence of this artlessness is a lack of restraint that gets him into trouble and spurs the action on, but it is clear that Hary believes Wallace to be in the right in each of these situations. Wallace's straight-forwardness can be seen in the fact that his manner of address offends Percy's men by the riverside, provoking his first altercation with the English authorities.[185] Shortly after this episode, he responds to being struck with a staff by Lord Percy's steward by taking the man by the collar and stabbing him through the heart with a knife, killing the steward outright and leading to him being imprisoned and almost starved to death.[186] Later, when Wallace finds an Englishman showing off his fencing skills with sword and buckler in Ayr he takes up the man's challenge to fight, but rather than matching the man in skill Wallace kills him with a single blow, simply hewing 'Throuch bukler, hand and the harnpan also'.[187] It seems that in these cases Hary favours a kind of rustic innocence, even naiveté, in Wallace and uses this to condemn the sneering sophistication of the English. The traitorous Corspatrick makes reference to Wallace's reputation for having a rude, unsophisticated manner in his dismissal of the Scottish champion as merely a 'king off Kyll', a jibe that has provincial, uncouth overtones and is clearly meant as a slight on Wallace's nobility.[188] The basic principle at

[184] *Fergus of Galloway*; C. de Troyes, *Perceval (Le conte du graal)*, (K. Busby ed.), (London: Grant and Cutler, 1993)
[185] *The Wallace*, Bk. 1, ll. 399
[186] *The Wallace*, Bk. 2, ll. 95-100
[187] *The Wallace*, Bk. 3, ll. 365
[188] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 39-41

work in Wallace's infamous vow to avenge his wife is the thought that the correct response to adversity is to struggle all the harder to accomplish your goal, as demonstrated by the preamble wherein Wallace lists the great lengths he will go to in order to achieve his goal.[189]

The notion that through striving earnestly a knight can achieve his ends no matter how great a task this may be is recurrent throughout the Wallace. There are hints of this present in Barbour's *Bruce* as well, but for Barbour effort is not enough to achieve one's aims. Barbour emphasises the need for strategy when approaching a problem and advocates the notion that such strategies can be developed and improved upon over time to better achieve whatever end a knight may be seeking. Hary on the other hand seems to promote the notion that merely by effort alone a knight can pursue his cause and hope to attain it once enough time has passed and enough effort has been exerted. This sentiment is echoed in the foreboding thoughts of 'ane ald knycht' after Wallace escapes yet another English attempt to overcome him:

> To thar langage maid answer ane ald knycht :
> 'Forsuth,' he said, 'be he chapyt this ayr,
> All your new deid is eking of our cair.'[190]

This comment reflects the fact that Wallace responds to adversity by fighting even harder to achieve success. Later in the poem, Wallace gradually becomes more refined as his military successes cause him to be adopted as Scotland's *de facto* war leader and his social standing increases, and some of the rougher elements of his character diminish in light of this. His new role brings him into contact with the highest levels of the aristocracy such as the queen of England and the king of France and in terms of his behaviour Wallace rarely seems out of place in their company. When Wallace meets the queen of England in particular, Hary presents an image of Wallace as softer, gentler and more courteous than he is at perhaps any other point in the poem, although he still remains utterly unshaken in his desire to make Englishmen suffer for their crimes against the Scots.[191] However, Wallace does not lose his simplicity entirely and he continues to demonstrate this straightforwardness in violent confrontations with characters designed to show the worst features of the haughty upper class. As noted above, Wallace beats two French champions to death for their repeated verbal slights against the Scots and he – and by extension Hary – place

[189] *The Wallace*, Bk. 6, ll. 213-215
[190] *The Wallace*, Bk. 7, ll. 322-324
[191] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll. 1233-1236

the blame on the two men for provoking him.[192] Shortly after this episode, Wallace turns down the offer of armour to fight with the French king's lion on the basis that the beast will be unarmoured as well.[193] Clearly then, Hary favours earnest simplicity in his knights and seeks to discourage his audience from being aloof or pompous in their behaviour towards their social inferiors.

Perhaps one of the most startling aspects of *The Wallace*, at least in terms of the behaviour he is willing to accept, is Hary's treatment of the so-called Red Reiver, later revealed to be Sir Thomas Longawell. The Red Reiver is introduced as a pirate, who has been robbing and killing for many years and made the crossing from Scotland to France a very hazardous undertaking. However, after being bested in combat and captured by Wallace he enters his captor's service and goes on to become one of Wallace's most loyal followers. The fact that someone with so dark a past could be so easily reconciled into the narrative as a minor hero is certainly remarkable, and requires some examination. Interestingly, the Red Reiver is one of only two people whose coat of arms is described in Hary's *Wallace*.[194] In fact, it is his coat of arms by which he is to be identified and the description of his heraldic device is given specifically because Wallace asks how he will know the Red Reiver when they meet. While the coat of arms is entirely fictional, and does not even conform to standard heraldic conventions, it is nonetheless notable that before he has even appeared in the poem the Red Reiver is associated with a typical chivalric form of expression such as this, one closely associated with nobility and in fact reserved for the upper levels of society. Furthermore, the explanation of what the three colours used in his coat of arms signify implies a noble character despite his reputation as a fearsome pirate. The red signifies 'blud and hardyment', both of which Hary values highly throughout the poem. The green signifies his courageous disposition, a common feature valued in many works concerned with chivalry and one that Hary values highly as well. Finally, the blue signifies the fact that he is a Christian, which was ordinarily an obvious sign of moral worth in late medieval Scotland.

The manner of the Red Reiver's capture is illuminating in trying to discern how Hary justifies transforming the character from a villain into a hero. When the Red Reiver boards the ship carrying Wallace to France, Wallace quickly overpowers him but the Red Reiver's first recourse is to cry for mercy 'for him that deit on rud' and to offer to make

[192] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 181-182
[193] *The Wallace*, Bk. 12, ll. 237-241
[194] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 236-241

amends for the blood he has spilled during his days as a pirate.[195] His immediate appeal to Christ for deliverance not only proves the meaning of his coat of arms to be true, it also serves as a recognition on his part for the need for atonement for his sins and the fact that he speaks of wanting to remedy his past misdeeds reinforces this. Subsequently, the Red Reiver reveals that he is a Frenchmen who, in a rage not unlike those that Wallace frequently succumbs to, murdered a man at court and was forced to take refuge at sea, undertaking his career as a pirate simply to survive.[196] However, his defeat at the hands of Wallace has made him see the error of his ways and seek to redeem himself for his past crimes:

> Her I gyff our roubry for evermar.
> In sic mysrewll I sall never armes ber,
> Bot gyff it be in honest oys to wer.[197]

The reasons for the Red Reiver's exile serve to link his character with the hero of the poem, which cannot help but cast him in a positive light. The same is very much true of his desire to put his martial skills to use in warfare, and it is with these points that Hary begins to construct an image of the Red Reiver as a complementary character to Wallace. Most notably, the Red Reiver is already aware of Wallace by his reputation as the finest knight in Scotland – although he does not initially realise that this is the man who has captured him – and when he learns Wallace's identity he is duly overjoyed and throws himself wholly behind Wallace and his cause.[198] Katie Stevenson has previously noted how often Hary equates good knightly behaviour not so much with a code of chivalric behaviour but rather with adherence to Wallace himself. [199]

The incident with the Red Reiver is thrown into further relief when considered alongside that involving John of Lyn, another pirate that Wallace encounters on his second voyage to France. McDiarmid has suggested that both of these tales have their origins in the folk traditions that had developed around Wallace since his death.[200] John of Lyn is the only other person for whom Hary gives a description of a coat of arms. However, the sole feature that dominates his coat of arms is a flood, signifying the pleasure he takes in

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[195] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 275-278
[196] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 316-342
[197] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 350-352
[198] *The Wallace*, Bk. 9, ll. 376-380
[199] Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland*, p. 150
[200] *The Wallace*, p. lxx

drowning his victims.[201] Although Hary does claim that Longawell killed during his time as a pirate, he gives no indication of the brutality or the cruelty that he attributes to the second pirate. Unlike the repentant Longawell, when John of Lyn sees that he and his men are outmatched by Wallace and his followers – who by this point include the reformed Longawell among their number – his instinct is to flee.[202] Thus Hary makes it clear that John of Lyn has neither the remorse nor the courage of Longawell, in short none of the redeeming qualities of the Red Reiver. Ultimately Wallace beheads John of Lyn before he can flee back to his own ship.[203] The key difference then between the Red Reiver and John of Lyn is that Longawell shares characteristics with Wallace that Hary finds praiseworthy. He is straight-forward, earnest, mistreated by those with power over him due to their relative social standing, courageous and faithful. Not only that, but when he is caught he shows remorse for his misdeeds and seeks redemption, ultimately achieving it through loyal service and friendship with Wallace. John of Lyn on the other hand shares none of these qualities with Wallace and shows no remorse for his actions, and thus receives no mercy.

Finally, *The Wallace* contains a recurrent if somewhat subtle suggestion that loyalty to the crown may even involve resistance to a king if said king does not live up to the values for which the monarch should stand. This has led to the suggestion by historians such as Goldstein that Hary may have been influenced by the political conflict between James III and his brother Alexander, duke of Albany, and it has even been suggested that the character of Wallace was modelled after Albany himself. It is certainly true that Hary's poem must be roughly contemporary with these events and so the possibility remains that it was in light of this that Hary included this theme. However, it may simply be that Hary intended the theme of loyalty to the office of king over obedience to the man in whom the office is currently invested to be a more general call to cling to established values in times of trouble, perhaps informed by events relating to James III's troubled kingship without being directly influenced by them.[204] In Scotland at the time Hary was writing, this could be read as a plea for loyalty to the institution of kingship more generally and offer the possibility of a redeemed king.

In *The Wallace*, the redeemed king is of course Robert I. In Hary's own time, the king in need of redemption would have been James III. When offering reconciliation to

[201] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 835-836
[202] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 885-886
[203] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 899-901
[204] Macdougall, *James III*, p. 160

Corspatrick it is interesting to note that Wallace stipulates that to be reconciled Corspatrick must 'Fra this tyme furth kepe lawta till our croun'.[205] Moll has already suggested that the episode featuring Corspatrick was specifically invented by Hary as a reaction to recent political turmoil and intended to encourage his audience to set aside ethnic, linguistic and political differences in favour of a sense of national unity.[206] In the immediate context of the section of the poem this appears in it is of course necessary that Corspatrick swear loyalty to the crown rather than the king since at the time the true king is absent. However, given the political strife that Scotland had endured in the 1470s and 1480s, the very period when Hary was writing, it may be that the writer was advocating the notion that maintaining a sense of loyalty to the office of king offers hope in uncertain times. Hary is at pains to justify Wallace's on-going feud with Bruce in terms of Bruce's refusal to behave in a manner befitting his rightful role as king, and emphasises that until Bruce accepts his duty to defend Scotland against her enemies then Wallace will discharge this duty for him. This can be seen in Wallace's stated refusal to submit to the person of Bruce on the basis that Bruce behaves in such a way that would make Wallace a subject of Edward.[207] When the two men finally confront one another across the Carron Wallace makes it clear in his conversation with the rightful king that he fights Bruce because he is loyal to what Bruce as King of Scots should be, not what he is actually like:

> Than Wallace said, 'Bot in defawt of thee,
> Throuch thi falsheis thin awn wyt has myskend.
> I cleym no rycht bot wald this land defend,
> At thou undoysthrou thi fals cruell deid.
> Thou has tynt twa had beyn worth fer mair meid
> On this ilk day with a gud king to found,
> Na five mylyon of finest gold so round
> That ever was wrocht in werk or ymage brycht![208]

In this way Hary seems to advocate a more abstract conception of proper kingship, based around the defence of the realm and a strong sense of patriotic pride, to which a knight can devote himself even if the king himself does not live up to these expectations.

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[205] *The Wallace*, Bk. 8, ll.11
[206] Moll, ''Off quhat nacioun art thow?'', p. 137
[207] Blind Hary, *The Wallace*, (M. P. McDiarmid ed.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1968-69), Bk. 11, ll. 474-475
[208] *The Wallace*, Bk. 11, ll. 458-465

Both Barbour and Hary are frequently at pains to assert the justness of the actions that their heroes undertake in pursuit of their goals, and the way in which they do so can be illuminating for more general study of what constituted acceptable behaviour for each writer. Barbour's portrayal of Robert I as a 'good' king suggests a familiarity with wider ideas on kingship, and yet demonstrates a willingness to adapt these ideas to the particular circumstances in which he was writing. Similarly, the way in which Barbour deals with those aspects of the conflict between Scotland and England that might cause embarrassment to other writers – whether it be specific incidents such as the Douglas Larder or the general use of 'sley' tactics to achieve military objectives – demonstrates a willingness on Barbour's part to draw on broader notions of acceptable behaviour in order to justify the actions of his heroes. Hary's attempts to justify Wallace's actions tend to be more inward-looking than Barbour's, and very often Wallace is vindicated merely by the fact that he is acting in the interests of the Scots. This betrays a deeper concern on Hary's part to promote a sense of loyalty to the crown, rather than a sense of loyalty to the person of the king. This is perhaps best explained with reference to Hary's likely intended audience, composed as it was mostly of men with reasons to resent the misrule of James III. Rather than seeking to justify radical resistance to a weak and ineffective king, Hary may have been advocating a more conciliatory approach whereby men might commit themselves to the principles for which the King of Scots was supposed to stand and thereby offer a better example for the king to adopt. In doing so, Hary could give voice to the frustrations of these men and present their attitudes as superior to that of the ruling class, without advocating open resistance to the king.

Conclusion

In the case of each of the major themes identified in Barbour's *Bruce* and Hary's *Wallace*, it is apparent that both Barbour and Hary were familiar with the contemporary literary culture of medieval Western Europe. In fact, it is likely that at least in Barbour's case he was familiar with a great deal of material that is entirely lost to us. Much of what Barbour and Hary have to say on the subjects of prudence, friendship, oath-making and even more generally on modes of acceptable behaviour can be identified as having their roots in more general trends in intellectual endeavour elsewhere in the medieval world. However, given that *The Bruce* is so early by comparison to other Scottish sources it is difficult to trace its direct antecedents with any great certainty. It is doubtful that Barbour was simply plucking these ideas out of thin air or developing them from scratch on his own, although he unquestionably felt at liberty to adapt them as he saw fit. From the details of Barbour's life that it is possible for historians to reconstruct it is apparent that he was fairly well-travelled and likely had the opportunity to encounter works and ideas that had already found expression elsewhere in Europe. Thus it must be the case either that Barbour (and possibly Hary) had access to known sources through a means that historians can no longer identify, or else that he encountered these notions as they were passed on through works now lost to posterity.[1] Barbour would have had access to the cathedral libraries at Aberdeen and St Andrews, and although no record survives of what these libraries held at the time Barbour was writing catalogues for Aberdeen Cathedral library survive from 1436 and 1465, giving some indication of the sorts of material to which Barbour may have had access.[2] The likelihood that Barbour was drawing on a wide range of works when composing his poem elevates *The Bruce* beyond simply an attempt to produce a pro-Scottish narrative of events that had already been recorded with an Anglo-centric spin in earlier sources. Nor was *The Bruce* merely an attempt to lionise the ancestors of the current king and other prominent figures from Barbour's own time, and thus help further legitimise the fledgling Stewart dynasty and certain contemporary magnate families. Seen in this light, Barbour is revealed to be a writer actively engaging with the literary culture of his time and

[1] For an indication of some of the potential sources available to Barbour, cf. J. Barbour, *The Bruce: A fredome is a noble thing!*, (M. P. McDiarmid & J. A. C. Stevenson eds.), (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 38-44; *The Bruce*, (A.A.M. Duncan ed. & trans.), pp. 14-30

[2] J. Higgitt, *Scottish Libraries*, (London: British Library in association with the British Academy, 2006), p, xi, 4-29, 30-43; the sources named by Bower give further idea of the range of works that were available to a Scottish clerical writer in the 1440s and that may also have been available to Barbour, cf. *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 9, p. 234-259 (pp. 236-243, 246-249)

furthering this intellectual discourse in his own work, as well as undertaking those other enterprises for which he is more often remembered and may well have received patronage. Ebin has correctly observed that Barbour's *Bruce* is best understood as an *exemplum* through which the writer could illustrate the significance of certain ideas and themes.[3] However, Barbour uses his work to explore a number of key themes beyond that of 'national' freedom, which Ebin's study primarily focusses on.

Hary's sources are slightly more easily identified than Barbour's, since there was by the time he was writing an established Scottish literary tradition stemming from Barbour's own time and work, but even in his case there are plenty of instances where no direct source for his text can be found. This can be as simple as a tale for which there is no apparent precedent, but of particular interest for this study are those instances when Hary explores a theme that is either not present at all in Barbour's *Bruce* or else runs contrary to Barbour's thoughts on a given issue. In these cases, it is easy to demonstrate how Hary was actively engaging with the literary culture of his own time and adapting the ideas prevalent within it to suit his own purposes. Of course, one difficulty that Hary presents is that modern historians have no real idea of the writer's identity beyond the name, which itself may be little more than a pseudonym. The text of *The Wallace* is therefore the only clue we have to what other works might have influenced him. In the case of Barbour's *Bruce* then we know that the writer had ample opportunity to experience ideas that were not necessarily widely known in Scotland, but cannot be certain of which works precisely influenced him in the ideas he chose to explore in *The Bruce*. In the case of Hary's *Wallace* on the other hand, it is easier to identify works that directly influenced the composition of the poem, but it is impossible to determine what opportunities the writer had to encounter ideas outwith his country of origin.[4] Regardless of this however, it is readily apparent that both writers sought to go beyond the mere recounting of tales and instead wished to disseminate ideas they had encountered elsewhere that reflected their participation in a wider literary and intellectual culture.

On the subject of prudence, *The Bruce* is by far the more illuminating of the two sources in question. McKim has previously noted Barbour's keen interest in prudence, but more than simply demonstrating a concern for prudence Barbour actively promotes this

[3] Ebin, 'John Barbour's *Bruce*: Poetry, History, and Propaganda', p. 220
[4] *The Wallace*, pp. lx-lxxiv, cviii-cxxxii; Blind Hary, *The Wallace*, (A. McKim ed.), (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), p. xi-xii

concept as a chivalric virtue.[5] Despite Barbour's claim in the early part of his work to be writing a 'romanys', his poem does not share the common interest of romance literature in peaceable passages of arms like jousts and tournaments or gentlemanly duels between knights over the love of a lady. Nor does he share the passion of Froissart for individual feats of arms performed against the backdrop of pitched battles and well-mannered warfare, where the combatants treat one another in as sportsmanlike a manner as possible. Rather Barbour's attitude towards warfare has more in common with the chivalric manuals produced by the likes of Ramon Llull and Geoffroi de Charny, where the elevated ideals of other chivalric literature are tempered by a clear appreciation of the practicalities of warfare in the medieval period. In doing so, Barbour ties *The Bruce* into a literary tradition stretching not only back through the medieval period to late antiquity. Barbour not only presented a consideration of the pragmatic needs of the medieval war leader alongside a celebration of chivalric virtues, he also actively attempted to make this type of pragmatism a chivalric virtue to be pursued in the same manner as any other.

For Barbour, recounting the practical considerations of his heroes in the lead-up to a battle or a skirmish is more important than recounting the action of the engagement itself. Passages describing fighting are mostly formulaic, though admittedly vivid, whereas those passages describing the tactics employed by the likes of Bruce and Douglas are varied and usually unique to the particular episode to which they apply. Furthermore, Barbour provides copious detail when reporting tactical information, often devoting more time to this than to the fighting itself. This serves to demonstrate that Barbour's interest lay more in exploring the role of prudence in warfare than in simply celebrating warfare and violence in general. This covered a whole range of behaviours that receive comparatively little attention from similar, near-contemporary writers and redeemed these behaviours as chivalric courses of action. The setting of traps and ambushes, the use of spies to gain information on enemy positions or to gain access to enemy strongholds, retreating to seek a more advantageous position, and even the avoidance of battle altogether takes on a chivalric aspect in Barbour's *Bruce*, so long as they do not compromise any other chivalric virtues a knight may possess. Despite having more in common stylistically with romance literature or the chivalric biographies written about the likes of the Black Prince or Du Guesclin, Barbour's attitude toward the promotion of prudence is much closer to those medieval writers with a more practical interest in chivalry, like Charny or Pisan. This is

[5] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', p. 85

particularly interesting when considering Barbour's *Bruce* in the context in which it was written, and lends weight to the notion that Barbour was conscious of the increasingly likelihood of renewed armed conflict with England and the prominent role many of his readers would play should such a conflict break out. By constantly reminding his audience of the role that prudence played in winning Bruce his kingdom, Barbour reinforces the significance of this virtue and its various expressions. Linguistically, Barbour uses the term 'worschip' to connect prudence to a desire for honourable reputation – an attractive characteristic for medieval aristocrats – to further increase its appeal to his intended audience.

Prudence is not simply a virtue that Barbour's knights possess, it is a virtue that can be learned and enhanced by knowledge and experience. This has been demonstrated with reference to the development that each of Barbour's four main heroes undergo during the course of the narrative. If prudence could be learned, then it was also possible for Barbour's audience to learn it from reading his text, illustrating the didactic intention of Barbour's writing on prudence. That Barbour devotes so much attention to prudence, what it dictates and how to attain it, suggests that he consciously intended his audience to adopt and nurture this virtue in themselves in light of the tales he recounted in his poem. Furthermore, Barbour presents competition as a means of developing prudence. This ties the virtue of prudence into a wider framework of chivalric standards. Competition over the attainment of certain ideals was a central element of chivalric culture in the medieval period.[6] By presenting the likes of Douglas and Moray as competing over their capacity for prudence in the same way that the heroes of other chivalric works might compete to demonstrate their prowess or loyalty, Barbour reinforces the position of prudence among these other chivalric virtues and in doing so makes it an appealing attribute for his readers to emulate. This observation builds on the work of McKim and Cameron, who have recognised Barbour's appreciation of prudence but have not identified Barbour's elevation of this concept to the level of a chivalric virtue.[7]

Barbour was almost certainly writing to an audience that included men who were involved in the day-to-day handling of Anglo-Scottish affairs at the time when *The Bruce* was produced. Whether Barbour's own dating of his work is to be believed or not, there can be little doubt that the poem was composed during the 1370s. This means that the work

[6] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, p. 149-155
[7] McKim, 'James Douglas and Barbour's Ideal of Knighthood', pp. 167-180; Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's *Bruce*', pp. 13-29

was being produced at a time when open conflict with England was beginning to grow increasingly likely. The English-controlled areas of southern Scotland were increasingly coming under attack from the Scots during the 1370s, a pattern that gained momentum following the death of Edward III in 1377. Not only were attacks taking place on the English 'pale' as early as 1375 but eruptions of violence were often dealt with at March Days, which prominent figures from both sides of the border would frequently attend.[8] Thus the most powerful men in the southern part of the kingdom were not only expected to take a lead in the prosecution of warfare along the border but were also engaged in the diplomatic aspects of Anglo-Scottish relations. This was yet another area in which a sense of prudence would be an advantage, as Barbour's depictions of the negotiation of agreements, and the inherent necessity of acting prudently when engaged in such negotiations, implies. Even though Barbour's own dating of the poem places the work slightly before open warfare broke out, it seems likely that at the very least the tensions that led to the renewed conflict were recognised among the Scottish aristocracy and the presence of this interest in prudence in Barbour's *Bruce* would tend to confirm that. The men engaged in those scattered attacks on the English 'pale' in the 1370s, and who by the 1380s would be actively engaged in the reclamation of that region, would be expected to have a keen interest in the successful prosecution of a war fought mostly in the lowlands of Scotland, against an enemy capable of fielding much larger armies than they could and that was already entrenched in many of the strong places of the country. It is hardly surprising then that it is to the First War of Independence that such men looked. Barbour thus equipped his narrative with attitudes appropriate to this kind of warfare. Hary on the other hand was composing a poem for men who were, at least at the time of writing, outside of the establishment. Their role, in the event of war with England, would be unlikely to involve directing strategy or dictating tactics, and thus their interest in such matters would be diminished. Instead, their interests lay elsewhere and were more often focussed on issues relating to Scotland's internal problems around the time Hary was composing his work. As is so often the case, it is the immediate context of these works that give us the best explanation as to why they are the way they are.

It is on the subject of social obligation seems to have fascinated both writers equally. This is unsurprising given the significance of obligation in late medieval aristocratic

[8] Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 111-112; Macdonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p. 29, 72

society.[9] Obligation was a key feature of social interaction in the late medieval period and thus whether or not an individual could be trusted to fulfil their social obligations dictated whether or not those same individuals could be relied upon to behave in a socially constructive manner. Formal social and political arrangements were often cemented by the taking of oaths, often accompanied by elaborate ritual and display. Thus the issue of oath-making was of particular interest to the nobility – while the more general crime of treason could be applied to people of any social standing – and was recognised by many medieval writers as being closely connected to chivalry. Barbour in particular stresses loyalty above all other virtues. This applied both in the broad sense of showing loyalty to one's social superiors, and especially to King Robert, but it is apparent from many episodes in the poem that it applies equally to the matter of being faithful to one's word. In *The Wallace* too, fidelity to spoken promises is of paramount importance to Hary's heroes, and to Wallace in particular. Both writers are keen to make the most villainous characters in their poems seem to be outright traitors, and if possible as oath-breakers as well. This is not least because by portraying the enemies of their heroes as treacherous, Barbour and Hary can justify the most brutal retribution they can devise for these characters to suffer and still expect their audience to approve, a tendency reflective of many near-contemporary writers. Often they were free to invent episodes through which to explore the perils of treason – both for the honest hero and for the traitor himself – but on other occasions the two writers attribute treachery to real historical individuals in order to explain actual historical events.

For Barbour the revocation of one's loyalty to an individual was not impossible and he presents the switching of allegiance as a genuine option open to the characters in his poem. The key to understanding the justification for such shifting of allegiances is based on a model of idealised reciprocal lordship. As a concept, this is very similar to the meaning of the term *diffidatio*, which has been identified by Walter Ullman as being in use in contemporary legal texts from elsewhere in Europe.[10] For both Barbour and Hary, the most important obligation placed upon their heroes is in remaining true to one's word. It was vital to be open and honest in one's dealings and not to hide one's true intentions. That is the key distinction between the actions of Moray in *The Bruce* and Comyn's actions in *The Bruce* and *The Wallace*. When Moray switches his allegiance to the English he does so openly and does not deceive either side by acting in a manner contrary to his publicly-

[9] F. Oakley, *The Watershed of Modern Politics*, p. 91
[10] Ullmann, *The Individual and Society*, p. 64

sworn oaths. Conversely, when he returns to Bruce's service he does not maintain any pretence of still serving the English in order to gain some advantage. Comyn on the other hand presents an impression of loyalty to the heroes of the two poems while keeping his true intentions hidden, misleading them and seeking only to benefit himself. This is in keeping with Cameron's assertion that in Barbour's *Bruce* at least, keeping faith with one's word was of paramount importance in social interactions.[11] In *The Wallace*, Hary's depiction of Wallace's frankness is so extreme that Wallace can at times seem utterly guileless. Of course, the motif of the simple country knight who emerges from the wilderness and wows the court with his chivalric virtues was a popular one in chivalric romance.[12] But Wallace retains this forthright attitude in all of his dealings throughout the poem, even when it causes problems for himself or his companions. Often Hary directly contrasts Wallace's honesty with the insincerity of other characters who seek to aggrandise themselves through deception, as is the case with Comyn and repeatedly during Wallace's time in France. Even more so than Barbour, Hary seeks to make a feature of this kind of duplicity and counters it with Wallace's innocent sincerity, encouraging his readership to imitate the latter. That both writers take an active interest in the issue of treason and oath-making brings into focus the fact that this subject affected all levels of the nobility. That Barbour felt the subject was appropriate fare for his aristocratic audience and Hary believed it to be relevant to his readers among the lesser nobility emphasises the fact that fidelity to one's social obligations was integral to the maintenance of relationships across late medieval Scottish society.

The subject of friendship is addressed in both works, although once again it is dealt with in greater detail in Barbour's *Bruce*. The most prominent relationship in *The Bruce* is that between King Robert and Sir James Douglas and Barbour's narrative offers considerable insight into how the writer understood the concept of friendship. Kliman has previously given attention to the relationship between these two characters as a lord and his vassal, but so far little consideration has been given to their relationship as a model for friendship between powerful individuals.[13] Most of the elements of the relationship between Bruce and Douglas are drawn, unsurprisingly, from the Classical philosophical sources that influenced broader trends in thought on the subject of friendship in medieval

[11] Cameron, 'Chivalry and Warfare in Barbour's Bruce', p. 15
[12] *Fergus of Galloway*; C. de Troyes, *Perceval (Le conte du graal)*, (K. Busby ed.), (London: Grant and Cutler, 1993)
[13] Kliman, 'The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce', p. 493

literature.[14] The two men are presented as being instant friends, recognising in one another the same high ideals and virtues that make them both the finest knights of their time. This connects Barbour's appreciation of friendship to Aristotelian ideas of the *amicitia perfecta*, in which the ideal friends are in essence reflections of one another, sharing the same values, expressing the same virtues and growing in affection for one another through the recognition of these values and virtues in the other. At many points in the narrative both men are shown going to great lengths to avoid upsetting one another or putting the other in a compromising situation, even stretching social convention at times in order to accomplish this. This depiction of their relationship owes much to Cicero's writing on the subject of friendship, which emphasised the notion that true friends should have as much concern for one another's prestige and reputation as they did for their own. Barbour's depiction of the friendship between Bruce and Douglas also shows a number of characteristics common to friendships between knights in the tradition of chivalric romance. This is most obvious when Douglas is given an audience with Bruce when the king is dying. Such deathbed scenes were a fairly common motif of chivalric romance and invariably offered an opportunity for writers to emphasise and examine the strength of the relationship between the knightly comrades on whom the narrative focusses.[15] Not only does Bruce's deathbed scene serve to reemphasise the friendship between Douglas and the king but it also provides Barbour with an opportunity to acknowledge the spiritual element of their relationship, introducing God as an interested party in the matter. This too is discernable in many chivalric romances, albeit works produced considerably earlier than *The Bruce*, in which God is portrayed as having an active interest in knightly friendships. Barbour seems to have been borrowing from the wider tradition of chivalric romance in order to present the historical relationship between King Robert and Sir James Douglas. His motivation seems to have been to present the relationship between Bruce and Douglas in a way that he was comfortable with but also to offer a model for the friendship between his chief heroes that would seem recognisable and appealing to his contemporary readers as well. The presence of these motifs in Barbour's *Bruce* supports the proposition that this tradition of chivalric writing was known to at least some among the Scottish aristocracy of the 1370s.

[14] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*; Haseldine, 'Introduction: Why Friendship?' pp. xvii-xxiii; Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', pp. 1-184

[15] Morse, 'Medieval Biography', pp. 257-268; Goldstein, ''I will my proces hald', p. 41; Tyson, 'The Vocabulary of Chivalric Description in Late Fourteenth-Century Biography', p. 127-128

Barbour also draws on practical, socio-political models of friendship in his presentation of his heroes and in doing so he reinforces our understanding of what made such relationships useful and appealing for those who actively engaged in political life in the period. This is especially apparent in two episodes in particular, namely in the conversation between Bruce and Douglas shortly before the Douglas Larder and Douglas' appeal to the king to be allowed to assist the earl of Moray on the first day of the Battle of Bannockburn. In both of these incidents, Douglas is able to gain significant concessions from the king thanks to the fact that he occupies a privileged position as King Robert's 'friend'. According to the model advocated by Barbour, friendship with one's social superiors could bring about an outright inversion of the standard model for such a relationship, with the superior party sublimating their own ambitions to align their aims with those of the inferior party. In the specific context of late medieval Scottish politics, the practical appeal of such a relationship should be readily apparent. Given that decision-making power often resided with a small number of powerful individuals, the ability to influence those individuals into acting in one's favour was highly desirable. Cultivating friendships of the sort envisioned by Barbour could offer a means by which to achieve this sort of influence. Furthermore, that Barbour would show an awareness of the practical benefits of friendship may lend further support to the notion that Barbour expected his work to be of particular interest to the upper echelons of the aristocracy. After all, the maintenance of beneficial friendships in order to gain political and social advancement would be of greatest interest to those who were actively engaged in the politics of the time. The fact that Barbour's poem deals specifically with the friendship between Douglas and the king in particular suggests that Barbour's narrative was aimed at the very highest levels of the aristocracy, possibly even the contemporary descendants of the men about whom he wrote. It is true that in reality Sir James Douglas was not a particularly prominent figure before his association with King Robert but by the 1370s his descendants included some of the most prominent and ambitious individuals in the kingdom. Indeed, if the case for *The Bruce* being patronised by the Douglases is accepted it is possible to take this point even further and suggest that since Douglas is the chief recipient of the king's friendship throughout the poem that a similar relationship with King Robert II was being courted by whichever Douglas was patronising the work.

For Hary, the exploration of what makes an ideal friendship between two knights is less of a concern. In general, the friendships explored in Hary's *Wallace* demonstrate similar features to the relationship between Bruce and Douglas in *The Bruce*, albeit to a

less dramatic degree. This is largely due to the fact that Hary does not seem to consider friendship to be a matter of particular interest and thus when presenting the positive relationships in Wallace's life he simply borrows heavily from the model provided by Barbour. It is conceivable that Hary was drawing from the same literary tradition that Barbour was drawing on, and possibly even drawing on the same obscure works, but it seems more likely that Hary was once again directly influenced by Barbour in presenting these relationships in this manner.

The most noteworthy instance in which Hary makes a comment on the subject of friendship that is not reliant on influence from *The Bruce* comes in his depiction of the relationship between Wallace and Fawdoun. This is the only instance in either poem that offers a considered opinion on the notion of negative friendship, which itself was a subject that had received considerable attention in previous medieval literature as Classen's work in particular has shown.[16] Hary portrays the two men as being almost diametrically opposed to one another in terms of their personal characteristics. Thus there can be no basis for their friendship other than the use the two men can be to one another and inevitably the relationship breaks down once Fawdoun is no longer useful to Wallace, with disastrous consequences. The episode possibly suggests a familiarity on Hary's part with literature dealing with friendship other than *The Bruce*, since Hary's apparent condemnation of friendship for 'use' only is present elsewhere in medieval literature but not in Barbour's poem. Much like Hary's lack of interest in prudence, his relative lack of interest in friendship may reveal something about his intended audience. Prudence was unlikely to be of particular interest to Hary's readers among the lesser nobility as they were unlikely to find themselves in a position to direct the grand strategies employed by the Scots in the event of a conflict. Similarly, men who were not actively engaged in courtly politics were unlikely to find themselves soliciting the direct patronage of either the king or the great magnates of the kingdom by cultivating a friendship with them, as the original readers of Barbour's *Bruce* might. That is not to say that such relationships might not be attractive to the lesser nobility but if the opportunity to pursue them was rare Hary's readers were less likely to consider them a primary concern. Of course, friendship in general must still have held some appeal, as suggested by the inclusion of Wallace's friendships with Graham and Longawell, and the fact that the term 'frend' is used by Hary to mean 'supporter' in much the same way as in *The Bruce*. However, Hary appears to have judged that the question of

[16] Classen, 'Friendship – The Quest for a Human Ideal', p. 7

how to avoid 'improper' friendships among relative social equals held more appeal to his readers than how to use friendship to influence political decision-making.

Unsurprisingly, one of Barbour's chief concerns is the subject of kingship. Throughout his poem Barbour is at pains to stress the fact that Bruce embodies the ideals of perfect kingship as much as any man could. It is tempting to think that Barbour's detailed exploration of idealised kingship suggests a royal patron for the poem, but in reality it may only go so far as confirming an expectation on Barbour's part that contemporary royal figures would be exposed to his work. Barbour's interest in good kingship might just as easily be the result of an aristocratic patron wishing to encourage virtue in present and future rulers, and the fact that very often Barbour weighs the proper kingly behaviour of King Robert against the immoral behaviour of his English counterparts supports the latter proposition more than the former. Hary's *Wallace* does not deal so openly with proper kingship, since Hary has no prominent character to base this discussion around for most of his poem. Wallace, who is offered the title King of Scots on more than one occasion in Hary's poem, is the character who best exemplifies Hary's values and it is safe to assert that Hary admired these virtues as much in a king as he did in knightly heroes such as Wallace. In fact, Wallace effectively substitutes for the king throughout Hary's poem and his struggle against the English is justified by Hary on the basis that the true king has refused to take up the responsibility of defending the kingdom against its enemies himself. It has been previously suggested that by constructing Wallace and his struggle in this manner Hary was commenting on the political opposition to James III by his brother the duke of Albany, with Wallace being modelled after Albany and *The Wallace* essentially standing as a piece of pro-Albany propaganda.[17] However, an alternate argument can be made in favour of a more conservative message being encoded in Hary's poem. Far from advocating the radical move of overthrowing the current king and installing another royal figure better suited for that role, Hary may instead be encouraging his audience to remain loyal to the institution of Scottish kingship even when the king himself was failing in his responsibilities. Throughout his time as leader of the Scots in their war against the English, Wallace is not a radical seeking to overthrow the status quo and establish himself as ruler of the kingdom. Rather he is merely working for those aims that the king should properly pursue – chiefly the defence of the realm – until such time as Scotland has a king who will pursue these aims as well. Hary seems to have been encouraging his audience to cling to

[17] MacDougall, 'Foreign relations: England and France', p.18; Goldstein, *The Matter of Scotland*, p. 279

the values for which the King of Scots was supposed to stand, which were timelessly relevant, even when subjected to an unsatisfactory king, who might be redeemed or else would inevitably be replaced by one who did take those responsibilities seriously.

Both Barbour and Hary unashamedly used their respective works to promote their own attitudes and opinions, adapting a rough chivalric framework to make these attitudes seem both recognisable and appealing to their audiences. Each writer had different concerns, usually tied to the immediate circumstances in which their works were being composed. In Barbour's case, he clearly drew heavily on a tradition of chivalric works and manipulated the themes and ideas expressed therein to compose a work that reflected his own opinion on what ideals knighthood should encompass. Hary took a lead from Barbour and in a similar manner Hary appropriated themes and ideas from previous works – and from *The Bruce* in particular – to present his own conception of idealised knighthood in a favourable light. It is apparent that both writers wished to appeal to their audiences in such a way that would modify the behaviour of their readership, and yet the fact that they both present their attitudes in a manner that was familiar to their audience suggests that to some extent these attitudes were not entirely new to their readers. Both works have been interpreted as being unconventional in the grand scheme of chivalric literature, and in many respects they are. But at the same time there is a sense in which both are advocating, in their own distinct ways, values that already occupied an established place in the minds of the late medieval European aristocracy in general, and the Scottish nobility in particular. *The Bruce* and *The Wallace* were intended as much for the justification of recognised, if not necessarily conventional, ideas already known to those who read these works.

Barbour's *Bruce* in particular is typified by a pragmatic approach to chivalry more common to didactic works – such as the manuals produced by Charny and Pisan – than to narrative ones – such as those composed by Gray, Froissart, Chandos herald and Cuvelier. Barbour is keen not only to acknowledge the practicalities of knighthood that his heroes must face in their lives as active participants in chivalric endeavour, but is also often at pains to integrate the necessary tools for dealing with these practical considerations into the 'theory' of chivalry through his writing. Thus, Barbour's intention is more often than not to reconcile the reality of knighthood in late fourteenth-century Scotland with the ideals of chivalry. No doubt this was of particular interest to any of his readers who took pleasure from the culture of chivalry, and its literature in particular, but who also pursued active careers in the on-going conflict with England and the domestic politics of late medieval Scotland.

Hary shows far less of an interest in the practical issues that Barbour concerned himself with, although his work is not completely devoid of such considerations. Where these concerns do appear, they are often reflective of Barbour's and may in fact be a direct result of the influence of the earlier work on the latter. However, Hary is not above placing his own commentary on them whenever they appear in his narrative. Moreover, Hary takes up his own concerns and – like Barbour – presents them within a framework of more easily recognisable chivalric ideals. This is the chief respect in which Hary's *Wallace* is indebted to Barbour's *Bruce*, in the sense that Hary borrows from Barbour a model through which he can explore themes that he believed to be important within a narrative structure that had both recognisable and appealing qualities for his readers. Hary's concerns however are closer to those of the lower echelons of the Scottish nobility than those found in Barbour. The consequence of this is that often the perspective from which Hary narrates his work is quite different from that employed by Barbour, accounting for some of the differences between their respective poems. Barbour and Hary's respective audiences were separated not only by time but also, to an extent at least, by class. Thus their writing tends to reflect the different concerns and anxieties of their respective audiences, which the two writers address in ways that best suited the differences in period and social standing that distinguished their intended readership. Barbour's *Bruce* combines elements of the narrative structure of chivalric romance and biography with the didactic elements of chivalric manuals to present a formulation of chivalry that reflects the need for judicious strategising and general cooperation among the aristocracy in the event of renewed war with England. Hary's *Wallace* borrows from Barbour structurally but associates chivalric achievement with the defence of the kingdom and the maintenance of the Crown even when the king fails to live up to his responsibilities. What both works clearly have in common is that they each present a model of chivalry that, drawing upon models evinced in other medieval writings, primarily reflects the attitudes of the writers, informed both by the expectations of their contemporary audiences and by the context in which they were writing.

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