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Biography, romance and chivalry: Barbour’s The Bruce and Chandos Herald’s La vie du Prince Noir

Supervisor: Dr. Seán Duffy

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Susan Foran
September 2006
Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the Library may lend or copy this thesis upon request.

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Summary

The aim of this thesis is to establish the form and function of two late fourteenth-century biographies of royal subjects in Britain: John Barbour's *The Bruce*, which was written *circa* 1375, and Chandos Herald's *La vie du Prince Noir*, arguably composed *circa* 1385. *The Bruce* is a biography of Robert Bruce (Robert I of Scotland, 1306-1329) and Sir James Douglas, his trusted companion, written for the court of Robert II (1371-1390), Robert I's grandson and the first Stewart king of Scotland. *La vie du Prince Noir* is a record of the deeds of the life of the so-called Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales, duke of Aquitaine and heir-apparent (1330-1376) to King Edward III. It is argued that both these biographies are royal commissions and reflect a reconciliation of a contemporary chivalric ethos promoting a system of individual values with a collective enterprise advocated by the courts for which they were composed.

An introductory appraisal of the relationship between biography, history and romance including an evaluation of modern and medieval interpretations of genre will establish how biography, in the fourteenth century and within a chivalric context, adopted the form of romance. This value system exploited themes and structures from romance to project the deeds and virtues with which *The Bruce* is primarily concerned. *Exempla*, themes, *topoi* and structural grids from select sources, together with the choice of vernacular, function as a reference system that elucidate the motivating impulse behind the composition of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. An examination of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* through the same conventions exploited by Barbour and Chandos Herald demonstrates how chivalry, and its literary manifestation in romance, could be mobilized to further monarchical ambition. This thesis concludes with a discussion of the function of the chivalric ethos generated by Barbour and Chandos Herald and its ability to serve the needs of the royal court.
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Abbreviations

Barbour’s Bruce
Barbour’s Bruce. *A fredome is a noble thing!*, eds. Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A.C. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1985)

The Bruce
The Bruce, ed. A.A.M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1997)

The buik
The *buik of Alexander*, ed. R.L.G. Ritchie (Edinburgh, 1921-28)

Chron. Bower

Chron. Fordun
*Johannis de Fordun Chronica gentis Scotorum*, ed. W.F. Skene, Historians of Scotland, I (Edinburgh, 1871)

Chron. Wyntoun
Andrew of Wyntoun, *Orygnale Cronykil of Scotland*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1872-9)

Foedera

Hary’s Wallace
Hary’s Wallace (*Vita nobilissimi defensoris Scotie Wilemi Wallace militis*) (c. 1470), ed. M.P. McDiarmid (Edinburgh, 1968-9)

La vie
Diana Tyson (ed.), *La vie du Prince Noir* (Tübingen, 1975)

Livre de chevalerie

MacKenzie

Pope and Lodge

Ritchie
Ritchie (ed.), *The buik of Alexander* (Edinburgh, 1921-28), vol. I

Rotuli Scotiae

Skeat
W.W. Skeat (ed.), *The Bruce or the book of the most excellent and noble prince Robert de Broyss, king of Scots* (Edinburgh, 1893)

Watt
The aim of this thesis is to establish the form and function of two late fourteenth-century biographies of royal subjects in Britain: Archdeacon John Barbour’s *The Bruce,*\(^1\) which was written circa 1375,\(^2\) and Chandos Herald’s *La vie du Prince Noir,*\(^3\) arguably

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1 *The Bruce* survives in two fifteenth-century manuscripts: Advocate’s Library, Edinburgh Adv.19.2.2 (i) [henceforth E] (which is complete) and St John’s College Cambridge MS.G.23 [henceforth C], which starts at 4.57. C was finished in August 28, 1487 by ‘J de R’ and is bound with two short poems by the same hand (a copy of ‘How the good wife taught her daughter’ and a poem by Lydgate). E was completed in 1489 by ‘Johannes Ramsay’, which is bound up with a manuscript of *The Wallace* by the same hand. W.W. Skeat (ed.), *The Bruce or the book of the most excellent and noble prince Robert de Broyss, king of Scots* (Edinburgh, 1893) vol. i, p. lx argues that ‘J de R’ and ‘Johannes Ramsey’ are the same person. J.T.T. Brown, *The Wallace and Bruce restudied* (Bonn, 1900) makes the case that they are both Sir John de Ross or Ross Herald. This is disputed by more recent editions. There was another now lost transcript made in 1571 as Andrew Hart’s 1616 edition seems to follow this; it does not follow C or E: see Skeat (ed.) *The Bruce,* p. lxvii for lines in Hart that are not in C or E. Before any of these editions, *The Bruce* was borrowed by Andrew of Wyntoun (c.1400), *Orygnale Cronykil of Scotland,* ed. David Laing [Chron. Wyntoun] (Edinburgh, 1872-9). Wyntoun preserves 280 lines of *The Bruce* in a different form than E (they are not in C): see Skeat, p. xvi. It was also used by Walter Bower (c.1440), *Scotichronicon,* ed. D.E.R. Watt [Chron. Bower] (Aberdeen, 1897-2001), *The buik of Alexander* (1428), ed. R.L.G. Ritchie (Edinburgh, 1921-28), and *Hary’s Wallace* (*Vita nobilissimi defensoris Scotie Wilelmi Wallace militis* (c. 1470), ed. M.P. McDiarmid (Edinburgh, 1968-9). Pinkerton’s edition of 1790 follows E and Skeat’s editions for the Early English Text Society in 1870 and the Scottish Text Society in 1894 follow C. Other nineteenth-century editions include Jamieson (1820) and Cosmo Innes (1856). A prose translation was made by George Eyre-Todd in 1907. In 1909, Mackenzie’s edition followed C. C was regarded as being the more reliable of the two extant transcripts although the first twenty-five leaves of C are lost. ‘Johannes Ramsay’ states that the E manuscript was ‘rapidly written’; however, the 1980-1985 edition of M.P. McDiarmid and J.A.C. Stevenson follows E and references C. Unless otherwise stated, all reference will be made to the latest edition, John Barbour, *The Bruce,* ed. A.A.M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1997), which follows the line numbering of the 1980-85 edition. References will be cited by chapter and line. That the name of the author of *The Bruce* was John Barbour, who was archdeacon of Aberdeen during the reigns of David II and Robert II, is attested to by Andrew of Wyntoun, Bower and Blind Hary: see Skeat, pp. xxxv–xxxvii.

2 Barbour says the ‘compiling/ Off this buk’ (13.709-10) took place in 1375, five years into the reign of Robert II, when Robert II was sixty years old, and 46 winters after King Robert I had died (711-17).

3 The poem survives in two manuscripts: Worcester College, Oxford Ms.1 (c. beginning fifteenth-century) and University of London Ms.1 (second half of the fourteenth century). The 1910 edition by Mildred Pope and Eleanor Lodge: *The life of the Black Prince by the herald of Sir John Chandos* is based on the Worcester manuscript. The other editions following Worcester are H.O. Coxe (ed.), *The Black Prince, an historical poem, written in French, by Chandos Herald,* Roxburgh Club (London, 1842) and F. Michel (ed.), *Le Prince Noir, poème du héraut d’armes Chandos* (London and Paris, 1883). Diana B. Tyson based her 1975 edition, *La vie du Prince Noir, by Chandos Herald* (Tübingen), on the London manuscript, following a 1953 article by E.J.F. Arnould calling for an edition of the previously unknown manuscript. See Tyson (ed.), *La vie,* pp. 3-10 where she argues that the London manuscript is closer to the original poem than Worcester. Her *stemma codicum* (p. 9) argues that the London manuscript is one, possibly two, steps removed from the Herald’s poem, and the Worcester manuscript is two, possibly three, steps away. In 1910 Pope and Lodge concluded that the Worcester manuscript was based on a once-removed corrupt Anglo-Norman version (pp. xxxiv-xlivii). All references will be to Tyson’s edition unless otherwise stated and will be cited by line. There is also a prose edition by Richard Barber: *The life and campaigns of the Black Prince: from letters, diaries and chronicles, including Chandos Herald’s Life of the Black Prince* (London, 1979).
composed in 1385. The Bruce is an account of the reign of Robert Bruce, Robert I of Scotland (1306-1329), composed at the court of Robert I’s grandson, Robert II, the first Stewart king of Scotland (1371-1390). Barbour was working for the royal court from the reign of David II (1329-71), Robert I’s son and Robert II’s uncle, and officially entered court service following the accession of Robert II. In 1378 he was granted an annual pension of £1 until his death when it was forwarded to the cathedral chapter of Aberdeen. An entry for 1429 in the Exchequer Rolls states that this annual pension was ‘pro compilatione libri de gestis quodam Regis Roberti de Brus’. He travelled to England and Paris to study, and his range of erudition is made clear throughout his narrative. The Bruce

4 The poem covers the life of the Black Prince until his death in 1376. The date of composition for the poem is based on line 1816 when the Herald notes that since the conquest of Castile by Henry of Trastamare ‘ne passa mye des ans vint’, which would indicate a date of 1386 but Pope and Lodge argue for 1385 citing line 2142 where the Herald uses the present tense when referring to the Princess of Wales (whose death took place at the end of 1385): ‘Qui de tout honor est maitresse’. However, the Herald also uses the present tense in relation to the Queen of Navarre who died as early as 1373, before the poem had been completed (line 2486; Pope and Lodge, p. lv). Richard Barber cautions dating the life based on this line, which he feels is too vague and ‘vint’ itself is a rhyme word and therefore insecure. He argues instead for a date between 1380-90, ‘and probably from the latter years of that decade’: Richard Barber, ‘Jean Froissart and Edward the Black Prince’, in J.J.N. Palmer (ed.), Froissart: Historian (Woodbridge, 1981), pp. 25-35, p. 31.

5 See Ritchie (ed.), The buik of Alexander by John Barbour (Edinburgh, 1921-28) vol. i, pp. clxvi-cxiii for the argument that Barbour began The Bruce during the reign of David II: ‘Robert II did not “discover” Barbour, he inherited him’ (p. cxiii). Ritchie argues that Barbour was under the patronage of Queen Joanna, who is commemorated in The Bruce: ‘And off! Dame Jhone als off the Tour/ That syne wes of full gret valour’ (20. 39-40); ‘The young lady of gret bewte’ (88); ‘For scho wes syne the best lady/ And the fayrest that men thurft se’ (106-7). Ritchie, p. clxvii discusses Joanna’s connection with Aberdeen. Barbour’s first mention in official documentation (September 13, 1357) is as a commissioner for the Bishop of Aberdeen to engage in discussions concerning the payment of the ransom of David II (Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiuscunque Generis Acta Publica, ed. T. Rymer (London, 1704-35) [Rymer’s Foedera], vol. iii, pt. i, 369; Skeat (ed.), The Bruce, p. xviii). In addition, Barbour’s safe-conduct to Oxford in 1357 was granted by Edward III at David’s personal request: ‘Sciatis quod ad supplicationem David de Bruys suscepimus Johannem Barber, archidiaconum de Aberdene, veniendo cum tribus scolaribus in comitiva sua in regnum nostrum Angliae, causa studendi in universitate Oxoniae: Rymer’s Foedera, iii, pt. i, 364; Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londonensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi, ed. D. MacPherson (London, 1814-19) [Rotuli Scotiae], i, 808; Skeat (ed.), The Bruce p. xviii; Ritchie (ed.) The buik, p. clxvii).

6 Barbour was auditor at the exchequer in February 1373, 1375, 1383, 1384 and 1385; he received gifts of money from Robert II in 1382-6: Skeat (ed.), The Bruce, pp. xv-xxv and D.E.R. Watt, A biographical dictionary of Scottish graduates to AD 1410 (Oxford, 1977), pp. 28-9.

7 In August 1378, £1 annually from the Aberdeen burgh was assigned to ‘our beloved clerk’ (dilecto clerico nostro): The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, ed. J. Stuart et. al. (Edinburgh, 1878-1908), ii, p. 566; Watt, A biographical dictionary of Scottish graduates, p. 29; Skeat (ed.), The Bruce, p. xx. In 1388 he was awarded another annual pension for life of £10: see ibid. Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 3 suggests this meant ‘he had satisfactorily completed a literary work, but was not to be given a bishopric.’ Whether this was in payment for The Bruce or the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ is discussed below.

8 The exchequer rolls of Scotland, iv, p. 5; Watt, p. 29.

9 Skeat (ed.), The Bruce pp. xv-xxv; Watt, pp. 28-9. Barbour was issued safe-conducts to travel to St Denis on October 16, 1365 and in 1368-9 - probably to study at the University of Paris, which has been called ‘the university for Aberdeen’: Mackenzie (ed.) The Bruce (London, 1909), p. xvi. Two safe-conducts were also issued for Barbour to travel to Oxford on August 13, 1357 and again in 1364. Barbour’s name is almost never mentioned without the title archidiaconus Aberdonensis so he
is also very much a biography of King Robert’s trusted companion, ‘the gud’ Sir James Douglas. Together in heart and hand, and famed in distant lands, it is ‘[o]f thaim I think this buk to ma’(1. 27-33).

La vie du Prince Noir is a record of the deeds of the life of the so-called Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales, duke of Aquitaine and heir-apparent (1330-1376) to King Edward III. The poem was composed by Chandos Herald, who was herald to Sir John Chandos, celebrated by Froissart as the embodiment of the ideals attached to the chivalric ethos. Glimpses of the Herald’s career can be gleaned from Froissart. Following Sir John Chandos’s death in 1370, he entered the service of the crown and became Ireland King of Arms. In 1377 Richard II named him ‘roy d’armes d’Engleterre’ in what appears to be the earliest reference to this title. His exact identity remains unclear. He is identified therefore solely through his role as herald; and, it is this function that informs the presentation of his account of the life of the Black Prince.
Biography is considered a modern narrative tradition: the word biography is first used in England in the seventeenth century. It is defined through its emphasis on the individual, a feature not considered consistent with classical or early medieval biography. Hellenistic and Roman biographers sought to emphasize the type - 'generals, philosophers, demagogues'. Early medieval royal biography (c.800-c.1150) was influenced by rhetorical exercises of antiquity, the Gospels and the early Christian writers of hagiography. It continued this representation of the individual as a type, and resembled hagiographical narratives replacing saint with king and celebrating the institution of kingship rather than the individual. However, the celebration of a life as a type does not negate an interest in the individual. And, furthermore, biography is not defined through the use of a title, which is not a standard feature of medieval historiography and is often applied anachronistically thus confusing consideration of the narrative. Fifteenth-century chronicles such as Andrew of Wyntoun refer to The Bruce as 'the Bruss buke', and the surviving manuscripts provide a summary title reflecting its concern with the deeds and virtues depicted by Robert Bruce and his trusted companions. Neither the Worcester nor London manuscripts of La vie is titled. A discussion of The Bruce and La vie as biography is determined by internal reference to their stated intention to record the lives of their heroes, as discussed below.

Tyson (pp. 17-18) disputes this and following Arnold suggest that he was Haneray, herald of arms, who served with John Chandos (Register of Edward the Black Prince, Public Records Office (London, 1933), vol. iv, p. 167), but there is no evidence to support this. See also E.J.F. Arnold, 'Un manuscript reconnu de la vie du Prince Noir', Mélanges de linguistique et de littérature romanes offerts à Mario Rogues (Paris, 1953), vol. ii, pp. 3-14.

17 Ruth Morse, 'Medieval biography: History as a branch of literature', Modern Language Review, 80 (1985), pp. 257-68, p. 257. Ibid.: 'life' is found from the early tenth century. But the vita had a much older heritage in Western Christendom.


19 Momigliano, pp. 11, 117.


The origins of biography, or life writing,\textsuperscript{23} have been traced to the fifth century BC, and they are associated with an interest in the individual. The word itself does not evolve until the Hellenistic age. *Bios* referred to a selection of events and opinions relating to an individual.\textsuperscript{24} The writing of biography proper is attributed to the fourth century philosophical school of the Peripatetics; Aristoxenus is named the first biographer.\textsuperscript{25} But it was the prose *encomium* of the individual as developed by Isocrates and fourth-century rhetoricians that was to prove the most enduring biographical mould,\textsuperscript{26} and the most influential in affecting the structure of medieval biographical narrative.

Biography has been largely considered as history from the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{27} But biography was not understood as history within a classical context.\textsuperscript{28} Biography was a type of historical writing that emphasized individuals. And, as a rhetorical subject, history was ‘a branch of literature’.\textsuperscript{29} Rather than being a separate genre, ‘history’ implied a style and was distinguished from other forms of medieval writing based on its supposed truth content.\textsuperscript{30} Thus biography, as with all historical writing, was structured according to literary categories and conventions inherited from antiquity.\textsuperscript{31} Medieval biography is an anachronistically defined genre that did not adhere to a specific set of narrative conventions. Instead, conventions from a variety of genres were adopted in order to mould the biography to contemporary needs and to place it within an already existing tradition.

The purpose of this thesis is to establish how a contemporary chivalric vogue influenced the presentation of biography. An introductory appraisal of the relationship between biography, history and romance including an evaluation of modern and medieval interpretations of genre will establish how biography, in the fourteenth century and within a chivalric context, adopted the form of romance.\textsuperscript{32} Biography was well suited to a romance

\textsuperscript{23} Judith Anderson, *Biographical Truth. The representation of historical persons in Tudor-Stuart writing* (New Haven, 1984) argues for biography to be referred to as life-writing, the more exact term.

\textsuperscript{24} Momigliano, *The development of Greek biography*, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 76.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 82.


\textsuperscript{28} Momigliano, *The development of Greek biography*, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{29} Ruth Morse, ‘Medieval biography: History as a branch of literature’, p. 257.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 257.

\textsuperscript{31} Idem., “This vague relation:”, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{32} There is also a case for an argument discussing biography as political history in the fourteenth century; and such narratives as the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* (ed. N. Denholm-Young (London, 1957)) and perhaps the *Historia vitae et regni Ricardi Secundi* (ed. G.B. Stow (Philadelphia, 1977)) could be examined to this effect. Both narratives are anachronistically titled biographies, but they are organized according to the reigns of Edward II and Richard II and more pertinently, the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* is concerned with an exposition of character.
framework: chivalric exploits performed through adventures promoted a value system embodied in the hero and his trusted companions. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 discuss how this value system is used by Barbour and Chandos Herald to project the deeds and virtues with which The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir are primarily concerned. Exempla, themes, topos and structural grids from select sources, together with the choice of vernacular, function as a reference system that elucidate the motivating impulse behind the composition of The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir. Chapter 5 concludes this thesis with a discussion of the nature of the chivalric ethos generated by Barbour and Chandos Herald and its relevance to contemporary patrons and audiences. The appeal of biography is its flexibility of narrative form, and its ability to encapsulate cultural 'changes of attitude [...] exemplified in the lives of individuals':

\[\textit{aliena vita nobis magistra est.}\]
Chapter 2  Biographical Form: Romance

The aim of this chapter is to place *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* within a tradition of historical writing in order to facilitate biographical interpretation through an exploration of the dominant themes, *topoi*, *exempla*, language and structure. The question of the tradition to which these texts belong has caused much confusion. The notion of genre itself is far from straightforward when considering medieval writings. This chapter argues that biography, the history of a single life, was, in the fourteenth century, and within a chivalric context, romance. When the life depicted was that of a knight, the form applied was romance. The cult of the hero was designed to revamp values considered in decline by a contemporary public concerned to exploit such values for their own aristocratic or royal ends. Whether royally or aristocratically inspired, which is the subject of later chapters, these narratives fused the didactic functions of *historia* with the thematic and structural concerns of romance.

Romance, like chivalry, is difficult to define and an understanding is best gleaned from an investigation of the sources, which are typically classified as ‘chivalric literature’. The umbrella term ‘chivalric literature’ refers to genres traditionally treated as either historical or literary: *chansons de geste*; romances; vernacular manuals of chivalry; romance-influenced biographies, histories and chronicles; and legal tracts on war and chivalry. ‘Chivalric literature’ is a convenient classification for a range of writings influenced by the chivalric culture in which they were composed. Modern scholars often use the term ‘chivalric literature’ as though it formed a separate genre in the Middle Ages.35 Certainly, there are grounds for treating a group of similarly styled narratives together under the heading ‘chivalric history’ or ‘chivalric biography’ but such an approach can confine the individual merits of a narrative within artificially imposed boundaries. Central to any examination of ‘chivalric literature’ is a thorough understanding of the form and function of romance. Thus after a preliminary appraisal of the central characteristics of medieval romance as it is perceived in a modern context, this chapter will proceed with a

study of the medieval understanding of romance as it relates to *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*.

I  
Romance: Modern definitions

Modern classifications often confine a medieval narrative within an anachronistic understanding of the features of a genre and this is clear in particular when considering romance literature. Barbour’s designation of *The Bruce* as a *romany* (1.446) has caused much confusion. Response to his use of *romany* can be divided between those who agree that his poem was intended to be a romance because, after all, he should know and those who disagree, ignoring his claim. Those who agree are content for the most part to classify *The Bruce* with ‘the Old French romance’ or ‘romance after the French manner’ or, more vaguely still, simply as a ‘romance’. Romance is equated with fantasy: ‘if it were cast in the form of a romance it would possess at least one of romance’s essential requirements, incredibility’; ‘Barbour’s poem is a ‘romans’ only in the sense that he himself gives to that term, it is a tale and its truth is marvellous’. Those who disagree adopt one of two approaches. On the one hand, Barbour’s use of the term ‘romance’ to explain his work has been dismissed and *The Bruce* is referred to instead as a *chansons de geste* or an ‘epic’, a

37 W.M. MacKenzie (ed.), *The Bruce by John Barbour* (London, 1909), p. xv: *The Bruce* is a romance ‘only in a technical sense’. Anne McKim, *The Bruce: a study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*, unpublished Ph. D dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 1980) p. 54: ‘The word [romance] simply meant a narrative in the vernacular and, like story, could equally well deal with facts, fictions, or a combination of these’. McKim also describes *The Bruce* a *chanson de geste*, see below, note, 6, but on the whole, treats the narrative as a romance: ‘he conceived of his work as a romance about real historical personages and events and [...] chose the romance form because he regarded it as the vehicle for the celebration of great deeds of prowess tempered by prudence and mesure’ (p. iii). Sonja Cameron, ‘Chivalry in Barbour’s *Bruce*’ in *Armies, chivalry and warfare in medieval Britain and France. Proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Stamford, 1998), pp. 13-29, p. 13: ‘*The Bruce* is a romance, not a chronicle’. For Cameron, medieval romances were the ‘escapist fiction of the time’ (p. 14), they dealt with knights, noble deeds, adventures, courts, ‘in a word, with chivalry’ (p. 13). Her acceptance of Barbour’s designation is dependent on an association of romance with fiction: ‘Incidents we find in Barbour’s *Bruce* are described because the author chose to describe them and to a large extent invented them’; thus Barbour’s claim to *suthfastness* is dismissed as a topos. (p. 13) However, Cameron further categorizes *The Bruce* as crusading romance, a point that will be returned to below.

39 Romance is also identified with fiction and with love: Matthew P. McDiarmid and James A.C. Stevenson (eds.), *Barbour’s Bruce. A fredome is a noble thing!*, vol. i, p. 45: ‘He cites only those romans de chevalerie that touch on history and never for a romantic purpose. [...] He makes no allusion to the famous lovers of fiction.’
40 The *chanson de geste* is a branch of epic but also grouped, because of its matter, with romance, see below. James Kinsley (ed.), *Scottish poetry. A critical introduction* (London, 1955), p. 3: ‘its spirit is that of the old *chansons de geste*’. Anne McKim, ‘*The Bruce*: a study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal’, p. 46: ‘The work might be described as a *chanson de geste*, although in using the term I do not intend to suggest anything about its particular conception of heroism or its predominant tone or values. I am thinking of the kind of classification of the *chanson de geste* and romance as essentially different literary modes offered by critics like John Finlayson in his introduction to *Morte Arthure*.’

8
2 Biographical Form: Romance

'chronicle', a mirror, a novel even and, of course, a biography. On the other hand, the use of 'romance' has been qualified with variations and combinations of genre such as an 'epic' that is 'half-way between chronicle and romance' or a 'chronicle written in romance spirit'. All-embracing genre classifications, whether applied individually or in bewildering combinations, offer a limiting understanding of the work at hand. What Barbour intended by the use of romanys will be discussed later, but he clearly had much


Lois A. Ebin, 'John Barbour's Bruce: poetry, history, propaganda', Studies in Scottish Literature 9 (1972), 218-47, pp. 219-22 argues against 'approaching the Bruce as a conventional epic, romance, or chronicle' cautioning against classifications based on form (such as Janet Smith, Kurt Wittig, Alexander Kinghorn), which 'have brought certain assumptions to bear on the poem [...] and have confused rather than clarified Barbour's purposes.' But then, after countering such an all-embracing approach and acknowledging that although The Bruce 'resembles each of these genres in certain ways, it fits no single category comfortably', Ebin classifies The Bruce as 'an exemplum or mirror designed to illustrate the importance of the ideals of freedom and loyalty for the Scottish nation'. Ebin does however provide a rewarding study of The Bruce treating it within the historical context of its composition and has provided the basis for many recent developments of this argument.

A.H. Douglas (ed.), The Bruce (Glasgow, 1964), p. 17 refers to the poem as a novel: Barbour sets the background before introducing the characters one by one and describing their appearance and character. The use of 'novel' here is anachronistic and not to be confused with the term 'novel' as it is applied to romance in discussions separating medieval historiography from clearly fictitious narrative such as P. Zumthor, Langue, texte énigma (Coll. 'Poétique') (Paris, 1975), p. 248; Peter Ainsworth, 'Legendary history: historia and fabula' in Historiography in the Middle Ages, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 387-416, p. 396.

G.W.S. Barrow, Robert Bruce and the community of the realm of Scotland (1998), p. 312: 'Nevertheless, on the score of general reliability Barbour must be reckoned a biographer, not a romaniser.' Duncan (ed.), The Bruce (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 4: 'The Bruce [...] is a romance-biography not a chronicle'.

more in mind than using the vernacular ‘to narrate a historical theme commemorating a few heroes.’

While inspiring nowhere near the conflicting generic designations of The Bruce, La vie du Prince Noir is still considered an anomaly among late fourteenth-century historiography, specifically because it is commonly studied within the confines of British historiography, and this is explored in more detail below. For now, it is sufficient to note that La vie du Prince Noir is typically classified as an epic, where the inference is chanson de geste, or as ‘chivalric literature’ or ‘chivalric biography’, considered a separate genre:

[Chandos Herald’s] Life is a notable example of the art of chivalric biography which [...] constitutes a distinct literary genre in the late Middle Ages.

This idea of the ‘genre’ of ‘romance-history’ is discussed below, but, as mentioned above, it has become an increasingly common narrative classification:

Chandos Herald’s work is not a strictly historical work, but belongs to the tradition of rhyming chronicles in the common tongue which can be found from the twelfth century onwards.

Chandos Herald is typically assessed on his conformity to fact and his literary skills are not well received:

We will proceed to examine how in his duties as an historian Chandos has acquitted himself. As a poet we have not so much sympathy with him, and it is perhaps fortunate that he was gifted with so little imagination as he appears to have possessed.

Succeeding editors concur: Pope and Lodge call the Herald ‘a professional verse-writer of some technical ability’ but ‘denied the gifts alike of copious vocabulary and of

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46 R. James Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, (Lincoln and London, 1993), p. 136 and ibid.: ‘Barbour might well have accepted the designation “geste”; his sense of the word “romance” was probably closer to our understanding of medieval epic or heroic verse’.
47 Pope and Lodge (ed.), The life of the Black Prince (1910), pp. xviii, note his ‘characteristic epic usage’ calling the poem ‘a historical narrative, couched in epic style’: ‘Whether narrating, or describing, the Herald hurries on from fact to fact, much as did the earlier Roland poet and all succeeding epic writers’.
48 Sumner Ferris, ‘Chronicle, biography and family tradition’, p. 29. See also John Leyerle, ‘Conclusion: major themes of chivalric literature’, p. 137. Additional generic designations are often supplementary to the overriding consideration of La vie as ‘chivalric biography’; for example, John Leyerle, ‘Conclusion’, p. 137: ‘The Chandos Herald, like Jean the Minstrel, portrayed his subject as if the Black Prince were the hero of a romance. [...] the work almost becomes secular hagiography’.
imagination.\textsuperscript{51} Again, Diana Tyson concedes his ‘professional bent for exactitude’ but does not consider the Herald a gifted writer looking instead to his sources, addressed below, to ascertain possible literary influence.\textsuperscript{52} Maurice Keen, however, assigns fourteenth- and fifteenth-century heralds a much more erudite role and this is also outlined below.

Modern theoretical discussions tend to treat genre as either a ‘purely idealistic entity’ outside time constraints or historically, in which precise time periods are the determining factor.\textsuperscript{53} When treated as a purely idealistic entity romance is primarily associated with fantasy or ‘the marvellous’.\textsuperscript{54} A typical medieval romance is considered to depict a brave and worthy knight who fights with lance and sword on a quest that leads him into numerous adventures that provide the opportunity to perform many great deeds illustrating his noble virtues. Love often provides the impetus for such quests, which transgress the realm of the known world into magical lands. Thus alongside the marvellous, it is the quest, the adventure and love that constitute the dominant features of romance. But such a designation does not hold true for the broad sweep of writing classified as medieval romance. The marvellous and the magical are mainly courtly romance associations; it is the fairy-tale that Erich Aurebach uses to define courtly romance:

The fairy-tale atmosphere is the true element of the courtly romance, which after all is not only interested in portraying external living conditions in the feudal society of the closing years of the twelfth century but also and especially in expressing its ideals.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52} Diana Tyson (ed.), \textit{La vie du Prince Noir}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{54}Modern theoretical studies involving romance such as Northrop Frye, \textit{Anatomy of criticism} (New York, 1969) and Fredric Jameson, \textit{The political unconscious. Narrative as a socially symbolic act} (Ithaca, NY and London, 1981) classify the genre of romance with fantasy; this is discussed by Peter Hadiu, ‘Romance: idealistic genre or historical fiction’, pp. 1-47. Paul Strohm, ‘The origin and meaning of Middle English \textit{romaunce}’, \textit{Genre}, 10 (1977), 1-28. p. 12 : ‘Modern critics have therefore been true to the medieval conception of \textit{romans/romaunce} in identifying the presence of fanciful, marvellous, and especially amorous elements as characteristics which help to distinguish these narratives from further narratives and \textit{gestes}’; Carol Fewster, \textit{Traditionality and genre in Middle English romance} (Cambridge, 1987), p. 36, n. 104.
Again, love is really only a decisive force in courtly romances; its role is downgraded in epic and Middle English romances. Therefore it is the quest, whether motivated by spiritual, amorous or military considerations, and its resultant representation, the adventure, that remain the defining characteristics of romance as they eclipse each epoch: they are just as central to twelfth-century courtly romance as they are to fourteenth-century Middle English romance but they are represented in different ways reflecting separate traditions and this is treated below.

It is futile to generalize about a genre that stretched over several centuries and into so many different countries. There is only one word in modern English to describe what in modern French is divided into such overlapping sub-categories as roman courtois, roman d’aventure, roman Breton, roman arthuriens and roman d’antiquité and in modern German has been treated as Abenteuerroman, höfischer Roman and höfisches Epos. Are fourteenth-century Middle English romances to be judged by the characteristics of twelfth-century Old French verse romances or thirteenth-century Old French prose romances or simply by their Anglo-Norman predecessors? As evidenced from the above popular conception of romance, the precepts of the genre were set by Old French courtly romance. An earlier generation of scholars graded English romances by the standards set by the tradition of courtly romance defined by that ‘essential concern with knightly adventures in pursuit of personal reputation without social, political, or religious motivation and divorced

Roman is commonly represented by Arthurian romance and especially associated with Chrétien de Troyes; the various traditions of twelfth and thirteenth-century Old French romance are treated in more detail below. Features of the supernatural found in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance are often exploitations of the appropriation by Old French romance of such themes in order to further narrative considerations within their own insular tradition: see Rosalind Wadsworth, ‘Historical romance in England. Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance’, unpublished Ph.D dissertation (University of York, 1972), esp. pp. 95-7. Chrétien de Troyes’s Erec et Enide and Chevalier de la Charrette deal specifically with love: Peter Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 398. Rosalind Wadsworth, ‘Historical romance in England. Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance’, esp. pp. 69 and 71, argues that love in Anglo-Norman romance follows the tradition of amour courtois but appropriates this tradition as a means to and end so that ‘[t]he essential virtue of fin’amors and of love in these romances is loyalty and indeed it often seems to be the idea of loyalty rather than of love which is dominant’, a point that is returned to below. In general, however, Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance is marked by a ‘cultural detachment’ from the continental wellsprings of courtoisie, which, in turn, ‘affects insular approaches to ideals of love and chivalry’: Susan Crane, Insular Romance. Politics, faith and culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English literature (Berkeley and London, 1986), p. 12.

from contemporary reality. More recent studies have recoiled against such criteria as a determinant for romance, pointing instead to an independent ‘insular’ tradition and thus extending the delimitation marks of romance in the process.

One approach towards an explication of the genre is to treat romance chronologically, thematically, culturally or structurally and to do so by contrasting it with another ‘purely idealistic entity’, the epic. Romance is considered representative of the chivalric age, as epic had depicted the characteristics of the heroic age. Nathaniel E. Griffin calls romance an ‘incredible’ and epic a ‘credible’ tale. Where romance requires interpretation, epic has a ‘perfect accord between the poet and his hearer’. Hans-Robert Jauss identifies epic with an ‘ethic of action’: the deeds provide the action for the plot; romance, on the other hand, is defined by an ‘ethic of events’ centred on the adventure. There is no clear chronological demarcation line between the composition of epic and that of romance, and both thematically and culturally they also overlap. Commonplaces referring to the thematic break from epic to romance are as follows: where the world of epic was the battlefield, the world of romance was the court; where epic heroes fought together in defence of a realm, romance reflects the developing twelfth-century focus on the place of the individual within society; where love was central to romance, love in epic was peripheral if indeed even considered. Thematically the traditions differ but to what extent is not necessarily straightforward and like all generalizations of type, there are patterns to be formed but there are revelatory deviations from the core. It is apparent however that the

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60 Discussions here are centred on a specific branch of epic, the chanson de geste.
63 Jauss, ‘Chanson de geste et roman courtois’ in Chanson de geste und höfischer Roman (Heidelberger kolloquium) (Heidelberg, 1963), pp. 61–77: Suzanne Fleischman, ‘On the representation of history and literature in the Middle Ages’, History and Theory 22 (1983), 278–310, p. 285, n. 24: where chanson de geste asks the question, what shall I do?, romance, using the adventure- ad venire, to come to- asks how things should happen in this world; the difference is between the active, in relation to the epic, and the passive, when considering romance.
64 The growth of romance is associated with the twelfth-century renaissance and while the heyday of the epic or the chanson de geste is considered long before, chansons continued to be composed into the thirteenth century: Morton W. Bloomfield, ‘Episodic motivation and marvels in epic and romance’, p. 97.
65 See W.P. Ker, Epic and romance; Jessie Crosland, The Old French epic (Oxford, 1951); Morton W. Bloomfield, ‘Episodic motivation and marvels in epic and romance’; Eugène Vinaver, The rise of romance (Woodbridge, 1971; 1984); Susan Crane, Insular romance.
central defining characteristic of romance is the individual quest and adventure and this departs from the more concentrated collective thematic considerations of the *chansons*. The adventure, central to romance not only on a thematic but also a structural and social or cultural level, is a crucial component in the narrative of both *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* and, together with a discussion of features peculiar to both *chansons* and romance, will be treated in more detail below.

R.W. Southern has argued that the change from epic to romance reflects the cultural - or, specifically, social, religious and intellectual components - transition represented by the 'twelfth-century renaissance':

The change of emphasis from localism to universality, the emergence of systematic thought, the rise of logic- to this we may add a change which in a certain sense comprehends them all: the change from Epic to Romance.66

Countering this explanation based on the prevailing religious and secular ethos of the age, Eugène Vinaver points instead to the rise of the vernacular as the determining factor that supplied the initiative for the transition from epic to romance:

The rise of romance in the twelfth century [...] was the birth of a world in which vernacular writings were to share with Latin texts the privilege of addressing the reader through the medium of visible, not audible symbols; through words intended to be read, not sung or even recited; and with this went a radical alteration of the very nature of literary experience.67

Vinaver's argument is reinforced through a formal examination of *chansons* and romance; his argument is therefore structurally determined. In particular, he stresses the appropriation of *laissez similaires* or 'repetition with variation' by *chansons de geste*, which are considered a branch of epic. Such a narrative style produced an emotional rather than intellectual reaction.68 Formally, the twelfth-century vernacular courtly romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the *romans d’antiquité* cater for a more studied psychological

68 Ibid., pp. 7-14; Vinaver defers to Mildred K. Pope, ‘Four *chansons de geste*: a study in Old French versification’, *Modern Language Review*, viii (1913), ix (1914), x (1915).
approach. But there are no clean breaks and thinking in phases is itself inexpedient; rather, an approach accommodating circular movement is advocated.

However, of all the above-mentioned approaches towards an exposition of the genres of epic and romance, a structural examination proves the most profitable. Three related procedures will be treated here: the paratactic composition of epic, interlace, and an evaluation of episode. It is the concentration on episode rather than causality or coherence of structure (beginning, middle, and end) that clarifies both authorial intent and, therefore, method of narration, in medieval historiography. This is the basis for the development of the term *parataxis* by Eric Aurebach. Applying a technique used by Latin poets who in turn were influenced by classical rhetoric, Aurebach provided an explanation of narrative peculiar to medieval historiography. *Parataxis* prioritizes the episodic by ‘the juxtaposition of essentially equal elements without causal or temporal connectives’ as opposed to *hypotaxis*, which is ‘the form of construction in which elements are connected in subordinate relations’. Paratactic structure is basically repetitive: themes, descriptions, statements, events are all repeated: ‘Time and again there is a new start, every resumption is complete in itself and independent.’ Paratactic construction was devised by Aurebach to elucidate the construction of epic: ‘the procedure is markedly epic, recitationally epic’. It has however been appropriated as a method designed to elucidate medieval narratives in general.

The purpose of interlace, which is best described as ‘the feeling that there is no single beginning and no single end, that each initial adventure can be extended into the past and each final adventure into the future by a further lengthening of the narrative threads’.

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72 Ibid., pp. 105-10: where *parataxis* was a low style in classical compositions, in medieval historiography it represented ‘an elevated style’.

73 See Nancy Partner, *Serious entertainments: the writing of history in twelfth-century England* (Chicago, 1977), p. 201 who argues that Aurebach’s highly developed paratactical approach cannot be reconciled with all philosophical and psychological studies of medieval historiography. Instead, Partner applies the basic paratactical theory devoid of the philosophical and psychological dimensions of the theory that she views as largely unnecessary to twelfth-century historical writing. In doing this, she is following William Ryding’s (*Structure in medieval narrative* (The Hague, 1971)) examination of the sequential nature of medieval French vernacular literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Together, these two studies testify to what Nancy Partner calls ‘the universality of the episodic, non developmental, serial organization’ (Partner, p. 202).


75 Eugene Vinaver, *Form and meaning in medieval romance* (Cambridge, 1966) and *The rise of romance*, p. 76. Vinaver adds to C.S. Lewis’s investigation of *polyphonic* or interwoven narrative in
is to provide a coherent structural grid for medieval romance and is primarily associated with the thirteenth-century Arthurian prose romances. Twelfth-century ‘episodic verse romances’ of an individual knight were recast into ‘a vast cyclic prose narrative chronicling the deeds of whole generations of knights and spanning the entire history of the grail quest’ at the beginning of the thirteenth century in what is known as the Vulgate Cycle. The technique of interlace supplied this huge corpus of a seemingly chaotic arrangement of romance narratives with a comprehensive framework. The pattern is cyclic; the themes are interrelated as one episode is connected to another. It is this ‘interlocking of episodes’ that Morton Bloomfield addresses in his treatment of episode as a structural device to distinguish between epic and romance. Episode in romance is centred on the adventure and set apart from epic due to its ostensible ‘irrational or unmotivated episodes’, which lend a sense of mystery to the narrative. However, while interlace is a feature peculiar to one specific body of romance literature, structural divisions based on episode are a rewarding study of medieval narrative and will be returned to below.

It is by now clear that epic and romance represent different traditions of medieval literature but are best studied not as idealistic entities but within their historical context where, as it has been debated, ‘generic variations deserve close attention as signs of differing institutional and ideological structures’. Recent scholars argue that ‘[n]o one any longer believes in the sharp dichotomies epic and romance, heroic and courtly, which were accepted by earlier scholars and which underlay the alleged novelty of courtliness in the twelfth century.’ Sharp dichotomies aside, generic variations are apparent. Terms such as chanson de geste, roman courtois, roman d’antiquité, Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance correspond with recognizable historical periods but cannot be fully explored without reference to the other. Historical appraisals of genre prove profitable but can be dismissed as propaganda if treated in isolation. A compromise between the two
theoretical positions outlined earlier allows for the discussion of conventions that were understood between an author and his audience at a particular time. This bipartite treatment of genre theory, together with 'les compromis polymorphes', corresponds neatly with Elisabeth Gaucher's division of chivalric biography into 'le model hyperbiographique' where 'l'auteur détache son héros de l'époque' and 'le modele historique' in which 'la conjuncture historique (les guerres, essentiellement) determine et oriente leur existence individuelle.' In the historic model, the subject of the biography symbolizes and is determined by his society and his age; thus, when the subject is a romance hero, this society is chivalric.

Other sub-genres have also been created: Anne McKim, following, Diane T. Leo, distinguishes between 'romances proper' and 'homilectic romance', 'on the basis of their different conceptions of the hero', grouping The Bruce with the 'romances proper' because '[i]t is the hero and his human qualities which are the central concern of the authors of these romances, as they are of Barbour.' William Brandt distinguished between what he terms 'aristocratic' and 'clerical' chronicles. Aristocratic chronicles are written in Old French or Anglo-Norman by laymen or members of the secular clergy and are marked by a continuity of action: 'they are narratives'. Clerical chronicles, which are written in Latin and typically by monks, are defined by this absence: they 'are not, properly speaking, narratives at all. They were written as collections of incidents or events, and the clerical chronicler simply did not see a basic continuity of action.' Rather than merely relating events, the aristocratic chronicle celebrates the value of the deeds depicted. Sarah Katherine Tolmie differentiates between 'royal' and 'knightly' biographies: royal biographies are marked by 'a continuous drama of recognition, which impels both characters within the text and readers of it to participate in a process of sustained parousia or epiphany' and contrasted with the 'developmental structure of knightly biographies, in which emphasis is placed on the processual and individual achievement of chivalric status.'

medieval historiography', Journal of Medieval History 1 (1975) 363-82, p. 364: '[t]he term propaganda can have a very limited application for most of the Middle Ages.'

Haidu, 'Romance: idealistic genre or historical fiction', p. 4. See also Fredric Jameson, The political unconscious. Narrative as a socially symbolic act; Susan Crane, Insular romance; Gabrielle Spiegel, Romancing the past. The rise of the vernacular prose in thirteenth-century France.

Elisabeth Gaucher, La biographic chevaleresque. pp. 201-5.


dominant features of royal, aristocratic and clerical historical writing and patterns can be formed, but there is not an exclusive formula to follow and trends spill over between traditions; again, the impulse is to start with the theories and other scholars follow suit.\(^7\)

Such an approach is countered by many recent scholars eager to distance themselves from standard theories of genre and return to medieval terms instead.\(^8\) It is clear that the simple generic tag ‘romance’ fails to explain the medieval conception of romance. Genre was not a restricting concept for medieval authors; it was applied to establish a text as part of a tradition. Medieval authors structured their narratives using categories they adapted from antiquity.\(^9\) These categories evolved in accordance with audience expectation. Genres existed but their rules were not rigid and structural patterns from one genre could be and were adapted and applied to fit another. The system was not closed: there were patterns that were followed but the patterns were not restricting.\(^10\) The purpose of history was to compose a narrative dealing with historical events using the literary categories already in circulation. The subject narrated determined what category or genre would be applied. Genre was therefore a way of classifying a narrative in order to encourage and fulfill audience expectations. It is perhaps more helpful to consider medieval writing as following traditions rather that genres not only in order to dispel the many rigid anachronistic associations with ‘genre’ but also because the term ‘tradition’ best defines

\(^{87}\)Kathryn Saldanha, ‘Studies in medieval Scottish historical romance’, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambridge University, 1999, refers to both Brandt and Tolmie and argues that ‘Brandt’s emphasis on the central importance of narrative to ‘aristocratic chronicles’ has particular application to The Bruce’, p. 30.


\(^{89}\) See Morse, \textit{Truth and convention in the Middle Ages} and ibid.,‘“This vague relation”: historical fiction and historical veracity in the later Middle Ages’, pp. 85-108.

\(^{90}\) Umberto Eco, \textit{L’œuvre ouverte}, trans. C. Rous de Bézieux (Paris, 1966) argues for a division between modern ‘open’ works, which are unlimited in meaning and medieval ‘closed’ works. See Haidu, ‘Romance: idealistic genre or historical fiction’, p. 2. note 3 for this division following Goethe and the opposition between ‘symbol’ and ‘allegory’. Eco later discards this theory but the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ remain fuelled with semantic connotations that are not intended above.
what it was that determined the category in which a work would be placed: source material. The sources referred to by an author placed his work in a tradition of prior texts; several works using similar sources will share certain characteristics that form a tradition, or what is known as 'genre'.

The events related controlled the structure applied to medieval narrative and not the other way round. A catalogue of chivalric deeds is best suited to a romance framework. The focus is on the exemplary value of the episode in order to depict the requisite chivalric virtues of the hero, as illustrated in *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. As the choice of subject determined the genre appropriated and controlled the narrative structure employed, so it also governed the use of sources. The models that Barbour and Chandos Herald used were primarily romances: romance was referred to in order to enter *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* into that tradition. However, as can be gathered from the above appraisal, the tradition of romance as it had evolved by the fourteenth century is far from clear-cut. So what exactly was romance anyway?

II  **Romance: Medieval definitions**

Chivalric biographical writings resemble a variety of overlapping genres or traditions and correspond most closely with the form of *roman d’aventure* and *histoire*. Structurally and thematically, *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* accord with both. Narratives now classed as *romans de chevalerie* or ‘historical romances’ described themselves as histories. ‘Historical romance’ is a term applied to romances depicting historical figures and events and taking as their focus concerns of war rather than scenes of courtly love; explained in this light, it is a term often used to define romances of England as distinct from their French predecessors. From the onset, however, romance was concerned with historical events: the first *romans* were *romans d’antiquité*. Romance was conceived as a translation of an authoritative Latin account of past events into the vernacular; it was, therefore, from its inception, defined in relation to a prior source, an established tradition. Even markedly fabulous narratives were at pains to stress their matter

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91 Gaucher, *La biographie chevaleresque*, p. 50.
93 The term ‘historical romance’ has been attributed to Wadsworth (see S. Crane, *Insular romance*) who develops the concept throughout her thesis; she uses it both to explain and define Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances through their own conventions rather than through the dictates of French romance. ‘Historical romance’, as explained by Wadsworth, was in vogue from the reign of Henry II to the end of the fifteenth century, p. 49: ‘The historical romance is the immediate successor to the epic; but it is not the epic.’ It is explained in contrast to ‘exotic’ romance, or romance that takes as its inspiration Celtic rather than chronicle traditions: p. 48. ‘Historical romance’ is not however confined to English romance -see Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’- nor should it be thought to represent a separate genre in its own right.
as true to fact by claiming allegiance to an older source. This concern to depict romance as historically viable lingered long into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Romance was considered to be history by a late medieval audience and is referred to as such by works corresponding in varying degrees to historical fact. Historical fact is expressed in a romance narrative through reference to a selection of sources and is evident in both the matter and structure appropriated from these sources. The aim was to teach by example and the method was to apply a series of *exempla*, which was in effect a reference system created to inculcate a scheme of values requisite to the chivalric ideal. An appreciation of the application of sources, explored below, is crucial to an understanding of authorial intention; a study of source selection supports both Barbour’s and Chandos Herald’s internal generic designations of their narratives. This generic designation is established here through a study of the medieval appreciation of the term ‘romance’.

‘Romance’ was a term originally used to designate a story written in *roman*, eleventh- and twelfth-century French instead of Latin. It referred to the vernacular language itself, to narratives written in this style, and, finally, most enduring of all, to the content of these narratives. Eventually a vast range of narratives came to be classed as romance. Similar stylistic conventions controlled both ‘historical romance’ and ‘romantic’ history. Conventions outside romance also informed its presentation. Many narrative traditions are influenced by contemporaneously developing traditions and romance is no exception; in fact, romance, because it is so inclusive, clearly conveys this overlap. Romance was connected with hagiography and chronicle writing, and this is a defining characteristic in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance, successors to a vast traditional heritage, as discussed below. In Middle English, *romaunce* can indicate ‘a work in or translated from French, a work in or from Latin, a narrative poem, any sort of narrative, or an authoritative source’: ‘Clearly, one must not seize on the term *romaunce* as a point of critical departure before deciding what the author means by it.’ In an attempt to clarify medieval generic distinctions, Paul Strohm categorized Middle English narratives according to their own terms: relationship to actual events (*storie, fable*); mode of narration (*spelle, tale*); language (*romaunce*); literary tradition (*romaunce, legend, lyf*); proportion of represented action to argument (*geste, treatise*); and movement of the fortunes of the protagonist (*tragedie, comedie*). He notes that most modern scholars have abandoned this ‘broad spectrum of Middle English vocabulary’ and ‘created a vocabulary which

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94 See Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 48, citing Froissart as an example.
96 Ibid., p. 348
accommodates modern perceptions of generic similarity', thus obscuring 'a potentially rich source of understanding of the form and purpose of the works themselves'. Modern generic tags can be applied indifferently, as we have seen, and they are often determined by the titles that modern editors of medieval narratives chose for their texts. Titles applied anachronistically then determine the reception of the text for posterity.

Examinations of internal generic designations within a medieval work reveal a series of multiple classifications, applied indiscriminately, or so it would seem. Within The Bruce, the narrative is referred to as a romanys, buk and a suthfast story (1.446, 1.33 1.13), which Barbour has writyn (9.661). In fact, it is the double pleasure of suthfastnes and the carpyng that will ensure the success of his story (1.6). Other narratives are referred to by Barbour as buke (1.525), taile (9.581), story (1.17, 334), ensampaill (3.251), lettre (10.358), or more specifically to 'the bibill' (1.466), '[a]uld stories' (1.17, 3.269), the '[r]omanys off worthi Ferambrace' (3.437). He also makes reference to sang and ryme (3.178), indicating a verse poem. Barrow calls Barbour 'a most careful and exact recorder', and Barbour classes his own work as the 'compiling/ Off this buk' (13.709-10). His compilation, however, is of written sources 'that men redys' (1.17; 2.531) and not oral accounts despite his professed adherence to the contrary.

Barbour is not a first-hand witness like his contemporary, Chandos Herald, who states his intent 'de faire et recorder beaux ditz/ Et de novelle et de jadis' (41-2). His matiere (44, 1386, 1650, 3700, 3721, 3936) and purpos (45, 1651) he outlines as follows:

Car je voil metre m’estudie
A faire recorder la vie
De le plus vaillant prince du mounde (47-49)

He will record (recorder) the life of the Black Prince listing the fait d ’armes worthy of remembering for posterity (48, 93; 162, 4188). The verb recorder (3319, 3644, 3935) and similar verbs such as conter (2182, 2651, 3699, 3701, 4903), nomer (2242, 2255, 2292, 2315, 2343, 2625, 3073, 3352), deviser (2241, 2291), di (2345, 2348, 2600, 3155,

97 Idem.
98 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 46: carpyng is translated as 'recitation'. Anne McKim, 'The Bruce: a study of John Barbour's heroic ideal', p. 32 refers to carpyng as the act of narration, which more clearly conveys Barbour's intention. Cf. Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, p. 136. The Dictionary of the Older Scots Tongue (DOST) (www.dsl.ac.uk) cites Barbour's lines as the first reference and defines the words as 'talking, speaking, conversing'.
99 Barbour uses 'aulde storys' here specifically to refer to stories of ancient Rome whereas at 1.17 it is more general; his precise references are considered below.
100 Barrow, Robert Bruce and the community of the realm of Scotland, p. 312.
101 'Report' / 'tell'. Also referred to as conteray, conte, conteroi and conté.
102 'Name' or, indeed, 'not name'. Also, nosmez at 2808: 'mentioned'.
103 'Estimate' / 'enumerate'.

21
3377, 3473, 2786, 3907), mention (3784) and retrahist (4187) punctuate his narrative. Clearly, Chandos Herald conceives his function as an enumerator of names and deeds. Aside from matiere, his narrative is referred to as a dit (41, 4185) of la vie du Prince (4094, 4106). To narratives outside his own he uses the following terms: beaux ditz (2, 30); livre (32, 1524, 4098); recort (508, 888, 1400, 1930, 3852, 4004) or reporte (3415); dist (993); romant/romance (1113, 1205); acountes (1205); matiere (1784); and estoire (3048). Three letters (letre) are also mentioned and included in his narrative; the first two are recorded verbatim (2403-2435; 2908-2950) and the last is summarized (3677-3692).

Writing in 1381, close to the composition of La vie du Prince Noir, Cuvelier uses a similar array of related terms when referring to his biography of Bertrand de Guesclin: vie, livre, romant, chançon. And, in relation to other sources, the following words are applied: roman; chançon, istoire. But such an interrelated system of designation was nothing new: the thirteenth-century author of the History of William Marshal used the terms œuvre, livre, conte, estoire and vie. Uevre, livre ou buk, even story, can refer to narratives indiscriminate of genre designation. Chandos Herald’s recort, dist and acounte also appear independent of genre association but are very much the source selection of a herald intent on obtaining a first-hand account of the events he narrates. Diz is also a general expression but is explicitly associated with verse, as are sang and ryme. Chandos Herald emphasizes that he has recorded the life of the Black Prince in rymée (4094). Romanys, vie, conte, taile, chançon and istoire/estoire are more specific in their designation but how much of this designation stems from a modern concern with genre and how much corresponds to the

104 ‘Say/ mention’. Also written as die, dit and dy.
105 ‘Related’.
106 And, more generally, record is used as a verb at line 448, car plusours gentz recorder and report as a verb at line 3450.
107 ‘List’. See also ‘ensi qe homme counte I’estille’; ‘ensi com dit l’estille’; ‘ensi com dit le nombre’ (737; 868, 993).
108 Sources not specified are referred to ‘as I heard’ (734, 762, 1370, 1375, 1384, 1400, 2047, 2467, 2626, 4085) but this does not necessarily indicate an oral origin. Line 2798, ‘come j’ay oy retraire’, is preceded by matter that clearly indicates a chanson de geste origin: ‘Et la fesoient chivalers/ Et la fesoient d’armes tant/ Qe unques Oliver ne Roulant/ Ne pooyent unques plus d’armes faire’ (2794-2798).
110 Roman: lines 8348, 8436, 14060, 16753, 17036, 17185, 17204, 17461, 18795, 19587, 21011, 21025; chançon: lines 7433, 9725, 11202, 11442, 11946, 14680, 14682, 16043, 16343, 17351, 20494, 21723, 22912; estoire: lines 449, 9203, 14208, 14773, 16543, 17755, 18061, 21007, 21322, 21583, 21723, 21819, 24118). As enumerated by Gaucher, p. 54.
author's intention? *Chançon* and *conte or taile* refer to traditions touching romance but not immediately relevant here; the extent to which Barbour and Chandos Herald relied on collections of tales depicting the deeds of their heroes circulating at the time of the composition of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* will be considered in relation to their use of oral sources. The interrelation between *vie* and *estoire* has been discussed above. Here, the concern is with romance and history; in fact, the impression is given that the two terms are applied interchangeably. 112

This apparent indiscrimination between romance and history results in the dismissal of medieval generic designations as unhelpful, even deceptive. Such a supposition centres on connecting romance with fiction, and history with fact, and the concomitant association that the two terms are irreconcilable:

Neither in English nor in Anglo-Norman is there any model for *The Bruce* in what we would regard as history; the only models are in romance. 113

Barbour was not constrained by historical fact in the composition of his romance. 114

Barbour claims to write a *romanys* in which he will 'say nocht bot suthfast thing' (1.446, 36); he calls his work a true story and a romance without envisioning any discrepancy between the two terms. These two terms are considered contradictory for many reasons, which when examined elucidate the importance of source selection in determining medieval generic designations. In order to establish a medieval appreciation of romance and its association with history, *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* will now be discussed in relation to their truth claims and their use of verse rather than prose. Both are interlinked and, although discussed separately, one section builds upon the other, clarifying Barbour and Chandos Herald's designation of their work in the process. But how romance and history have come to be so diametrically opposed is curious given their collective concern with the past and their appropriation of similar styles to extract from the past what was relevant for a contemporary audience and worthy of remembrance by posterity.

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112 Many narratives such as Renaut de Beaujeu's *Bel Inconnu* refer to themselves as *roummant* and *istoire*. Peter Ainsworth, 'Legendary history: *historia* and *fabula*', p. 395. Ainsworth investigates medieval classifications to distinguish between historiography and romance and, based on the interchangeable use of history and romance, concludes that 'c]ontemporary generic designations are of no help to us in this regard', p. 395.

113 Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 6.

114 Sonja Cameron, 'Chivalry in Barbour's *Bruce*', p. 13 and see also ibid., 'A study of the career of Sir James Douglas: the historical record versus Barbour's *Bruce*', for a full discussion of the reception of *The Bruce* from the fifteenth century on concluding that 'Barbour's *Bruce* is a historical document either where other documents support the poet's statements or where there is no other evidence to disprove what he says. Barbour's *Bruce* is historical by default' (p. 18).
II.1 **Truth claims**

II.1.i *The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir*

That Barbour and Chandos Herald referred to their stories as history is implied never stated and the implication rests on the association of history with truth. History, a concern with the events of the past, was associated with facts: "Historiae sunt res verae quae factae sunt." Medieval historians, using classical rhetoric, divided narratives into *historia*, *argumentum* and *fabula*; following Isidore, *historia* was typically defined in opposition to *fabula*: "historia, que veritate nititur, et fabula, que ficta contexit." It was therefore truth content that distinguished history from fable. This concern with depicting the truth revealed an edificatory intention: "Historia est narratio rei gestae ad instructionem posteritatis." Truth was therefore associated with conformity to fact and with a didactic intention; does this correspond with the conception of truth in *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*?

From the beginning, Barbour announces his intention "To put in wryt a suthfast story/ That it lest ay furth in memoi" (1.13-14). Throughout his narrative, this claim to *suthfastnes* is repeated like a refrain: "we say the suthfastnes" (1.457); "I wate weill without lesing" (7.77); "bot to sa swyth" (10.666); "forsuth" (12.147, 15.407); "I tak on hand" (13.414); "This was the caus forsuth to say" (13.440); "suth to say" (19.41). For Barbour, *suthfastnes* 'schawys the thing rycht as it wes' (1.8). He will therefore record his matter to the best of his knowledge,

Bot thai that I wate utterly

Eftre my wyt rehers will I (10.355-356)

and avoid all dishonesty,

Bot I trwo falset evermar

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116 Ibid., I, 44.5. Typically, only *historia* and *fabula* are discussed by medieval historians: Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Introduction" in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1-13; Ainsworth, 'Legendary history: *historia* and *fabula*', p. 389. See also Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the fabric of history. Truth, myth, and fiction in the Chroniques* (Oxford, 1990), p. 24.


119 See Peter Ainsworth, 'Legendary history: *historia* and *fabula*'; Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles. The writing of history in medieval England* (London and New York, 2004); Ruth Morse, 'Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy'; Ibid., ""This vague relation": historical fiction and historical veracity in the later Middle Ages'; Ibid., *Truth and convention in the Middle Ages.*
Sall have unfair and evill ending (15. 122-123).

The Herald lists a similar array of truth claims to those produced by Barbour: he wishes to make *juste recort* (34) or *just report* (3411) and *averitée recorder* (3644); his account is given *pur verité* (442, 3771) or *sanz faille* (512, 3479); he does not lie:

je ne mente mie (375)
je ne vous mente pas (1126)
Ore ne vous menterai je pas (2382)
ne vous menteray ja (3618)
sanz mentir (3644)
de rien ne vous ay mentit (3788)

For the same reasons that the historicity of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* has been questioned by modern scholars, their truth claims have been dismissed as mere topoi:

Claims of this kind were *conditio sine qua non* for medieval authors if they wanted their works to be read, and were with equal sincerity made by Hary, the highly imaginative author of the *Wallace*.\(^{120}\)

It would appear therefore that the doubt about such professions of truth stems from the uniformity of such truth claims across a broad range of narratives ranging in scale from *historia* to *fabula*. This was not something of which Barbour and Chandos were unaware.

Both *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* begin their accounts acknowledging the existence of fables and distancing their narratives from such purely entertaining tales:

Stories to rede ar delatibill  
Suppos that thai be nocht hot fabill,  
Than suld storys that suthfast wer  
And thai war said on gud maner  
Have doubill plesance in heryng.  
The first plesance is the carping,  
And the tother the suthfastnes (1.1-9).

Chandos Herald is at pains to distinguish himself from the minstrel characters he considers more esteemed at court:

D'un jangelour ou d'un faux menteur,  
D'un jogelour ou d'un bourdeur  
Qui voudroit faire une grimache  
Ou contreferoit le lymache  
Dount home purroit faire un risée

Their truth claims are supported by assertions of adherence to reputable sources. Conformity to fact was ensured through conformity to source. By procuring authoritative written and oral testimony contemporary to the period being narrated, a medieval author was a compiler and defined himself as such. Einhard followed Isidore of Seville in excusing himself for being a compiler for those years that were outside his own memory of Charlemagne. As mentioned above, Barbour also refers to himself as a compiler: after the battle of Bannockburn, he interrupts the text (not for the first time) to record the year in which he is 'compiling’ his narrative.

And in the tyme of the compiling
Off this buk this Robert wes king (13.709-10).

His status as a compiler is clear through his use of different and sometimes conflicting source material. When relating Robert Bruce’s murder of John Comyn ‘[i]n the Freris at the hye awter’ (2. 32), Barbour notes that ‘sum men sayis’ the ‘debat fel other-wayis’ (39-40) than the account he provided. But whatever the truth of the matter, Comyn died there because of that quarrel:

Bot quhat-sa-evyr maid the debate
Thar-throuch he deyt weill I wat (41-2).

Barbour later gives two versions of the king's escape from John of Lorn and the 'slouth hund': in the first, the dog loses the scent of King Robert (7.1-52); and in the alternative version, the king’s archer kills the dog with an arrow (53-75),

Bot quhether this eschaping fell
As I tauld you fyrst or I now tell,
I wate weill without lesing
That at that burn eschapyt the king (75-8).

Dubious information he registers as such, concentrating instead on the point of his story. Barbour concludes musings on how the king escaped possible treachery, which, he ‘herd say’, was ‘[t]hrou wemen that he with wald play’ (5.543-4), with the point of his reflections:

Bot how that ever it fell perde
I trow he sall the warrer be (5.547-8).

\[121\] Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages*, p. 67.

\[122\] Duncan translates 'I wate weill without lesing' as 'I'm quite sure, and not romancing': Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 260. But Barbour does not use the word 'romance' here, in any form, and he never uses it to indicate dubious information; see below.
Again, when relating the murder of Thomas of Lancaster and how he was subsequently ‘maid marter’ and ‘was saynct and myrakillis did’ (17.874-5), Barbour comments,

Bot quhether he halie wes or nane
At Pomfret thus was he slane. (17.877-78).

When in doubt, Barbour addresses his audience:

Bot I can nocht tell quhat thai hycht (2.246)
and other ma/ That I thar namys can nocht say (2.494-5)
His name can I nocht tell perfey (5.505).

That which he does know for certain he supports through a source.

A compiler gathered together various sources. John of Fordun equates this with a written procedure: ‘Ex variis quippe veterum scriptis chronographorum colligitur’.123 It is a system connected with collecting written sources, a notion that Barbour does much to dispel. The activity of a compiler was differentiated from that of an assertor, someone who supported his own report.124 The work of the assertor was largely the domain of oral sources and the most authoritative support here was the eyewitness testimony, as earlier argued by Isidore of Seville.125 Conformity to fact required a faithful rendition of both oral and written sources. Oral reports were initially deemed superior to the written word and medieval historians argued among themselves about their respective merits.126 The evolution from oral to written sources of verification corresponded with the growth of literacy. The change from memory to written record was ‘a cultural shift, taking place in the imaginations and assumptions of numerous individuals’.127 This belief in oral supremacy lasted long into the twelfth century.128 Writing was initially considered

128 Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, pp. 65-66 cites Béroul’s *Tristan* (c.1190), which argues for the supremacy of memory:

Li conteor dien qu’Yvain
Firent nier, qui sont villain
Ne savent mie bien l’estoire!
Berox I’a mex en sen memoire (lines 1239-1243).
untrustworthy, which in turn created the need for truth claims.\textsuperscript{129} The ‘cultural shift’ displaced the role of memory from recitation and re-enactment to the written record.\textsuperscript{130} The eyewitness testimony bridged the divide between the oral tale and the written text by transferring the established authority from the former to the latter. Oral statements were now supported by the written text. Froissart stressed the value of the witness report but ensured its preservation through writing:

Each night when we arrived at our inn, I would write down all that he told me, either then or in the morning, so that I might have it fixed in my mind for future use, for there is no memory so exact as the written word.\textsuperscript{131}

The eyewitness testimony was central to contemporary reporting and this was very much the domain of chivalric literature, reflecting, as it professed to do, its own cultural milieu. Memory was preserved for posterity by writing things down but this implied an inevitable selection of what was considered worthy to be remembered: ‘quia quidquid dignum memoria est litteris mandatur’.\textsuperscript{132} This facilitated the development of value systems governing source selection, which, in turn, were determined by the prevailing cultural ethos.

The Bruce is very much the product of a learned literary tradition, as we shall see, but this does not exclude the appropriation of eyewitness statements. Eyewitness reports re-enacted past events for a present audience. Witness reports were truth claims and the validity of the source was vouched through character. A reputable character was essential to ensure the authenticity of the report, hence Barbour’s concern to vouch for the credibility of his source, Sir Alan Cathcart, a knight who had been in Sir Edward Bruce’s service:

\begin{quote}
‘The storytellers claim that Yvain has drowned; but they are scurrilous. They hardly know the story, which Béroul has much better in his memory.’
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{129} Clanchy, \textit{From memory to written record}, p. 193: ‘Writing was untrustworthy in itself, and furthermore, it implied distrust, if not chicanery, on the part of the writer.’ See also Given-Wilson, \textit{Chronicles}, p. 58 (referring to Clanchy’s chapter title ‘Trusting Writing’): ‘It is nevertheless against this lingering backdrop of not quite ‘trusting writing’ that chroniclers […] seem to have evinced such an eagerness to persuade their readers of the benefits of writing as the most secure way of preserving memory’ and pp. 58-9: Ranulf Higden’s preface to his \textit{Polychronicon} is cited in support.

\textsuperscript{130} Alfonso el Sabio, \textit{Primera Crónica General o sea Estoria de España que mandó componer Alfonso el Sabio y se continuaba bajo Sancho IV en 1289}, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid, 1955), 355b:48-49, 356a:1-5, 356b:22-25 (chapt. 623): ‘There are those who say in their epic songs that Charles conquered many cities in Spain and many castles, and that he fought many battles with the Arabs and opened up the road from Germany to Santiago. But in truth this could not be…[offers alternative account]. Therefore one ought to believe what appears in writing as logical and reasonable and not the tales of those who tell about what they do not know.’ Translated in Suzanne Fleischman, ‘On the representation of history and literature in the Middle Ages’, p. 300.


Biographical Form: Romance

Worthi and wycht stalwart and stout
Curtais and fayr and off gud fame
Schyr Alane off Catkert be name
Tauld me this taile as I sall tell (9.578-81).

The greatest guarantee of good character is to personally vouch for his integrity, and this is exactly what Barbour has done. Barbour’s claims to oral reports are relevant to this discussion insofar as they maintain a fidelity to source. But Barbour also claims to use them in places where in fact he had a buk open in front of him, and this will be addressed below. For now it is sufficient to ascertain that he established such oral claims according to an historiographical tradition and following the dictates of Middle English romance, thus adhering to the conventions of both historia and romance.

Through a system of oral signifiers, Barbour establishes himself within an oral tradition, or so it would seem. He claims he is writing ‘[a]s thai that saw hym said to me’ (1.388); he will record what he ‘hard/ herd tell’ (5.411; 9.659; 19.23), ‘herd say’ (5.543), ‘hard syndry men say’ (18.522). What ‘[m]en sayis’ (17.465) Barbour will in turn relate to his audience: ‘as I you say’ (11.611); or, if so well known as to be ‘syng’ by ‘young wemen [...] ilk day’, he ‘will nocht rehers the maner’ (16.530, 529-30, 527). Duncan has calculated some twenty uses of ‘I herd say’, which he attributes to the introduction of an alternative version, support for a number quoted or for dubious circumstances, a name or tale omitted, and tail rhymes. Such set phrases were a popular trope in romance. Barbour is using oral signifiers such as tail rhymes, which far from expressing an oral origin are more a clue to authorial intention. His use of the formulaic ‘I herd tell’, together with audience invocations such as ‘Lordingis, quha likes for till her’ (1.445), which were associated with minstrel authorship, were in keeping with the formalised Middle English romance tradition. Oral indications such as these were ‘traditionality’ topoi fulfilling audience expectations. These claims to an oral source were used by Barbour to place his work within a tradition of romance but they were also claimed as support for the truth of his story. Using such distinctive topoi with two aims in mind, one literary and one historical, as they are understood today, has caused some confusion. A distinction must be made here between a spurious claim to ‘popular lays’ collected from ‘the tales of old sweats from

133 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 15 suggests that Barbour’s ‘one-eyed’ claim at 5.506-7 (‘Bot Ik haiff herd syndry men say/ Forsuth that his ane e wes out’) is true, as is 20.618, where Barbour claims to have ‘hard auld men say’ the land fared well under Moray’s regency.
135 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 15: 2.39, 7.54.
137 Ibid., name: 19.23; tale: 9.660.
139 Carol Fewster, Traditionality and genre in Middle English romance, pp. 9, 23-29.
whom Barbour bought drinks in the inns of Ayr and Edinburgh\(^{139}\) and the compilation of eyewitness reports, which a medieval historian had a duty to record. The fact that both claims were catered for by oral signifiers does not mean that both are fictional; but it does account for how Barbour’s oral claims, once trusted by scholars but now dismissed as fabrications, have compromised the historicity of *The Bruce*.

Chandos Herald’s eyewitness claims are more credible and more immediate; not only did he hear tell (‘j’ay oy counter’, 394, 734; ‘a ce qe j’entendi’, 1163, 1375) but he also saw (‘je vys avenir’, 1652). Facts for heralds were easy to come by, placed as they were in a profitable position to witness and record events. Chandos Herald is a recorder of events; report and recount, as we have seen, are verbs consistently applied throughout his narrative. He is concerned with relating *le novellas* (3562) about the deeds of the life of the Black Prince by compiling a collection of contemporary reports including his own. And it is through these contemporary reports, chief among which are eyewitness testimonies, that he supports his historical worth. His narrative is divided into two parts: the French campaigns (Crécy, 1346; recovery of Calais, 1349; Poitiers, 1355-6) and the Spanish campaign (1367). For the French campaigns Chandos Herald supports his matter through eyewitness accounts that he heard tell and the written *recort*; such sources are more frequently cited before line 1649 when he switches thereafter to his own testimony for the Spanish campaign. In support of his assertion that the battle of Crécy was fought on St Bartholomew’s Eve, Chandos quotes from a written account (‘come dist lui escris’, 380). The date quoted is wrong as are other dates and numbers. Conformity to fact required fidelity to source; an inaccurate yet ‘authoritative’ source was the means by which ‘untruths’ continued to be perpetuated. The conscientious historian included different versions, as did Barbour, but Chandos Herald’s aim was to narrate his own record within the framework of a life of the Black Prince, as he explained in his introduction to the Spanish campaign:

\[
\text{Ore est bien temps de commencer} \\
\text{Ma matiere, et moi adresser} \\
\text{Au purpose ou je voile venire (1649-1651; my italics).}
\]

For the Spanish campaign he is the eyewitness account not just for his own narrative but for others too. Chandos Herald can now vouch for the integrity of his report: ‘je vous affie’ (4056). His value is as an *assertor* and his office as herald is his stamp of credibility: ‘Qe retrahist li heraud Chaundos’ (4187). It is his account of the Spanish campaign that

\(^{139}\) Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 15. Duncan is here denouncing the claim to oral compilation.
Froissart acknowledged his debt to the reports of heralds and kings of arms in composing his own work and, as quoted above, he stressed the value of eyewitness testimonies in general. Although he was working on the first redaction of this Chroniques before La vie du Prince Noir was composed, Froissart may have used the Herald’s records of the Spanish campaign or recorded his testimony at night when he arrived back at his inn in a manner similar to that which he recounted above. Written sources are also referenced, but they are supplementary: ‘si lui estoire ne ment’ (3048). When Chandos Herald consults written records for the Spanish campaign, they deal more with Spanish events. He includes three letters, as mentioned above, and records the full contents of two; documentation had the stamp of authority. It is interesting, however, and revealing, that although stressing the importance of the eyewitness account, Isidore, as mentioned before, Froissart, in the extract above, and Chandos Herald, in recording his account, emphasize that it is the realm of the written and not the oral that will ensure the preservation of these memories for posterity. It was the written word and not the oral tale that would endure, and both Barbour and Chandos Herald evoke an oral milieu but resolutely place their narratives within a written tradition.

Oral source signifiers were not alone in fulfilling narrative functions. Written source indicators also have a role in romance. Writing in the fifteenth century after a long tradition of romance, Sir Thomas Malory uses the written source signifiers ‘as the book saith’ and ‘as the French book saith’ to cater for a number of narrative requirements: establishing or claiming a reputable literary precedent; introducing a change in subject matter; disguising the omission of source material. But the intention here is specifically the connection between source and truth. Written sources were referred to by Barbour and Chandos Herald in support of their truth claims and the sources applied were chosen to conform to a specific didactic initiative. History, as previously discussed, was long defended for its didactic function. A moral value system establishing correct and incorrect conduct was central to the chivalric creed that informed chivalric writings. A narrative expressing an edifying impulse promoted chivalric values to a contemporary audience. By endorsing lessons to be heeded by posterity, it also established its worth by adhering to a conventional understanding of the exemplary function of truth. A didactic concern

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142 For example, line 1784: ‘si come la matiere dist’ when describing Pedro’s flight from Seville.

informed by a chivalric ethos determined what would be included for posterity. As Froissart explains in the prologue to his *Chroniques*, his purpose is didactic:

In order that the honourable enterprises, noble adventures and deeds of arms which took place during the wars waged by France and England should be fittingly related and preserved for posterity, so that brave men should be inspired thereby to follow such examples, I wish to place on record these matters of great renown.\textsuperscript{144}

His record was heeded by posterity: Caxton in turn urged a later audience to ‘[r]ede Froissart’.\textsuperscript{145}

Both Barbour and Chandos Herald provide an account of exemplary conduct for posterity. For Barbour, ‘I wald fayne set my will/...To put in wryt a suthfast story/ That is lest ay furth in memory’ (1.11-14):

For auld storys that men redys
Representis to thaim the dedys
Of stalwart folk that lyvyt ar
Rycht as thai than in presence war (1.17-20).

It is not right that such deeds and their lessons be foryet (1.16). Such a didactic impulse also governs his source selection. Barbour refers to narratives outside his own as stories that will teach by their ensampaill:

as man has red in mony story/ That few folk has oft vencusyt ma
Men redys off mony men that war/ Fer harder stad then we yhet ar
Ye may weill be ensampaill se/ That na man suld disparyt be
(1.334-5; 3.203-4; 3.251-2 -my italics)

Chandos Herald reflects on how esteemed authors ‘qui faisoient beaux ditz’ in times gone used their knowledge of the good (‘De moustrer lez bons conissance’):

Pur prendre en lour coers remembrance
De bien et de honour recevoir. (5-7)

His intention is to follow their lead in order to ‘recorder la vie/ De le plus vaillant prince du mounde’(48-9). For the Herald, the prince’s life was ‘la parfite racine/ De tout honour et de nobleté/ De sens, de valoir et de largeté’ (60-63). Barbour and Chandos Herald present their heroes as chivalric ideals to be emulated by posterity, and they apply *exempla* that will further this initiative. They extract from their sources their didactic worth and reference them in their narrative to cater for a specific agenda, the unravelling of which is the central

\textsuperscript{144} Froissart, *Chronicles*, p. 37.
aim of the next chapters. For now it is important to establish their concept of truth which, following medieval conventions, is equated with conformity to fact and, as is clear from above, an edificatory agenda. Conformity to fact was source dependent but a didactic intention was conventional. Adherence to a truth that promoted values for posterity without relying on sources for verification allowed for clearly fabulous works to present themselves as true.146 Similar stylistic conventions in works with varying degrees of conformity to fact further blurred the boundaries between historia and fabula.147 How such conventions framed vernacular narratives and how both historia and fabula relate to romance is the basis of this enquiry.

II.1.ii Twelfth-century Old French verse

The octosyllabic couplet is the defining style for twelfth-century vernacular chronicles and romances and it is the style later appropriated by Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances; it is the style in which both The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir are composed. Works from a variety of traditions typically classed as history or romance, and all appearing under the umbrella term ‘chivalric literature’, appropriated a similar style. Peter Ainsworth’s 2003 investigation of the distinction between historiography and romance follows Paul Zumthor’s 1975 discussion of roman-‘vernacular narrative texts in octosyllabic couplets with a predominantly legendary or imaginative emphasis’- and histoire-‘vernacular narrative texts in octosyllabic couplets with a predominantly historiographical emphasis’ as ‘twins born of a certain crisis of self-awareness that affected the ruling class of western society in a relatively specific place and time’.148 Their studies are concerned with the new vernacular discourse of the twelfth century. What follows is a synopsis of these new vernacular narrative traditions: an examination of the evolution of romance is necessary in order to appreciate its affinity with historia.

Chansons de geste, romans d’antiquité, romans Breton or Arthurian romance and twelfth-century vernacular chronicles were all composed in verse, in Old French and are all concerned to present their matter as true. Chansons de geste, romans d’antiquité and Arthurian romance form the three materes divided by Jean Bodel’s twelfth-century Chanson des Saisnes. According to Bodel, the chanson de geste, the matter of France, was described as true; the roman d’antiquité, the matter of Rome, was considered instructive; and Arthurian romance, the matter of Britain, was valued as a source of entertainment:

N’en sont que trios materes a nul home entendant:

146 Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 53.
147 Ibid., pp. 49-64 and Truth and convention in the Middle Ages.
De France et de Bretaigne et de Rome la grant;
Ne de ces trios materes n’i a nul semblant.
Li conte de Bretaigne s’il son vain et plaisant,
Cil de France sont voir chasoun jour aparant,
Cil de Rome sont sage et de sen aprenant. 149

Chansons de geste consist of three main cycles concerned to convey the deeds of historical figures: the cycle of France or the cycle of Charlemagne; the cycle of William of Orange; and the cycle of the rebellious barons. 150 Events were described in an anachronistic past. 151 Conformity to fact ranges between chansons and also within a chanson. Many are centred on an historical event 152 and authenticity is claimed for the narrative by the chanteur de geste who ‘sees himself as dealing with the truth, eagerly contrasting his art with the fanciful approach of the Breton storytellers.’ 153 Although claimed as history, the historical geste recounted is fused with fictional elements. 154 But the important point is that they claimed their narrative as true. Their truth claim rested on stressing the conformity of their chanson to the historical geste, which typically referred to the deed itself but corresponds semantically to a prior oral or even a written account. 155 By associating the geste with an alleged written source, the chanteur was vouching for the historicity of his song and this despite the prevailing oral ethos in which the chansons were composed. 156 In addition, the jongleur reciting the chanson is at pains to claim his song as historically true by denouncing

150 The cycles are considered to have developed before the second half of the twelfth century and are noted as such by the twelfth-century poet Bertrand de Bar-sur-Arbe. ‘Not mentioned by Bertrand is the cycle that purports to give an account of the First Crusade - its content is, with the notable exception of Chanson d’Antioche, almost entirely fictitious’: Joseph Duggan, ‘The epic’ in A new history of French literature, pp. 18-22, p. 19. See also Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 391.
151 Chansons sung mainly of past times but action was presented in terms of contemporary twelfth-century society: Southern, The making of the Middle Ages, p. 242. Duggan, ‘The epic’, p. 20 notes that while the chansons are mostly concerned with the Carolingian period, names and events are found from as early as the Merovingian monarchy and as late as the taking of Antioch in 1098. Later still is the Occitan chanson, which includes reference to the civil war in Navarre of 1276-77. See Duggan, The epic’, p. 20 for examples.
those of his rivals.\footnote{Joseph J. Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’ in Historiographie, vol. ii, Grundriss der romanischen literaturren des mittelalters, pp. 290-311, at pp. 304-5.} It should be remembered that whatever doubts existed about the historicity of the \emph{chansons de geste}, their matter, the matter of France, was described by Bodel as true.

\textit{Romans d’antiquité} first appeared in the middle of the twelfth century and were presented by their authors as ‘translations’ of Latin texts into the vernacular in order to reach and teach an audience ignorant of Latin. \textit{Roman de Thèbes} (c.1150-1155) was a translation of the \textit{Theibad} by Statius, \textit{Roman d’Enéas} (c.1160) a translation of Virgil’s \textit{Aeneid}, and Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s \textit{Roman de Troie} (c.1160-1170) used Dares Phrygius’s \textit{Historia de excidio Trojae} and Dictys Cretensis’s \textit{Ephemeris belli Trojani} to transfer into \textit{roman} what he believed were eyewitness accounts of the Trojan war.\footnote{Jean-Charles Huchet, ‘Romances of antiquity’ in A new history of French literature, pp. 36-41, p. 38. Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: \textit{historia} and \textit{fabula’}, pp. 399, 401. Another example is Albério de Pisançon’s \textit{Roman d’Alexandre} c.1130.} In his prologue, Benoît announces his didactic intention to translate from Latin to \textit{roman} for ‘cil qui n’entendent la letre’.\footnote{Benoît de Sainte-Maure, \textit{Le roman de Troie de Benoît de Sainte-Maure}, ed. Louis Constans, 6 vols (Paris, 1904-1912), vol. i, Prologue, lines 33-39, line 37; Spiegel, \textit{Romancing the past}, p. 61; Jean-Charles Huchet, ‘Romances of antiquity’, p. 38. See also Benoît de Sainte-Maure, \textit{Le roman de Troie}, ed. E. Baumgartner and F. Vielliard in Lettres Gothiques, ed. Michel Zink (Paris, 1998).} Conformity to fact in \textit{romans d’antiquité} is therefore source dependent; the truth claim rests on faithfully rendering into the vernacular authoritative Latin sources. Such Latin models were considered authoritative due to their composition contemporary to the events they were recording and presumed inclusion of - if not consisting entirely of - eyewitness testimony.\footnote{Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s use of what he believes are eyewitness reports is in explicit preference to other sources such as Homer, who, although a ‘clerc mervellos/ E sages e escièntos’ was not an eyewitness to the events he relates: ‘ne fu puis de cent anz nez/ que li granz oz fu assemblez’ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure, \textit{Le roman de Troie}, 45, 53): Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ‘Old French narrative genres: towards the definition of the \textit{romans antique’}, p. 151.} As the Latin models had become established as authoritative texts and were considered to conform to fact so the new ‘translations’ transferred this authority to the vernacular.\footnote{Jean-Charles Huchet, ‘Romances of antiquity’, p. 39.}

Conformity to fact, as stated above, was conformity to source; this was the celebration of a written culture far from the oral tradition in which the majority of \textit{chansons} were composed. And however loosely translated from the Latin original, the \textit{romans d’antiquité}’s use of authoritative sources was sufficient to place this matter into the canon of writings regarded as true.\footnote{Ibid., p. 38 calls the romances of antiquity rewritings rather than translations due to their many additions, abridgements and displacements. Classical antiquity was conveyed through twelfth-century guise.} In addition, the impulse behind the composition of \textit{romans d’antiquité} was avowedly didactic and didacticism was explicitly connected with conveying
the truth: the lessons to be learnt from the examples espoused were useful because they were true. The justification for the undertaking of such translations, as was the justification for writing history in general, was to teach useful lessons and the authority of such lessons came from reputable sources that conformed to fact. Thus changes and additions from the pagan Latin original to the Christian, chivalric twelfth-century roman are more easily explained through governing didactic concerns as, understood in this light, the nature of ‘translation’ itself was inherently perfectible.\textsuperscript{163} Such a didactic initiative was reconciled with the promotion of a contemporary chivalric value system. In adhering to a didactic agenda, the ideological impulse behind the examples applied followed the conventional pattern for assertions of truth in medieval historiography.

Set conventions pronounced a narrative part of a conceptual culture. Adherence to a conceptual truth was conceived through conventions with which an audience was immediately familiar. Thus clearly fabulous and markedly factual narratives alike announced their claims to truth. But how did this come about? Contemporary to these didactic ‘translations’ into roman of classical texts were a series of twelfth-century vernacular verse chronicles conforming to - and claiming to be - estoire.\textsuperscript{164} Considered here is Robert Wace’s Roman de Brut (c.1155), and, to a lesser extent, his Roman de Rou (c.1160).\textsuperscript{165} These narratives followed the pattern of ‘translating’ past Latin texts into the vernacular as practised by the romans d’antiquité considered above, and, indeed, are often classed as romans d’antiquité due largely to the fact that authors from one tradition composed works in the other.\textsuperscript{166} However, they differed from these contemporary compositions in their choice of matter. With the Roman de Brut, Wace introduced the third of the trios matieres sung by Jean Bodel, the matter of Britain, into the vernacular and into France. His Roman de Brut traced the foundation by Brutus, alleged great-grandson of Aeneas, of the kingdom of Britain and subsequent succession to the throne by King Arthur whose knights of the Round Table make their first literary appearance in his narrative.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{163} See Spiegel, Romancing the past, p. 103 on ‘perfectionist’ impulses of translators.

\textsuperscript{164} Gaimar’s Estoire de Angleis, Wace’s Roman de Brut and Roman de Rou, and Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s Chronique des ducs de Normandie all refer to themselves as estoire: Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 395.


\textsuperscript{166} Huchet, ‘Romances of antiquity’; Spiegel, Romancing the past; Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ‘Old French narrative genres: towards the definition of the romans antique’. Benoît de Sainte-Maure, author of the Roman de Troie considered above, composed his Chronique des ducs de Normandie, a task specifically entrusted to him by Wace who started to recount the history if the Norman dukes in his Roman de Rou; Wace, Roman de Rou, ed. A.J. Holden, vol. 2, II 11419-39.

The story of Brutus and Arthur had already been recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia regum Britanniae* (c.1136-1138) on which Wace based a great part of his narrative. Geoffrey claimed to have an authoritative source before him as he composed his *Historia regum Britanniae*; his work was, he alleged, a translation of a work given to him by the archdeacon of Oxford. Through Brutus’s descent from Aeneas he also linked his matter to that of Rome, transferring the previously established authority of the latter to his own work. Wace claims his narrative as true, vouching for the authenticity of his tale through the ‘translation’ into Old French of Latin sources assumed authoritative such as Monmouth and the Latin texts of two other British clerks: Gildas’s *De excidio Britannie* and Nennius’s *Historia Brittonum*. But, while respecting Geoffrey as an authoritative source for the reign of the allegedly historical King Arthur, Wace nevertheless omits more markedly marvellous episodes in the *Historia regum Britanniae*. In his *Roman de Rou*, he derides an oral dependence relying instead on the authority of the written word.

His immediate concern in his *Roman de Brut* is to relate the ‘history’ of King Arthur to contemporary chivalric society and therefore, in following the pattern glimpsed in the *romans d’antiquité* considered above, an abstract concept becomes increasingly more concrete as it is supported by an expanding cultural framework. Michel Zink sees in Wace’s development of the narrative history of the reign of King Arthur the emergence of what is termed a ‘non-referential truth’:

Leaving Antiquity and the world of the Mediterranean for Brittany and the time of King Arthur, the romance forsakes historical, referential truth and must therefore search for

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168 The *Historia regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, ed. N. Wright (Cambridge, 1985), I.
169 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 115.
171 *A jugleours o en m’efface chanteur*
*Que Guillaume fist jadiz Osmont essorber,*
*Et au conte Riouf lez dues oizz crever,*
*Et Anquetil le prouz fist par enging tuer,*
*Et Baute d’Espaingne o un un escu garder;*
*Ne sai noient de ceu, n’en puiz noient trover,*
*Quant je n’en ai garant n’en voil noient conter,*
*De la mort Anquetil ai ge o parler,*
*Ochiz fu, ce soit on, n’en quier homme escouter,*
*Mez je ne sai comment, ne qui face a blasmer;*
*N’en voil por verite la menchonge affirmer*
*Ne le voir, se jel sai, ne voil ge pas celer.*

another kind of truth. A truth which is that of meaning; a meaning which, essentially, is fed by mediations on love and chivalry.\textsuperscript{172}

Although, and, in fact, through, stressing conformity to fact through the appropriation of what were considered authoritative sources, Wace’s \textit{Roman de Brut} legitimizes a spurious and sparsely-sourced matter that would beget an insular referential framework crucial to the development of a canon of chivalric writings and, in the process, blurring the boundaries between \textit{historia} and \textit{fabula}. Wace himself gives voice to this process as he refers to his narrative as ‘net tut mençunge, ne tut veir’.\textsuperscript{173} Similarly, Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s \textit{Chronique des ducs de Normandie} follows the established pattern for works of \textit{estorie} such as his own that are concerned to convey the truth: he cites authoritative sources such as Isidore, Pliny and Augustine, asserts his didactic intention to \textit{maint bien esample}, avoid \textit{fausete} and \textit{mençonge}, and presents again a fusion of fact and fiction.\textsuperscript{174} Both Wace and Benoît vouch for the truth of their narratives by ostensibly conforming to facts found in reputable sources and presenting an edificatory intention; and, with this declared, the narrative proceeds to adhere to its own ‘non-referential truth’ and advocate a chivalric creed.

While non-referential in the sense of conforming to facts found in reputable sources outlined above by Zink, this truth is nevertheless sustained and vindicated through a system of reference to an increasing array of contemporary compositions concerned to depict chivalric culture. But this becomes more clear with the mid twelfth-century development of the matter of Britain in the vernacular verse romance synonymous with the name Chrétien de Troyes. Although not exclusively responsible for the massive Arthurian inheritance bequeathed to posterity, Chrétien is the primary focus here, specifically his furtherance of an embryonic chivalric culture, the themes and structure of which form the backdrop to the composition of \textit{The Bruce} and \textit{La vie du Prince Noir}. Chrétien’s legacy, which influenced generations of chivalric literature, was nonetheless legitimized through the appropriation of an ostensibly reputable prior text.

Chrétien’s \textit{Erec et Enide}, known as the first Arthurian romance, appeared in c.1165. Written in Old French rather than Latin, the poem was classed as a ‘romance’.\textsuperscript{175}


\textsuperscript{173} Wace, \textit{Roman de Brut}, ed. Arnold, line 9793.

\textsuperscript{174} Translatee ai l’estoire e dite
D’eissi cum l’ai trovee escrite,
N’ai mis fauseté ne mençonge.


Erec et Enide was followed by a succession of similar narratives forming a tradition or genre to which the term roman would lend its name, and creating in the process an Arthurian universe true to itself. This ‘internal coherence of his story’ was referred to by Chrétien as conjointure. The development of such an insular world was facilitated by the limited store of Arthurian sources available for consultation. And those sources available for consultation were treated differently than previous romans:

Not only does Chrétien, unlike Geofffrey of Monmouth and Wace, not set out to provide a narrative of the reign of King Arthur; he assumes such familiarity on the part of his public with the Arthurian universe that explanations and information alike are rendered superfluous.

Everything changes with Chrétien de Troyes, even if the revolution does not come about through the invention of a new form. ... The beginning of the narration in Erec et Enide brutally wrenches Arthurian space and time away from the chronological and historical time in which Geofffrey of Monmouth and later Wace had inscribed their narratives, doing away with any temporal or even spatial point of anchorage.

However, although not providing a ‘translation’ of prior texts that treat of the matter of Britain, and, therefore, ‘[n]o longer laying claim to a truth that is fundamentally or primarily referential’, Chrétien nevertheless establishes his conjointure with a sense of recourse to source. Crucial to the legitimization of such an internal culture was adherence to prior traditions. It has been argued that, rather than ‘translations’ of classical and Arthurian matter, ‘Chrétien’s first romances can be seen as the narrativization and transmutation into plot of the sensibility and fin’amor of the trouvères and their songs.

Association with previous traditions conferred respectability and Chrétien composed lyric poems himself but the songs of the trouvères were not sufficient sources to support an

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176 Cligés (c.1176), Chevalier de la Charrette (c.1177-81), Yvain (c.1177-81), and Perceval or Le conte du Graal (c.1181-85). See Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 397.
177 Jean Frappier, ‘Chrétien de Troyes’ in Arthurian literature in the Middle Ages, pp. 157-191, p. 161: ‘He may have been the first to use the word roman to designate a distinct genre; in any case he observed its laws.’
internal conceptual universe. Lyric poems were associated with oral culture, which, in its turn, was long the domain of the fableur, minstrel and jongleur. These were names increasingly associated with untruths; names no self-respecting author intent on establishing his own authority would wish to be called; and names explicitly derided in Chrétien’s Perceval or Le conte du Graal.\(^\text{183}\) Carrying far more weight, as expressed by Wace above, and explored in more detail shortly, were written works; and, in his introduction to Cligés, Chrétien claims to be following an estoire found in an ancient book at the library of Monseigneur Saint Pierre de Beauvais.\(^\text{184}\) By translating the exemplary content of this ancient estoire into roman he will preserve the legacy of the Greeks and Romans, memories of whom are fading fast.\(^\text{185}\) By connecting his narrative with an authoritative text and legitimizing his composition through ‘translation’, Chrétien is fully aware that this will ensure the preservation of his own work for posterity.\(^\text{186}\) He also connects this new matter of Britain with the matter of Rome creating ‘a faultlessly antique and highly evocative pedigree’\(^\text{187}\) crucial to the establishment of a credible chivalric value system, for chevalerie and clergie:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ce nos ont nostre livre apris,} \\
\text{Que Grece ot de chevalerie} \\
\text{Le premier los et de clergie.} \\
\text{Puis vint chevalerie a Rome} \\
\text{Et de la clergie la some,}
\end{align*}
\]


\(^{186}\) De or commencerai l’estoire \\
Qui toz jors mes iert an mimoire \\
Tant con durra crestiautez \\
De ce s’est Crestiens vantez,

\(^{187}\) Keen, Chivalry, p. 102.
Chrétien therefore establishes his didactic intention, his claim to truth, in a manner reminiscent of the *romans d'antiquité*, Wace and Benoît de Sainte-Maure. The justification for the composition of his *roman* was to preserve the memory of edificatory examples and the legitimacy of this didactic agenda was transferred to the internal *conjointure* of his stories. An edificatory initiative, which was a conventional premise for truth claims, facilitated the narrative development of a contemporary chivalric value system. However, truth as conformity to source lent it legitimacy.

However spurious this source claim might be, and there are no grounds for support whatsoever, the crucial factor is that Chrétien legitimized his conceptual universe through reference. The transferral of the validity of truth, long defined in medieval historiography through its association with fact and its didacticism, to an internal world of narrative, was brought about in much the same way that 'translations' into *roman* of established Latin sources secured for the new vernacular compositions of the twelfth century all the authority of their classical sources. Thus not only was Arthurian romance, the most decisive influence on chivalric culture as it evolved in the succeeding centuries, propagated through an internal system of reference to an interdisciplinary array of sources but it was also created by source referral. The evolution of a chivalric value system and the concomitant creation of an internal conceptual truth could not have been authenticated without association with an established source. And it is similarly through the use of source that the truth claims of narratives ranging in scale from *historia* to *fabula* can be deciphered.

The governing chivalric concept, therefore, was conceived as a truth. Chivalric values were depicted within a conceptual grid forming a truth whose only responsibility was to remain faithful to its own cultural framework. The framework was of course source dependent and thus the system multiplied in a self-perpetuating cycle becoming increasingly complex and learned. By the fourteenth century, the corpus of writings espousing an edificatory chivalric ethos expanded to include diverse works: narratives ranging in factual content, in style and tradition and composed in both verse and prose; narratives, in effect, that were connected because of their collective concern with chivalric culture, which had become a conceptual truth. This conceptual truth was then sustained by the promotion of uniform conventions across a broad sweep of writings. The various

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188 Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*, lines 30-35; Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, p. 100. See also Jean Frappier, ‘Chrétien de Troyes’, p. 160 and, in more detail, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ‘Old French narrative genres: towards the definition of the *romans antique*’, pp. 143-159, for the theme of *translatio studii*, discussed below.

189 See Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, p. 100: ‘For as is well known, it is precisely the notion of *translatio* that stands at the heart of Chrétien’s cultural project.’
sources consulted by Barbour and Chandos Herald supplied a vast thematic and structural range and both texts will be considered individually below but what is curious and consistent with these two contemporaneous compositions is their collective choice of verse. Curious indeed when all the signs would seem to indicate a contemporary vogue for prose; and curious even more considering how prose was explicitly hailed as the language of history. An examination of the verse/oral and prose/written division does not however sustain any of these suppositions.

II.2 Prose and verse

II.2.i Thirteenth-century Old French prose

Twelfth-century vernacular verse compositions such as romans d'antiquité, verse chronicles and romans Breton fused fact and fiction, claimed their narratives as true, and appropriated similar authenticating devices to establish their narratives as part of a tradition. Chansons de geste, in their concern with presenting history in the vernacular and as true, form the background to this process and are here discussed as romance only insofar as their matter, the matter of France, which becomes stock to a series of intricate romances and romance-influenced chronicles in the following centuries, owes its origins to these initial raw compositions. Thematically and structurally, as discussed below, they provided the model for their twelfth-century roman successors. Separated by modern generic divisions, romans d'antiquité, verse chronicles and romans Breton are in fact part of a single tradition. Truth claims were supported through association with an authoritative source typically a Latin text that could be ‘translated’ into the Old French vernacular. Thus the prestige of the past prose text legitimized the new vernacular verse narrative. These vernacular narratives were primarily romance purely in a linguistic sense; classing their compositions as ‘translations’, twelfth-century vernacular authors validated a novel linguistic narrative discourse. A didactic objective and a chivalric culture catered for the creation of a contemporary value system advocating exemplary past deeds in chivalric guise. Chrétien’s poems entered this linguistic tradition following the pattern of translatio and professing adherence to prior authoritative sources in order to preserve the memory of ancient and worthy deeds. Didacticism was crucial to the success of the vernacular verse narrative. The choice of vernacular reached a larger audience than Latin texts could hope to influence, as Walter Map later explained to his contemporary, Gerald of Wales:

2 Biographical Form: Romance

Multa, Magister Giralde, scripsitis, et multum adhuc scribitis; et nos multa diximus. Vos scripta dedistis, et nos verba. Et quanquam scripta vestra longe laudabiliora sint, et longaeviora, quam dicta nostra, quia tamen haec aperta, communi quippe idiomate prolata, illa verba, quia Latina, paucioribus evidentia, nos de dictis nostris fructum aliquem reportavimus.¹⁹¹

Chrétien’s poems become part of this vernacular tradition (dicta) through conventional adherence to truth: conformity to fact (source) and a didactic initiative. However, his poems, once established, were to change the dynamic of vernacular verse historiography. Truth transferred from an externally validated concept dependent on source referral to an internal system of reference. ‘Gods make their own importance’ (P. Kavanagh, ‘Epic’) and the internal Arthurian universe looked inward for validation permitting the inclusion of clearly fabulous components and challenging the historiographical status of the vernacular verse narrative. What was to be done to reclaim the vernacular narrative as historiography, as historia rather than fabula? Prose seemed to offer a solution.

The first decades of the thirteenth century witnessed the mise en prose of all three matters mentioned by Jean Bodel and composed in verse in the twelfth century as chansons de geste, romans d’antiquité and romans Breton. The matter of France launched its renewed claims to historicity through the six vernacular prose translations of what was considered to be a Latin history recounting the words of Charlemagne’s companion from the Chanson de Roland, Archbishop of Reims Turpin, and therefore now known as the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle.¹⁹² These chronicles opened with a series of claims stressing the accuracy of their narratives: following the verse narratives treated above, they claimed that what they wrote was true, and, that they were ‘translating’ a written source; however, they went further and stressed the venerable repository of this ancient source and, finally, they set their narrative apart from and above twelfth-century vernacular narratives by condemning the use of verse as untrue. The emergence of prose as the language of truth and history was accompanied by the declamation of ‘nus contes rimes nest verais’:

¹⁹¹ Gerald of Wales, Opera omnia, vol. 5, ed. James F. Dimock, in Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores (Rolls Series) (London, 1867), pp. 410-411, my italics; Spiegel, Romancing the past, p. 343, n. 47. ‘Master Gerald you have written and are still writing much, and I have spoken many things. You have uttered writings, and I words. Your writings are far more praiseworthy than my words; yet because mine are easy to follow and in the vernacular, while yours are in Latin, which is understood by fewer folk, I have carried off a reasonable reward while you and your distinguished writings have not been adequately rewarded.’: quoted in Walter Map, De nugis curialium: courtiers’ trifles, p. xxii; E. Jane Burns, ‘Arthurian romance in prose’ in A new history of French literature, pp. 66-70, p. 67. See also Clanchy, From memory to written record, p. 266.

¹⁹² These six translations were made between 1200 and 1230 within the French realm; there is also a contemporary Anglo-Norman version, the Anglo-Norman Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle of William of Briane, ed. Ian Short (Oxford, 1973).
Thus wrote Nicolas of Senlis, the first thirteenth-century prose translator of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* (c.1202). Not only is verse denounced as untrue but is also expressly equated with an equally suspect oral tradition, and the domain of the *jongleur*:

> Tot est mencongie co qu’il en dient car il n’en sievent rienz fors quan par oir dire.

Many people have heard it told and sung, but what these singers and jongleurs sing and tell is nothing but a lie.'

Preferable to these untrustworthy songs were written works stored in ‘bones abeies de France’ and ‘les armaires’ where ‘la veriae ystoire’ might be found. ‘[L]a veriae ystoire’ was that written by Archbishop Turpin and to add weight to his claim, Nicolas offers a letter from the archbishop claiming to have witnessed what was there recorded. Similar assertions are made throughout the prologues of the other five ‘translations’. ‘Master Johannes’ (c.1206) claims to record ‘la verité d’Espaigne’ from the ancient Latin history found at the abbey of Saint-Denis under the initiative of Count Renard of Boulogne. Connected with this assertion of his conformity to source is his dismissal of rhyme,

> Et por ce que rim e se velt afeiter de moz conqueilliz hors de l’estoire, voust li cuens que cist livres fust sanz rime selonc le latin de l’estoire que Torpins l’arcevesque de Reins traita et escrist si com il le vit to.

Again, the Latin history claimed for translation by Master Johannes was none other than that related by Archbishop Turpin himself. A non-verse translation was considered to

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193 ‘No rhymed tale is true. Everything they say is lies, for they know nothing about it except through hearsay.’
194 ‘Many people have heard it told and sung, but what these singers and jongleurs sing and tell is nothing but a lie.’
195 ‘Li bons Baudois li cuens de Chainau si ama molt Karlemaine ni ne veut onques croire chose que l’om en chantast. Ainz fit cercher totes les bones abeies de France e garder par totz les armaries par saver si l’om i trouveroit la veraie ystoire’: ‘The good Baldwin, the count of Hainault, dearly loved Charlemagne, but he did not want to believe anything that was sung about him. Thus he had all the abbeyes of France and all the libraries searched to see if one might find the true history.’
198 ‘Mes que ce li autre aient osté et mis, ci poez oir la verité d’Espaigne selonc le latin de l’estoire que li cuens Renauz de Boloigne fist par grant estude cercheri et guerre es livres a monseignor Saint Denis’: Jehan, *The Old French Johannes translation of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, ed. Ronald N. Walpole (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976), p.130. Translated by Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 75 and 347, note 89: ‘Whatever the others have taken away from or added to [this history], here you can hear the truth of Spain according to the Latin of the history that Count Renaud of Boulogne had with great effort caused to be sought out in books at the Abbey of Saint-Denis’: *Romancing the Past*, pp. 75 and 347, note 89.
render more faithfully the prior work into the vernacular. These claims of absolute fidelity to a Latin text found in Saint-Denis are of course fabricated. But the important point is that prose was launched as the language of history by disparaging verse, and that it was explicitly linked to a written, and not oral culture.

None of the above-mentioned thirteenth-century prose narratives applies the word ‘prose’; ‘prose’ is first used to mean a non-verse, non-rhyme narrative in Brunetto Latini’s Trésor in 1265. Etymologically ‘prose’ denotes the straightforward where ‘verse’ corresponds with the deviant. Verse was long treated with suspicion, as the vernacular was, in general, considered inferior to Latin. It was, however, as explained above, chosen as the medium for twelfth-century vernacular historiography and, until the end of the twelfth century, Old French is almost exclusively composed in verse. The replacement of verse by prose as the language of history has been attributed to a great many reasons. Prose was considered to be ‘richer and susceptible to infinite expansion and development’, therefore facilitating analysis within a narrative. Prose was the language of the Bible and its use by early thirteenth-century narrative accounts of the fourth crusade further supported its associations with history, with the truth. Verse, as emphasized in the Pseudo-Turpin prologues, and indeed, even earlier, was considered to take liberties;

199 Again, the prologue to Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: fr. 1621, fol. 208r and cited by Spiegel, Romancing the Past, pp. 75 and 347, note 90: ‘Por che que l’estoire traitie par rime samble menchonge est cheste sans rime mise en romans selonce le raison del latin que Torpins meisme fist et traite’; my italics. The concerns are the same: history in rhyme lies; this history is translated into roman ‘sans rime’; and it is done so following the command of Archbishop Turpin.
200 Spiegel, Romancing the past, p. 76. There is a Latin account of Charlemagne’s expedition to Spain claiming to be an eyewitness account by Archbishop Turpin, which was assembled c.1140 by clerics fusing the Chanson de Roland and ecclesiastical moralizing: Spiegel, p. 69.
201 Ibid., p. 57.
202 See Spiegel, Romancing the past, pp. 57-8, using Wlad Godzich and Jeffrey Kittay, The emergence of Prose: an essay in prosaics (Minneapolis, 1987), p. xx: ‘Prose’ derives from the Roman goddess Prorsa (Prosa), responsible for the births delivered head first; thus, prosus denotes the straightforward and therefore, the linguistically straightforward. Set opposite this is ‘verse’, from the Latin vertere, to turn.
203 Ibid., pp. 58-68 for the distrust of verse by late antiquity.
204 The only vernacular prose texts before the thirteenth century are charters, vernacular translations of the Bible or sermons: M. Zink, Litterature française du Moyen Age, p. 175; Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 414. There are fifty examples of Old French prose dating from the twelfth century, Spiegel, Romancing the past, pp. 56-7; most are concerned with religious subjects.
206 Prose was used by early thirteenth-century witness reports of the fourth crusade (Robert de Clari and Geoffroi de Villehardouin); Ainsworth p. 415. See also E. Jane Burns, ‘Arthurian romance in prose’, p.67.
207 Nus hom ne puet chanson de geste dire Que il ne mente la ou li vers define As mos drecier et a tailler la rime. La mort Aymeri de Narbome: chanson de geste, ed. J. Couraye du Parc, Société des Anciens Texts Français (Paris, 1884). Lines 3055-3057, written c. 1180: ‘No one is able to recite a chanson de geste

45
and, a point rather more influential, it was linked to an increasingly suspect oral culture from which verse narratives did not dissociate themselves.

Twelfth-century verse historiographers were at pains to stress the integrity of their accounts through associations with a written culture.208 *Chanteurs de geste*, traditionally recited by itinerant *jongleurs* before an aristocratic audience, dissociated themselves from fanciful Breton tales.209 *Romans*, in their turn, were anxious to distance themselves from the performing *jongleur*.210 *Chansons de geste*, typically composed in assonanced rhyming *laisse* in decasyllabic meter211, which aided recitation,212 are very much associated with the oral culture out of which they evolved. Formally, the *romans d'antiquité* broke with the *chanson laisse* in favour of the octosyllabic couplet but an oral association lingered. Oral recitation by the *chanteur de geste* was facilitated by the use of stock phrases and scenes. These were traditional tropes that were later applied by both Barbour and Chandos Herald; tropes that became synonymous with oral transmission and were later exploited for this association. Such stock signifiers sustained verse’s association with an oral culture despite efforts by the *roman* to defect to a written tradition.

The appearance of prose can be ascribed to a number of factors and there are abundant generalizations that can be made about the relative historiographical merits of verse and prose but what is important is the time in which Old French prose emerged as the vernacular language of history. This has been traditionally considered a natural progression of literary history.213 However, Gabrielle Spiegel has argued that its emergence was ‘the product of a specific historical moment and situation that endowed prose with a particular value for those who patronized, produced and consumed works written in the discursive register.’214 Old French prose historiography, she argues, was ‘an ideological initiative on the part of a threatened elite to authenticate its claims to historical legitimacy.’215 All six

without lying at the place where the verse ends, to order the words and shape the rhymes.’; Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, p. 61

208 See above, for example, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*, lines 42035-37: ‘Translatee a l'estoire e dite/ D'eissi cum l'ai trovee escrite;/ N'ai mis fausete ne m enfonge.’


211 Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: *historia* and *fabula*’, p. 392. Alexandrine and octosyllabic lines are also found.

212 Huchet, ‘Romances of antiquity’, p. 37

213 Everywhere verse appeared before prose in the vernacular or so the story goes, and, in some literary cultures, the emergence of prose is ‘a natural evolution of a literary language’: Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, pp. 2-3. Spiegel challenges this stance; for the argument of prose as a natural progression, see M. Zink, *Littérature française du Moyen Age*, p. 175; translated by Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: *historia* and *fabula*’, p. 414.

214 Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, p. 2 and chapters I-VI for a full exposition of her argument.

215 Ibid., p. 3.
'translations' of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle were composed in a specific geographical area of northeast France and under the patronage of a Franco-Flemish aristocracy whose autonomy was threatened by a powerful Capetian monarchy.\textsuperscript{216} The past was used as a legitimizing tool to recreate and 'correct the deficiencies of a problematic present.'\textsuperscript{217} Thus it was necessary to establish the historicity of the past recounted through a novel vernacular narrative discourse freed from the mendacious associations of verse. Whether these professions of historicity can be sustained through an examination of the factual content in the prose chronicles is not the point;\textsuperscript{218} the crucial factor is that thirteenth-century vernacular historiography, following the twelfth-century verse roman, was established through similar patterns of authentication: adherence to a prior prose Latin text and espousal of the exemplary nature of the matter related. And, where the roman had dissociated itself from the jongleur and stressed its conformity to a written tradition, now in turn the Old French prose narrative distanced itself from its vernacular predecessor by associating verse with these exact connotations. Thus the Old French vernacular chronicle was constructed in opposition to the twelfth-century verse chanson and roman. As the roman had replaced the chanson in the twelfth century by stressing conformity to source and a didactic initiative in order to establish its historicity, now the roman, tainted with fictional connotations through its association with courtly romance, was replaced by vernacular prose historiography.

Following the success of the Pseudo-Turpin chronicles, the matters of Rome and Britain treated in the twelfth century as romans d'antiquité and romans Breton were recast into prose. Not that they took their cue solely from these early thirteenth-century Pseudo Turpin prose 'translations' but rather that there were similar processes at work in determining the recasting of their matter into prose: the choice of prose was a deliberate attempt to escape identification with fabula and reaffirm their matter as historia. And, again, this was achieved through the espousal of an edificatory agenda and through the use of authoritative sources. The thirteenth-century recasting into vernacular prose of romans d'antiquité is not central to the discussion here apart from the Latin 'translation' into prose

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid. pp. 11-54.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{218} Ainsworth, 'Legendary history; historia and fabula', p. 414 asks if, along with Spiegel's argument, it could also have been the case that the adoption of a vernacular prose narrative recently established as the voice of historiography was to mask clearly fanciful components in these Pseudo-Turpin chronicles? Although this is true and it is exactly what would happen with vernacular prose historiography specifically with the recasting into prose of the Arthurian legend, it is not an argument that is not already catered for within Spiegel's exposition. Spiegel's argument, however, geared towards the deconstruction of the ideological assertions of a specific group at a specific time, should not detract from what was the general state of vernacular historiography at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The specific historical circumstances surrounding its inception do not change the increasing association of verse with the fabulous through Arthurian romance and its ensuing compromise as a mode for historiographical narration; instead, they support it.
of Benoit de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* (c.1160-1170) by Guido della Colonna. Guido’s *Historia destructionis Troiae* claims to narrate the story of the Trojan war using what are believed to be eyewitness accounts: ‘fidelium ipsius ystoire uera scribentium scripta’. Guido promises a faithful rendition into Latin based on alleged eyewitness reports as Benoit had earlier claimed. Source selection is the key and Guido denounces the accounts of Homer, Virgil and Ovid in preference to the presumed witness reports of Dares and Dictys. The use of Latin prose rather than Benoit’s vernacular verse serves further to reinforce the Troy story as *historia*. *Historia destructionis Troiae* set the mould for the Middle English Troy narratives.

More immediately pertinent is the matter of Britain. The matter of the *romans Breton* was recast into prose as the Arthurian Vulgate Cycle (c.1215-1235); this was an explicit attempt to claim historicity for its matter, which was now also markedly more religious in tone. The Vulgate Cycle claimed the authority of scripture and created its own literary world as a reflection of contemporary theological *summae*. Both chronologically and genealogically the framework of Arthurian romance expanded, stretching from ‘its origin in the Passion of Christ to its successful accomplishment by the chosen Arthurian hero’. Structurally and thematically the Arthurian Vulgate linked its matter to the established authority of the Bible. Arthurian romance recast and developed its matter in prose, the newly-conceived language of history and the traditional language of the Bible. There was, however, for a contemporary audience, a far more immediate indication of its historiographical agenda and this was the alleged authorship of Walter Map. Map is reputed to have found a Latin transcript of the adventures of the Holy Grail related by Bors. Map then ‘translated’ this document, which had been stored in the library at Salisbury, into

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221 ‘Consideraui tamen defectum magnorum auctorum, Virgiiii, Ouidii, et Homeri, qui in experimenda uriterte Troyani casus nimium defece, quamuis eorum opera contexuerint siue tractuertent secundum fabulas antiquorum siue secundum apologos.’ *Historia Destructionis Troia*, p. 276; Strohm, ‘*Storie, spelle, geste, romance, tragedie*: generic distinction in the Middle English Troy narratives’, p. 349.

222 E. Jane Burns, ‘Arthurian romance in prose’, p. 67. The Vulgate Cycle is published as *The Vulgate version of the Arthurian romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, 5 vols (Washington, D.C., 1908-1912). See also Jean Frappier, ‘The Vulgate Cycle’ in *Arthurian literature in the Middle Ages*, pp. 295-318, p. 295: the cycle consists of the *Estoire del Saint Graal*, the prose version of Robert’s *Merlin*, the *Lancelot* (c.1215), the *Questa del Saint Graal/ La quête du saint Graal* (c.1220) and the *Mort Artu/ La mort du Roi Arthur* (c.1225). The first two are considered later additions and the remaining three have become known as the ‘Prose Lancelot’ due to their collective concern with Lancelot.


224 Ibid., p. 67.
French for Henry II. The alleged source is therefore a first-hand account of these adventures bequeathed to posterity by the written record. These adventures are related as part of a chivalric edificatory agenda and are central to the formation of a canon of chivalric writings that claimed to continue this tradition, as explored below. And the prime promoter of this Arthurian climate was the English court. Arthur’s enduring fame was above all a royal inspiration and was exploited as such by succeeding reigns of English kings from King Stephen (1135–54) on, being of course most ambitiously applied by Edward I as dynastic propaganda. Arthur’s association with the English crown and the resultant defection by the aristocracy to the cultivation of the knights of the Round Table as alternative heroes to King Arthur within Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance is examined below. Through its appropriation of Walter Map’s Latin sources, the Arthurian Vulgate associated itself with a reputable vernacular chronicler associated with the court of Henry II, with a past prose text and with eyewitness accounts, all prerequisites for sound historiography, as outlined above, and all in keeping with an established understanding of truth: conformity to fact and a didactic agenda. Thus in keeping with the conventional formulae for *historia, fabula* once again, within a prose climate, established itself as part of the canon of historiography. So why did Arthurian romance again usurp and compromise an established historiographical discourse with spurious matter? Simply because it considered its matter to be true: it conformed to source and aimed at edification.

II.2.ii  *Fourteenth-century verse*

Prose continued as the dominant Old French choice for historiographical discourse long into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but it was not the form chosen by Barbour and Chandos Herald. The choice of verse for these two compositions has long been questioned as it appears at odds with the contemporary vogue for prose. The above appraisal of twelfth and thirteenth-century Old French verse and prose was intended to

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226 One of the manuscripts of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae* was dedicated to King Stephen c. 1136 and this association with the royal household can be followed through the reigns of Henry II, Richard, John and Henry III; Elizabeth Salter, *English and international: studies in the literature, art and patronage of medieval England*, ed. Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman (Cambridge, 1988), p. 96.

227 One of the methods adopted by fifteenth-century narratives emanating from the Burgundian court and ranging in factual content but concerned to present themselves as *historia* was to stress the superior accuracy of prose. See Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, pp. 49-64. This, as discussed above, was the same argument of the thirteenth-century *mise en prose* of the matters of France, Rome and Britain.

228 Both written in octosyllabic verse, *The Bruce* is 13,600 lines and, in Tyson’s edition, based on the London manuscript, *La vie du Prince Noir* is 4,280 lines.
elucidate the relationship between romance and history, but such a study also traces the literary background to *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. For both these works, one written for a Scottish audience in Early Scots, and the other in Old French, but composed for the English court, the background is the above-mentioned French romances. The romances considered above provide the impetus for Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances and they form the background to the bulk of what has become classed as 'chivalric history' or 'chivalric literature'. Historiographical studies of 'chivalric literature' are generally conducted as part of national surveys of historical literature and therefore within the confines of a particular country. As mentioned above, the question of the tradition to which *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* belongs has caused much confusion, and both texts are largely treated in terms of French historical writing. Both appear anomalies among British historiography and are typically treated, following Antonia Gransden, as part of a tradition of 'romance-style' histories stretching from the twelfth-century *Estoire des Engleis* by Geoffrey Gaimar and the chronicles of Jordan Fantosme and Ambroise to the thirteenth-century *History of William Marshal* and the fourteenth-century *Scalacronica* of Thomas Gray and *La vie du Prince Noir*. Barbour, Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart, considered stronger proponents of romance-influenced historiography, are treated separately as 'foreign' writers. Taylor, following Keen, traces the roots of 'chivalrous history' to Geoffrey Villehardouin, and then through Ambroise and Fantosme to the fourteenth century noting that '[i]n fourteenth-century Europe chivalrous histories were increasingly written in prose'. Gransden's determinant for the 'genre' of 'romance-history' in England is verse: Gray's 'chronicle is not a typical romance history as it is not in verse'. But, this exception to the rule is called by Taylor 'chivalrous history at its best and most representative'. Pierre de Langtoft's *Chronique de Brut à l'année 1307* (c.1311-1320) written in Anglo-Norman verse is also typically included in this list. Gransden notes that of her above-cited selection of 'romance histories' only Fantosme and Gray were Englishmen, the rest were Normans. According to Gransden, 'romance historiography


never took root in England'. She is confirmed in this opinion by a somewhat more cautious John Taylor who considers chivalrous histories of the type written by Jean le Bel and Jean Froissart 'not central to the native tradition'. A re-evaluation would entail an investigation of ambitious proportions and such curt dismissals of the English contribution to romance-style historiography are generally accepted. Taylor points to the decline of the French language in England as the primary reason for the dearth of 'chivalrous histories' in fourteenth-century England. However, as examined below, French was far from a declining influence in fourteenth-century England. French was considered the language of chivalry and the fortunes of the French language are typically addressed in relation to its literature.

A reappraisal of the status of 'chivalric history' in England is outside the remit of this thesis but it seems that even leaving aside the limitations of insular boundaries, the choice of determinants such as verse and language as the criteria to confine random histories stretching over three centuries into a 'genre' fails to allow for a full treatment of the way in which a romance tradition and a chivalric ethos affected historical writing in both verse and prose. The concern here is briefly to consider fourteenth-century vernacular historical writing in order to establish whether 'chivalric history' was largely the domain of verse or prose narratives. It would appear, therefore, that romance-influenced history in England was mainly composed in Anglo-Norman and in verse and prose. Surveying fourteenth-century French historical literature, Diana Tyson concludes that 'prose and verse works exist in roughly equal numbers, but since the individual prose items are often very much larger than the verse works, the proportion of the actual volume of writing is definitely in favour of prose.'

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234 Ibid., p. 460.
236 Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 5: 'But with one exception Edward III's England produced no chivalrous account of the time, for a very good reason: events had moved to France.' The exception is the *Scalacronica*. Sumner Ferris, 'Chronicle, biography and family tradition', p. 29: 'Chivalric biography, like chivalry itself, is mainly a French tradition, and most of the chivalric biographies are written in French, including Anglo-Norman.'
237 French provided English with a chivalric vocabulary, while functional or grammatical words are derived from Old English: Stanley Hussey, 'Nationalism and language in England c.1300-1500' in *Nations, nationalism and patriotism in the European past*, eds. Claus Bjorn, Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 96-108. The French-origin words to enter the English language do not indicate that French was the language of the majority after the Norman Conquest, but rather that these were words with which the ruling classes were concerned. See Clanchy, *From memory to written record*, p. 213.
239 Tyson (ed.), *La vie du Prince Noir*, p. 22: 'One only has to think of the chronicles by Joinville, Jean le Bel and Froissart to realize that prose accounts for the bulk of fourteenth century historical
The superior accuracy of prose over verse had, in any case, become an accepted topos by the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{241} In a much-cited prologue to the chronicles of Jean le Bel, prose is explicitly hailed as the preferred mode of historiographical discourse:

Qui veult lire et ouir la vraye hystoire du proeu et gentil roy Edowart, qui au temps present regne en Engleterre, si lise ce petit livre que j'ay commencé à faire, et laisse ung grand livre rimé que j'ay veu et leu, lequel aucun controveur a mis en rime par grandes faintes et bourdes controuvees, duquel le commencement est tout faulx et plain de menchongnes jusques au commencement de la guerre que ledit roy emprit contre le roy Philippe de France. Et de là en avant peut avoir assez de substance de verité et assez de bourdes, et sy a grand plente de parolles controuvees et de redictes pour embelir la rime, et grand foison de si grandes proesses racontées sur aucuns chevaliers et aucunes personnes qu'elles debveroient sembler mal creables et ainsy comme impossibles; par quoi telle hystoire ainsy rimée par telz controveurs pourrait sembler mal plaisant et mal aggreable à gens de raison et d'entendement.\textsuperscript{242}

Verse is denounced for three main reasons, which, although interrelated, are worth listing individually: verse is connected with exaggeration; the use of \textit{la rime} is connected with \textit{controuveurs}; and the reason for this concern with conformity to fact is out of respect for the matter narrated. Thus, following thirteenth-century denouncers of verse, prose is considered to offer a more exact medium for the recording of past events, and it is promoted at the expense of verse. Rhymed narratives are dismissed as the work of \textit{controuveurs}, and le Bel also connects \textit{jongleurs} with verse:

\begin{quote}
J'ay trouv6 en ung livre rimé que ung jengleure a fait tant de bourdes et de menteries que je ne les oseroie dire.\textsuperscript{243}
\end{quote}

Le Bel stresses the merits of prose over the \textit{livre rimé} in order to chronicle correctly the chivalric deeds from the wars of England and France. His narrative is therefore distanced writing and that, as to volume, the verse yield is meagre indeed. Moreover, some of the prose works listed as a single item in bibliographies exist in a considerable number of different versions. It seems clear that the prevailing taste of the time was for prose history, rather than verse. And, following A. Coville, ‘Poèmes historiques de l’avènement de Philippe VI de Valois au traité de Calais (1328-1360)’, \textit{Histoire littéraire de la France}, XXXVIII (Paris, 1949), 259-333, Tyson (p. 22 and note 98) takes into account poems now lost, such as the ‘big rhymed book’ mentioned above by le Bel, which are listed in L. Delisle, \textit{Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V} (Paris, 1907), concluding that ‘[i]t is unlikely, however, that their existence would have affected the conclusion that prose was the preferred medium for historical writing.’ See also Duncan (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, p. 5, who argues that le Bel’s ‘big rhymed book’ dealt with the Scottish wars of 1327-37.\textsuperscript{244}

\textsuperscript{241} Morse, \textit{Truth and convention}, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{243} \textit{Chronique de Jean le Bel}, ed., J. Viard and E. Déprez, 1, p.xii; Tyson (ed.), \textit{La vie du Prince Noir}, p. 33.
from a medium considered more susceptible to exaggeration.\textsuperscript{244} It was important that such deeds be recorded truthfully because reputations hinged on dissemination of chivalric feats, as explored below. For now it is worth emphasizing that prose, as outlined by le Bel, is considered the superior discourse for contemporary chivalric depictions of knightly deeds; it is, therefore, not only associated with truth but explicitly connected with the exact matter forming the content of \textit{The Bruce} and \textit{La vie du Prince Noir}.

Froissart, like Jean le Bel, and possibly following le Bel, decided ultimately to write in prose. Froissart's choice of prose, if we are to accept that his lost chronicle was in verse, was also a decision based on the chivalric matter that he was relating. This lost chronicle, which was written in 1361 for his first patron, Queen Philippa of Hainault, is referred to by Froissart in the prologue to his \textit{Chroniques}:

\begin{quote}
Voirs est que je, qui ay emprins ce livre a ordonner, ay, par plaisance qui a ce m'a tousjours encliné, fréquenté plusieurs nobles et grains seigneurs, tant en France comme en Angleterre, en Escoce et an autres pais, et ay eu connoissance d'eux. Si ay tousjours à mon povoir justement enquis et demandé du fait des guerres et des aventures qui en sont venues, et par especial depuis la grosse bataille de Poitiers où le noble roy Jehan de France fut prins, car devant j'estoie encore jeune de sens et d'aage. Et ce non obstant si emprins je assez hardiement, moy yssu de l'escole, à dittier et à rimer les guerres dessus dites et porter en Angleterre le livre tout compile, si comme je le fis. Et le presentay adonc à très haulte et très noble dame, dame Phelippe de Haynault, royne d'Angleterre, qui doucement et liemement le receut de moy et me fist grant proffit.\textsuperscript{245}
\end{quote}

The dispute about the form of the lost chronicle has centred on Froissart's description \textit{dittier et à rimer}, which can be accepted as indicating a composition in verse.\textsuperscript{246} Diana Tyson argues that this lost chronicle in verse, possibly centring on Edward III and the Black

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item Ainsworth, \textit{Jean Froissart and the fabric of history}, p. 39.
    \begin{quote}
    I can say with truth that I, who have undertaken to compose this book, have been led by a constant inclination to seek the company of various nobles and great lords, either in France, or in England, in Scotland, Brittany and other countries, and have been acquainted with them. Thus, I have always made inquiries to the best of my ability about the exact course of the wars and other events which have occurred, particularly since the great battle of Poitiers, in which the noble King John of France was taken prisoner, for before then I was very young in years and understanding. Yet in spite of that I undertook, perhaps rather boldly, when just out of school, to rhyme and indite the wars just mentioned and to take the finished book with me to England. There I presented it to that most high and noble lady, Philippa of Hainault, who received it gladly and graciously and rewarded me well.
    \end{quote}
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On speculation that the lost chronicle may be one of the two fragments described by L. Delisle in ‘Fragments d’un poème historique du XIVe siècle’, \textit{Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartres}, LX (1899), 611-16, see Tyson (ed.), \textit{La vie du Prince Noir}, p. 27.

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Prince, may have influenced Chandos Herald’s choice of verse. Peter Ainsworth takes the whole prologue into account when evaluating the significance of Froissart’s use of *dittier et à rimer*. Froissart prefaces his reference to this lost chronicle by referring to the work of Jean le Bel, on which, he states, he will now base his *Chroniques*:

Donc ainsi, pour attaindre et venir à la matière que j’ay emprinse de commencer premierement par la grace de Dieu et de la benoite glorieuse Vierge Marie, dont tout confort et avancement viennent, je me veuil fonder et ordonner sur les varies croniques jadis faites et rassemblées par venerable homme et discret seigneur monseigneur Jehan le Bel, chanoine de Saint Lambert du Liege qui grant cure et toute bonne diligence mist en ceste matière et la continua tout son vivant au plus justement qu’il pot, et moult lui cousta à acquerrer et à l’avoir. Mais quelque fraiz qu’il y eust ne fist, riens ne plaingny, car il estoit riches et puissans, si les povoit bien porter, et de soy mesme larges, hounourables et courtois, et qui le sien voulentiers despendoit. Aussi il fut en son vivant moult amy et secret à tres noble et double seigneur monseigneur Jehan de Haynault qui bien est ramenteus de raison en ce livre, car de plusieurs et belles avenues il en fut chief et cause, et des roys moult prochain. Pourquoy, le dessus dit messire Jehan le Bel pot delez lui veoir et congnoistre pluseurs besoingnes, lesquelles sont contenues ensuivant.

Thus it would appear that Froissart’s stated intention to rework in prose a now lost chronicle in rhyme that he had written for Queen Philippa is directly related to his homage to le Bel. Such an initiative was undertaken by him after the battle of Poitiers, when he was more mature in years:

Si ay tousjours à mon povoir justement enquis et demandé du fait des guerres et des aventures qui en sont avenues, et par especial depuis la grosse bataille de Poitiers où le noble roy Jehan de France fut prins, car devant j’estoie encore jeune de sens et d’aage.

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247 Tyson (ed.), *La vie du Prince Noir*, p. 28 and note 113: Tyson, following A.H. Diverres, suggests the Queen Philippa may have encouraged a chronicle relating the chivalrous exploits of her husband and son.

248 Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. Luce, I, 209-11; prologue quoted in full by Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the fabric of history*, pp. 40-41. Translated by Brereton pp. 37-8: Therefore, to enter upon the subject which I have undertaken - first trusting in the grace of God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary from whom all consolation and advancement come - I will base my work on the true chronicles formerly brought together by the wise and venerable Sir Jean Le Bel, canon of St Lambert of Liège, who took great pains over this matter and continued it during his whole life - and much did it cost him to obtain his material. But, whatever the expenses he incurred, he never regretted them. He was rich and powerful and could well support them; and then he was by nature a generous, honourable, and chivalrous man, always ready to spend his wealth. Also, he was in his lifetime an intimate friend of the most noble and mighty Lord John of Hainault, whose deeds are rightly commemorated in this book, for he was the mover and leader of a number of fine exploits and a near counsellor of kings. Because of this, Sir Jean Le Bel was able to witness or learn through him the truth of many of the incidents described in these pages.

249 ‘Thus, I have always made inquiries to the best of my ability about the exact course of the wars and other events which have occurred, particularly since the great battle of Poitiers, in which the
And following the example of ‘venerable homme et discret seigneur monseigneur Jehan le Bel’, Froissart will proceed to compose his *Chroniques* on the deeds of arms of worthy men in prose, so that their exploits ‘should be faithfully credited to those whose valour has achieved them’:

> Or puet ester que cest livre n’est mie examiné ne ordonné si justement que telle chose le requiert. Car fais d’armes, qui si chierement sont comparez, doivent ester donnez et loyaument departis à ceuls qui par prouesce y travaillet. Donc, pour moy acquitter envers tous, ainsi que drois est, j’ay emprinse ceste histoire à poursuir sur l’ordonnance et foundation devant dite, à la prière et requeste d’un mien chier seigneur et maistre, monseigneur Robert de Namur... 

Prose, considered the language of truth, was therefore chosen by Froissart as the preferred mode of historiographical discourse for the chivalric exploits he narrates. The sacred matter related determined the choice of prose, because, as indicated above, reputations hung in the balance. Prose was favoured in preference to his previous choice of verse. As Ainsworth emphasizes, ‘Froissart was himself at first almost certainly one of the versifying *controuveurs* so disapproved of by le Bel, but had begun to see the light.’

Froissart, like le Bel, derides the *jongleur*:

> Pluiseur gongleour et enchanteour en place ont chanté et rimet les guerres de Bretagnes et corromput par les chançons et rimes controuvées le just et vraie histoire.

Such derision of the *jongleur*, as similarly practised by thirteenth-century Pseudo-Turpin chronicles, was not the exclusive domain of the prose author and, as explained above, it is also used by such twelfth-century verse narratives as those of Wace and Bodel. The role of the *jongleur* was diverse and they are commonly grouped with minstrels, who, in their turn, were initially associated with heralds, as discussed below. Here, it must be remembered that Chandos Herald, composing in verse, was anxious to dissociate himself from the same group of performers slighted by his contemporaries, le Bel and Froissart, who specifically connected the *jongleur* with the use of verse. As is clear from the above, prose was a deliberate choice on the part of le Bel and Froissart to relate truthfully chivalric events so

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> Now perhaps that book was not thought out and composed as such a subject demands— for deeds of arms, in which distinction is so dearly bought, should be faithfully credited to those whose valour has achieved them. Therefore, to discharge my debt to all, as is only proper, I have undertaken the writing of this history according to the method and foundation already mentioned, at the request of one of my dear patrons and masters, Robert of Namur... 

251 Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart*, p. 46.

252 Tyson (ed.), *La vie du Prince Noir*, p. 33.
why did Barbour and Chandos Herald, narrating similar matter, and claiming conformity to fact, choose verse?

Tyson divides fourteenth-century verse historiography into three main categories: epic works, verse chronicles and occasional verse. Epic works include the *Voeux du paon* by Jean de Longuyon (1312), Machaut’s *La Prise d’Alexandrie* and Cuvelier’s *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin*. They are all composed in *laissez* of monorhymed alexandrines apart from *La Prise d’Alexandrie*, which is in octosyllabic couplets. Examples of chronicles in octosyllabic verse are Philippe de Vitry’s *Fleur de lis* (1338) and Guillaume de Saint-André’s *Livre de bon Jehan, duc de Bretagne* (c.1382-5). Occasional poems are titled *chansons, dits* and *contes*, vary in length and metre and concern specific battles or contemporary situations. The selection of verse for a narrative dealing with contemporary historical figures is therefore also the choice of two Old French *lives* contemporary to *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir: La prise d’Alexandrie* by Guillaume de Machaut (composed c.1372) and *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin* by Cuvelier (c.1381). Machaut wrote all his work in verse, and he, together with Barbour and Chandos Herald, applied the ‘still fashionable octosyllable’. Cuvelier’s choice of a traditional form was deliberate. *La chanson du Bertrand du Guesclin* was adapted into prose two years later by an anonymous author commissioned by Jean d’Estoutouville. *La prise d’Alexandrie* is interesting for its chosen subject, which, like *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*, concerns a royal figure. It is also the only example of the above group of *lives* that is contemporary to both *The Bruce* (c.1375) and *La vie du Prince Noir* (c.1380-85), and Machaut’s work may have been known to Barbour and Chandos Herald. Barbour’s possible knowledge of Machaut’s work remains conjecture, but Machaut was with David II in London in 1363.

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253 Ibid., p. 24.
254 Tyson also includes Langtoft’s Anglo-Norman *Chronique* in this category.
255 Ibid., pp. 24-25. See also pp. 20-21. The *Voeux du héron* (p. 25), discussed below, appears in this category, and is written in rhymed *laissez* of alexandrines.
257 Ibid., p. 109.
258 Gaucher, *La biographie chevaleresque*, p. 187 discusses the possible reasons for Cuvelier’s retrograde choice of medium. Cf. Tyson, ‘Authors, patrons and soldiers’: Cuvelier chose the *chanson de geste* style of monorhymed *laissez*.
259 Tyson, ‘Authors, patrons and soldiers’, p. 110.
260 Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 6.
enthusiast of chivalrous culture, are outlined below. That David II met Machaut during his
time at the court of Edward III is no indication that the poet was well-known in Scotland,
but, again outlined below, Barbour was no stranger to the English court and Machaut was at
any rate a famed poet and musician.\(^{261}\) However, there is a more tenable link between
Chandos Herald and Machaut, who, it is argued by Tyson, possibly influenced the Herald.
Tyson points to their similar compilation of eyewitness reports and hearsay, and their use of
similar stylistic devices such as epithets and repetitive phrases.\(^{262}\) This is still largely
conjecture and Tyson acknowledges the lack of evidence linking the two authors, but
argues that *La prise d’Alexandrie*’s ‘dating between 1369 and 1373 makes it
chronologically possible that he did so’:

It is quite possible that the two men met, either at the French or the Flemish court, or at one
of the many battles and peace negotiations in which their patrons took part.\(^{263}\)

Machaut may have influenced the Herald’s choice of octosyllabic verse. Another influence
on his narrative form may have been Froissart’s above-mentioned lost chronicle, composed
\(c.1361.\)^\(^{264}\) Tyson emphasizes such sources of influence on *La vie du Prince Noir* to account
for his curious choice of verse, but also because she does not rate the Herald as a gifted
writer, an opinion in which she would not find much disagreement among the chorus of
previous editors who, following Coxe in 1842, all agree that the Herald lacked much
imagination.\(^{265}\)

Froissart’s decision to write in prose has also been considered in light of his
patron’s preferences.\(^{266}\) His allegiance to the wishes of his patrons, it is argued, can account
for the changes initiated in the different versions of his *Chroniques*.\(^{267}\) The subject of
possible patrons for *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* is discussed in succeeding
chapters. If verse was requested by a patron the question is: why? Verse, as specified by a
patron, might elucidate audience preference.\(^{268}\) It might also indicate a royal, as opposed to
an aristocratic, initiative. Such considerations of audience and patron are addressed below,
but are deciphered through an appreciation of the sources on which *The Bruce* and *La vie
du Prince Noir* are modelled; in fact, the patronage initiative, whether royal or aristocratic,

\(^{262}\) Ibid., p.25.
\(^{263}\) Ibid., p.26.
\(^{264}\) Ibid., pp.26-7.
\(^{265}\) H. Coxe (ed.), *The Black Prince*, p. v; F. Michel (ed.), *Le Prince Noir*, p. x; Pope and Lodge (ed.),
The life of the Black Prince, p. xxviii.
\(^{266}\) Tyson (ed.), *La vie du Prince Noir*, p. 27: he wrote his romance *Méliador* in verse for Gaston
Phoebus and Wenceslas of Bohemia and a collection of *dittiers* on love for Richard II. See also
\(^{267}\) G.T. Diller, *Chroniques. Début du premier livre. Édition du manuscrit de Rome Reg. lat. 869*
(Geneva, 1972); Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 53 and note 1.
\(^{268}\) Tyson, ‘Authors, patrons and soldiers’, p. 110.
was determined by source preference, which, in its turn, can illuminate the prevailing literary taste of the late fourteenth-century Scottish and English courts. Verse was therefore most likely a choice made by Barbour and Chandos Herald in imitation of select sources. Why should verse historiography, as outlined earlier, be chosen as a model to follow in preference to prose narration and all its concomitant associations as the language of truth and the language of (chivalrous) history? Because verse narratives, more than prose, proposed an avowed objective to entertain.

Both Barbour and Chandos Herald, as established above, specified that they wished to relate a true tale of past events that would be pleasing in manner. This emphasis on the *carpying*, or the narration, was in order to entertain:

*The first plesance is the carpyng,*
*And tother the suthfastness*
*That schawys the thing rycht as it wes,*
*And suth thyngis that ar likand*
*Till mannys heryng ar plesand* (1.6-10, my italics).

Chandos Herald, as detailed above, states his intent ‘[d]e faire et recorder beaux ditz/ Et de novella et de jadis’ (41-2). His choice of *rymée* (4094) for his account of ‘[L]a vie du Prince’ (4094) was in order to follow the tradition of ‘homme du temps jadis [...] qui faisoient beauz ditz’ (1-2; 4094) and who, the Herald laments, are no longer praised at court (8-11). Instead, such men as the *jangelour*, *faux menteur*, *jogelour* and *bourdeur*, who apply antics to make their audience laugh are more popular at court (17-21). Chandos Herald is therefore modelling his account on reputable poets of past time rather than the performing *jongleur* and reclaiming the domain of verse in order to relate a true tale through a pleasing medium. Writing in the fifteenth century, and using Barbour as a model, Andrew of Wyntoun, following the original conception of *roman*, explains how he has translated stories from Latin to the vernacular in order to entertain:

*Allsua set I myne intent,*
*My wyt, my wyll, and myne talent,*
*Fra that I sene had stories sere*
*In cronnyklys, quhare thai wryttyne were,*
*Thare matere in tyll fowrme todrawe*
*Off Layyne, in tyll Ynglys sawe.*
*For Romans to rede is deultybyle,*
*Suppos that thai be qhyle bot fabylle.*

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270 The italized lines are translated by Duncan as ‘[for] true events that are pleasing are entertaining to the hearer’ (p.46).
2 Biographical Form: Romance

An avowed objective to entertain once again raises the question of audience. Another aspect to the vernacular, and to verse, although not exclusively so,\(^{272}\) is oral delivery, and, as explained above, oral signifiers are applied by both Barbour and Chandos Herald.\(^{273}\)

Particularly associated with this aim to entertain was the matter of Britain. Jean Bodel, as shown above, considered the matter of Britain ‘vain et plaisant’. But, in contrast to Barbour and Chandos Herald, who both combined an aim to entertain with a didactic initiative, it was the apparent lack of edification within the matter of Britain that troubled contemporaries. Philippe de Mézières cautioned Charles VI against the ‘empty fables’ (bourdes) of Arthurian tales.\(^{274}\) Thus it was their conformity to fact he challenged, which in turn raises the question of fictional indicators. Did setting a tale in Arthurian time constitute a fictional indicator for an audience?\(^{275}\) Was the claim of a prior text within Arthurian romance then part of the game? Or was an Arthurian setting merely an indication that truth would be determined by a didactic initiative, rather than historicity, and hence the emphasis on a prior text in order to follow the requisite procedure for claims of truth as argued above. The romances of Chrétien have long been applauded for their didactic dimension:

Artus, li buens rois de Bretaingne,
la cui proesse nos ansaingne
que nos soiens preu et cortois,
tint cort si riche come rois.\(^{276}\)

\(^{271}\) *Chron. Wyntoun*, vol. I, 25-32; Anne McKim, *The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*, p. 43. McKim notes that in some manuscripts *romans* is replaced by *stories*.


\(^{273}\) Janet Coleman, *English literature in history, 1350-1400: medieval readers and writers* (London, 1981), views rising literacy as the cause of literary innovations in the fourteenth century—more books, more private owners and therefore the less likely an audience of court listeners would be. Those who see references to listening within a work as a mere stylistic convention include Derek Pearsall, Ronald Waldron and others whose arguments are countered by Joyce Coleman, *Public reading and the reading public in late medieval England and France* (Cambridge, 1996). Coleman follows the argument first proposed by Ruth Crosby in 1938 that stock expressions in Chaucer were not there to create an illusion of listening rather than reading but to hold the interest of a fourteenth-century audience that were actually listening: pp. 52-74.


\(^{275}\) Morse tentatively suggests that it was: Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 59.


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Arthurian romance combined an aim to entertain with an edificatory intention that advocated a way of life, creating a code of exemplary chivalric conduct. And, while the matter of Britain contained clearly fabulous components, the historicity of Arthur himself was never in doubt; he entered the canon of exempla constituting the 'historical mythology of chivalry' as an historical figure, and is treated as such by Barbour, Chandos Herald and contemporary romance-influenced historical writing.\(^{277}\)

### III Conclusion

While the focus of this chapter has been the relationship between narrative form (romance) and subject (history), later chapters discuss the functional implications of such an alliance, which rest upon the subject or matter of romance. This matter of romance supplied *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* with the themes, *topoi*, *exempla* and structural grids necessary to create and frame their narratives. Their use of this matter was at once their entry into and perpetuation of 'the historical mythology of chivalry'. Thematic and structural considerations of *The Bruce* demand twice the space of *La vie du Prince Noir*. *The Bruce* is not only more intricate in form than the Herald's poem but more ambitious in its function. Barbour's designation of *The Bruce* as a romance indicates his subject; this is supported through reference to romance *topoi* and *exempla* such as hero lists and stock situations. His intention by the use of the word *romany* is, following the initial conception of romance, *translatio*. Sentences recorded in a language other than Scots are translated; for example, when quoting an *insample* that Barbour *herd* *tell* of a war '[b]etwix Fraunce and the Flemyngis fell', he translates into *Inglus toung* the lines that he had transcribed in *Latyn* (4. 238, 239, 240, 253, 260), as discussed below.\(^{278}\) Similarly, words written in French rather than the Scots form of *Inglus toung* in which *The Bruce* is composed are highlighted:

> And wrat outht him as auld men sais
> In Frankis, 'Gardys vous de Francais' (10.751-2).

*The Bruce* is scattered with French words and phrases such as *pardew* (14.487) and, again, *perdé* (19.693); this, however, owes much to Barbour's French sources, discussed below, and highlights an important consideration in the treatment of romance as translation. *Translatio* should not be considered solely an exercise in translation of words into the vernacular for with the words went the world they captured and *translatio studii* is above all an exercise in the translation of ideas and ideals from an ancient and respected past tradition of literature to a novel vernacular discourse, and, therefore, from a past to present

\(^{277}\) The phrase 'historical mythology of chivalry' is coined by Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, chpt. vi.

\(^{278}\) Lines 'Rex... caterva' (4.249-51) are underlined in red in St John's College Cambridge MS.G. 23.
audience. It is the concept of *translatio studii* that facilitated the establishment of a venerable tradition of chivalry; thus, as Maurice Keen writes, ‘[f]rom the very first it would seem, true chivalry was always presented in antique dress.’ How virtues and ideals central to the chivalric ethos were given a prestigious heritage owes much to the matter of Rome and the anachronistic representation of the ancient world in contemporary chivalric terms, which in its turn added to the belief that somewhere in the past existed the golden age of chivalry to which a contemporary audience longed to return. These ideas are treated in full below but it is important to note that Barbour’s designation of his narrative as a romance was deliberate and his understanding of the term *romany* is fully in keeping with the original conception of romance as translation and this should not be reduced to a consideration of language alone. A treatment of romance solely as a vernacular composition rejects a full comprehension of the concept of *translatio* and fails to account for the thematic and structural concerns of *The Bruce*; in addition, it fails to account for the interpretation of the sources appropriated by Barbour. *Translatio* is also very much indicative of a learned literary tradition further forsaking the association of Barbour with ‘the inns of Ayr and Edinburgh’.

Above all else, Barbour’s narrative is a romance in its content and style, which is discussed in the following chapter. Style was the determining influence in source selection; and this in its turn was governed by authorial intention, which for Barbour and Chandos Herald, as stressed above, was dictated by their royal subject matter and chivalric milieu.

Barbour calls *The Bruce* a *romany*, which he describes as a work that will tell ‘off men that war in gret distress/ And assayit full gret hardynes/ Or thai micht cum till thar entent’ (1.446-9). Romance is associated with a record of great deeds performed by men who underwent much hardship in order to reach their destinies. That they were *in gret distres* is a point laboured by Barbour and the episodes are recounted in such a manner as to emphasize the great challenge that Bruce and his men faced and surmounted. Repeatedly Barbour asserts that the Scots fought against the odds:

That certis hard I never say/ That Inglismen mar aparaile/ Maid than did than for bataill (11.80-82)

That Scottismen semyt to be/ Worthi and off gret bounte,/ ‘Bot thai ar nocht withoutyn wer/ Half-dell a dyner till us her.’ (14.185-188)

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281 The *Bruce*, (ed.) Duncan, p. 15.

282 Again at 14. 367, Barbour writes of *gret distress*. The DOST entry for ‘romans’ cites Barbour first (www.dsl.ac.uk): ‘a verse tale based on the adventures of some hero, or heroes, of chivalry, or on those of a hero of antiquity treated as a figure of chivalry’.
The hardest fycht forsuth that wes/ That ever the gud lord off Douglas/ Wes in as off sa few menge (15.407-409)

Richard off Clar on this maner/ And all his folk discomfit wer/ With few folk, as I to you tauld (16.243-245)

And certis I herd never say/ Quhar quheyn mar defence had maid/ That sua rycht hard assailing haid (17.812-814)

This defeat of ‘Inglismen with gret maistry’ (18.260) brought greater honour to the Scots as Edward Bruce informed his men: “The mai thai be/ The mar honour all-out haff we” (14.273-274).

The gret distress that Barbour herd never in romanys tell was due to Bruce’s murder of Comyn at the hye awter of the Greyfriars church in Dumfries in 1306:

He mysdyd thar gretly but wer
That gave na girth to the awter,
Tharf for sa hard myscheiff him fell
That Ik herd never in romanys tell
Off man so hard frayit as wes he
That efterwart com to sic bounté (2.43-48).

Barbour’s romanys is an account of the many worthy deeds performed by King Robert I and James Douglas in order to com to sic bounté. It is an account of the life of James Douglas from his youth to his death and that of Robert Bruce, the primary hero, from his accession to the throne to the end of his life, merging the fate of hero and nation; the motivation behind Barbour’s decision to begin his account of the life of Robert Bruce after he became king will be considered below. Again, Barbour writes that the deeds of Edward Bruce, the king’s brother, equal only to the king himself in chivalry (9. 668-671), would make a great romance:

And quha wald rehers all the deid
Off his hey worschip and manheid
Men mycht a mekill romanys mak (9.495-497).

Romance is again explicitly linked to struggle:

And nocht-forthi I think to tak
On hand off him to say sum thing
bot nocht tende part his travalyn (9.498-500, my italics).

Whoever would recount all his great valour and courage would, he claims, make a long romance, a remark very similar to that made by Thomas Gray in relation to Edward Bruce’s
campaigns in Ireland.\textsuperscript{283} It is also closely related to a comment in the \textit{Gesta Annalia II} that, it is argued by McKim, may have provided the impetus for Barbour’s choice of narrative:

\begin{quote}
Insuper, inter tot adversa, et innumerabiles angustias, quas laeto animo perpetuit et invicto, si quis suos particulares conflictus, et singulars triumphus, victories duella, quibus, Domino opitulante, propriis, viribus, et humana virtute, hostium cuneos penetrat securus, hos potenter proternenos, nunc, et potenter nunc declinans poenam mortis evandendo, noverit recitare, probabat, ut arbitror, quod infra mundi climata, in suis temporibus, in arte pugnandi, et corporis vigore, nullos similes habebat.\textsuperscript{284}
\end{quote}

It has been argued that the \textit{Gesta Annalia II} may have been composed c.1363. Whatever the textual relationships, Barbour’s designation of his narrative as a \textit{romanys} is clearly thematically inspired; \textit{The Bruce} conforms to the standard matter of romance and this is supported through formalized stylistic conventions, as discussed below.

Chandos Herald does not term his narrative a romance. \textit{La vie du Prince Noir} is a record of the life of the Black Prince, compiled using contemporary accounts of the Black Prince’s campaigns and one of these accounts is the record made by Chandos Herald himself. Chandos Herald’s use of romance as a source is immediately supported by the word account: ‘La romance dist, et lui acountes’ (1205). \textit{La vie} is here discussed as romance in so far as the style of the narrative and the thematic content conform to the discussion above and below; nowhere is the term romance intended to classify the poem. As discussed above, \textit{La vie} is typically classed as chivalric biography or chivalric literature, which did not form an independent genre in the Middle Ages but which is influenced most profoundly by romance. As explained above, \textit{La vie} is also considered an epic and compared to \textit{chansons de geste} in particular. And, as emphasized above, it is not intended to classify \textit{chansons} as romance but they are described by Jean Bodel as the matter of

\textsuperscript{283} Thomas Gray, \textit{Scalaronica}, p. 143 ‘qe serroit une graunt romaunce a rementyner tout’: Given-Wilson, \textit{Chronicles}, p. 104 and note 17, p. 235, noting the possible textual relationship between \textit{The Bruce} and \textit{Scalaronica} for this remark. See also Duncan (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, p. 345.

\textsuperscript{284} \textit{Gesta Annalia} as attributed to Fordun in \textit{Johannis de Fordun, Chronica gentis Scotorum}, ed. W.F. Skene, CXVIII and translated:

\begin{quote}
With all the ill-luck and numberless straits he went through with a glad and dauntless heart, were any one able to rehearse his own struggles, and triumphs single-handed- the victories and battles wherein, by the Lord’s help, by his own strength, and by his human manhood, he fearlessly cut his way into the columns of the enemy, now mightily bearing these down, and now warding off and escaping the pains of death - he would, I deem, prove that, in the art of fighting, and in vigour of body, Robert had not his match in time, in any clime.
\end{quote}

Anne McKim, ‘“Great price off chewalry”: Barbour’s debt to Fordun’, \textit{Studies in Scottish Literature}, 24 (1989), 7-29, pp.11-12. Fordun’s authorship of the \textit{Gesta Annalia} has since been challenged: Dauvit Broun, ‘A new look at the \textit{Gesta Annalia} attributed to Fordun’, in B. Crawford (ed.), \textit{Church, chronicle and learning in medieval and early Renaissance Scotland: essays presented to Donald Watt on the occasion of the completion of the publication of Bower’s ‘Scotichronicon’} (Edinburgh, 1999), pp. 9-30. Broun divides the previously classified ‘Gesta Annalia’ into \textit{Gesta Annalia I} and II; the \textit{Gesta Annalia II}, composed c.1363, begins its account at the second marriage of Alexander III in October 1285 (Skene’s chapter 67): Broun, p. 15.
France, and, together with the matters of Rome and Britain, form the basis for ‘the historical mythology of chivalry’. What follows is a discussion of the matters of France, Rome and Britain that relate to *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. Following Maurice Keen’s proposal, the content of a fourth matter, the stories of the Old Testament, will also be included. This is followed by a brief consideration of some of the separate Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance themes and structures that were to have an important effect on *The Bruce* in particular, and a discussion of language and patronage. An examination of how key *exempla* from these sources are applied in both texts is crucial to an understanding of the role played by *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* within their cultural milieu.

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285 See Peter Haidu’s cautionary note regarding the classifications of *chansons* in his review of Sarah Kay’s *The ‘chanson de geste’ in the age of romance: political fictions* in *Speculum*, vol. 73, no.1, (January, 1998) 204-207, p. 204.

286 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 119.
Chapter 3  Biographical Interpretation: Part I, Exempla, themes and virtues

An appreciation of the use of sources by Barbour and Chandos Herald is the key to both the interpretation of the narrative and authorial intention. It is not so much a question of the potential sources themselves that is important but how they are appropriated. The use of sources, as stressed above, supports internal generic designations and establishes and sustains an equation of truth not only with conformity to fact but with a didactic function controlled by a chivalric creed. The way in which Barbour and Chandos Herald apply and adapt traditional conventions does as much to define the chivalric ethos their narratives espouse as it does to expose their objectives for writing. The sources that contribute most to the form of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* are the traditions of *chansons de geste* and romance discussed above, following Jean Bodel, as the matters of France, Rome and Britain. This discussion is divided into two parts forming two chapters that will use thematic and structural conventions from *chansons* and romance to examine the deeds and virtues celebrated by Barbour and Chandos Herald.

*Exempla* are the most obvious advertisement of a didactic agenda informed by a chivalric initiative and Part I will consider Barbour and Chandos Herald’s use of *exempla* from *chansons* and romance. A study of relevant themes from these traditions will follow. This will be supplemented by a consideration of matter from the Old Testament relevant to *The Bruce* in particular. Themes from the matters of France, Rome and Britain isolate virtues with which the narratives of *The Bruce* and *La vie* are primarily concerned and a discussion of these virtues as they are understood by Barbour and Chandos Herald will conclude this chapter.

Chapter 4 (Part II) will open with a treatment of prevalent *topoi* from Old French *chansons* and romance in order to examine the depiction of deeds throughout *The Bruce* and *La vie*. Narrative structures from *chansons* and romance adopted or exploited by Barbour and Chandos Herald are discussed next. Following this, influential thematic and structural characteristics of ‘the matter of Britain’ - Anglo-Norman and, more specifically, Middle English, romance - will be examined. This chapter will conclude with a consideration of language and patronage. As explained above, this will entail an uneven distribution of emphasis in favour of *The Bruce*, which is both longer and more intricate in narrative form than the Herald’s poem. Thematic and structural conventions function as a reference system informing the composition of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. Central to an understanding of this reference system is the relationship between biography and romance.
Following the pattern set by Hellenistic and Roman biographers, medieval biographies sought to emphasize their subject as a type. Deeds depicted in *The Bruce* and *La vie* illuminate virtues requisite to the chivalric ideal. An examination of these virtues, however, reveals more than a stream of continuous praise eulogizing the protagonists as chivalric heroes; instead, these virtues are expressed through a hierarchical and co-dependent creed that reflects a contemporary appreciation of the concept of chivalry and its attendant value system, and also caters to the didactic agenda of Barbour and Chandos Herald. As indicated above, a life was applied as the organizing principle for romance. A biographical interpretation of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* unfolds through an assessment of chivalric exploits performed along the adventure. Lives are depicted through a record of celebrated deeds. Barbour, as mentioned above, notes that whoever would 'rehers all the deid' of Sir Edward Bruce's 'hey worschip and manheid', 'mycht a mekill romanys mak' (9. 495-497). The 1429 entry in the Exchequer Rolls states that Barbour's annual pension was 'pro compilatione libri de gestis quodam Regis Roberti de Brus'. *The Bruce* and *La vie* are accounts of the deeds of the lives of King Robert, the Black Prince and their trusted companions. These deeds were violent, they were typically enacted in battle and they required courage and determination, or prowess and its concomitant virtues, as shown below. Furthermore, these deeds are praised because they were noteworthy, they established a knight's reputation and they made him worthy of commemoration; they are recorded so that they will remain in memory. Of 'the good' Sir James Douglas, Barbour notes that if all his deeds were recorded, 'his name suld be/ Lestand into full gret renoune' (8.519-20). It is for Randolph's 'dedis worthy' that he should be 'prisyt soverandly' (10. 303-4). Gib Harper is remembered as 'the douchteast in deid' then living, in his position (15.182-30). Edward Bruce mourns Neil Fleming's 'worschip and douchty deid' (15.234). Barbour often explains that he will not linger long on an event or battle as no other deeds were done there worth remembering, and therefore, worth recording. When 'other dedis nane war done' (19.529), he moves the narrative along: 'Quhy suld 1  mak to lang my taile' (11.142)? These deeds are equated with chivalry, as discussed below, and they are the substance of both *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*: '1 lat it schortly pas forby', Barbour explains, '[f]or thar wes done na chevalry/ Provyt that is to spek o f her' (13.749-51).

Deeds determine which men are remembered, and celebrated, by the Herald: 'Monsire Bartreme de Burghées/ Qui moult fuist hardy en sez fees' (563-4); Thomas de

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287 See 8.428-30: Again, in relation to Douglas, Barbour writes that whoever would take 'on hand' to 'tell his worschippis ane and ane', he would find many to recite.

288 See 1315-6: 'Le bon Bartrem de Burghées/ Qui moult fuist hardy en ses feés'. Diana Tyson (ed.), *La vie*, p. 37 notes that the Herald applies stock rhymewords to describe his characters so that Bartholmeus de Burghées always (apart from one exception) rhymes with *fées*; this is a method she
Holland '[q]ui de faire armes estoit pres' (2610); Raoul Camois '[q]ui fuist beaux en fait et curtois' (2616). Chandos Herald explains that the purpose of his record is to preserve the deeds of the Black Prince for posterity; deeds are divided into words (ditz) and actions (faitz) (1637-8). The Herald is writing 'pur doner en remembrance' the prince's deeds, and the virtues such deeds disclose:

De son fait et reconissance
Et da sa tres haute proesse
Et da sa tres noble largesse (4100-4).

For this reason he will not recount matter not related to the prince's words and deeds:

Perdonez moi si je l'ai dit briefment
Car je l'ai passée legierement,
Mai spur ceo qe je voile retraire
De cest Prince de noble affaire
Qui moult fuist vaillantz et hardis,
Prodhomme et en faitz et en ditz (1409-14).

The prince performed so many memorable deeds that were all his exploits to be recorded, Chandos explains, one could make a book as big as that of Arthur, Alexander or Claris (4098-4100). Geoffrey de Charny also equates the account of a life with a record of deeds worthy of remembrance:

We therefore learn from the good knights and men-at-arms whose great achievements and honourable deeds of prowess and of valour have been related, described and told above and which they have accomplished through suffering great hardship, making strenuous efforts and enduring fearful physical perils and the loss of friends whose deaths they have witnessed in many great battles in which they have taken part; these experiences have often filled their hearts with great distress and strong emotion. If anyone might want to give an account of their lives, hard as they have been and still are, for the benefit of those who want to take up this honourable vocation, their adventures would take too long to record.289

The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir are above all a record of these 'honourable deeds of prowess and of valour' performed along the adventure. This adventure, which necessarily entailed much hardship as discussed below, determined the thematic content and structural framework of romance, which, in the case of The Bruce and La vie in particular, is directly

attributes to his general unimaginative style but concedes that 'certain traits of the central figures nevertheless emerge.'

equated with the depiction of the life of a knight. Matter superfluous to the adventures related is not included. Chandos Herald shortens his lists of knights ‘[d]e noble et de puissant linage’ so as not to delay his *purpos*:

Dount je ne voil le nouns nosmer,/ Car trop me purroie tarder/ A revenir a mon purpos (1664-7).

Qe vous purroie je detrier/ La matiere et plus alongier (1953-4)?

De lour parlement plus ne sai/ Ne plus ne vous en conteray (2181-2).

A quoi faire vous conteroie/ La matiere et alongeroie (3699-700)?

Mais, pur la matiere abreggier (3721).

Such tail-rhymes can be considered *topoi,* but they serve a functional purpose for both the Herald and Barbour who, as they explain from the onset, and as emphasized above, are concerned to compose a record of the memorable deeds of the lives of their heroes in order to elucidate their virtues:

And certis thai suld weill have prys
That in thar tyme war wycht and wys
And *led thar lyff* in gret travail,
And oft in hard stour off bataill
Wan gret price off chevalry
And war voydty off cowardy,
As wes king Robert off Scotland
That hardy wes off hart and hand,
And gud Schir James off Douglas
That in his time sa worthy was
That off hys price and hys bounte
In ser landis renownyt wes he.

*Of thaim* I think this buk to ma (1.21-33, my italics)

These virtues were illustrated through deeds enacted in battle: ‘And oft in hard stour off bataill/ Wan gret price off chevalry’. The author of the *History of William Marshal* was similarly assured of his theme: ‘Mais ce ne fait or ci a dire,/ Ainz revendrai a ma matyre’. And the author of the *Gesta Annalia II,* concerned to depict *bella famosa, et gesta publica,* did not consider his narrative an account of Robert Bruce’s *gesta particularia* because such

290 Tyson (ed.), *La vie,* p. 36: ‘the Herald often inserts a line or couplet which adds nothing to the narrative and produces an effect of clumsiness’.

291 *History of William Marshal,* ed. A.J Holden and trans. S. Greogory, pp. 494-5: ‘However, this is not the place to speak of that,/ instead I shall return to my theme’. See also Gransden, *Historical writing,* vol. ii, p. 346.
personal exploits were difficult to correctly date; such personal deeds, however, are exactly the matter with which Barbour and Chandos Herald are concerned.

I Exempla

Barbour and Chandos Herald’s internal generic designations (discussed above) indicate the importance of establishing a precedent in order to enter a narrative into an existing tradition of historical writing. Exempla extricated from these precedents operate in a similar manner to internal assertions of truth and intention. ‘I herd nevr in na tym gane’ (6.179; 10.739), writes Barbour. Everywhere what is written must be explained in light of an existing ensampill: ‘Ye may weill be ensampill se’ (3.251). As indicated above, the application of exempla was in effect a reference system created to inculcate a scheme of values requisite to the chivalric ideal. Exempla also facilitated an authorial display of erudition, which, for Barbour and Chandos Herald, as shown below, was centred on chanson and romance. Cuvelier’s late fourteenth-century La chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin, in a manner similar to that of Barbour and Chandos Herald, recounts his familiarity with ‘the private pantheon of heroes’ established by the ‘historical mythology of chivalry’:

Qui veult avoir le non des bon et des vaillans.  
Il doit aler souvent a la pluie et au champs.  
Et ester en la bataille, ainsi que fist Rolans,  
Et li bers Olivier, et Ogier le poissans,  
Les iii fiils Aymon, Charlemains li grans,  
Li Dues Lion de Bourges, et Guion de Cournans,  
Perceval le Galois, Lancelot et Tristans,  
Alixandre et Artus, Godefroi le sachans;  
De coi cilz menestrelz font ces nobles rommans.  

Such an erudite aim, catered for under the premise of edification, was reconciled with specific authorial agendas and governing value systems. The more learned the author the greater the scope for scholarly exhibition and Chandos Herald is no match for Barbour in

292 Gesta Annalia II [GA II] as attributed to Fordun in Johannis de Fordun, Chronica gentis Scotorum, ed. W.F. Skene, CXVIII and noted by McKim, ‘“Gret price off chewalry”: Barbour’s debt to Fordun’, p. 13 where the GA II is considered to have been composed by Fordun, as discussed above.

this respect. Less learned than Archdeacon Barbour, the Herald’s erudition was nevertheless crucial to a raw portrayal - if not party to the sustained creation - of the chivalric ethos reflected in these narratives and one that can be deconstructed through the thematic and structural conventions explored below.

*Exempla* took on various forms. Chandos Herald draws allusions to heroes from the matters of France, Rome, and Britain, as discussed below, but his method is straightforward and his intention is simply to state a comparison between the Black Prince and established heroes of renown. *Exempla* in *The Bruce* serve several purposes. They can be used as an aid to identification: Douglas could be compared to Hector of Troy,

> Till gud Ector of Troy mycht he  
> In mony thingis liknyt be.  
> Ector had blak har as he had  
> And stark lymmys and rycht weill maid,  
> And wlisoyt alsua as did he,  
> And wes fullfillyt of leawté  
> And wes curtais and wys and wycht (1.395-401).

They can be used to legitimize something or someone. Barbour justifies Bruce’s murder of John Comyn at the Greyfriars altar in Dumfries by claiming it as an act of revenge for Comyn’s alleged treason, or disloyalty. Barbour first provides the example of Troy: ‘Was nocht all Troy with tresoune tane/ Quhen ten yeris off the wer was gane’ (521-2)? Three royal parallels follow. ‘Alexander the conqueroure’ who ‘[w]las syne destroyit throu pusoune/ In his awyne hous throu gret tresoun’ (1.529, 533-4). ‘Julius Cesar als’ who ‘[t]hrou thaim of his consaill preve’ was [s]layne with pusoune rycht to the ded’ (1.537, 544-5). And, claiming ‘the Broite’ as a source, Barbour provides the example of Arthur who ‘[t]hrou tresoune and throu wikkitnes’, ‘Modreyt his syster son him slew’ (1.560, 559, 557). There is no evidence for

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294 Barbour’s stress on ‘tresoune’ associates what is Comyn’s alleged treachery - his personal betrayal of Robert - with treason, a crime against the king; this reinforces his fusion of King Robert (who was not king when this alleged betrayal took place) with his kingdom, as discussed below.
the alleged pact Barbour describes between Bruce and Comyn. There is, however, a great model: the Book of Maccabees, which is considered below. Enraged by Comyn’s betrayal, Bruce ‘wes angry out of mesur.’ And swour that he suld vengeance ta’ (1.570-1). It is not the murder Barbour condemns but the disrespect for the sanctuary of the high altar, and because of this he underwent much hardship before he came ‘to sic bounté’ (2.43-4;48). And King Robert is not described as ‘out of mesur’ again, a point that Barbour reinforces throughout the narrative.

Exempla can provide parallels of distress: the Scots ‘wer lik to the Machabeys’ (1.465), discussed below; Barbour has King Robert reassure his men using the exemplum of Scipio’s defence of Rome from the onslaught of Hannibal and his great army (3.187-267). This is one of many exempla and topoi applied by Barbour to illustrate how a small group of dedicated knights can defeat a much larger army. King Robert tells his men: ‘Men redys off mony men that war/ Fer harder stad then we yhet ar’ (3.203-4). It was an example intended to keep his men from despair: ‘Ye may weill be ensam pill se/ That na man suld disparyt be’ (251-2). This exemplum, like that of Julius Caesar (3.273-84), ‘[a]s men may in his story se’ (284), was intended to offer comfort:

And to comfort thaim gan inbryng
Auld storys off men that wer
Set intyll hard assayis ser
And that fortoun contraryit fast,
And come to purpose at the last (3.268-72).

Apart from providing examples to comfort ‘men that wer in gret distress’, exempla were used by Barbour to elaborate a point he wished to make: ‘Insample will I set her now/ Off a wer as I heard tell/ Betwix Fraunce and the Flemyngis fell’ (4.240). Barbour introduces the story that ‘[m]en redys’ of ‘quhen Thebes wes tane’ to show that ‘[i]n wem en mekill comfort lyis/ And gret solace on mony wis’ (2.531; 551-2). Exempla also function as an indication of erudition and the tradition in which The Bruce is composed: romance heroes read romances and King Robert, in an oft-cited passage, reads the romance of Fierabras to comfort his men while crossing Loch Lomond (3.435-444). The application of exempla proceeds very much like a sermon, a procedure with which Barbour was no doubt familiar as he depicts King Robert ‘prechyt thaim on this maner’ (3.299). The examples come from past times and past accounts, mostly romans d’antiquité, discussed shortly. They are used

Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 139-41, for the origins of this tale of the pact as similarly discussed by Chron. Fordun, vol. i, 337-4 and Chron. Wyntoun [Laing], 364-8, which ‘finds no confirmation in any contemporary source’. But, while considering the tale ‘a literary product, the final, satisfying version of an originally much simpler or less romantic, story’, Barrow concedes that ‘the tale cannot be totally fictitious.’

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as comparisons, identification, parallels and precedents; in sum, they are a means of placing both deeds recounted in historical perspective and King Robert and his trusted companions within an historical, and romance, tradition of great men. However the exempla are applied, Barbour’s primary intention is to draw attention to the deeds and the virtues that are celebrated. It is Douglas’s qualities especially his loyalty that Barbour wishes to list through comparison to Hector; similarly, Douglas’s loyalty inspires comparison with Fabricius (20.526-79). It is Comyn’s disloyalty that provides the impetus for examples of treason. Like the Maccabees the Scots used ‘thar gret worship and valour’ ‘to delyver thar countre/ Fra folk that throu iniquite/ Held thaim and thairis in thrillage’ (1.467; 469-72). Scipio, Caesar and the ‘[r]omanys off worthi Ferambrace’ (3.437) are intended to keep men from despair through the example of what determination, skill and resolve can achieve (3.285-98); these qualities are all catered for by the concept of prowess governed by mesur, which is treated below. And all these qualities, and the deeds that depict them, are in effect the central thematic consideration of The Bruce.

Much has been written on Barbour’s possible sources: popular lays (discussed above); poems in circulation on the battle of Bannockburn and the war of independence; and contemporary English and French sources. Contemporary Scottish sources have also been examined. The supposed generic indeterminacy of The Bruce, as discussed above, was attributed to the disparate nature of Barbour’s sources; the peculiar form of The Bruce, it was argued, was due to the sources consulted (discussed above). But Barbour was not a slave to his sources. However, it has been argued more recently that not only the form but the matter of The Bruce can be accounted for by Barbour’s sources. Duncan has argued that Barbour consulted a range of now lost sources on King Robert, Sir Edward Bruce, Sir Thomas Randolph, Sir James Douglas and Sir Ingram d’Umfraville. There is of course no way to settle a question on lost sources but only two alleged lost sources mentioned by Duncan have some support: one for King Robert, and one for James Douglas. Duncan argued that for King Robert, Barbour consulted the hystoire mentioned by le Bel, writing c.1350: ‘Aucune fois, ce dit on, et le treuve on en hystoire faîte par le dit roy Robert’. This is typically translated as, ‘And at one time, one says, and finds it in a story made by

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298 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, pp. 16-30.

Based on these lines, Duncan argued that 'Le Bel knew of a written *hystoire* narrating the king's early adventures, a work with a title like the *Regis Roberti Historia*, which persuaded him that it was royal autobiography'.

Goldstein found that the wording indicated that King Robert caused a narrative to be made about his deeds, that he in fact commissioned such a *hystoire*. Gransden mentioned that *le Bel* may have heard about it from James Douglas whom he met in Sluys when Douglas was on his way to Spain with Bruce's heart.

However, McDiarmid earlier interpreted these lines as a history made by the English minstrel and king-of-arms Robert le Roy, 'who served in the Scottish wars of all three Edwards'.

McDiarmid noted that Walter Bower recorded how Edward II, some time after Bannockburn, asked 'le Roy Robert nuncupato [...] Heraldorum rege nominato' to name the three worthiest knights of his time. 'Le Roy Robert' named the emperor Henry, Sir Giles d'Argentine and Robert Bruce, who he singled out for 'arduous achievements'.

McDiarmid also pointed out that 'le Roy Robert's' praise of Sir Giles d'Argentine is repeated by Barbour, a discussion of which is found below. Furthermore, McDiarmid reconciles 'le Roy Robert's' praise of Robert Bruce as fit to rule the empire with Barbour's account of Sir John Hainault's praise of James Douglas in the 1327 campaign:

>'Yone folk ar governyt wittily
And he that ledis is worthi
For avisé worship and wysdome
To governe the empyr off Rome’ (19.471-4).

That Barbour used a herald's account is further supported by the circumstances in which *le Bel* mentions the history. *Le Bel* is describing Edward I chasing Robert Bruce through forests with hound dogs. Barbour describes King Robert being chased by tracker dogs twice, providing two different versions, as discussed below where it is argued that this tale is an example of the oral dissemination central to the chivalric ethos in which *The Bruce* can be interpreted. The tale was orally disseminated, it is argued, and who better to disseminate such tales than a herald, whose range of functions is discussed below but whose primary role was to list and thus transfer such stories in circulation to written record. 'Le

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301 Duncan, p.16.
307 *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, vol. i, p. 111.
Roy Robert’s grading system for the best knights of his time is one that is continually reiterated by Barbour whose narrative is in fact saturated with such a systematization of chivalric topos. However, from le Bel’s wording, it seems certain that he referred to a history made by King Robert, and this is returned to below. In any case it is clear that Barbour consulted a written record for his account of the deeds of the king, and at one point he follows an example of King Robert’s ‘utrageous manheid’ with the comment, ‘Sa did this king that Ik off reid’ (9.101, 102).

Oral dissemination similarly challenges the alleged lost source Duncan claimed Barbour used for Douglas. Duncan argued that the only explanation for James Douglas’s main role in The Bruce is this now lost source. The only support for this is thirty-seven lines of Latin verse by quidam, celebrating Douglas’s deeds and character, which are found in Bower’s Scotichroncion. Duncan argues that this reference in Bower could be the lost life of Douglas that Barbour used. A missing life seems unlikely especially in view of the fact that Barbour specifically states that were all Douglas’s deeds ‘reheris or tell’ his name would last ‘into fill gret renoun’ (8.518-29, see above). This is of course a topos and similar to that made by Barbour and Gray in relation to Edward Bruce as discussed above, but it is a topos that seems redundant if a full buk of James Douglas deeds was open in front of Barbour as he wrote. Duncan argues for a lost life of Douglas in order to explain his presence in the poem but, as discussed below, there is nothing haphazard about the commemoration of Douglas in The Bruce. Barbour did not insert the deeds of James Douglas into a romanys about the ‘gud’ King Robert because he happened to have a life of Douglas at his disposal. Sir James Douglas’s presence in The Bruce is not mere chance. As emphasized above, it is of thaim - both King Robert and Douglas- that Barbour is writing. And the reason why Douglas’s deeds are celebrated is because of his reputation (‘[i]n ser landis renownyt wes he’), which in turn depended on ‘hys price and hys bounte’. And, as Barbour’s use of ‘reheris or tell’ indicates, and the existence of a poem praising his character and deeds further supports, it seems likely that Douglas’s deeds were orally disseminated. Certainly he was well-known and celebrated even in his own lifetime and this is discussed below.

Whatever the truth of these lost sources, Barbour was certainly not, neither in form nor content, a slave to his sources. The sources he refers to are there for a reason as are the characters whose deeds he depicts. What these sources were can be gauged by the exempla

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309 Duncan, p. 27.
applied. As indicated above, Barbour’s allusions are primarily classical: Hector; Fabricius; Hannibal and Scipio; Alexander the Great; Julius Caesar; Tydeus. This has been attributed to classical sources but, as McKim’s thesis has confirmed, Barbour’s influence was romance. Ritchie argued long ago for Barbour’s influence from romance, proposing that *Le roman d’Alexandre* was used by Barbour as a model for his poem. Indeed, he went so far as to credit Barbour with the authorship of *The buik of Alexander*, a translation of two episodes from *Le roman d’Alexandre*: *Les vœux du paon* and *Li fuerres de Gadres*. *Les vœux de paon* was written by Jean de Longuyon c.1310 while *Li fuerres de Gadres* is a separate poem by an unknown ‘Eustache’ that was included in *Le roman d’Alexandre* by Lambert le Tort in c.1199. *Les vœux du paon* celebrates the expedition of Alexander and his men against Clarus, the vows they made beforehand (over a roasted peacock) and the battle of Ephesos. Jean de Longuyon introduced a passage in *Les vœux* on the Neuf Preux or Nine Worthies, gathered from the matters of France, Rome and Britain and from the stories of the Old Testament; they celebrate three classical, three Biblical and three Christian representatives of chivalry: Hector, Alexander and Julius Caesar; Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus; and Charlemagne, Arthur and Godfrey de Bouillon. Each of the Nine became associated with a specific virtue, and they were then used as *exempla* to convey these specific qualities. Hector is celebrated for his prowess. Barbour compares Douglas to Hector in his physical appearance, loyalty, courtesy and wisdom, as mentioned above; but for his prowess, Barbour explains, he dare not compare Hector to anyone: ‘Bot of manheid and mekill mycht/ Till Ector dar nane comper/ Of all that ever in warldys wer’ (402-4). Arthur was celebrated in England, and, as shown below, is used for comparison frequently by Chandos Herald; it was Alexander, however, that proved more

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311 McKim, *The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*, p. 238. See also Skeat (ed.), *The Bruce* for influence from Lucan, Statius, Plutarch, Cato and Virgil, and Kliman, ‘Speech as a mirror of sapientia and fortitudo in Barbour’s *Bruce*’, as mentioned below, for influence from Vegetius.

312 Ritchie, p. xii-ccxxxi where he argues that the description of the battle of Bannockburn is modelled on the battle of Ephesos, the siege of Berwick is copied from the siege of Tyre, the character of Edward Bruce is based on Hector, Emendius and Gadifer and the speeches including Bruce’s address to the troops before Bannockburn are taken from those of Alexander and his knights.

313 Ritchie, p. xxi-li: *Le roman d’Alexandre* consists of four branches of which *Les vœux du paon* makes up the third section and *Li fuerres de Gadres* is part of the second. *Les vœux du paon* was apparently translated first in *The buik of Alexander* with a short prologue and epilogue and then followed by a translation of *Li fuerres de Gadres*.

314 Ibid., chpt. ii, sections 7, 8, 9: pp. xxx-xli.

315 His list was constantly copied and a list of heroines was drawn up in imitation: Ritchie, p. xi note 6. See also Janet Smith, *The French background to Middle Scots literature* p. 6 note 1 for a list.

316 See also Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 123.
popular among a Scottish audience.\textsuperscript{317} The Nine Worthies, an essential and, in many respects, climactic component of 'the historical mythology of chivalry' is treated below. Ritchie’s claims for Barbour’s authorship of \textit{The buik} have since been disproved,\textsuperscript{318} but it is worth remembering that his insistence on the similarities between \textit{The Bruce} and \textit{The buik} were part of his overall argument that \textit{The Bruce} is 'marked by a singularly free use of French terms, subtly pervaded by French idiom and French syntax, quoting French, and containing comparisons drawn from French history and works of French literature [...] in brief, a poem manifestly composed by an archdeacon steeped in French Romance.'\textsuperscript{319} And the similarities he found between \textit{The Bruce} and the matter of \textit{The buik} in fact elucidated the thematic concerns most influential on \textit{The Bruce}, which were the above-mentioned 'comparisons drawn from French history and works of French literature'. Although his argument hinged on \textit{The buik of Alexander} and \textit{The Bruce}, Ritchie paved the way for a later explanation of Barbour’s sources within the tradition of \textit{romans d’antiquité}.

\textsuperscript{317} Writing in the fifteenth century, Andrew of Wyntoun in his \textit{Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland} [Laing] declined to comment on Alexander’s deeds as he felt too many books on Alexander were already in circulation (Book IV, 1262). Keen, \textit{Chivarly}, p. 123 calls Alexander an exemplar of largesse.

\textsuperscript{318} McDiramid (ed.), \textit{Barbour’s Bruce}, pp. 17-32. Apart from \textit{The Bruce} and the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’, there is sufficient evidence to attribute to Barbour, Barbour has been credited with composing \textit{The buik of Alexander}, \textit{The balletis of the nine nobles}, the ‘The Troy Book’ or the Scottish ‘Brut’, and one of the authors of \textit{The legends of the saints}: Ritchie, pp. cxc–cxcii; G. Neilson, \textit{John Barbour, poet and translator} (London, 1900); Mackenzie (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, Appendix E, p. 505. It is argued that the ‘Brut’ and the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ may be one and the same: \textit{The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun} (ed.) A. Amours, vol i, p. lxvi:

Off Brutus lynnage quha will haie
Ze luke the treatus of Barbere
Made in till a geneology (III, 621).

See also Ritchie, p. cxxiii. However, Wyntoun also refers to the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ and the ‘Brut’ separately, which would seem to indicate that the two were different works. It is thought that about 2000 lines from Lydgate’s \textit{Siege of Troy} are from Barbour’s ‘Brut’ as the lines ‘Her endis Barbour and bgynnis the monk’ and ‘Her endis the Monk ande bygnnis Barbour’ would seem to indicate. Skeat rejects this as being by another hand basing his argument on ‘variations in poetical expression in small technical usages, and in the rimes’ (p. xii–xiii). J.E. Wells’ \textit{A manual of the writings in Middle English} (London and Oxford, 1916) offers instead that the Troy fragments are by a different Barbour (p. 203). Barbour is also claimed as the author of \textit{The legends of the saints} but the arguments are inconclusive; Mackenzie accepts his authorship of St Ninian and St Maher, p. xx. the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ and \textit{The balletis of the nine nobles} are discussed below.

\textsuperscript{319} Ritchie, p. clxvii for examples. Ritchie bases his claim on George Neilson’s earlier argument, which was adamantly opposed by J.T.T. Brown (\textit{The Wallace and Bruce restudied}, pp. 90–100) who proposed instead that \textit{The Bruce} was a fifteenth-century edition of Barbour’s original work. The various arguments are recalled in Ritchie, chpt. iv, sec 16 and 17 and Mackenzie (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, p. 505–6. One of the parallel lines between \textit{The Bruce} and \textit{The Buik} appears in the sections from \textit{The Bruce} that Wyntoun uses c. 1420 (\textit{The Bruce} 1.160; \textit{The Buik} 8.8; Wyntoun, Book viii, chpt. ii, 246; Mackenzie, p. 506). Thus a line of translation from \textit{The Buik} dated 1438 occurs in \textit{The Bruce} as borrowed by Wyntoun who wrote before 1420. The main evidence against Barbour’s authorship rests with the colophon date of 1438, which was explained as a scribal error by Mackenzie, Appendix, p. 292 who gives evidence of similar scribal or printing errors in \textit{The Bruce} itself: Book xvi, line 507: ‘And fifteen hundreth men be tale’. MS E has this number as fifty (\textit{The Bruce}, ed. Duncan, Book 16. 501); Hart and C have fifteen. The colophon date of \textit{The buik} stands at 1438; Mackenzie argues that this could be a mistake for 1338 or alternatively, it may be the date of the scribe’s copy rather than the actual work.
Romans d’antiquité, as explained above, developed as a ‘translation’ of an original Latin source into the vernacular in order to reach a larger audience; thus, from the onset, they are defined by their didactic initiative and their avowed conformity to fact (or source), the exact motives behind the composition of The Bruce and La vie, as shown above. McKim argued that Barbour’s sources were primarily romans d’antiquité and not the original classical sources or later adaptations of romans d’antiquité. Past examples were important because they could prevent future calamity; what happened in the past could teach men of their present predicament and, following Aristotle, it was assumed that the future would be like the past. ‘A! Blind folk full off all folly’ (1.91), laments Barbour who argues that had the Scots heeded the examples of how Ireland and Wales had fared under the hand of Edward I they might not have been subjected to his lordship:

Walys ensample mycht have bene
To you had ye it forow sene,
And wys men sayis he is happy
That be other will him chasty,
For unfayr thingis may fall perfay
Als weill to-morn as yhisterday (1.119-124).

The use of examples from French romance implies a contemporary taste for such romance at the court of Robert II; exempla, explained John of Salisbury, drawing on Aristotle, Cicero and Horace, should be relevant and familiar:

ceterum cum exempla ad probandum quid aut plura ferunter aut singular, convenientis esse
debent et ex quibus scimus; qualia Homerus, non quaiia Cherillus si autum ab auctoribus

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320 McKim offers reasons for Barbour’s use of the original roman but also allows for a comparison with versions circulating contemporaneously with The Bruce, and for medieval rather than classical sources for three previously unexplained classical comparisons applied by Barbour: Julius Caesar, Scipio and Hannibal, and Fabricius. The merits and limitations of these approaches are outside the remit of this thesis, which is concerned specifically with how such sources were used by Barbour and Chandos Herald. Fabricius was also used as an example against treason by John of Salisbury, Pollicaticus, v 7 1 p. 310.26 cited by Peter Von Moos, ‘The use of exempla in the Policraticus of John of Salisbury’ in The world of John of Salisbury, ed. Michael Wilks (London, 1984, 1994), pp. 207-61, p. 223. McKim, ‘The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal’, pp. 269-70 for Roman de Thèbes (see above, Chapter 2) as a source for Barbour’s reference to Tydeus; pp. 272-8 for resemblances between The Bruce and Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s Roman de Troie (Benoît de Sainte-Maure, as explained above, used the assumed eyewitness reports of Dares and Dictys, a myth sustained by Barbour: 1. 525-6) or two later derivatives, Guido della Colonna, Historia Destructionis Troiae and the alliterative translation of the Historia Destructionis Troiae, the Gest Hystoriale (c.1350-1400); pp. 281-3 for Barbour’s use of Wace’s Roman de Brut rather than the original Geoffrey of Monmouth. Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p.72 for Barbour’s use of Le roman d’Alexandre and see Ritchie, above, for the fourteenth-century adaptation of Le roman d’Alexandre upon which The buik of Alexander is based. Barbour’s familiarity with Les voeux de paon, especially the Nine Worthies, is considered below.

transumantur, Homer quidem Grecus, Latinus autem Vergillo utatur et Lucano; domestica
namque exempla magis movent, et ignota dubiorum non faciunt fidem.\textsuperscript{322}

John of Lorn compares King Robert to Goll mac Morna (3.67-9), but Barbour then provides
an alternative \textit{ensample} that he feels more fitting. King Robert, he claims was like Gadifer
of Laris (72-87), another example from Old French romance, and \textit{romans d'antiquité} in
particular.\textsuperscript{323}

References not corresponding with \textit{romans d'antiquité},\textsuperscript{324} as clear from the \textit{exempla}
cited above, include the Book of Maccabees, considered below, and Barbour's version of
\textit{Fierabras}, which King Robert reads to his men. The '[r]omanys off worthi Ferambrace',
from the matter of France, celebrated Oliver's display of prowess in his defeat of Fierabras,
who then converted to Christianity;\textsuperscript{325} \textit{Fierabras} is commonly classed as a 'crusading
romance'. Barbour's reference to the romance of \textit{Ferambrace} is believed to be a version of
the original \textit{Fierabras} that no longer remains.\textsuperscript{326} As explained above, analogies should be
apt and \textit{Fierabras} is used by Barbour to reflect the thematic concerns of his narrative. The
story recalled the brave resistance of a small force against a much larger host and King
Robert chose this romance to ' '[c]omfort thaim that war him ner/ And maid thaim gamyn
and solace/ Til that his folk all passyt w as' (3.464-6). Barbour's use of \textit{Fierabras} has been
explored by Cameron who noted that ' \textit{The Bruce} matches the crusading romances in
stylistic features such as the approach to fighting and the de-emphasis of courtly elements
of chivalry' (discussed below) but not so in religious fervour.\textsuperscript{327} She reconciled the fight
between Christian and heathen in 'crusading romances' and Christian against Christian in
\textit{The Bruce} by attributing the role of heathen in the latter to the English. Thus not only was
Barbour applying an apt analogy in his introduction of the story of Fierabras but \textit{The Bruce},
she argued, can be explained as a crusading romance. The dehumanizing of the English
explains the ease with which King Robert and his men can desecrate churches and kill

\textsuperscript{322} John of Salisbury, \textit{Metalogicon} iii 10 pp. 15624-157.11: cited by Von Moos, p. 218: 'When
examples are adduced to prove something [...] they should be relevant and drawn from the things
with which we are acquainted. If examples are taken from authors a Greek should quote Homer, a
Latin Vergil and Lucan. For familiar examples have greater cogency; whereas strange ones lend no
conviction concerning what is doubtful.'

\textsuperscript{323} This example is most likely from \textit{Le roman d'Alexandre}: see Ritchie (ed.), \textit{The buik}, p. xii -
ccxxxi; Duncan (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{324} \textit{Romans d'antiquité} here refer to the matter of Rome and the \textit{Roman de Brut}
for convenience although \textit{romans d'antiquité} are considered as the matter of Rome above, and the \textit{Roman de Brut is}
grouped with similar matter of Britain.

\textsuperscript{325} Duggan, 'Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular
historiography', pp. 293-4.

\textsuperscript{326} ' \textit{The Bruce}: A study of John Barbour's heroic ideal', pp. 283-6 for a summary of the questions
surrounding which version of \textit{Fierabras} was used by Barbour. See also Ritchie, pp. clxx, cxx;
McKim, ' \textit{The Bruce}: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal', p. 284: there were two fourteenth-
century Middle English versions: \textit{Sir Ferumbras} and \textit{The Sowdone of Babylone}.

\textsuperscript{327} Cameron, 'Chivalry in Barbour's \textit{Bruce}', p. 25.
And, as noted by Cameron, the idea of a holy war between the Scots and the English reflects contemporary discourse during the reign of King Robert.\textsuperscript{329} This idea of a ‘patriotic war’ as a holy war is returned to below, but such parallels are not sufficient to classify \textit{The Bruce} as a ‘crusading romance’, which at any rate was not a separate genre but merely reflects the collective concerns of many \textit{chansons} and romances. Furthermore, while Barbour is not shy to denounce the \textit{Inglismen} sheriffs and bailiffs (‘sa wykkyt and covetous/ Ans sa hawtane and dispitoues’: 1.195-6) governing Scotland or the English kings who he sets up as the antithesis to the ‘gud’ King Robert, the English are not depicted as ‘the personification of evil’, as has been suggested.\textsuperscript{330} Barbour does not defame all English knights but, rather to the contrary, is found celebrating some English knights and deeds, as shown below. However, the idea of the crusade was an important component of chivalric culture and a concern that is reflected in \textit{The Bruce}. Also, Cameron’s argument for \textit{The Bruce} as a crusading romance highlights a tension not just in \textit{The Bruce} but within chivalric culture in general: the place of religion in chivalry. An appreciation of the role of religion in romance, discussed below, adds much to an understanding of the reasons behind the promotion of a religious ethos within chivalric culture.

The question of potential sources consulted by Chandos Herald has generated sizeably less speculation and his matter is typically considered within British historiography, as part of fourteenth-century Old French literature, or as an example of ‘chivalric biography’, all of which are outlined above. Chandos Herald appears at first an unlikely choice for a poet but men of war had written before him and would continue to do so long afterwards. Henry of Grosmont, earl of Derby and since 1351 first duke of Lancaster, fought with Edward III in France and later composed his \textit{Livre des seyntz medicines} (1354) and Geoffrey de Charny, mentioned by Chandos Herald (421) and considered one of the best knights of his day, composed his \textit{Livre de chevalerie c. 1350}.\textsuperscript{331}

These works were for the most part in prose. But, by the late Middle Ages, a number of heralds such as Giles le Bouvier, Berry Herald, Lefèvre de St. Remy and Claes Haenen had composed their own accounts, many in verse.\textsuperscript{332} Tyson noted certain similarities between \textit{La vie} and Wace’s \textit{Roman de Rou} and \textit{Brut}, citing similar opening lines, authorial aims and repetition of phrases and ideas; she concedes, however, that this does not necessarily indicate a direct influence by Wace, whose popularity in the fourteenth century is

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., p. 26: \textit{The Bruce}, 5. 305-14, 324-7; 16.444-60; 17. 537-88.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{332} Keen, \textit{Nobles, knights and men-at-arms} p. 77.
confirmed by the number of manuscripts surviving from this period, but may instead point to ‘a literary tradition inspired by him’. As explained above, Tyson also argues for influence from Machaut, and possibly Froissart, on the Herald but follows previous editors of La vie in concluding that the ‘Herald is not an imaginative writer’ and ‘the literary merits of the poem are slight’. Keen however has argued that heralds, the ‘lay priesthood’ of chivalry, performed an increasingly erudite, and literary, function by the late Middle Ages.

The practical functions required of heralds on the battlefields and at tournaments appear at odds with those of the poet and his courtly audience but their worlds were not so far apart. Chandos Herald does much to dissociate himself from his minstrel origins, as discussed above, but this association with court culture has stood him well. The thirteenth-century poet Raoul de Hodenc wrote of men who would teach other men about knighthood and these men he grouped together as heralds, minstrels and jongleurs. Heralds were considered to belong to the same professional class as minstrels; from the time heralds first appear on record during the reign of Edward I and until the fourteenth century, they are categorized with minstrels as menestrali or ministralli. They had two kings: Rex Haroldorum and Alter Rex Haroldorum. It has been suggested that one may have tended more to the affairs of minstrelsy while the other was concerned with matters of arms. The two careers continued to be confused until the role of the herald became more fully developed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. The twelfth and early thirteenth-century image of the itinerant herald travelling from tourney to tourney in search of largesse, an image often associated with minstrels, was replaced instead with a professional learned class of heralds with clearly-defined functions that set them apart from their minstrel origins.

These functions centred on the tournament and battle and are treated below, but such roles guaranteed heralds their status as prime witnesses to be consulted by chroniclers and historians such as Froissart; it was natural that some of these men would then set down

335 Keen, Chivalry, Nobles, knights and men-at-arms in the Middle Ages; idem, ‘Chivalry, heralds and history’ and idem, ‘Heraldy and hierarchy: esquires and gentlemen’ in Orders and hierarchies in late medieval and Renaissance Europe, ed. Jeffrey Denton (London, 1999), pp. 94-108.
336 Raoul de Hodenc, Les ailes de provesse cited in Keen, Chivalry, p. 139.
337 Although heralds do not appear on record before the reign of Edward I, they are referred to for about a century beforehand in French romances and poems: A.R. Wagner, Heralds and heraldry in the Middle Ages: an inquiry into the growth of the armorial function of heralds, esp. pp. 25-6 and Noel Denholm-Young, History and heraldry, 1254-1310 (Oxford, 1965), p. 54.
338 Denholm-Young, p. 54.
339 The image is one drawn by Baudouin de Condé as described by Wagner, pp. 53-4 and Maurice Keen, Chivalry, p. 137.
their own record for posterity. What is interesting is the genealogical, or biographical, slant such records assumed. One of the roles required of a king of arms was to visit his province and record the insignia of all its nobles: heraldic erudition now required an understanding of the laws of nobility and inheritance. The concern was with honouring aristocratic and royal lineage and ‘the general registrars of prowess’ had the best qualifications for the job. Heraldic devices had moved a long way from mere aids to recognition; they became, in effect, a ‘showcase of descent’ illustrating lineage and alliances to display at ceremonies including funerals such as that of the Black Prince in 1376. In many ways, therefore, they were not ‘heralds turned historians’ so much as heralds recording past events as before they had visually recalled the past through hereditary heraldic devices. Whichever way, the effect was to celebrate the ancestry of a great line and thus bring pride and esteem to the patron in question. It is this genealogical concern that connects La vie du Prince Noir with the court of Richard II, as discussed below. And, furthermore, it is their initial connection with minstrels that continues a heraldic association with court culture despite their separate and, as Chandos Herald would have it, superior status. Malcolm Vale has highlighted the popularity of the herald-minstrel-poet combination such as Chandos Herald in courts in north-west Europe into the fourteenth century. And although these professions had long become separate by the time Chandos Herald wrote, their association with one another lingered due to their joint connection with the royal court.

The inventory of the library of the English herald, Thomas Benoit, Clarençieux king of arms (died 1534) reinforces this connection between chevalerie and clergie reflected in the role assumed by late medieval heralds. Aside from books of visitations, rolls recording pedigrees and accounts of ceremonies, works listed included the Chroniques of Froissart, a translation of Giles of Rome’s De regimine principum, the Book of the Nine Worthies, the History of Troy, Geoffroy de Charny’s Livre de chevalerie, Vegetius’s De re militari, Honoré Bonet’s Tree of battles and a French translation of the Old Testament. No inventory for Chandos Herald exists but his range of reading (or listening) can be glimpsed through allusions to the matters of France, Rome and Britain: Oliver and Roland (2796,
Reference to Alexander may imply Jean de Longuyon's fourteenth-century addition to *Le roman d'Alexandre: Les voeux du paon*. This poem, as explained above, commemorates the expedition of Alexander and his men against King Clarus who is also referred to by the Herald (51, 4100). The Bible too is alluded to by the Herald who frequently claims the birth of Christ as the time when last was seen such great battle as that witnessed when the Black Prince and his men took to the field, but this is more a loose statement placing the deeds of the Black Prince in historical time than anything else.\(^\text{347}\) And, in fact, historical figures as they were all considered, Chandos Herald's references to Oliver, Roland, Alexander, Clarus, Julius Caesar and Arthur again place the deeds of the prince in historical perspective. Indeed, it was in their capacity as past examples of the chivalric ideal that these characters from the matters of France, Rome and Britain assumed their place within 'the historical mythology of chivalry', a myth sustained in a large part by the 'lay priesthood of chivalry' whose role it was to place present prowess in historical perspective, as entries from the *Heralds' Rolls* confirm.\(^\text{348}\)

Whether Barbour and Chandos Herald consulted original or second-hand sources it is clear that both authors were substantially influenced by Old French *chansons de geste* and romance themes, *topoi*, *exempla* and structures. *Chansons* were relevant to an audience contemporary with *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* as confirmed by the numerous manuscripts copied during the fourteenth century.\(^\text{349}\) As indicated above, epic heroes were considered historical examples of the virtues attached to the chivalric ideal; their deeds and the values they inspired were imitated by heroes in romance, *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. Romance too was popular among aristocratic audiences; it was the choice for entertainment at the court of Richard II.\(^\text{350}\) According to the Memoranda Roll list compiled in 1384-5, Richard II's books included a 'Romance de Roy Arthure', two *chansons de geste*, the *Questa del Saint Graal*, the *Mori Artu*, a version of the above-mentioned *Fuerre de Gadres*, a two-volume Bible, the *Roman de la rose* and what is thought to be Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte del Graal*.\(^\text{351}\) Romance however was not simply entertainment, it was

\(^{347}\) See, for example, lines 320; 3014-5.

\(^{348}\) Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 140-1 and note 71: arms featured in the thirteenth-century English *Heralds' Rolls* include those of Roland, Gawain and Bevis of Southampton while in the fifteenth century, arms are provided for the Nine Worthies, Charlemagne's paladins and the knights of the Round Table. See also Denholm-Young, *History and heraldry*, p. 52.

\(^{349}\) Duggan, 'Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography', p. 309 notes that a quarter of the surviving corpus of *chansons de geste* manuscripts was copied during the fourteenth century. Many were also transferred into prose. See pp. 310-11.


\(^{351}\) Ibid., pp. 32–3. What is thought to be Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte del Graal* is classified as 'vn Romance de Perciuall et Gawyn'.

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edificatory and, as the the above titles from the matters of France, Rome and Britain indicate, such romances were largely concerned with deeds of war rather than 'courtly love' confirming the impression of an aristocratic audience more interested in historical works than belle-lettres.352

II Old French chanson de geste and romance themes

Sources used indicate influence and place a narrative within a tradition;353 as explained above, for The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir, these sources were largely Old French chansons and romance. It is not intended here to provide an aimless list of prevalent themes from romance and chansons, or to define one in relation to the other, but rather to isolate certain themes from the matters of France, Rome and Britain that were appropriated by Barbour and Chandos Herald. Themes exploited by Barbour and Chandos Herald set the scene for the depiction of deeds illustrating a scale of values. This scale is apparent in both The Bruce and La vie through the exempla and topoi applied by Barbour and Chandos Herald. However, an appreciation of the scale of heroic virtues central to the chivalric ideal was not an end in itself for Barbour and Chandos Herald, and therefore the way in which the thematic matter of Old French chansons and romance were applied by these two authors adds much to an understanding of not only prevailing chivalric considerations but also influential political concerns at the time of composition.

As discussed above, the matters of France, Rome and Britain were believed to have an historical core and their varying levels of historicity were reinforced with the thirteenth-century mise en prose of all three matters. Several central and interrelated themes from chansons de geste and romance are reconciled with the authorial aim of The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir: nobility and chivalry; ancestral deeds; chivalry and violence; the quest and adventure; the crusade and religion; feudal relations and treason.354 Heroes of Old French chansons and romance were noble, often royal, figures: Alexander, Scipio, Hector, Caesar, Charlemagne, Hugh Capet, Louis III, Louis the Pious, and Arthur and his knights.355 Their nobility is an important determinant for the value system, considered below, which centred on their developing cults. Tournaments in the romances of Chrétien de

353 See Morse, Truth and convention, p. 107; Nicholas Trevet began his annals with a reference to Sallust.
354 The use of 'feudal' refers to the duties implied in the relations between lord and vassal as outlined below. Cf Susan Reynolds, Fiefs and vassals (Oxford, 1994; 1996) for qualifications regarding the use of 'feudalism'.
355 Figures from chansons de geste are listed by Duggan in 'Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography' in Historiographie, vol. ii, Grundriss der romancichen literaturen des mittelalters, p. 289.
Troyes limited fighting to knights alone. It was left to a later age to incorporate all men-at-arms into such chivalric pursuits, but romance itself remained in the domain of the court, a "storial thing that toucheth gentillesse". Tournaments, feasts and ceremonies are celebrated by Chrétien and the court of Arthur served as a model court just as Arthur was considered an ideal king used to compare and contrast contemporary monarchs. Arthur was also the model of the warrior king: Wace's Roman de Brut, which paved the way for the development of the roman d'aventure, placed Arthur on the battlefield comforting his troops, a topos that originated with classical convention, became a standard feature of chanson and romance and was appropriated by Barbour and Chandos Herald, as shown below. The emphasis on nobility in the chansons is related to a desire to establish and praise ancestral deeds. Geste could mean 'deeds', 'tales about a hero's exploits' and 'lineage' and 'cycle of songs about a lineage'. This genealogical concern of chansons, and romance, especially the so-called 'matter of England' romances discussed below, provides important thematic and structural impetuses for The Bruce in particular, as outlined below. Chansons depict 'the aristocratic life of the warrior caste', and the knights from the matters of Rome and Britain are similarly concerned with noble deeds performed in support of a chivalric, and combative, ethos. The above-mentioned 'undialectical binarisms' of epic and romance classify epic with warfare and romance with the quest but warfare is central to both:

The real difference lies in the mode of representation, the reduction of combative values from epic's collective subject to single combat in romance. The problem of violence remains identical: both 'genres' problematize its nature and causes, but its representation changes from the mass to the individual.
Warfare provides the opportunity to display deeds worthy of praise and the virtues extolled are virtues amenable to the enactment of such praiseworthy, and violent, deeds, as listed below.

Old French romance focused on the deeds of an individual hero and indeed it is often contrasted with the contemporary verse chronicle for exactly that reason. This concentration on the destiny of the individual as it is revealed through a series of adventures involving violence and the idea of the quest is crucial to The Bruce in particular but also informs the thematic and structural organization of La vie. The court is the centre of the romances of Chrétien de Troyes but for knights to attain virtues they need to leave the court and seek continuous adventure. It is a world of constant proving so that the virtues requisite to the chivalric ideal are re-enacted episode after episode in a thematic and structural repetition confirming Geoffrey de Charny’s maxim ‘qui plus fait, mieux vaut’, he who achieves more is worth more. The adventure and the quest, perhaps the central defining characteristic of romance, not only structured the narrative but determined the matter that was to be included in the romance. Chrétien employed the quest as a means to an end; the adventure was not used by Chrétien, Barbour or Chandos Herald as the end in itself that it would later become. With the adventure determining the thematic content of the romance, priority was given to the deeds recounted on the adventure. The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir, as emphasized above, are above all a record of the deeds of chivalry that their heroes will perform along their quest. Matter not related to this adventure is not included, prompting allegations of bias by modern scholars who have questioned the historicity of The Bruce and La vie based on what they consider calculated omissions by Barbour and Chandos Herald.

Themes in chansons and romance reflect the religious and feudal ideology of the age. The adventure that dominated the chanson de geste was the crusade. It is argued

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364 Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 402: ‘Chrétien’s hero remains a solitary knight - even if he is sometimes accompanied by one or more companions’. See also Spiegel, Romancing the past, chapter 5. E. Jane Burns, ‘Arthurian romance in prose’, p. 67 notes the change from the individual to the collective with the Vulgate Cycle: ‘episodic verse romances that in the preceding century had focused on the exploits of an individual knight are here expanded into a vast cyclic prose narrative chronicling the deeds of whole generations of knights and spanning the entire history of the grail quest’.

365 Southern, The making of the Middle Ages, p. 243.

366 Livre de chevalerie, p. 48, line 18 and this is repeated throughout.

367 Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’ for examples of the appropriation of the adventure as an end in itself.

368 See Gaucher, La biographie chevaleresque, p. 112.

369 The crusade was not exclusive to chansons de geste: Keen, Chivalry, pp. 108-9 for the Roman d’Alexandre and its analogy with the crusade.
that *chansons* ‘helped to shape the mentality that made the crusade possible.’

The struggle between the pagan and Christian world framed the religious tone of the *chansons* and established the good, the Christian, as opposed to the heathen, the other and the enemy, in a simplified system of absolutes amenable to appropriation by romance and prompting classifications of *The Bruce* as a ‘crusading romance’, as discussed above. Indeed, as argued by McKim, Barbour delivers his message through the use of ‘binary opposites’: ‘Thus contrar thingis evermar/ Discoveryngis off the tother ar’ (1.241-2).

It is all the more striking therefore where such a system of absolutes is not applied by Barbour thus highlighting the tension in *The Bruce* between an international cult of chivalry and the insular, or national, concept of the community of the realm fostered by the court of Robert I and, it is argued below, his grandson, Robert II, for whose court *The Bruce* was composed.

This religious framework similarly shaped the Arthurian Vulgate Cycle in the quest for the Grail. How a religious ethos informs, but does not dominate, the chivalric creed influencing Barbour and Chandos Herald’s depiction of their heroes forms an important part in the construction of the concept of chivalry, and is most evident in exploitation of the virtue of piety considered below. And, following Chrétien, religious observance also indicated nobility: a pious disposition was considered the mark of the well bred.

Mirroring as they do contemporary society, *chansons* and romance are governed by a system of feudal relations where the duties of a lord and the duties of a vassal are determined by personal relationships. Feudal romance motifs established the importance of the lord’s dignity, his capacity to keep his word, his defence of his land and his vassal, and the administration of power. A vassal in turn was shown in romance to respect, love, obey and support his lord, all of which is governed by the virtue of loyalty as it was understood within a fourteenth-century chivalric context, which is discussed below. Many epic characters act on behalf of the primary hero and, through their loyalty to their lord and his cause, become heroes in their own right and are celebrated as such. Sir James Douglas is such a type. The primary motivating force is loyalty; its opposite is treason. Treason is a dominant theme in *chansons de geste* and linked to ‘the deliberate purveying of bad advice’

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374 Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 291: epic characters that fall into the category of those fighting on behalf of others, and whose historical existence is questionable, are Roland, Oliver, the sons of Aimeri de Narbonne and Ogier le Danois.
by evil counsellors. Conversely, loyalty to King Robert and the Black Prince is clear from the good counsel they receive from their men. The traitor is presented as an obstacle to the hero’s enterprise. Treason is presented in romance as a calamitous force, the reason for the hero’s fall and the cause of great destruction for the hero and his world. Treason, above all, is presented as an act of disloyalty, prompted by greed, and is explicitly described as such by Barbour. Together with all the themes considered above, treason is explored within the discussion of virtues that follows a brief consideration of Old Testament themes.

III The Old Testament

Biblical parallels had long been drawn by the writers of *chansons de geste* and romance, and translations of the Bible into the vernacular were made throughout the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The matter of Rome, as discussed above, provided an anachronistic representation of the ancient world in contemporary chivalric terms, which sustained the belief of a past golden age of chivalry to which a contemporary audience longed to return. The matter of the Bible operated in a similar manner but with an additional ideological dimension fostered by the exploitation of the virtue of piety within a chivalric creed, as discussed below. Chandos Herald’s Biblical references, as discussed above, treat Jesus and God in chivalric terms. Honoré Bonet described how ‘it is no great marvel if in this world there arise wars and battles, since they existed first in heaven’. Virtues and ideals creating and sustaining a chivalric ethos were imbued with religious symbolism through the identification of Biblical with chivalric time. The stories of the Bible, and the Old Testament in particular, formed part of chivalric culture and provided examples of the chivalric ideal. It is as exemplars of knighthood that King David, Joshua and Judas Maccabeus take their place in the Nine Worthies.

Judas Maccabeus, as discussed below, was the perfect knight for Geoffrey de Charny because he combined prowess with piety and ‘he died in a holy way in battle like a saint in paradise’. Barbour compared Edward Bruce to Judas Maccabeus because of his celebrated feats against a ‘multitud of men’ (14.315). It is his endurance of great hardship that prompts Robert Bruce’s comparison to Judas in the Declaration of Arbroath (1320) and the *Gesta Annalia II*, as discussed below.

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376 Gaucher, *La biographie chevaleresque*, p. 133.
377 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 120.
379 *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 100, section, 35, line 158.
Dominum Robertum, qui pro populo et hereditate suis de minibus inimicorum iiberandis, quasi alter Maccabeus aut Joshua, labores et taedia, inedias et pericula laeto sustinuit animo. Tanquam alter Machabaeus, manum mittens ad fortia, pro fratribus librandis, innumerous et importabiles diei aestus, et frigoris, et famis, in terra et in mari, subiit labores, non inimicorum tantum, sed etiam falsorum fratrum insidias, et taedia, inedias, et pericula laetanter amplectendo.

This ability to persevere in the face of great suffering is central to Barbour’s depiction of King Robert, as discussed below. Judas could be appropriated in different ways and he is used by Langtoft as a model for Edward I but he remained a chivalric ideal whether it is his prowess or piety that is emphasized. The defence of Israel against the pagans by the Maccabees was interpreted within an international chivalric context as a precedent for the crusade. And the idea of the crusade or the just war was amenable to appropriation by the historiography of the Scottish wars of independence including *The Bruce*, as discussed below. Moreover, participation in a just war does not necessarily entail a crusade:

No one can and should excuse himself from bearing arms in a just cause, whether for his lord or for his lineage or for himself or for the Holy Church or to defend and uphold the faith or out of pity for men and women who cannot defend their own rights.

And, it is the means by which a man can save his soul.

The story of the Maccabees had a particular resemblance to the Scottish situation, a point not missed by Barbour. Much has been written on Barbour’s use of the Book of Maccabees and the role of the story of the Maccabees within fourteenth-century Scottish historiography in general, and the Declaration of Arbroath in particular. The plight of the Scots is directly compared to that of the Maccabees:

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380 ‘A letter from the Scottish magnates to John XXII. Arbroath Abbey, 6 April, 1320’ in Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, pp. 779-82 and translated as (p. 780):

381 *Gesta Annalia* as attributed to Fordun in *Johannis de Fordun, Chronica gentis Scotorum*, CXII and noted by McKim, ‘“Gret price off chewalry”: Barbour’s debt to Fordun’, pp. 14-15.


384 *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 95, section 40, lines 15-18.

385 Ibid., p. 96, section 40, lines 33-4.
Thai were lik to the Machabeyes
That as men in the bibill seys
Throw thar gret worship and valour
Faucht into mony stalwart stour
For to delyver thar countrre
Fra folk that throu iniquite
Held thaim and thairis in thrillage.
Thai wrocht sua throu thar vassalage
That with few folk thai had victory
Off mycht kingis as sayis the story,
And delyveryt thar land all fre,
Quharfor thar name suld lovyt be (1 465-76).

The comparison is straightforward: although outnumbered, through their ‘great worship and valour’ the Maccabees, like the Scots, delivered their country free and therefore their name should be acclaimed; their country was held from them ‘throu iniquite’.386 It is their faith and their just cause that are stressed. The importance of keeping faith explains King Robert’s pains to keep his men from despair, which he describes as the worst thing possible:

‘For disconford, as then said he,
Is the werst thing that may be,
For throu mekill discomforting
Men fallis oft into disparing
And fra a man disparyt be
The utraly vencusyt is he,
And fra the hart be discumfyt
The body is not worth a myt’ (3.191-8).

‘Tharfor,’ he said, ‘atour all thing/ Kepyis you fra disparyng’ (199-200). They should have faith in their situation because they are fighting for a just cause, as King Robert explains to his men before the battle of Bannockburn: ‘we haf the rycht/ And for the rycht ay God will fycht (12.235-6). It was for ‘our lyvis/ And for our childer and for our wyvis/ And for our fredome and for our land’ that ‘Ar strebyeit in bataill for to stand’ (145-8) as opposed to Edward II and his army who ‘thouccht our fayis haf mekill mycht/ Thai have the wrang, and succundry/ And covatys of senyoury/ Amovys thaim foroutyn mor’ (296-299). From the onset, Barbour has the lord Bruce state that he is assured of his right to rule the kingdom: ‘I will blythly apon me ta/ The state, for I wate that I have rycht’ (1.507-8). And, although outnumbered, they will succeed like the Maccabees ‘throu thar vassalage/ That

386 See also McKim, ‘The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal’, p. 95 note 54.
with few folk thai had victory.' The Maccabees are therefore an excellent precedent for the Scottish struggle that sought to reinstate the right state of affairs against a tyrannical lordship and the parallel has encouraged emphasis on the meaning of freedom in *The Bruce*, which has therefore been interpreted largely within the context of a national struggle.

The merits and limitations of this approach are treated below but the Scottish struggle is comparable to that of the Maccabees in that it is a collective enterprise. King Robert, as discussed below, is shown at all times to work towards a communal goal. And his murder of John Comyn, and specifically the existence of an alleged pact, can be explained on similar grounds. Comyn had reneged on a pact that Bruce had agreed to in order to free his people. It was because he saw the whole kingdom so oppressed that the lord Bruce decided on a course of action:

Thys lord the Bruce I spak of ayr
Saw all the kynryk swa forfayr,
And swa troublyt the folk saw he
That he tharoff had gret pità (1.477-80).

Comyn’s treachery is therefore a treachery towards the Scottish people and not just Robert Bruce. Similarly, it was seeing a fellow Jew sacrifice idols according to the law of the invading King Antiochus that provoked Mathathias to slay him on the altar in the city of Modin. He also killed another man in service to King Antiochus at the same time. And Bruce and his men murdered Sir Edward Comyn ‘[a]nd othir mony off mekill mày n’ at the same time and place that Sir John Comyn was killed. The precedent for the murder on the altar is apt. Moreover, Barbour’s depiction of the murder of Comyn employs a similar descriptive framework to that of the Book of Maccabees. But, above all, it is Comyn’s treachery towards his people that Barbour is reinforcing through his record of the breach of the alleged pact between Bruce and Comyn. Bruce’s murder of Comyn is immediately sanctioned by Barbour who has the bishop of St Andrews connect Bruce to his ‘land’:

‘I haiff gret hop he sal! be king
And haiff this land all in leding’ (2.89-90).

Furthermore, the bishop alludes to Bruce’s kingship as preordained by associating his bid for the throne with the fulfilment of the prophecy of Thomas of Ercildune (85-7). Clearly a kingship is being legitimised, as discussed below, and this is reinforced through the parallel

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387 Ibid., pp. 95, 121, for an emphasis on the importance of the comparison for the defeat of the few against the many.
388 1 Maccabees 2. 22-5.
389 See also McKim, ‘*The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*’, pp. 221-2 for further comparison between *The Bruce* and the Book of Maccabees.
from the Book of Maccabees where it is the act of treachery towards the kingdom of Israel that prompts the Maccabees’ struggle against a more powerful force in order to regain what is rightfully theirs.

III. Chivalric virtues

The matters of France, Rome and Britain are, above all, a ‘celebration of the already known’, a ‘confirmation of values coupled with a remembrance of past heroes whose actions preserved the social group’. A didactic objective informed by a chivalric ethos created a system of values for knights using knights. Exemplars of knighthood such as Barbour’s ‘the Bruys’ and Chandos Herald’s ‘noble Prince’ joined the ‘private pantheon of heroes’ promoted by a literature centred on a range of virtues projecting a chivalric ideal. Such a value system had become increasingly intricate by the fourteenth century. Cults centred on heroes from romance and chansons were created, culminating in the fourteenth-century development of the concept of the Neuf Preux or Nine Worthies. Such cult figures were considered historical; all three matters, as detailed above, were concerned to present themselves as true. The virtues they embodied were promoted as a code of behaviour, a set of instructions for knights to imitate. As shown above, these virtues are constantly reiterated throughout The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir; they are expressed through the use of exempla or parallels from romance where the values chosen by Barbour and Chandos Herald for illustration are attached to heroes from the past, a characteristic feature of heroic literature in general.

An incessant repetition of the virtues embodied by the heroes of The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir further reinforces the mobile quality of the chivalric value system, which depended on continuous adventures involving much suffering and providing opportunities for the hero to prove his worth and, therefore, for the author to reaffirm constantly a selection of virtues requisite to the chivalric ideal. It was with gret pité (3.552) that King Robert listened to the adventures (aventuris, 3.550) related by his men: ‘That he ne had pite and plesaunce/ Quhen that he herd mak remembrance/ Off the perellys that passyt by’ (557-9). For perils recalled later can bring men much comfort, as long as there was no shame:

To tell off paynes passyt by
Plesys to heryng petuislt,
And to rehers thar auld dise
Dois thaim oftsys comfort and ese,
With-thi tharto follow na blame

Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 285. Duggan’s comments here are directed at epic alone.

Dishour wiktyns na schame (3.561--66).

Sir James Douglas endured much trial and tribulation before he came to such great fame: ‘Bot wonderly hard thing fell/ Till him or he till state wes brocht’ (1.297-8). In fact, following Charny’s maxim, ‘qui plus fait, mieux vault’, it was because of all Sir James’s ‘hard travalys and barganyngis’ that ‘his price doublyt be’ (308-9), confirming Geoffrey de Charny’s advice to knights:

One should therefore take far greater account of undertakings involving physical hardship and danger which the great lords are prepared to and do embark on of their own free will without any need to do so other than to achieve personal honour, with no further expectation of any reward for the money and effort which they devote to performing these great deeds of arms.392

The Black Prince and his company similarly endured much hardship and great suffering:

Touz les compagnons de la galle
Retournerent en Acquitaine;
Mais avant eurent moult de paine (1994-6).

Never did any man embark on so perilous an adventure as the Spanish expedition, the Herald has the princess cry as the Black Prince takes his leave from Bordeaux: ‘Car tut li monde dist ensi/ Q’onqes nulle homm e ne s’enbaty/ En voiage si perilouse’ (2067-9). Not since the death of Christ did anyone endure such hardship:

Mais puis qe Dieux le droiturer Mais moult y suffrist de duretee
Suffri mort pur nous en la crois A passer, c’este chose certaine
Ne fuist passage si estroiz (2296-8) Lui noble Prince d’Aquitaine (2358-60).

Adventures undertaken demanded perseverance to overcome this great hardship,393 and it was during the adventure, as exemplified by the Duke of Lancaster, that virtues were on display:

Et de l’autre part lui noble ducs
De Lancastre, plain de vertus,
Si noblement se combatoit
Qe chescun s’en merveilloit.
En regardant sa grant prouesce,
Coment, par sa noble hautesse,
Mettoit son corps en aventure (3295-3301).

And for Barbour and Chandos Herald, as explained above, this adventure was battle.

392 Livre de chevalerie, p. 59, lines 77-82.
393 See also lines 2882-4.
The following examination of key virtues embodied by the heroes of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* clarifies to what extent a code of behaviour, if any, informed a late medieval understanding of the concept of chivalry. Such values were an active shaping force in the contemporary society for which these narratives were intended and are all too often bracketed within an anachronistic appreciation of the virtues lauded, which, concomitantly, produces a distorted picture of both romance and chivalry. Qualities embodied by the heroes of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* correspond with an older tradition of heroic literature from which *chanson de geste* and romance values developed.\(^{394}\) *Chansons* praise wisdom, bravery, strength, skill, generosity, piety and faithfulness, which correspond for the most part with the values displayed by the heroes of romance.\(^{395}\) Such qualities resonate with the quintessential chivalric virtues embodied by King Robert, Sir James Douglas, the Black Prince and the secondary heroes of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. However, although the virtues emphasized by Barbour and Chandos Herald accord with values requisite to the chivalric ideal on display in romance, they are interesting not for their empty fulfilment of obligatory criteria for knighthood but for the didactic impulse governing their implementation: 'Romance is not simply a literature of celebration or agreement; it is a literature of debate, criticism, reform.'\(^{396}\) A defining characteristic of romance and chivalric literature, therefore, as with the chivalric values such a literature espoused, is this active quality; it is a literature that could and was mobilized to serve specific functions. This is particularly clear in *The Bruce* where Barbour reconciles specific virtues with compositional interests detailed below. However, not only was authorial intention projected through the thematic celebration of specific virtues but *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* also illuminate a late fourteenth-century appreciation of chivalric culture.

Examining two manuscripts, one of which includes the text of *La vie du Prince Noir*, Gervase Mathew isolated the values celebrated in these sources as the ideals of late

\(^{394}\) Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 104: the early *chansons de geste* displayed a set of characteristics similar to and evolving from older Germanic literature such as *Beowulf*.

\(^{395}\) Duggan, ‘The epic’, pp. 18-22 and Ruck, *An index of themes and motifs in twelfth-century French Arthurian poetry*, the *preudhomme* of twelfth-century Arhtuian romance typically displays the following qualities: fearlessness; courage; eagerness to fight, disappointment at missing a fight; desire for adventure; desire for glory; knight relates adventure; and fame as a fighter. See also Peter Noble, ‘The epic hero in thirteenth-century French chronicles’ in *The Medieval chronicle III. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle, Utrecht 12-17 2002*, ed. Erick Kooper (Amsterdam and New York, 2004), pp.135-6: epic heroes must be physically and mentally brave and have the capacity to endure great hardship; they must be skilled warriors, loyal and have a strong Christian faith.

medieval knighthood. The values he stressed were prowess, loyalty, *pitie*, justice, *largesse, franchise* and *courtoisie*, all of which are found in *The Bruce*, *La vie to Prince Noir* and countless contemporary romances and romance-influenced narratives. The virtues celebrated by *The Bruce* and *La vie* are nothing new but how they are adapted to the chivalric climate in which they were composed explains why they were important for Barbour and Chandos Herald. *The Bruce* and *La vie* revamp traditional heroic virtues and reconcile them with a particular objective. The reiteration of a system of virtues throughout these narratives is not merely formulaic. Through the incantation of these virtues a contemporary appreciation of the concept of chivalry is revealed. Furthermore, the values celebrated by *The Bruce* and *La vie* provide the inspiration for their composition; they are values that establish and reaffirm the identity of the audience for which these narratives were intended. These values are an active force shaping an argument and this is particularly clear in *The Bruce*. Throughout *The Bruce* there is an ongoing argument for the celebration of key virtues that are appreciated as a hierarchy. Deciphering the hierarchy facilitates an interpretation of the narrative. Prowess, loyalty and piety are the most important virtues celebrated by Barbour and Chandos Herald. Prowess is crucial to a definition of chivalry and is in many ways the master virtue. The heroes of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* exude a pious disposition. However, far more than simply a virtue espoused, piety functions as the entire framework for the chivalric ethos that informs these narratives; and, for this reason, it is found below in Chapter 5 as part of a discussion of chivalry. An appreciation of loyalty is central to any evaluation of *The Bruce*. Together with prowess it is the virtue most celebrated by Barbour. Through loyalty a system of personal relations is exposed and these relations depend on several subset interrelated virtues such as *courtoisie, pitie, largesse, franchise* and justice. These virtues, in their turn, are central to an understanding of nobility and royalty in *The Bruce* and *La vie*.

III.i Prowess

Any understanding of chivalry is dependant on an appreciation of prowess, a difficult concept to define and one that equates directly with chivalry at times, as discussed below. The word *prowes* is used in *The Bruce* in relation to Sir Ingram d'Umphraville, who was 'rjenomm yt off sa hey prowes' and King Robert whose heart was found to be 'o]ff all bounte and all prowes' (9.507; 20.240). It was in the heart that such things were judged, as discussed below. An anachronistic appreciation of the qualities involved in the concept of

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prowess combines bravery, strength and bold courage, which are referred to by Barbour as **hardyment, bounté, valour, worschip, manheid** and **vassalage**. These are words attributed to all worthy knights, and especially to Barbour’s four main heroes—King Robert I, Sir James Douglas, Sir Edward Bruce, and Sir Thomas Randolph—from their introduction in the narrative:

King Robert off Scotland/ That hardy wes off hart and hand (1.27-8)
And gud Schir James off Douglas/ That in his tyme sa worthy was/ That off hys price and hys boute (1.29-31)
Schyr Edward that wes sa hardy (2.480)
[Randolph] we sua curageous ane knycht/ Sa wys, sa worthy and sa wycht/ And off sa soverane gret bounté (10.277-9).³⁹⁸

Sir Walter Steward may be added to this list; his early death ended both his potential for bold deeds and his space in *The Bruce*. For his ‘gret bounté’, he is commended above others (17.919).³⁹⁹ **Hardyment, bounté, valour, worschip, manheid** and **vassalage**, in effect, what is understood by prowess, are reinforced throughout the narrative through numerous encounters with many worthy opponents.⁴⁰⁰

Chandos Herald uses the word *proesce* more frequently (67; 138; 142; 3299) but also applies a similar array of terms to Barbour that constitute an anachronistic definition of the qualities equated with prowess: *valoir, bountée; vasselage*; to be *vailliant, hardy*. Such qualities are embodied by the hero from his birth:

Cil franc prince, dount je vous di,
Depuis le jour q’il fuist nasqui
Ne pensa forsqe loiautee,
Fraunchise, valour et bountee
Et si fuist garniz de proesce (63-7).

They are evident in his childhood and throughout his life (68-79); they are, in effect, innate. But such qualities are increased with practice and therefore, from youth, it was important  

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³⁹⁸ Thomas Randolph is introduced in the narrative at 2.466 when he becomes King Edward I’s man in return for his life and again at 9.746-53 when he reprimands the king for using *slycht* instead of ‘playne fechtyng’, as discussed below. However, it is not until 10.261-304 when Randolph is granted the earldom of Moray that he is ‘prisyt soverandly’ (304) by Barbour for the first time. ³⁹⁹ Walter Stewart is again introduced in the narrative before this but fulsome praise is awarded to him following demonstrations of valiant deeds such as in the example cited above. See 17.220-57. ⁴⁰⁰ *Hardyment, bounté, valour, worschip, manheid, mycht, vassalage* and *prowes* are attached to specific situations reflecting bravery, courage, bold and valiant deeds, and heroic skill; but, in order to explore Barbour’s appreciation of such qualities, ‘prowess’, which requires all the above virtues as it is understood in a modern sense, will be used as the umbrella-word for convenience.
for the prince to exhibit a desire to perform feats of arms, as Charny advises all knights who wish to find ‘the truest and most perfect form’ of the practice of arms.\textsuperscript{401}

Prowess ensured that knights would be \textit{bauld} and ‘douchty of deid.’\textsuperscript{402} Prowess, according to Mathew, demanded an acquired skill-at-arms and the natural qualities of ‘indominability and rashness’ (\textit{magnanimitas} and \textit{audacia}).\textsuperscript{403} This is the most indicative and basic level of an appreciation of prowess. Once acquired, skill-at-arms is sustained through continuous combat where it is typically demonstrated by an epic blow that cuts an opponent (and sometimes his horse) in two,\textsuperscript{404} a theme later appropriated by romance,\textsuperscript{405} and used by Barbour to describe King Robert’s encounter with Sir Henry de Bohun, when with one blow he cut through de Bohun’s helmet slicing his head to his brains. The force of the blow broke his hand shaft in two (12.43-60). Similar scenes illustrating King Robert’s heroic strength are found throughout \textit{The Bruce}, as explained below. As is clear from the epic blow, skill-at-arms was a bloody and violent business, and this aspect of prowess is also treated below. Skill in battle is directly equated with prowess by the Herald who records how men of ‘hardi corage’ gave proof of their \textit{vesselage} through use of sword and hand:

\begin{quote}
\text{Car plus de cent foitz celi jour} \\
\text{S'avalerent, sanz nulle sojourn,} \\
\text{Les glaives trenchantz en lour mains,}
\end{quote}
\textsuperscript{406}

\textit{Livre de chevalerie}, pp. 55-6, section 16, lines 1-2; 4-16:

It is embodied in those who, from their own nature and instinct, as soon as they begin to reach the age of understanding, and with their understanding they like to hear and listen to men of prowess talk of military deeds […] and as they increase in years, so they increase in prowess and in skill in the art of arms in peace and in war; and as they reach adulthood, the desire in their heart grows even greater to ride horses and bear arms. And when they are old enough and have reached the stage where they can do so, they do not seek advice nor do they believe anyone who wants to counsel them against bearing arms at the first opportunity, and from that time forward, on more and more occasions...

See also pp. 82-3, section 34, lines 9-15.

\textsuperscript{402} \textit{The Bruce}, 8.116; 11.322, 330.

\textsuperscript{403} Gervase Mathew, ‘Ideals of knighthood in late fourteenth-century England’, p. 358.

\textsuperscript{404} Joseph J. Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 290.


\begin{quote}
vos am puis je dire plus de .M., car je l’aloie touz jorz sivant por veoir les merveilles qu’il faisoit; si li vi occire a .V.cox.V. chevaliers et de moi meesmes vos di je quil fandoit pres que par mi les chevax et les chevaliers et de moi meesmes vos di je quil fandi mon escu en .II moitiez et trancha ma sele et coupa mon cheval par mi les espaules, et tot a .1. sol cop
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{406} Alexandre Micha, ed., \textit{Lancelot, 9 vols}. (Geneva, 1979), vol. 4, 198-99:

\begin{quote}
I could recount more than a thousand fine blows, for I followed that knight every fine step to witness the marvelous deeds he did; I saw him kill five knights and five men-at-arms with five blows so swift that he nearly cut horses and knights in two. As for my own experience, I can tell you he split my shield in two, cleaved my saddle and cut my horse in half at the shoulders, all with a single blow
\end{quote}

Et par force, soiez certains,  
Ils les fesoient reculer. (2766-7; 2768-2773).\textsuperscript{406}

Magnanimitas and audacia demanded that the hero be brave, fearless and display 'hardyment':

Lo! how hardyment tane [shown] sa sudandly  
And drevyn to the end scharply  
May ger oftsys unlikely thingis  
Cum to rycht fayr and gud endingis  
As it fell into this cas her. (The Bruce, 9.637-41).\textsuperscript{407}

Deeds of personal prowess were essential in a leader who through his great courage could inspire his men to follow suit:

For folk foroutyn captaine  
Bot thai the better be apayn  
Sall nocht be all sa gud in deid  
As thai a lord had thaim to leid  
That dar put him in aventur  
But abaysing to take the ure  
Tha God will send (9.63-9).

'The king that stout wes stark and bauld' (10. 112) with 'gret vasselage' encouraged such hardyment in his men, '[t]hat thai na perellwald forsak (16. 200-2)'. King Robert took 'his ledder in hand' during the attack on Perth as as 'ensample to his men' (9.389-90). He was the second, Barbour 'herd say', to climb the wall (416-7). 'Worthy and of gret vasselagis' at all times (12.233), King Robert won thirteen castles in one year as Barbour recounts (9.662-4).' His hardyment prevents his men from despair:

Apon this wis the noble king  
And quhen the kingis men sa stoutly  
Gaff all his men recomforting  
Saw him rycht at the fyrst meting  
Throu hardy contenance of cher  
Foroutyn dout or abaysing  
That he maid on sa gud maner.  
Have slayne a knycht sua at a strak  
Thaim thocht that na myscheiff mycht be  
Sic hardyment tharat gan thai tak  
Sa gret with-thi thai him mycht se  
That thai come on rycht hardly (12.62-7).  
Befor thaim sua tha thaim suld greve  
That ne his worschip suld thaim releve (11.505-12)

\textsuperscript{406}See also lines 2794-8.  
\textsuperscript{407}This is translated by Duncan as 'Look how boldness, shown without hesitation and driven ruthlessly to a conclusion, can often cause an unlikely situation to come to a right fair and good conclusion, just as befell the case here.' Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 352.
Through his *utrageous manheid* King Robert wins men to his cause, ensures the loyalty of his men, as discussed below, and secures his place as leader:

> Bot he that throu his gret noblay
> Till perallis him abandonys ay
> To recomfort his menye
> Gerris thame be off sa gret bounte
> That mony tyme unlikely thing
> Tha bring rycht weill to gud ending (9.102, 95-100).

Men fighting under Sir Thomas Randolph and Sir Edward Bruce in Ireland through courage from their brave example: ‘for that gret vasselage/ Thar men sic hardyment gan tak’ (16.200-1). Defined in light of the leader demonstrating great prowess that will in turn ensure his men’s support and subservience highlights the reciprocal, or feudal, dimension inherent in prowess as in all chivalric virtues, as discussed below. For now it is important to stress that prowess proved a leader’s worth and that a display of prowess, therefore, provided value and identity for men-at-arms, and those typically not at arms too such as William Sinclair, ‘the gud’ bishop of Dunkeld. Despite his ostensible adherence to the supranational entity of the universal church, ‘the gud’ bishop prioritized his allegiance to his community and, a robe covering his armour, proved his courage to his men; in return, they followed him into battle without ‘drede or aw’ (16.580-629).408

Similarly, it was the Black Prince’s strength in battle that ensured his domination; it established his right to lead and, in resonance with Charny’s guidelines, inspired love and loyalty from his men, as elaborated below.409 The Black Prince, like Sir James Douglas described below, was loved by his friends and feared by his enemies:

> Li veisin et li enemi
> Avoient grant doute de li,
> Car tant fuist haute sa vaillance
> Qe par tut regnoit en puissance (1633-6).

There was no man living, claimed Fernandez de Castro, who could challenge the Black Prince’s great valour and courage:

> ‘Moult par est prodhomme et hardiz,

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408 Similarly, a friar in the company of Sir James Douglas concealed his armour with his great hood and upon a 'stalwart hors', spear in hand he charged into battle with Douglas and his men (18.300-319). This is further testimony, as argued by Barbour, to the great courage Douglas inspired in his men.

409 *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 59, section 18, 114-17: ‘for the great lord had them in his company and loves, honours, and values them, and rewards them, and they respect him, love, honour and esteem him for the great valour they see in him in addition to the love, honour and reward he has bestowed on them.’
Not since the time that Christ was born was anyone so valiant: ‘Qe depuis le temps qe Dieux nasqui/ Ne fuist plus vaillant de son corps’ (102-3). The prince leads the way in battle and through his courage the field is won:

Lui noble Prince de valour  
De la bataille avoit l’avantgarde  
Si c’ome doit bien prendre garde,  
Car par lui et par sez vertus  
Fuist lui champ gaignez et vaincus (352-6).

He was always eager for battle (desirer de la bataille, 2895); his example of prowess rescues his father at Calais,

Et lui noble Prince son filtz,  
Qui moult feust vaillant et hardis,  
La combati vaillament  
Qu’il rescout veritablement  
Par force son pire le roi (429-33).

and prevents his men from despair:

Et lui noble Prince de pris  
Se combatoit moult vaillamment  
Et, en reconfortant sa gent,  
Distoit: ‘Seigniour, pur Dieu merci.  
Pensez de bien ferir; veietz me cy’ (1240-4).

Above all, prowess required the strength to face and overcome great danger and avoid any cowardly retreat. The Herald’s record equates a display of courage with a demonstration of vesselage in battle:

Et cils, qui moult eurent vertus,  
Come gent de hardi corage  
Lour moustroient lour vesselage (2766-8).

Sir James Douglas, argues Barbour, achieved great fame through his perseverance in the face of danger:

Quharfor in all hys lyvetyme he  
Wes in gret payn and gret travail,  
And never wald for myscheiff faill  
Bot dryve the thing rycht to the end (1.307-11).
King Robert tells his men of the example of Caesar who battled the odds ‘[t]o end the purpose that he wald tak’ (3.279). The importance of this ability to ‘dryve the thing rycht to the end’ is reinforced throughout *The Bruce*, which announces its intention to record ‘the dedys/ Of stalwart folk’ who ‘[W]an gret price off chevalry/ And war vovdyt off cowardy’ (1.18-19, 25-26).

Cowardice is presented as the antithesis of chivalry. Barbour has King Robert ask his men before the battle of Bannockburn to avoid ‘cowardys’ and ‘abaysing’, translated as ‘holding back’ (12.266). Sir James Douglas’s ‘gret hardyment’ gave his men such ‘[c]omfort’ that ‘na man thocht on cowardys’ (15.394-6). Men of great courage (bounté) are listed in Sir Edward Bruce’s retinue to accompany him on his campaign in Ireland; it was important such men be without ‘drede or effray’ (14.19, 43). King Robert’s brave fights against the odds (discussed below) are set in contrast to the picture of Edward II fleeing the field at Bannockburn (13.282-94). Barbour records the great sadness at the death of Sir Giles d’Argentine, who continued fighting explaining to King Edward II that he never yet fled a battle and would remain in the fight:

‘And I cheys her to bid and dey
Than for to lyve schamly and fley’ (13.306-8).

Sentiments expressed by heroes of romance accord with d’Argentine’s words. Honour, discussed below, was prioritized within the chivalric system of values and d’Argentine here is following the conduct of the ideal knight in the Prose Lancelot and Charny’s manual of chivalry:

A knight should not, for fear of death, do anything which can be seen as shameful, rather he should be more afraid of shame than of suffering death.410

And while the cowards have a great desire to live and a great fear of dying, it is quite the contrary for the men of worth who do not mind whether they live or die, provided their life be good enough for them to die with honour.411

Sir Ralph Cobham ‘wes renownyt for best of hand / Off a knycht off all In gland’ (*The Bruce*, 18.429-31) but because he withdrew in a fight while Sir Thomas Ughtred stayed, Sir Thomas was ‘prisit our [over] him’ (436). Barbour has King Robert comfort his men using the *exemplum* of Scipio’s defence of Rome, as mentioned above. King Robert’s concluding comments are telling:


411 *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 70, section 22, lines 45-8. See also p. 71, section 23, lines 18-19: ‘one should dread vile cowardice more than death’.
Men who make war should ‘stand agayne thar fayis mycht’ sometimes with strength and sometimes with *slycht*; if the choice is to die or live as cowards, they should choose to ‘dey chevalrusly’. Following the example of d’Argentine, men should choose to stay and die rather than to flee and live in shame. They should also note that it is not at all dishonourable to fight with *slycht*, a concept that will be returned to below following a discussion of *mesur*, or restraint governed by reason, on which an understanding of *slycht* as it is applied in *The Bruce* is dependant.

At one end of the concept of prowess was the desire to fight against the odds, to remain brave despite the challenge and to avoid at all costs any charge of cowardice; such an understanding of prowess conforms to the virtues of *magnanimitas* and *audacia* emphasized by Mathew. However, translated as ‘rashness’, the quality of *audacia* is slightly distorted because prowess implied a wisdom that ‘rashness’ and its connotations of reckless abandon does much to pervert. Central to any understanding of prowess as it is portrayed in *The Bruce* is the concept of *mesur*. Prowess demanded *magnanimitas* and *audacia* but it was governed by prudence, which was the ability to navigate the two extremes of foolhardiness and cowardice:

> Worschip extremyteys has twa,
> Fule-hardyment the formast is,
> And the tother is cowartys,
> And thai ar bath for to forsak (6.338-41).

It is ‘the mene betuix that twa’ (349) that creates the ideal:

> For pryce off worschip nocht-forthi [nonetheless]
> Is hard to wyn, for gret travaill
> Offt to defend and oft assaill
> And to be in thar dedis wys
> Gerris men off worschip wyn the price,
> And may na man haiff worthyhed,
> Bot he haiff wyt to ster his deid
> And se quhat ys to leve or ta. (6.330-6).
Courage and wit are required to steer this route, ‘[f]or hardyment with foly is vice’ (357):

Bot hardyment that mellyt is,
With wyt is worship ay perdé,
For but wyt worship may nocht be (358-60).

Wyt, therefore, is essential to ‘wyn the price’ of prowess, or chivalry; ‘na man haiff worthyed’ without it. Wyt is not to be confused with wys, as it is in translation. King Robert is always described ‘worthy wycht and wys’ (2.173) or ‘wis and averty’ (8.162), which can be translated as careful. King Robert’s wisdom saves his life on a number of occasions:

Bot the king that in all assayis
Wes fundyn wys and avisé
Persavyt rycht weill thar sutelté (10.36-8).

Wisdom was a necessary quality for a good lord: the Herald describes the Black Prince as ‘[a] bon siegniour loial et sage’ (1606), but it is his sens in battle that ensures victory for his men (1342-4). He is acclaimed by the Herald for his ‘[s]ens et atemperance et droiture,/ Raisoun et justice et mesure’ (1627-8). Wyt requires a quick intelligence but it is not used interchangeably with wys by Barbour; it is a separate quality that is very important for guidance in prowess: ‘This ‘gud king that all wytty/ Wes in his dedis everilkane’ (9.346-7). Sir Edward Bruce, criticized for his lack of wyt, as explained below, is nonetheless celebrated as ‘wys and wycht’ (9.49-51), an essential requirement of any noble knight. But Sir James Douglas, who always ‘thocht ay encrely/ To do his deid avysily’ (1.301-2), is singled out by the nobles of the realm as the best equipped to undertake the task of carrying King Robert’s heart on crusade for the specific reason that he has both ‘wit’ and ‘worship’ (20.210). These two virtues taken together represent Barbour’s ideal.

412 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, pp. 242 (‘intelligent’), 752 (‘wisdom’).
413 See also The Bruce, 18. 439: ‘Wys in his deid and averty’.
414 See also The Bruce, 7. 560-5.
415 Wit and worship are translated by Bernice Kliman as sapientia and fortitude: ‘Speech as a mirror of sapientia and fortitudo in Barbour’s Bruce’, Medium Aevum, vol.xlv, 1975 (44), 151-61. She uses Ernst Curtius’s definition of sapientia as cleverness, wisdom gained from experience and eloquence and fortitudo as ‘the ability and inclination to fight when necessary but also the knowledge of how to battle and lead others in battle’ (Kliman, p. 151; Curtius, European literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1963), p. 172). She demonstrates Barbour’s understanding of these virtues through an analysis of speeches before battle in The Bruce and attributing Barbour’s use of rhetoric to Ad Herennium and his military knowledge to Vegetius’s De re militari: ‘The Bruce is a leader who can inspire his men to heroic action because he is a master of the science of war (fortitudo) and also because he knows how to use the art of rhetoric (sapientia)’ (p. 156). Whether he read one of the several Vegetius manuscripts in circulation at the end of the fourteenth century (p. 151) or not there were common concerns regarding war and chivalric conventions circulating contemporaneously with The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir and this is reflected and debated within these narratives. Just as there is no one archetypal romance, as explained above, there is no one neat definition of chivalry. Kliman uses Vegetius to evaluate
King Robert’s wyt ensured that he had such ‘mesure in his his deid’ that none ‘worthyar then he/ Mycht nocht in his tym fundyn be’ except for his brother, Sir Edward Bruce: ‘To quham into chevalry/ Lyk wes nane in his day’ (9.666-71). But King Robert had mesur in his deeds, and this guaranteed that his name and his great chevalry would be acclaimed above that of his brother:

For he led him with mesur ay,
And with wyt his chevalry
He governyt sa worthily
That he oft full unlikely thing
Brought rycht weill to a gud ending (672-6).

Indeed, as Barbour describes it, Sir Edward Bruce’s lack of mesur proved his downfall. Good ‘Schyr Edward the worthy’, King Robert’s ‘broder that wes sa hardy’, is consistently praised as ‘worthy’ (9.49-50, 479):

Wes off his hand a noble knyght
And inhis blythness suete and joly,
Bot he wes outrageous hardy
And of sa hey undertaking (9.486-9).

Barbour celebrates Sir Edward Bruce’s ‘sic valour’ (18.108) equal to the king himself but attributes his lack of mesur to his downfall:

Couth he haf gouvernnyt him throu skill
And folowyts nocht to fast his will
Bot with mesur haf led his dede
It wes weill lik withoutyn drede
That he mycht haff conqueryt weill
The land of Irland ilkadele,
Bot his outrageous suquedry
And will that wes mar hardy
Off purpose lettyt him perfay (16.325–33).

Barbour’s treatment of battle in The Bruce, but this approach risks confining The Bruce within a master pattern. Barbour’s sources elucidate prevalent themes and structures in The Bruce but they are just an aid to interpretation; Barbour must be appreciated for what he is saying and not for how well his matter fits that of his sources. It is interesting, however, that Vegetius was translated as Livre de chevalerie: Keen, Chivalry, p. 111.

416 Barbour ensures King Robert behaves with mesur in all his deeds, including those not involving combat such as urging temperance in the drinking of wine before battle so that his men do not start to fight among themselves (14.224-39). This is in keeping with Charny’s advice for all men-at-arms so that they do not grow sluggish and unprepared for the rigours of war: Livre de chevalerie, pp. 61-2, section 19, lines 43-68.
Barbour connects this lack of *mesur* with *outrageous surquedry*, which has been translated as ‘arrogance and stubbornness’ or ‘pride’, but is perhaps more telling when explained as unguided prowess. Sir Edward failed to curb his will to fight: he ‘folowyt nocht to fast his will’; he ‘had na will to be in pes [peace]’ (14.3) and was annoyed by rest or inaction: ‘Bot he that rest anoyit ay/ And wald in travail be always’ (18.1-2). Sir Edward was part of the general late medieval problem of what Sir John Chandos called men ‘who cannot live without war and did not know how to’.

Sir Edward was always eager to attain renown, which was specifically attached to the defeat of a large group of opponents by a few men, as elaborated below. For this reason Barbour compares him to Judas Maccabheus:

This gud knycht that sa worthi was
Till Judas Maccabeus myvht
Be lyknyt weill that into fycht
Forsuk na multitud of men
Quhll he had ane aganys ten (14.312-6).

When Sir Edward heard that his brother with a few men had fought and defeated Richard de Clare and all his men in his absence, ‘[m]ycht na man se a waer [angrier] man’ (16.249). Although outnumbered, Sir Edward never fled a challenge, and refused to wait for reinforcements from Scotland before the battle of Faughart. He refused to heed the advice of his men who acknowledged that they were greatly outnumbered and wished to wait for the reinforcements that were on their way (18.31-53). ‘Thought tribill and quatribill’ men opposed the Scottish force, Sir Edward gave orders to fight without delay. “‘Allace,” said he’,

’Sall na man say quhill I  may drey
That strength of men sall ger me fley’ (18.30, 49, 53-4).

It was his failure to check his *wilfulness* or *outrageous bounté* or *gret outrageous surquedry*, which should have been ‘led with wit and mesur’ (18.174, 178, 183, 179), that proved his undoing. Instead, Sir Edward was guided by a desire for praise and a belief that the greater the opposing force, the greater the potential for acclaim. Such connections are revealing: personal prowess ungoverned by reason had no place in a chivalric code that prioritized a reciprocal relationship between a leader and his men fighting for a common goal. A communal fighting spirit and an identity as a community are crucial components of

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417 Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, pp. 596, 574; McKim, “*The Bruce*: a study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal”, p. 64.

418 Sir John Chandos (Froissart) in Keen, *Nobles, knights and men-at-arms in the Middle Ages*, p. 9.

419 *The Bruce*, 5. 64-75.
Barbour’s depiction of the relationship between King Robert and his men. The way in which Barbour reconciles a chivalric ethos promoting a system of individual values with a collective enterprise advocated by the courts of Robert I and Robert II reveals much about the flexibility of the concept of chivalry and its literary expression in romance. There is nothing passive about chivalry, and romance was mobilized to accommodate its fluctuating functions. It is, therefore, as a literature of reform that The Bruce must be interpreted and not as part of a set system of static conventions.

Edward Bruce is a case in point. His lack of mesur is often interpreted as part of his general old-school approach to chivalric conventions. He granted a year’s truce to Sir Philip de Mowbray, commander of Stirling Castle, and is reprimanded by King Robert who says,

‘That wes unwisly doyn, perfay.
Ik herd never quhar sa lang warmyng
Wes gevyn to sa mychty a king
As is the king off Ingland’ (11.38–41).

When their opponents fled the field of battle, Sir Edward allowed no man to chase them (14.306). He trusted in O’Dempsey’s oath of fealty to him and was betrayed (14.329-44). His refusal to wait for reinforcements, feeling his reputation was at stake (‘Sall na man say quhill I may drey/ That strength of men sall ger me fley’: 18.53-4) is considered part of the pattern. He is, therefore, commonly depicted as a hero from ‘courtly, chivalric romance’. Indeed, it is even argued that he ought not to be considered a hero at all for failing to live up to Barbour’s ideal of wit and worship. While he may not be Barbour’s ideal, he is certainly a hero; as mentioned above, he is compared to Judas Maccabeus, who represented for Charny the perfect knight:

He was w ise in all his deeds, a man of worth who led a holy life, strong, skilful, unrelenting in effort and endurance, handsome above all others and without arrogance; he was full of prowess, bold, valiant, a great fighter taking part in the greatest and fiercest battles and the most perilous adventures there ever were, and, in the end, he died in a holy way in battle like a saint in paradise.

Edward Bruce, in fact, is a type. His characteristics resemble many a hero from chansons de geste and thirteenth-century French chronicles where the hero often displays ‘a certain

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422 Livre de chevalerie, p. 100, section, 35, lines 154-8.
423 A point similarly noted by Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour’s Bruce’, p. 493: ‘Edward is a hero in the old tradition […] his willingness to die is more remarkable than his prowess or wisdom.’
fanaticism', 'an inability to compromise'. This 'fanaticism' is connected with an ideal such as loyalty to cause or to a task, and a feeling, as in the case of Sir Edward Bruce, that personal honour is at stake. Heroes in *chansons* display *dèmesure* but they are also criticized for this lack of *mesur* or *mesure*. In *La chanson de Roland*, Oliver tells Roland that 'vasselage par sens nen est folie;/ Mielz valt mesure que ne fait estoltie./ François sont mort par vostre legerie'. *Dèmesure* therefore, determines their death and that of Sir Edward. For these reasons, *chansons*, as with their thirteenth-century prose counterparts, are often interpreted as exemplary tales or warnings. Kaeuper argues for a more ambivalent authorial intention; while *chansons* call for *mesure* and reform, they simultaneously admire 'the great game of honourable violence'. An ambivalent contemporary approach to *dèmesure* arguably encourages what Spiegel has called the 'literary management of heroic violence': the hero must die. Barbour certainly attributes Sir Edward's untimely death to his lack of *mesur* but he is nevertheless a hero of *The Bruce*, equal only to his brother the king in chivalry, as discussed above. He resembles that grade of worthy men-at-arms described by Charny whose prowess is beyond reproach but whose failure to curb their rash impulses relegates them below the worthiest type of men-at-arms:

Now it is time to speak of those good men-at-arms who are held to be valiant, of whom there are some who are skilled in handling weapons, brave and adept, but their way of pursuing a career in arms is always such that when they are in action, they do not consider the benefit or advantage for their friends or the harm done to their enemies, but without giving or taking advice, they spur forward in a disorderly way and perform personally many feats of arms. This is often more due to their disadvantage than to their advantage, but they achieve many striking deeds of arms, and in this way take part in many good battles without attempting to contribute in any other way, but they cannot be reproached in relation to the honour earned through bravery; and these men, who have seen so many great days of

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425 See also Barber, *The knight and chivalry*, p. 52.
   laisse xxiv: 'an unbridled man (*hom desprez*) has great difficulty in surviving'
   laisse xc: 'I will be honest with you: I can tell you the story of many men’s lives, and an arrogant man will never succeed, whatever anyone may say'
   laisse xiv: 'A man without moderation (*sans mesure*) is not worth a fig'.
427 *La chanson de Roland*, ed. G.J. Brault (London, 1978): 'valour tempered with prudence is a different thing from folly, and discretion is better than recklessness. The French lie dead for your foolhardiness.'
428 Kaeuper, *Chivalry and violence*, p. 249.
combat and made such a fine contribution to their physical exploits, should indeed be called
worthy, although as for being worthy in the truest sense, it would be possible to do better.\textsuperscript{430}

The reason for this apparent dichotomy - that Sir Edward can appear at once the hero but
embody the lack of \textit{mesur} denounced by Barbour - becomes clear when \textit{The Bruce} is
considered, together with romance in general, as a literature of debate and reform. Barbour
is highlighting a tension between feats performed for individual renown and feats enacted in
the name of the community of the realm. It is a tension between a universal culture of
chivalry prioritizing individual values, exploits and fame, and a communal initiative
fostered by the courts of Robert I and Robert II, which sought to channel a system of
individual virtues towards a collective cause. And it is a tension mirrored by \textit{The Bruce} in
order to generate the chivalric ethos necessary to support monarchical ambition.

Unbridled prowess itself is not the problem. The problem is prowess that is not
governed by reason, or, to be ‘angry out of mesur’ (1.570). When it was right to fight
knights should fling themselves into the battle, as if in a rage. Sir Thomas Randolph, earl
of Moray, ‘faucht as he war in a rage’ (16.119). Rage was most clearly visible in the face:
Sir James Douglas, who was ‘luflly/ And meyk and sweyt in cumption’ had another
‘countenance’ in battle (1.389-92), where he was feared like the devil, as discussed below;
‘the contenyng [countenance/demeanour]/ Off Scottismen and thar cummyng’ showed that
they were ‘[w]orthi and off gret bounte’ (14.179-80, 186). The English host was as fierce
as lions according to the Herald who applies the lion \textit{topos} on numerous occasions:

\begin{quote}
Il n’avoit en la compaignie
Du Prince homme, tant fuit petitz,
Qe ne fut bien auxi hardis
Et auxi fiers come un lioun (3378-81).\textsuperscript{431}
\end{quote}

But the ideal knight must also know when not to fight, when to pull back and in such
situations restraint did not equate with cowardice but was instead central to the chivalric
ideal advocated by Barbour. A knight must be able ‘to ster his deid’ (6.335), which Duncan
has translated as ‘control his actions’.\textsuperscript{432} Barbour’s phrase, however, ‘to ster his deid’ best
fits the concept at hand: the route between foolhardiness and valour must be steered or
manoeuvred, which requires wit, and the use of ‘deid’ is itself revelatory and central to an
understanding of prowess and chivalry in \textit{The Bruce}. As explained above, the concept of
character was expressed through a series of deeds designed to illustrate specific chivalric
virtues. In this way, Barbour justifies the use of \textit{slycht}; the reason behind the reiteration of

\textsuperscript{430} \textit{Livre de chevalerie}, pp. 81-2, section 32, lines 1-14.
\textsuperscript{431} See also lines 1208, 3380: ‘Qui furent plus fiers qe lions’; ‘’fiers come un lioun’.
\textsuperscript{432} Duncan (ed.), \textit{The Bruce}, p. 240.
the importance of mesur is Barbour’s desire to endorse the use of slycht or guerrilla warfare tactics as opposed to ‘playne fechting’ by attributing slycht or sutelte to prudent leadership. As mentioned above, both King Robert and Sir James Douglas display the wyf necessary to ensure mesur in their deeds, and, as a consequence, both are acclaimed for their use of slycht: Douglas ‘throu hardim ent and slycht’ is typically depicted overcoming ‘the mycht/ Of his fell fayia’ (9.679-81). This has largely been interpreted as Barbour’s legitimization of underhand techniques irreconcilable with chivalric conventions as they were understood by a late fourteenth-century audience. Certainly Barbour is justifying the practice of slycht throughout his narrative; however, departing from an idea of legitimization based on an all too often anachronistic appreciation of what constitutes chivalric conventions distorts an understanding of the concept of chivalry as it is expressed in The Bruce.

McKim argued that Sir James Douglas is the joint hero of The Bruce specifically because he is Barbour’s ideal knight and subject. Thus Barbour’s detailing of Douglas’s youth and virtues drew attention to the education of a knight. Barbour’s presentation of his ideal knight, as argued by McKim, draws ‘away from that of the courtly hero who was conventionally “[w]ys curtais and deboner” (1.361-2) ‘towards that of the epic, feudal hero’. This feudal dimension results in reciprocal relationships between lord and vassal that McKim correctly highlights as crucial to an understanding of Douglas’s role in The Bruce. As a vassal to King Robert, Douglas is protected and rewarded, a service he in turn will provide for his own vassals, as discussed below. However, McKim concludes that ‘Barbour’s ideal of knightly conduct does not fit, and is not intended to fit, the courtly mould with its emphasis on personal ideals’: ‘Barbour’s ideal of knighthood is based on the rules governing the practice of real wars and the standard of conduct set forth in medieval handbooks on the art of war.’ McKim’s conclusion concurs with Kliman’s study of The Bruce within the tradition of contemporaneously circulating handbooks on war. Kliman notes Vegetius’s recommendations for the prudent general: he should fall upon his enemies unexpectedly; choose ‘snares and ambuscades’ over pitched battles; and use spies. Such

433 See also King Robert’s speech, cited above: 3.259-61.
434 Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour’s Bruce’, Mediaeval Studies 35 (1973), 477-508, p. 492: ‘Barbour is fully conscious of the deviation from a chivalric norm’. Cameron, ‘Chivalry in Barbour’s Bruce’ in Armies, chivalry and warfare in medieval Britain and France. Proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Matthew Strickland (Stamford, 1998), pp. 13-29: ‘Barbour reinforces the message that normal conventions as followed partly by Moray and consistently by Carrick, are constantly being violated and justifiably so’; ‘The fact that he does so regularly throughout the romance may suggest that he was conscious of arguing a case’.
436 Ibid.
438 Ibid., pp. 169, 170.
439 Kliman, ‘Speech as a mirror of sapientia and fortitudo in Barbour’s Bruce’, pp. 152-5.
techniques are applied in *The Bruce* but are considered contrary to chivalric convention by Kliman and Cameron. In fact, Cameron argues that 'by making Douglas the second main hero of his epic, [Barbour] is implicitly saying that chivalry is irrelevant, if not downright damaging, in a war of independence.' Cameron argues that Douglas 'does not conform to courtly concepts of chivalry':

Despite Barbour's use of courtly epithets like 'curtias', 'deboner' and 'larg', Douglas has nothing of the courtly tradition about him. The tender sides of that tradition are lost on him, and most attributes accorded him by the poet, such as 'wicht', 'hardy', 'manly' and 'douchty', refer to his martial accomplishments. These accomplishments, again, bear little concrete relation to any chivalric code. Douglas's fighting style, like that of Bruce, is expedient, not chivalrous.

The crux of the argument therefore is that expediency, or a realistic portrayal of warfare, has nothing to do with the concept of chivalry: 'There is nothing chivalric in Douglas's ploys and ambushes; the bloodbath of the Douglas Larder is a travesty of knighthood. [...] For these reasons, it is impossible to call Douglas an “ideal knight” without redefining the concept of chivalry beyond recognition'.

But where are the dictates of chivalric convention set and are they set? Certainly the heroes of *The Bruce* are governed by expediency. However, Kliman, McKim and Cameron depart from an assumption that Barbour's treatment of chivalric conventions must fit an anachronistically established pattern, whether this is 'courtly romance' or handbooks of chivalry; Barbour's understanding of the chivalric conventions enacted by his heroes is not given precedence. Warfare in *The Bruce* is a reflection of late fourteenth-century chivalric practice and not a deviation from conventions as highlighted in 'courtly romances'. It is a mistake to assume that what is understood by the umbrella-term 'courtly romances' set the fashion for chivalric conventions as they were to stay from the twelfth century on; *The Bruce* highlights the tension between different types of warfare but it is not correct to say that one espouses a chivalric ethos more than the other. One may represent a chivalric ideal and the other the reality but it was left to a later generation to set the definition of chivalry by the standards of its own idealistic texts. There is nothing in *The Bruce* or *La vie du Prince Noir*, as shown below, to indicate that an understanding of chivalry was established by an idealistic code of conduct; and, more immediately pertinent,

41 Ibid., p. 258.
42 Ibid., p. 258.
43 See Kaeuper, *Chivalry and violence*, p. 35.
Barbour never indicates that *slycht* is contrary to his understanding of the word chivalry; rather, as argued here, he uses the two terms together.

As Barbour’s ideal knight, Douglas is an exponent of the practice of *slycht*. This, it is argued by Kliman and Cameron, is a deliberate departure from the ‘courty’ tradition that Barbour is apparently consciously subverting. In the same vein, the use of *slycht* is considered contrary to chivalric behaviour, a departure from what was considered worthy and right for a chivalric knight. But is this the case? There is a clear tension between the use of *slycht* and ‘playne fechting’ in *The Bruce*. In fact, Randolph is so disgusted by King Robert’s refusal to engage in ‘playne fechting’ that he accuses him of being a coward and acting with *slycht* (9.727-73). From this, Cameron concludes that ‘Bruce’s methods are not part of the knightly code of conduct as Moray knows it.’

King Robert ‘bad [bade] Schyr Amery [de Valence] isch to fycht’ (2.251) but Sir Ingram d’Umfraville thought the English host would be placed in ‘gret perill’ if they were to fight in ‘playne bataill’ as King Robert had proposed and so he advised Sir Aymer de Valence to surprise them instead at night. Although such *sutelté* is considered contrary to an anachronistic understanding of chivalric conventions nowhere is it derided as such by Barbour; in fact, not only is Barbour’s condemnation of the English use of *sutelté* related to their failure to fight in the open when they had the forces (*mycht*) to do so rather than the breach of any chivalric code, but he has Sir Ingram, a well-respected commander, who ‘was sley and wis [sly and wise]’ (5.515), voice a cunning plan similar to many that King Robert, Sir James Douglas and Sir Thomas Randolph will themselves enact to great acclaim throughout the course of the narrative. Furthermore, the word *chevalry* is still applied to the English host despite their failure to uphold a supposed chivalric convention (2.288-90).

Douglas ‘wes wys’,

And saw he mycht on nakyn wys

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444 Cameron, ‘Chivalry and warfare in Barbour’s Bruce’, p. 259.
445 Translated by Duncan, p. 96 as ‘Lords, you can see now that yon folk cunningly mean to do with a trick what they feared to do with force.’
446 See 1. 149-52: ‘Bot he thocht weile throuch thar debat/ That he suld sleyly fynd the gate/ How that he all the senyhoury/ Throu his gret mycht suld occupy’. See also 1.111-2 for Edward I’s use of *slycht* when he could not take Scotland by might: ‘Ye mycht se [Edward I] suld occupy/ Throu slycht that he ne mycht throu maistri’.
It was ‘throu hardiment and slycht’, ‘throu wyt and throu bounté’ (9.679, 683), that Douglas developed a series of shrewd plans ensuring the successful capture of strongholds such as Roxburgh where ‘James off Douglas’

Set all his wit for to purchas
How Roxburch throu sutelté,
Or ony craft mycht wonyn be (10.359-62).

Douglas and his men made ladders of hempen ropes and stole into the castle in the beginning of the night concealing their armour under black cloaks (365-81). Their cunning escapes were successful and Roxburgh was soon surrendered prompting Sir Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray to ‘set for to purches sum slycht’ to help him

To wyn the wall off the castell
Throu sumkyn slycht, for he wyst weill
That na strenth mycht it plainly get (10.520, 523-5).

Randolph, in a feat reminiscent of Alexander the Great’s capture of Tyre (706-19), conquered Edinburgh castle with *slycht* and ‘hey chevalry’ (522); the two terms are not irreconcilable. Clearly, chivalry means much more than a code of etiquette determining the way in which men waged battle, if indeed it ever means this, but such a discussion continues below.

Having established the need for *slycht*, King Robert decides that he will fight on foot: ‘And tak on fute bath weill and wa,/ And wald na hors-men with him haiff ’(3.352-5). He therefore dispenses with the horses by giving them to the ladies, an alleged ‘chivalric’ gesture that was determined instead by *wyt* and the decision to ‘tak on fute’ with *slycht* come what may. Before Bannockburn, he tells his men,

‘And gyff we fecht on fute perfay
At a vantage we sall be ay,
For in the park amang the treys
The horsemens always cummerit beis,
And the sykis alssua that ar thar-doun
Sall put thaim to confusioune’ (11.303-8).

The decision to fight on foot is inconsistent with the general depiction of the knight on horseback in romance. It is a decision that appears contrary to the message advocated in

\[447\] Translated by Duncan, p. 420 as ‘But if we fight on foot, perfay, then we shall always have the advantage, for in the park among the trees horsemen are always disadvantaged, and the streams down below will throw them into confusion.’
romance and romance-influenced narratives such as Sir Thomas Gray’s *Scalacronica*; but is it? Andy King has argued that Sir William Marmion’s supposed ‘chivalric’ feat of arms performed on horseback in the name of love was not celebrated but mocked by Gray:

Gray was happy for some reckless fool to ride headlong into the Scottish ranks, thereby disrupting their formation and spoiling their attack, but the real business of war had little to do with the knightly heroics of chivalric romance.449

King’s conclusion is that Gray’s depiction of warfare reflected reality and not romance:

As far as Gray was concerned, helms with crests of gold - and all the other posturings and rituals of courtly chivalric culture - were a foolish irrelevance which distracted from the practical realities of warfare. Rather, for Gray, chivalry remained a thoroughly pragmatic (and entirely unromantic) arrangement.450

Reality, however, is not incompatible with romance, and chivalry is both ‘romantic’ and realistic. Fighting on foot is clearly a deviation from the norm. It is therefore worth considering not because it is contrary to an understanding of chivalric conventions as they are extracted from texts advocating their own idealistic standards but because it is a decision that is not inconsistent with the concept of chivalry as it is expressed in *The Bruce*. The decision to fight on foot is supported by heroes of romance celebrated for their chivalric virtues and it is a decision that is made by the king himself. The chivalric ethos advocated by Barbour’s heroes, which appears at odds with an understanding of chivalry that is determined by a system of established conventions, is a chivalric ethos nonetheless. Chandos Herald depicts the prince and his men on horses and the French on foot (3050-63). But his method is not exclusive and both the English army (1101; 1104-1111) and their Spanish opponents send spies and wait in ambush (2899, 3045). Moreover, not only do the prince and his men fight as fierce as lions in battle but they make a widowed lady and many a poor child orphan: ‘La firent mainte veofe dame/ Et mainte poeyre enfant orphanin’ (238-39). *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* depict a system of ideal virtues projecting a chivalric ideal while simultaneously portraying the realities of war whether this is the method of waging war or the repercussions for society; both the ideal and the reality equally reflect chivalric culture, as discussed below.

As mentioned above, King Robert concludes that men who make war should ‘stand agayne thar fayis mycht’ sometimes with strength and sometimes with slycht (3.261-2). Again, it must be noted that dying chevalrusly is not compromised by the use of slycht, but rather by living cowartly (257-8), which would appear to indicate retreat. But Barbour is

448 Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, pp. 171-2.
450 Ibid., p. 35.
eager to stress that retreat is exemplified by the picture of Edward II fleeing Bannockburn, as described above, and not to be confused with King Robert’s prudent tactical manoeuvre of withdrawing his men from attack:

Then thai withdrew thaim hateely
Bot thai wes nocht full cowardly (3.45-6).451

What exactly this difference entailed may very well be queried. There were no absolutes and the concept of chivalry itself is riddled with apparent contradiction, but Barbour draws attention to a particular point. In this instance, the decision to withdraw was made by King Robert in order to defend his men and anyone who could see such ‘worthely vasselage’ would say ‘he aucht weill to be /A king off a gret reawte’ (59-60). The issue at stake is not the use of sutelté or slycht, which the prudent leader knows when to apply, but the idea of ‘gud faith’:

For werrayour with strenth na fors suld ma
Quhether he mycht ourcum his fa
Throu strenth or throu sutelté,
Bot that gud faith ay haldyn be (5.85-8).452

Good faith was expected from a leader. As explained above, a leader must inspire his men and keep them from despair; he must lead by example and therefore he must not break faith. King has argued that Barbour’s equation of shame with retreat meant that as an archdeacon without ‘first-hand knowledge of chivalry’ he could wax lyrical about death being preferable to retreat. This approach he contrasted with the Scalacronica where ‘Gray considered capture to be a wholly honourable conclusion to a lost battle.’ However, Barbour is not advocating death before retreat but death before shame, which is not necessarily the same thing. Shame in The Bruce is not retreat in itself but retreat identified with the breaking of ‘gud faith’ between lord and vassal. When Edward II fled the field in Bannockburn he broke this faith, a point reinforced in contrast to the steadfastness of his celebrated vassal, Sir Giles d’Argentine. Again, it is the feudal relationship that is highlighted; a relationship amenable to the appropriation of a chivalric value system that prioritized loyalty to a lord. Henry the Bastard was filled with rage when he saw his men flee the field, Chandos Herald records, and he urged them to stay and help him, and heed the oath of loyalty they had made him:

‘Seigniours, aidez moi,
Pur Dieu, car vous m’avez fait roi

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451 See also 2.436-42.
452 Translated by Duncan, p. 194 as ‘For a warrior should not bother whether he can overcome his enemy by might or by guile, so long as good faith is always maintained.’
453 King, ‘A helm with a crest of gold’, p. 34.
Et si m’avez fait siérem
De moi aider loialment’ (3371-74).

They had broken their good faith to their lord, who later flees himself while the French, Bretons and Normans stand their ground: ‘Lui bastard s’en fuit tut un val/ Mais unqore sont en estal/ François, Bretons et Normandz’ (3393-5).

III.ii Loyalty

Loyalty is celebrated by romance and chanson, and considered central to ‘true chivalry’, but what exactly does it entail? Loyalty is described by Mathew as ‘a quality of the soul’; ‘it implied fidelity to the pledged word, or loyalty to an individual because of love or friendship’. Mathew found no medieval example of the concept of loyalty to an idea or to a cause. In chansons de geste and romance, loyalty to the family, lord or community is placed first and followed by loyalty to the country and God. The History of William Marshal emphasizes William’s loyalty to his king. Loyalty, therefore, is largely defined by its feudal dimension or its emphasis on reciprocal relationships between lord and vassal. Feudal loyalty is placed above all other relationships based on loyalty such as those constructed by the institution of brotherhood-in-arms. Brothers-in-arms could co-exist with feudal loyalties as in the case of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin and Sir Hugh Calveley. Calveley fought under du Guesclin during the peace between England and France after the Treaty of Brétigny. He loyally informed his friend when he learned of a plot in the English camp to murder du Guesclin. However, feudal loyalty was prioritized and when the Black Prince decided to support Don Pedro, Hugh Calveley left du Guesclin to serve his lord. Such a course of action, as noted by Charny, was the most fitting demonstration of a vassal’s loyalty to his lord:

for the faith and loyalty which they owe to their lord cannot be better demonstrated than by serving him and assisting him loyally in such urgent need as that of war which is so grave as to put person, land, and resources all at risk.

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454 Keen, Keen, ‘Chivalry, heralds, history’, p. 400.
455 Mathew, ‘Ideals of knighthood in late fourteenth-century England’ p. 358: ‘ot coer loiall’ is used by Chandos Herald on a number of occasions: 2266, 4200, 4212, 4236.
457 Wadsworth, ‘Historical romance in England. Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance’, p. 250; Southern, The making of the Middle Ages, p. 243. See also Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 290 for secondary heroes in chansons whose role is to act primarily on behalf of others, typically their lord or king.
460 Livre de chevalerie, p. 49, section 5, lines 12-15.
Others who returned from adventures abroad to aid the Black Prince in his support of Don Pedro included Sir John Chandos, as noted by the Herald (1969-78).

Loyalty is a central defining virtue of Robert I’s group of trusted followers. ‘Good’ Sir James Douglas, who ‘[a]ll men lufyt’, is praised ‘for his bounte’ and described as ‘[w]ys curtains and deboner’, but is remembered, above all, for his love of loyalty: ‘And our all thing luffit lawte’ (1.360-4). Again, at his death, this point is reiterated by Barbour: ‘Our all thing luffit he lawte’ forsaking treason so strongly that no traitor was safe near him (20.526-30), and inspiring a comparison for his ‘honest lele’ (576) with Fabricius (531-78).

Douglas appears the embodiment of loyalty; indeed, it has been argued that he is Barbour’s second hero because of it. Again, chief among the assets Barbour would have Randolph remembered for by posterity is his loyalty:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Lawte he lovyt atour all thing,} \\
\text{Falset tresoun and felony} \\
\text{He stude agayne ay encrely,} \\
\text{He heyit honour ay and larges} \\
\text{And ay mentemyt rychtwysnes (10.290–5)}
\end{align*}
\]

As is clear from the above citations, three characteristics central to loyalty are emphasized and these are reinforced throughout *The Bruce*: loyalty is described in relation to love; it is associated with *rychtwysnes*; and it is defined in contrast to *tresoun*.

Loyalty, as it is described by Barbour, is connected with love. This is clear first merely in a descriptive sense: Douglas ‘luffit lawte’ (1.364; 20.526); it was loyalty Randolph ‘lovyt atour all thing’ (10.290). However, the association between love and loyalty also highlights something more central to the chivalric creed as it was understood, or promoted, by Barbour. Due to love and loyalty, the queen and other fair ladies followed their men to Aberdeen wishing to share in their sufferings: ‘That for leyle luff and leawte/ Wald partenerys off thar paynys be’ (2.519-20). When King Robert heard of the death of Sir Christopher Seton, ‘“Allace,” he said, “For luff off me

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\begin{align*}
\text{“And for thar mekill lawté} \\
\text{Thai nobill men and thai worthy} \\
\text{Ar destroyit sa velanysly” (5.161-4).}
\end{align*}
\]

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462 Randolph is praised for his loyalty despite his stint in the English camp. When captured by the English after Methven, Randolph ‘for his lyff become thar man’ (2.467); when recaptured by the Scots he agreed to become King Robert’s man (10.263-4).

463 See *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 67, section 20, lines 37-8, 43: ‘And these noble ladies should, as is their duty, love and honour these worthy men-at-arms […] And the advice of these noble ladies is as follows: “Love loyally if you want to be loved.”’
Love inspired loyalty; the emphasis is on a system of personal relationships and mutual respect due to the constant enactment of what was required by lord and by vassal.  

Love is equated with loyalty by the Herald. Don Pedro mourns the great disloyalty of his people who were bound to serve him: ‘la grande desloialté/ De ceux qui lui doient servir’ (1752-3). It is love that inspires this loyalty and therefore, explains the Herald, he who is not loved by his people should not be called lord:

Car touz lui feurent desloial  
Cil qui lui devoient amer:  
Si qe homme doit dire, a voir counter,  
Ne doit ester sires clamés  
Qui de ses homes n’est amez (1756-60).

Ferant de Castres is praised for his steadfast loyalty to Don Pedro and his refusal to give homage to Henry (1792-1804), because he would ‘not suffer a bastard to hold a kingdom’: ‘Si ne purroit il consenter/ Un bastard roialme tenir’ (1802-3). Again, emphasis is placed on a feudal relationship. When the Black Prince held his court in Aquitaine, all the barons from the surrounding country came to pay him homage because he was a good lord,’loial et sage’:

Car tut li prince et lui baroun  
De tut la pais enviroun  
Viendrent a lui pur faire hommage.  
A bon seigniour loial et sage (1603-6).

All his men loved him: ‘Et l’amoioint de bon amour/ Tut li subgit et tout li sien/ Car il lour fesoit moult de bien’ (1620-22). And he loved his men for the services they had provided him:

‘Beaux seigniours, par foi,  
De tut mon coer aymer vous doi,  
Car vous m’avez tres bien servi.  
De bon coer vous en mercy’ (3805-8).

In return for the faith he owes his men, they have loyally served him, as the prince acknowledges before his death: “‘Seigniour”, fait il, “perdonez moi,/ Car, par la foi qe je vous doi,/ Vous m’avez loialment servi’”(4123-5).

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464 See McKim, ‘James Douglas and Barbour’s ideal of knighthood’, p. 173 for an emphasis on personal relations and feudal ties. McKim lists terms associated with feudalism in The Bruce and suggests that ‘[i]t may well be that the frequency of these terms reflects the strengthening of military feudalism under Robert Bruce (p. 169). Feudal topoi are found throughout twelfth-century Arthurian romance: Ruck, An index of themes and motifs in twelfth-century French Arthurian poetry.  
465 Translated as such by Pope and Lodge (ed.), La vie du Prince Noir, p. 23.
As is clear from the above citations from *The Bruce*, loyalty is defined through its opposite: disloyalty or *tresoun*.466

He wes in all his dedis lele,  
For him dedeynyeit nocht to dele  
With trechery na with falset (1.375-77)

In gret perell than was the king  
That off this tresoun wyst na thing,  
For he that he triastit maist if ane  
His ded falsiy has undertane,  
And nane may betreys tyttar than he  
That man in trowis leawté (5.527-32).

Instances of treachery are found throughout *The Bruce*. A list of parallels from the matters of Rome and Britain, as cited above, reinforces Barbour’s presentation of Sir John Comyn’s alleged betrayal of Robert Bruce. ‘[W]orthy’ Sir Christopher Seton fell through ‘a fals tratour’, Macnab, ‘a discipill off Judas’:

It wes fer wer [worse] than tratoury  
For to betreys sic a persoune  
So nobill and off sic renounce (4.19; 18; 22-4).

‘A fals lourdane a losyngeour’ called Osbern also ‘maid the tresoun’ (4.108-9). On three occasions King Robert is surprised by three men who attack him, as discussed below, and twice Barbour draws attention to their treachery. King Robert explains that but for their treason, all three would have been worthy men:

‘Thai had bene worthi men all thre  
Had thai nocht bene full off tresoun,  
Bot that maid thar confusioun.’ (5. 656-658).

Kliman has pointed out that treason to one was loyalty to another: Sir John Comyn’s alleged betrayal of Bruce is described as *tresoun* (1.515) where King Edward I calls it *leawté* (1.576).467 Treason, or disloyalty, was the prime threat to the stability of the realm. Sir David Brechin was executed for his part in the de Soules conspiracy specifically because of his disloyalty to his king:

And for he helyt thar entent  
And discoveryt it nocht to the king  
That he held of all his halding  
And maid till him his fewté  
Jugyt till hang and draw wes he (19.64-8).

In the aftermath of the de Soules conspiracy, Barbour reflects:

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466 Treason and treachery are both used by Barbour to indicate disloyalty.
467 Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour’s *Bruce*’, p. 489.
Loyalty therefore, as understood from its opposite—treason—was a bond of support from a vassal to his lord. Disloyalty was so serious a crime specifically because it broke this basic feudal bond on which a series of chivalric virtues were dependent in order to ‘[steer] prowess into acceptable channels’.

Disloyalty, or treason, was motivated by personal greed: ‘Bot covatys, that can nocht ces/ To set men apon felony/ To ger thaim cum to senyoury’ (19. 2-4). It is the anthesis to the virtues necessary to fuel a collective enterprise.

Disloyalty in La vie du Prince Noir is similarly described as breach of faith; it is the breaking of a bond between lord and vassal, the cause of the Spanish war, and the reason for the treason and falsehood that followed the onset of the prince’s illness, when his friends became his enemies:

Adonqes comencea fauxetée
Et traisons a governer
Ceux qui le devoient aymer;
Car cils qu’il tenoit pur amis
Adonqes feurent ces enemies (3822-6).

Disloyalty accosted him from all sides: ‘Li noble Prince moult perdi,/ Car traisons et fauxetées/ Regnoient la de touz costées’ (3908-10). It was, in effect, the failure to display the prowess necessary to sustain his lordship that facilitated disloyalty. But it is above all described by the Herald as a breach of faith on the part of his vassals and a dishonourable course of action. When the prince advises Don Pedro against perpetrating vengeance on his men who had been disloyal, Don Pedro agrees save for Gomez Carillo who he refuses to pardon. Carillo, claims Don Pedro, is the traitor who caused him the most dishonour: ‘“Car certes ce est le traitour/ Qe plus m’ad fait de dishonour”’ (3541-2).

Loyalty is also associated with rychtwysnes: ‘Leawté to luff is gretumly,/ Throuch leawté liffis men rychtwisley’ (1.365-6). This connection between loyalty and rycht

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468 Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, p. 185.
469 Don Pedro breaks his promise to send the prince provisions: ‘Lui Prince ad bien aperceu/ Qe le roi Petro ne fu/ Pas si foiaux come il quidoit’ (3703-5).
prompted Kliman to equate Barbour’s *leawté* with Chaucer’s *trouthe*. But loyalty in *The Bruce* is classified above all by its emphasis on a reciprocal relationship between lord and vassal in which the lord protects the vassal who responds with his unswerving loyalty; this was the correct order (*rycht*), as Barbour indicates in his prayer for his heroes’ descendants after Bannockburn:

> God grant that thai that cumyn ar
> Off his offspring mainteyme the land
> And hald the folk weill to warand
> And mainteyme rycht and leawté
> Als wele as in his tyme did he (13.718-2).

Loyalty was therefore the defining *vertu* of the ‘gud man’:

> With a vertu and leawté
> A man may yeir sufficyand be,
> And but leawté may nane haiff price
> Quether he be wycht or he be wys,
> For quher if faileys na vertu
> May be off price na off valu
> To mak a man sa gud that he
> May symply callyt gud man be (1.367-75).

Douglas, described above as cherishing loyalty above all things, becomes King Robert’s man in return for men and arms to pursue his own personal aim to reclaim Douglasdale. That is how they made ‘thar aquentance’ (167) and from then, ‘[t]hair frendschip woux ay [increased] mar and mar’ (170) because Douglas served Bruce loyally and the king ‘[r]ewardyt him weile his service’ (174). This reciprocal relationship is important because Douglas’s loyalty was secured through rewards and protection from his lord. McKim argued that loyalty is an integral part of Douglas’s character rather than something that must be proved through example, citing just two instances where his loyalty is demonstrated: helping Randolph at Bannockburn (11.637-48); and attempting to rescue Sir William Sinclair in Spain (20.451-79). However, Douglas’s loyalty is in evidence throughout *The Bruce* in his unswerving support for King Robert’s attempt to reclaim his patrimony. Loyalty, like prowess, was an active quality and required continuous

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471 See also Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour’s *Bruce*’, pp. 492-6; McKim, ‘James Douglas and Barbour’s ideal of knighthood’, p. 169.
472 McKim, ‘James Douglas and Barbour’s ideal of knighthood’, p. 173: ‘It is however interesting that although throughout *The Bruce* Douglas is consistently portrayed as loyal to the lord he serves and to his fellow knights, there are actually few occasions on which Barbour focuses on concrete examples of his loyalty. It is rather a stated, and accepted part of Douglas’s character.’
obligations from both lord and vassal. In return for loyalty, Bruce rewards his men. At his king’s death, Douglas kneels to say thank you:

‘I thank you gretly lord,’ said he,
‘Off the mony larges and gret bounté
That yhe haff done me fel-sys
Sen fyrst I come to your service’ (20.133-6).

Typically this reward is a grant of land. Randolph is granted the newly created earldom of Moray after he has pledged his allegiance to his king (10.274–99). The men of Rathlin ‘maid the king homage’ and in return they were confirmed in their possessions (3.756; 747-53). Similary, Douglas agrees to reward and protect his men in return for their loyalty in his drive to recover his patrimony. Loyalty was based on individual relationships but it worked toward a collective cause. For this reason Barbour emphasizes the communal spirit of the war of independence, as discussed above, much as he spurns those who seek individual renown at the expense of their group such as Sir Edward Bruce, as discussed above, and Sir Colin Campbell who is admonished by the king: ‘“Breking of bidding/Mycht caus all our discomfiting”’ (16.135-6).

A feudal initiative catered for the promotion of a loyalty-centred ethos for the benefit of the lord or king. As a governing chivalric virtue, loyalty is essential to understanding how a series of individual qualities considered components of a chivalric creed were in fact a hierarchical value system concerned to promote chivalry as a collective force that could curtail the individual opportunism facilitated by a chivalric culture. Chivalry promoted the individual prowess of the ideal knight but loyalty established a feudal relationship that bound ‘the individual to the collective ethos’. The king protects his vassals in return for their loyalty but, due to the love the king inspired from his men through a display of his many virtues, they also protect their king. Sir Christopher Seton rescues King Robert from Sir Philip Mowbray who had seized the reins of the king’s horse crying ‘“Help! Help! I have the new-maid king”’ (2.419). Mutual respect ensures that his men will work together with him: ‘Thai held furth with the king thar way’ (9.182). Before Bannockburn, the king consults his men about the best way to fight and together they agree to fight on foot (11.303-9). Together they draw up four divisions and choose the commanders (310-43). King Robert asks each man to decide for himself whether to fight or not:

‘For gyff you thinkis spedfull that we

5.293-300. See also McKim, ‘James Douglas and Barbour’s ideal of knighthood’, pp. 169-70.
475 Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, p. 186.
Fecht we sall, and giff ye will
We leve, your liking to fulfil.
I sall consent on alkyw wis
To do rycht as ye will dyvvs
Tharfor says off your will planly’ (12.194-9)

Unanimously they respond, ‘For doute off deye we sall nocht faill/ Na na payn sall refusyt be/ Quhill wehaiiff maid our counter fre’ (204-6). He asks that no man break array (217) and that each man fight for his own honour as well as that of his country (219-20); high and lowborn together fight for a collective cause (304). Collectively the nobles decide that Douglas is the best equipped to take the king’s heart on crusade (20.191-99). Douglas, in his turn, treats his men as equal and for this reason they love their lord. He divides the spoils of battle among his men, according to their merits and keeping nothing for himself (15.539-41): ‘Sic dedis aucht to ger men luff/ Thar lord, an sua thai did perfay’ (542-3).

The Black Prince also works with his men. After battle, he sleeps in a little pavillon among the dead on the field, his men all around:

Lui Prince logea celle nuit
Entre les mortz sur le zabaloun
Dedeins un petit pavilloun,
Et sez homes tut entour lui (1436-9).

He respects the advice of his council and urges his men to speak their minds:

‘Un bon conseille sur cee point,
Seigniours, vous veiez bein a point.
Ore en ditez vostre purpose’ (1907-9).

The Herald is at pains to stress it is through the advice of the prince’s privy council (son conseil li plusz privée) that arrangements are made: (1911-1930). The prince’s intentions are for the public good (‘Et en touz biens faire publiqes’: 4108), which, in line with Barbour, is in order to ‘manteyme rycht and leawte’. The prince, as described above, is guided by ‘[s]ens et atemperance et droiture,/ Raisoun et justice et mesure’ (1627-8). All his life he was set on maintaining justice and right:

Tant fuist cil prince de hautesce,
Q’il voillez totz les jours de sa vie
Mettez tout son estude
En tenir justice et droiture,
Et la prist il sa noirture (69-72).
It is this sense of *droiture* that prompts him to help Don Pedro in order to restore him to his right: ‘Le roi dan Petro de son droit’ (1975-6). Don Pedro has lost his *droit* due to the disloyalty of his men. It is his belief that his father, King Edward is the rightful heir that prevents him from accepting terms for peace with France from the cardinal of Périgord: ‘Pur tenir et pur possesser/ France’ (829-32). And it is similary to protect the *droit* of his son Richard that the prince on his deathbed asks his men to serve his son as loyally as they have served him:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Je vous recomande mon fitz} \\
&\text{Qui moul{\text{e}}t joefne et petitz} \\
&\text{Et vous pri, si servi m'avez,} \\
&\text{Qe vous de bon coer li servez'}  \\
\end{align*}
\]

(4135-8).

He specifically requests that his father the king and his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, maintain Richard in his right: ‘Et en son droit li maintiendroient’ (4148). A system of loyal relations between lord and vassal maintains *rycht* or *droit*, a message with clear implications for a contemporary audience, as discussed below.

*Pitie*, justice, *largesse*, *franchise* and *courtoisie* are all dependent on this system of personal relationships illuminated by an examination of the role of loyalty in *The Bruce* and *La vie*. *Largesse, franchise, pitie* and *courtoisie* are very much royal qualities; they are, in any case, the mark of the high born. A display of *largesse*, defined by Mathew as ‘prodigal generosity’, at once indicates nobility and secures loyalty through the rewards that determined such support. It is described by the Herald as *noble largesse* (4104). It is also a requisite quality to praise in a patron on whose generosity one is dependent. And it is a generosity typically awarded to a herald, as Chandos Herald relates (2953-7). The Herald is awarded with jewels and robes and mantles for his role as messenger and Chandos Herald notes his appreciation: ‘Qui ot le coer joiant et baud’ (2954). Epic heroes displayed *largesse* by sharing the spoils among their men and the heroes of *The Bruce* and *La vie* behave accordingly. The prince rewards his men (3809-12), in contrast to Don Pedro’s failure to deliver the promised provisions (3683-6). Douglas is depicted dividing booty among his men according to their merits and keeping nothing for himself. Such deeds, Barbour explains, ought to make men love their lord, as they did (15.539-43). Men gained respect through this distribution of *largesse*. More importantly, it secured loyalty. King Robert initiated a policy of land grants for men who promised him their loyalty, as explained above. Men who came into his peace and renounced their English fealty could

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keep their Scottish holdings. Robert I’s policy of placating opponents and securing
loyalty through a system of rewards was similarly implemented by Robert II for whose
court The Bruce was composed, as discussed below.

A display of largesse implied ‘a detachment from possession and a disregard for
wealth’. Largesse was the opposite of greed, which caused disloyalty, as explained
above, and compromised a knight’s honour. Above all, it was indicative of a royal, or
noble, status, and it is represented as such in romance, in The Bruce and in La vie du Prince Noir:

out of innate nobility he gives his own horse to a young man of noble birth who has been
ambushed, his horse incapacitated: without Lancelot’s gift he would miss a chance to
confront a traitor in court. Lancelot’s generosity preserves him from shame.

he was surely of high birth, for they found no greed in him, as soon as anything of worth
came his way, he put it to good uses, and all his gifts were fair according to what each one
deserved.

Chandos Herald describes the Black Prince’s largesse in his provision for eighty knights
and four times that number squires at his table during his regna (1599) in Gascony:

Car tour jours avoit a sa table
Plus de quatre vintz chivalers
Et bien quatre tantz esquires (1612-14).

His largesse is celebrated further in his provision for ‘[I]a fesoient justes et reveaux/ En
Auguileme et a Burdeuz’ (1615-16). His men loved him because of his largesse and
noblesse (1620-6).

Franchise is best discussed within a consideration of courtoisie, which, far from
implying courtly manners, functions as a gauge of nobility and inspires fidelity in The
Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir. Heroes are described as courteous:

[Douglas] wes off full fayr effer
Wys curtais and deboner' (1.361-2)

[Randolph] wes of mesurabill statur
And weile porturat at mesur
With braid vesage plesand and fayr,
Curtais at poynyt and debonayr
And of rycht sekyr contenyng (10.285-9).

478 See Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 255-70.
480 Livre de chevalerie, p. 65, lines 185-7: ‘You must guard against greed and all other behaviour
which might stand in the way of and deflect you from such a noble achievement as winning honour.’
481 Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, p. 195.
482 Ibid., p. 196.
At his death, King Robert’s men mourned ‘his worthi bounte/ His wyt his strength his honeste’ but, above all, ‘the gret company/ That he maid thaim oft curtasly’ (20.269-72):

‘All our defens,’ thai said, ‘allace
And he that all our comford was
Our wit and all out governing
Allace is brocht her till ending.
His worschip and his mekill mycht’ (273-77).

They mourned their loss of comford and his wise governing: ‘For better governour that he/ Mycht in na countre fundyn be’ (289-90).\(^{483}\) Courtesy is connected with a personal relationship between a lord and his men; the courteous lord provided good governance, defence and comford. In return, the courteous vassal provided his lord with love and loyalty: ‘he lowyt him ffull curtasly’ (2.154).\(^{484}\)

This emphasis on courtesy as a personal bond between lord and vassal is found throughout *The Bruce*. It is found in the stress Barbour places on the comford/ comfort a leader inspires in his men and their love and respect for him in return. Comford keeps men from despair so that they might fulfil their intention (‘do thar entent’):

For oftsy throu a word als weill may fall
Comford may rys and hardyment
May ger men do thar entent
On the samyn wys it did her,
Thar comford and thar cher
Comford thaim sa gretumly (11.494-501).\(^{485}\)

Sir Edward Bruce ‘the worthy’ went to great pains to comfort his men (9.49, 52). Douglas, ever-courteous to his men, protected them from thoughts of cowardice by his brave example:

The Douglas thar weill hard wes stad,
Bot the gret hardyment that he hade

\(^{483}\) Similarly, at his death, Douglas’s men grieve for their loss of their lord and friend who was so ‘swete and debonar’ (20.521).

\(^{484}\) An understanding of courtesy as a virtue creating bonds between men was noted earlier: see McKim, *The Bruce*: a study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*, pp. 61-2.

\(^{485}\) Translated by Duncan, p. 428 as follows: ‘For many a time from one [wrong] word defeat and loss can arise, and through a [good] word, equally well, comfort and determination can arise, causing men to achieve their aim. It did just that here: their comfort and good cheer encouraged them so greatly’.  

124
Comfort his men on sic a wys
That na man thocht on cowardy (15. 393-6)

Douglas looks out for his men in battle and dies rescuing another knight (19.582- 611; 20 451-80). As cited above, King Robert’s men drew encouragement from their king’s brave example: ‘His folk sall tak ensample ay’ (9.72). His ensample ‘[g]aff all his men recomforting’ (11.506). He treated his friends courteously (18.545). And, as his men mourn his death, so he mourns the death of his men.

Courtesy in a lord was also indicative of nobility. King Robert behaved in a way fitting for a king, in a manner that should be praised. When Ingram d’Umphraville requested leave to depart from King Robert’s camp following the death of Sir David Brechin, it was his ‘hart’ that would not allow him stay (19.107). King Robert respected his decision and d’Umphraville returned to England where he told Edward II ‘off the kingis curtassy’ in allowing him to leave (19.125). Later he refused to give advice to Edward II to King Robert’s disadvantage: ‘He delt sa curtasy/ With me that on na wis suld l/ Giff consaill till his nethring’ (19.153-5). King Robert is courteous in his treatment of prisoners and sends both Sir Marmaduke Tweng and the French knights home ransom-free and laden with gifts; both times Barbour emphasizes how King Robert ‘gert tret thaim curtasy’ (13. 535; 18. 538). Such behaviour should gain a man much praise:

A worthi man that sua wald do
Mycht mak him gretly for to prise (13.540-1).

Edward I, in contrast, ‘for dispyte’ ordered that his prisoners be hung and drawn (2.458- 9). His motive was without pyte, discussed below. Edward also had Christopher Seton drawn, beheaded and hung, ‘[f]oroutyn pete or mercy’ (4.31). And, when dying he again shows no mercy:

‘Hangis and drawys.’
That wes wonder off sik sawis,
That he that to the ded wes ner
Suld answer apon sic maner
Foroutyn menyng and mercy (4.322-6)

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487 2.471- 3; 7. 229.
489 See Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour’s Bruce’, p. 484, for examples of some less than praiseworthy treatment of prisoners by the Scottish camp such as ‘the Douglas Larder’ (5.401- 11) and the English treatment of prisoners (p. 483).
490 Duncan, p 102 translates ‘for dispyte’ as ‘from spite’ but it seems Barbour is highlighting the lack of pitie, discussed below, involved in such an act.
The implications of ransoming for chivalry are treated below; here the aim is to establish the virtues that determine the deeds performed by the characters in *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. And these virtues, it is clear, operate within a system of personal relationships between lord and vassal with clearly delineated roles.

*Franchise* and *courtoisie* in *La vie* are similarly indicative of a noble disposition; values that inspire loyalty in a lord. The Herald typically celebrates the prince’s virtues in a cluster: ‘fraunchise, valour et bountée’; ‘[l]argesce, franchise et honour’; (66; 1619). The prince courteously tends to King John II of France after he is captured at Poitiers (1417-26). He is courteous to his men (2579-80) and his wife (2072-84), whom he comforts when he leaves for the Spanish expedition. His relationship with his wife is described in courteous terms throughout the poem. Chandos Herald tells us the Black Prince married ‘une dame de grant pris/ Qui de s’amour l’avoit espris,/ Qe bele fuist, plesante et sage’ (1587-9). She welcomes him on his return from the Spanish war and he dismounts and they walk together hand in hand (3751-74). Chandos Herald’s descriptions of the prince’s relationship with his wife are not isolated incidents from ‘courtly’ romance. They are part of his general courteous attitude, which in turn indicated nobility. ‘Druerie’, a quality described by Mathew as the opposite to adultery, denotes the personal courteous service of women. Mathew notes that this quality was far wider than love by the end of the fourteenth century but could include it. Courtesy, after all, is derived from love, as emphasized by Andreas the Chaplain:

> It is agreed that there is no good thing in the world and no courtesy, that is not derived from love as from its fountain head.

Sir James Douglas’s gallant search for food for the ladies is indicative of his courteous behaviour (2.573-81), and illustrative of nobility, a link that Barbour was keen to emphasize in relation to Douglas, as discussed below.

*Pitié* has been described as a sympathy or empathy for an individual that provides the motive for a course of action. Mathew links this quality to the role of knight as ‘justiciar’ or punisher of wrongs in the *chansons de geste*. A ‘justiciar’ was a punisher of those in the wrong. As described above, King Robert reprimands those found to be breaking his command such as Sir Colin Campbell and Sir Edward Bruce, and punishes those found guilty of treason. Treason, as explained above, was considered a breach of

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loyalty and explains why King Robert took such ‘firm steps’ when he discovered the de Soulis conspiracy.\textsuperscript{495}

As mentioned above, it is \textit{gret pitté} that moves King Robert to fight for his kingdom:

\begin{verbatim}
Thys lord the Bruys I spak of ayr
Saw all the kynryk swa forfayr,
And swa troublyt the folk saw he
That he had tharoff gret pitté (1.477-80).
\end{verbatim}

His decision to spare the lives of the townsfolk of Perth after its capture is attributed by Barbour to the king’s \textit{pité}, or empathy to their plight: ‘thai were kynd [kin] to the countré/He wyst and off thaim had pité’ (9.453-4). It is due to sympathy that he stops his army in Ireland to help a laundress who goes into labour at the side of the road: ‘Certis, it was pité’, the king explains, to leave her there at her moment of crisis (16.281). ‘This was a full gret curtasy’, Barbour notes (16.293). It is without empathy or sympathy that Edward I treats his prisoners, as noted above: ‘for dispyte’; ‘[f]oroutyn peté or mercy’ (4.31). And it is without sympathy that King Robert and his men, wise to the need for \textit{slycht}, attack Turnberry and kill the inhabitants ‘dispitously’ to avenge the ill treatment that the defendants of the village had previously bestowed on them (5.98-101). Pity is also linked to a sense of shame or sadness, an emotion inspiring sympathy. The deaths of Sir Giles d’Argentine and Sir David Brechin are described by Barbour as a ‘gret pite’ (13.320; 19.72).

\textit{Pitie} was the impetus for the Black Prince’s support of Don Pedro:

\begin{verbatim}
Ore commence noble matiere
De noble et puissant mestiere,
Car pitée, amour et droiture
Mist ensemble sa noriture (1817-20).
\end{verbatim}

It is connected with a sense of right and love, virtues that existed together in the prince from his childhood. They are the virtues listed in union in the letter Don Pedro sent to the prince imploring aid for his adventure:

\begin{verbatim}
pur \textit{Dieu} tut primerement,
Et pur \textit{amour} et pur \textit{pitée},
Pur \textit{alliance} et pur \textit{amistée} [amity],
Et pur \textit{lineage} auxi
Et pur \textit{droit} q’il ad, sanz nulle si,
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{495} Book 19.32: \textit{sutell purches}, translated by Duncan, p. 701 as ‘firm steps’. 

127
A tres noble Prince, puissant,
Honorable, preu et vaillant,
Car il lui plese a socourer
Droiture et lui, qui requerer
Lui voet en noun de pacience (1870-9, my italics).

They are inseparable from his as role of lord and illustrate the fusion of nobility and virtues central to La vie and The Bruce, and central to the concept of chivalry, as discussed below.
4 Biographical Interpretation: Part II, Topoi, structure, English romance, and language

This chapter will conclude the investigation into Barbour and Chandos Herald’s use of traditional conventions from *chansons de geste* and romance in order to elucidate the chivalric ethos informing their narratives. *Topoi* will be treated first. *Topoi* appropriated by Barbour and Chandos Herald are primarily concerned to expound aspects of war and chivalry. The way in which both authors treat traditional *topoi* concerning battle reflects a contemporary understanding of the concept of chivalry, and how it could be manipulated to accommodate aristocratic or royal ambition. The structure of these two narratives is also informed by thematic concerns with adventures undertaken to perform deeds of arms. The matter of Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance will be considered in relation to *The Bruce*, which, as explained above, merits a more detailed investigation than *La vie du Prince Noir*. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an exploration of language and patronage.

1 Topoi, chivalry and reputation

Stock descriptions and situations from romance and *chanson* saturate *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*. They were traditional *topoi* instantly recognizable to their intended audience. A break in the narrative or the beginning of a new section was often announced by the treatment of seasons as the time when birds start or cease to sing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La vie (1552-4)</th>
<th>The Bruce (16.63-73)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ce fu au tens qu’arbre foillissent,</td>
<td>This wes in the moneth of May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que glai et bois et pré verdissent,</td>
<td>Quchen byrdys symgis in ilk spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et cil oisel en lor latin</td>
<td>Melland thar notis with seymly soune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chantent doucement au matin</td>
<td>For softnes of the swet sesoun,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et toute rien de joie aflamme⁴⁹⁶</td>
<td>And leyvys off the branchys spredis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au temps que la russinole chante,</td>
<td>And blomys brycht besid tham bredis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oept jour en joly mois du mai,</td>
<td>And feldys ar strowyt with flouris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que oiseaux ne sont pas en esmail</td>
<td>Well saaverand and of ser colouris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(La vie, 1552-4)</td>
<td>And all thing worthies blyth and gay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quchen that this gud king tuk his way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To rid southwart as I said ar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴⁹⁶ Chrétien de Troyes, *Le conte du Graal (Le roman de Perceval)*, ed. Willaim Roach (Geneva, 1956), lines 69-73, p. 3: ‘It was in the season when trees break into leaf, when iris plants and woods and meadows become green, when birds in their own language sing sweetly in the morning, when everything is aflame with joy’.
Trois jours droit eu mois d’averille,
Qe cil douce oisselet gentile
Preignent a refaire lour chantz
Pres prees, per bois et per champs (3475-8).

Thys wes in ver quhen wynter tid
With his blastis hidwys to bid
Was ourdryyyn and byrdis smale
As turturis and the nychtynyale
Begouth rycht sariely to syng (5.1-5).

Winter is marked with snow: ‘Quhen snaw had helyt all the land’ (The Bruce, 9.128-9). Mornings are indicated by the rising of the sun: (8.216); (14.177). Topoi applied by Barbour and Chandos Herald confirmed their narratives within a tradition of romance. Ladies lament when men leave for battle (3.346-52; 2089-92, 3576-93). Similes are colourful and descriptive such as the pot holes dug by King Robert and his men before the battle of Bannockburn, which are compared to a wax-comb made by bees (11.370-5). Archers shot so fast, the Herald explains, that arrows fell like rain:

Ore commence bataille fier Car plus droit traioint archier
Et prist a level le power. Qe ne soit pluive en temps d’yver (3361-2). 497
Archiers traient a la volée,
Plus drue qe pluvie n’est volée (3225-7)

Animal metaphors such as ‘plus fiers qe lions’ (La vie, 1208), a popular topos in twelfth-century Arthurian romance, 498 are used to indicate strength:

The erle of Carrick Schyr Edward,
That stoutar wes than a libard (14. 1-2)
(522-4)

(522-4)

The Bruce, 14.1-2)
Il n’avoit en la compagnie
Du Prince homme, tant fuit petitz,
Qe ne fut bien auxi hardis
Et auxi fiers come un lioun (3378-80).

Victories are celebrated in The Bruce and La vie with ‘fest and glaidsum cher’ (The Bruce, 17.5):

Gret glaidschip than wes in the land./ All than wes wonyn till his hand (17.11-12)
Rycht blyth intill his hart wes he/ And maid them fest with gamyn and gle (17.907-8)
Daunser et festoier y veist hom/ Et faire festes et reveaux (La vie, 474-5)

Grant joie et grant feste fist homme,/ Grantz justes et festes criée/ Adonqes par la contrée (522-4)
Le fesoient justes et reveaux/ En Anguileme et a Burdeaux (1615-6).

Such jousts and feasts at the court of the Black Prince are comparable to the reign of Arthur: ‘Dauncier et chacier et voler./ Faire grantz festes et juster,/ Fasoit [com] en regne

See also lines 1189-92.

Elaine Ruck, An index of themes and motifs in twelfth-century French Arthurian poetry. Arthurian studies xxv.
Biographical Interpretation: Part II

The jousts in *The Bruce*, however, are ‘justyn [jousting] of wer’ (19.524).

I.i Chivalry and violence

Other *topoi* appropriated by Barbour and the Herald reinforce the prevalence of this bellicose dimension and shed light on three defining characteristics of the concept of chivalry: violence; the achievement of honour through prowess; and, the reason for the emphasis on attaining honour: oral dissemination and the importance of the recognition of reputation. The deeds enacted are violent; blood is a central motif. Sir Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, asked Sir James Douglas about his fight: “Schyr, said he, “we haf drawyn blud”” (19.625). Throughout *The Bruce* the grass and streams flow red with the blood of corpses:

The gres woux off the blud all rede (2.364)
The bataille thar sa feloun was/ And sa rycht spilling of blud/ That on the erd the flosiss stud (13.18-20)
And sua felloun occisious/ That the rewys all bludy war/ Off slayne men that war lyand thar (14.220-222)
Than wes the slaughter sa felloun/ That all the ruys ran of blud (15.70-1)
The red blud out off mony a wound/ Ruschyt in sa gret foysoun than/ That off the blud the stremys ran (16.166-8).

Additional battle *topoi* further reinforce the violent nature of such encounters:

Thar wes off speris sic bristing
As ather apon other raid
That it a wele gret frushc had maid,
Hors come thar frushand heid for heid
Sua that fele on the ground felle deid (16. 158-62)

Thar mycht men se a felloun sycht
Off stabing, stocking ans striking
(17.784-5)
So knychtlik apon ather sid
Giffand and takand routis rid (15.53-4).

Prowess is celebrated in battle, and it is understood to involve a ‘rycht gret spilling of blud’ (13.19). Sir Edward Bruce fought ‘rycht hardely/ That mony a fey fell under fete,/ The feld wox some of blud all wete’ (15.44-6). Deeds are carried out in *La vie du Prince Noir* through the use of force:

la prist il le tour sur assaut (713)
Mais la puissance d’Engleterre/ Prisetrent la par force la terre (159-60)
La gaignerent a l’envaoir/ Par force le pas de la haie (1228-9).

Chandos Herald records the *grant* battles fought by the Black Prince, and the ensuing slaughter:

499 Battle *topoi* emanate from classical conventions and are not exclusive to romance and *chanson*; they are, however, very much associated with traditions of romance by the late fourteenth century.
La veissiez a l’enconter
Sez grosses launces abaisser
Et bouter de chescune part (1303-5)
Lors s’enforce li ferreis
Et fors fuit li abatis (3335-6).500

Pur les grantz coups q’ils se donoient
Des grantz haches q’ils portoient
Et des espées et cotiaux (3265-7)
La avoit moult grant bataille,
La veissiez maint homme mort (1332-3).501

**Warfare** was of course violent but the point is that this was acknowledged and embraced by the concept of chivalry. Battle was understood to be both marvellous and horrible:

Celui jour ot il bataille
Si horrible qe, tout sanz faille,
Unques ne fuist corps si hardis
Qe n’en poeit ester esbahis
Qe veist venire las puissance
Et la poair du roi de France,
Grant mervaille serroit a dire (305-11)

Mais certes grantz piece estoit
Et merveilouse chose et dure;
La avoit meinte creature
Qui celui jour fuist mis au fin(1184-7)
Avoit guerre moult merveillouse
Qe avoit duree moult cruouse
Le temps de quatorze ans ou plus (1681-3).

And such fierce battle is directly equated with chivalry by Chandos Herald:

Espris de maltalent et de ire
Devant ensemble entreacountier
Et faisnat d’armes le mestier
Si tres chivalrousement
Qe unques puis le venement
Ne vist homme bataille plus fiere (312-17).

It is the deeds of arms enacted in battle (*faisnat d’armes/* *fesantz d’armes*) that the Herald calls *tres chivalrousement*. Throughout *The Bruce*, *La vie du Prince Noir* and many a romance much space is devoted to the description of knights eager to perform deeds of arms:

That fayis ridand ner at the hand/ Arayit rycht avisely/ Willull to do chevalry (2.346-8)
Schyr Edward that gret yarnyn had/ All tymys to do chevalry (9.588-9)
Thai war all young men and joly/ Yamand to do chevalry (11.531-2)
On ather sid men mycht than se/ Mony a wycht man and worthi/ Redy to do chevalry (12.494-6)

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500 Translated by Pope and Lodge (ed.), *The life of the Black prince*, p. 42: ‘Then the clash increases, and mighty was the slaughter’.
501 See also lines 503-8: ‘La se proverent vaillantement/ Lui noble baroun ensement./ La ot il maint niefs gaignée,/ Maint pris et maint peree,/ Et la ot meint bon homme mort/ Si come je oy en mon recort.’
Stewart Walter that gret bounte/ Set ay on hey chevalry (18.486-7)
Bot he that rest anoyit ay/ And wald in travaill be alway (18.1-2)
Lui Prince, qui moulit ad grant seing/ Et desirer de la bataille (La vie, 2894-5)
Englois sont a pee descendu./ Qui moult ont le coer esmoeu/ De gaigner et conquere honour (3147-9).

As is clear from the above citations, chevalry is understood by Barbour to denote praiseworthy deeds enacted in battle:

For the king full chevalrusly / Defendyt all his company (3.89-90)
How ony man sa sodaniy/ Mycht do so gret chevalry/ As did the king that him allane (6.11-13)
Quhen sic a knycht and sa worthy/ As this throu his chevalry/ Into sic perell has him set' (9.405-7)
Throu his chivalrous chevalry/ Galloway wes stonayit gretum ly (9.541-2)
Now may ye her off gret ferly/ And off rycht hey chevalry (9.563-4)
And till the Erle Thomas perfay/ Thai gaiff the vaward in leding/ For in his noble governing/ And in his hey chevalry/ Thai assoueryt rycht sovereignly (11.312-6)
The Erle off Murreff gret price had ther./ For his worthi chevalry/ Comfort all his cumpany (14. 82-4)
And mony fayr chevalry/ Eschevyt war full douchtely (20.15-16).

Chivalry therefore describes deeds of arms, and these deeds were understood to involve a display of prowess, or violent force. ‘The Bruysis folk full hardely/ Schawyt thar gret chevalry’, records Barbour, and they showed their great chivalry with heavy blows (2.369-70, 373). In the example of Count Ferrand, Barbour explains that it was ‘throu his chevalry’ that Ferrand knocked the king to the ground (4.283-4). But not all deeds are equated with chivalry, just those that are noteworthy and are carried out with an admirable display of prowess: ‘Thai bykyrrit oftsyys sturdily/ Bot gret chevalry done wes nane’ (10.816-7).

Chivalry in The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir indicates renowned deeds of prowess, knights themselves (discussed below), and is also directly associated with the ability to enact deeds of prowess; it is therefore used to describe knights who embody the virtues necessary to perform prowess in battle:

And Ingram the Umfravill perfay/ That wes bath wys and averty/ And full of gret chevalry (2.212-14)
Ye ar ilkan wycht and worthy/ And full of gret chevalry (2.337-8)
And Schyr Paschall the Florentine/ That wes a knycht of Lumbardy/ And wes full of chevalry (14.516-8)

The Herald describes the Black Prince as the embodiment of chivalrie: ‘C’est du fait de chivalrie:/ En sa persone fuist noire/ En la quele il regna trente ans’ (97-99). This chivalrie/chevalry is displayed in battle, and, as noted by Kaeuper, it is demonstrated by a
knight's own hands.\textsuperscript{502} King Robert '[t]hat hardy wes off hart and hand' killed fourteen men 'with his hand'; all his victories were 'wonnyn till his hand' (1.28; 6.315; 17.12). Sir Ingram Umphraville explains to Sir Aymer de Valence that the Scots' "leddar is wys and wycht/ And off his hand a noble knycht" (2.263-4), the exact phrase used earlier by Barbour in relation to Aymer de Valence (2.201-2). Sir Edward Bruce is also 'off his hand a noble knycht' (9.486).\textsuperscript{503} And Sir Ralph Cobham, discussed below, 'wes renownyt for best of hand / Off a knycht off all Ingland' (18.429-31). As explained above, the Herald records how 'gent de hardi corage' gave proof of their vesselage through their use of sword and hand (2766-73). The wisdom of the use of hands in battle is exemplified by Sir James Douglas's unscarred face. One of the many knights who came to see Douglas while he was in Spain, referred to by Barbour simply as one of the most valued fighting men in Christendom, marvelled that such a reputable knight as Douglas should have an unscarred face. Douglas explains to him that he always used his hand to protect his head ('"Love God, all tym had 1/ Handis my hed for to wer"'), a point emphasized by Barbour: 'Quha wald tak kep to this answer/ Suld se in it understanding' (20.388-91).

I.ii Chivalry and honour

Chivalry involved the use of violence to enact feats of arms, and it was the means by which a knight acquired acclaim, as explained by the Herald:

\begin{quote}
La veissez ferir Chaundos \\
Qui cel jour y acquist grant los (1307-8)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ces bachilers de noble affaire \\
Veissez la ferir a tas \\
Et doner si grantz hatiplas \\
Qe ce fuist un grant mervaille (1328-32).
\end{quote}

Through a display of such noteworthy deeds, a knight achieved honour. But what exactly was honour? According to Ramon Lull's late thirteenth-century treatise, '[h]onour is worth more than gold or silver without comparison.'\textsuperscript{504} The fifteenth-century author of \textit{L'instruction d'un jeune prince} emphasized the importance of virtue to honour:

\begin{quote}
Et, ad ce propoz, l'en treuve que anciennement, ou temps que Rome seignourissoit presque sur tout le monde, avoit à Rome deux temples, l'un nommé le temple d'onneur et l'autre le temple de vertu; mais le temple d'onneur estoit edifié et assis en telle manière que nul n'y
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{502} Kaeuper, 'The societal role of chivalry in romance: northwestern Europe', pp. 100-1.
\textsuperscript{503} See also ibid., for 6.315 and 9.486.
His intention was to connect nobility with virtue, as discussed below, and four virtues are celebrated: prudence, justice, continence and force, also called 'magnanimity, boldness of heart or force of courage', which is the virtue required to perform bold deeds of arms:

Magnanimité est le iiiie des vertus que on doit moulhon orner, car princes ne chevaliers de haulte renommée ne firent oncques entreprinse ne vaillance en armes dignes de mémoire sans sa compaigne, aide et confort.506

Magnanimité as described here is the same as Froissart’s proece, Barbour’s hardyment, bounte or valour, and Chandos Herald’s proesce; all involved strength and courage to enact brave and violent deeds in battle, and all lead to honour:

si comme la busce ne poet ardoir sans feu, ne poet I I  gentilz horns venire a parfait honneur ne a la gleore dou monde sans proece507

That thai syne throu thar gret valour Fors pur droit ester sustenzuz
Come till gret hycht and till honour Et proesce, et pur franchise, (The Bruce, 1.451-2)
Qe mon coer semonte et attise De conquestre vie de honneur (3178-82).

It is specifically in battle that great honour can be achieved, explains Geoffrey de Charny.508

Speeches before battle emphasize this association between prowess and honour. Before charging into battle, the Black Prince tells his men to think of victory if they have a thought of life and honour:

‘Avant seigniour!’ fait il, ‘pur Dieu, Gaignons ceste place et cest lieu, Si avons counte de nostre vie et honnour!’ (1339-42).

In ancient times […] when Rome ruled almost all the world, there were at Rome two temples: one called the temple of honour, and the other the temple of virtue; but the temple of honour was built and set up in such a way that no one could enter it who had not first passed through the temple of virtue. By reason of which, you should know and understand that no one, of whatever rank he may be, can attain honour without virtue.

506 Ibid., pp. 354, 356; Vale, pp. 25, 26 and note 61:
Magnanimity is the fourth of the virtues that one must greatly honour, for princes and knights of high repute never performed enterprises nor bold deeds of arms worthy of memory without its accompaniment, aid and comfort.

507 Chroniques de Jean Froissart, 1, 2: in Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, p. 24:
As firewood cannot burn without flame, neither can a gentleman achieve perfect worldly honour nor worldly renown without prowess.

508 Livre de chevalerie, p. 50, section 7, lines 22-3: ‘for it is from good battles that great honours arise and are increased, for good fighting men prove themselves in good battles.’
A display of prowess will secure renown, or honour, as King Robert tells his men before Methven and Bannockburn:

Ye ar ilkan wycht and worthy
And full of gret chevalry,
And wate rycht weill quhat honour is.
Wyrk yhe then apon swylk wys
That your honour be savyt ay
That quha-sa-ever he war that fand
Hys hart nocht sekyr for to stand
To wyn all or dey with honour
(11.405-7, my italics).

Both King Robert and the Black Prince incite their men to fight for individual honour:

‘That ilk man for his awne honour/ Purvay him a gud baneour’ (12.219-20)
‘Avant, avant baniere!/ Chesun pense de son honour!’ (1276-7).

But it is an individual honour necessary to support a communal goal and one that ultimately secured monarchical acclaim.

It is the hart that both Barbour and the Herald connect with honour. The English, records the Herald, ‘[q]ui moult ont le coer esmoeu/ De gaigner et conquere honour’ (3158-9). King Robert, as mentioned above, is described by Barbour as ‘[rjycht blyth intill his hart’ (17.907) when he heard of how the English were defeated by his men. Douglas’s ‘hart on hey honour wes set’ (1.378). Honour and virtues were associated with the heart.^

The prince’s virtues were in his heart from the beginning of his life (76-9). There was no heart in the world that would not be moved at deeds of battle recorded by the Herald:

La ne fuist, c’est chose certaine,
Nulle coer en monde si hardis
Que ne peust ester esbahis [amazed]
Pur les grantz coups q’ils se donoient
Des grantz haches q’ils portoient
Et des espées et cotiaux (3262-7).^

The above-mentioned animal descriptions denoting strength in battle are often attached to the heart: ‘Ovesque le seigniour de Courtoun,/ Qui ot le coer fier come lion’ (1107-8); ‘Felletoun/ Guilliam, qui ot coer de lioun’ (2461-2); Edmund, earl of Cambridge, the Black Prince’s brother , ‘[q] ui eust le coer fier come lyoun’ (3920). A strong heart was necessary to prevent despair and maintain a firm resolve in order to display prowess in battle:

509 Kaeuper, *Chivalry and violence*, p. 16.
510 Pope and Lodge (ed.), *The life of the Black Prince*, p. 41: ‘Then, of a surety, there was no heart in the world so bold as not to be amazed at the mighty blows they dealt with the great axes they bore, and the swords and daggers.’
511 See lines 2755-6.
Therfor we suld our harts rais
Sua that na myscheyff us abais
And schaip us alwayis tothat ending
That beris in it mensk and loving (4. 546-9).

Sir Aymer de Valence explains that King Robert’s ‘nobill hart’ could not be defeated:

‘Bot his hart fillyt is off bounte
Sua that it vencusyt may nocht be’ (7.360-1; 379-80).

King Robert listened to his heart and acted with courage: ‘And did rycht as hys hart hym bad/
Strang utrageous curage he had’ (6.127-8). Prowess was measured in the heart. As explained above, King Robert’s heart was found to be ‘[o]ff all bounte and all prowes’ (20.240). It is his heart that Douglas is entrusted with to bring on crusade, the ultimate stage for reputable knights to prove their prowess, as discussed below.

Honour is therefore inseparable from reputation and determined by prowess. Death, as explained above, was preferable to dishonour. If a knight has magnanimité, according to L’instruction d’un jeune prince, ‘la mort luy samble petite paine à endurer, pour acquérir honneur et bonne renommée’. A feeling that honour had been compromised provoked a display of prowess. King Philip, the Herald explains, assembled his force and swore he would avenge his loss, and his name:

Et dist qe poi se priseroit
Si graunt vengeaunce n’en pren deroit (229-30).

The French threatened the English, saying for their ‘grant outrage’ they would have them die in shame:

Durement manacent les Engleis,
Disantz qe par lour grant outrage
Les ferroient morir a hountage (1678-80).

It is Don Pedro’s belief that his honour had been challenged that incites him to wage war:

Moult en fuist en son coer maris
Dans Petro d’Espaigne, lui rois;
Dist q’il ne [se] prise un nois
Si de tout ce n’en prist vengeaunce (1747-9).

Sir James Douglas, Barbour explains, so avenged his father’s death at the hands of the English, that there was no one alive in England who did not fear him: ‘His faydr dede he

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512 See ‘Bot his hart that wes stout and hey/ Consailllyt hym’ (6.118-9).
513 Ghillebert de Lannoy, Oeuvres, p. 357: in Vale, War and chivalry, p. 26 and note 61: ‘death seems a small penalty to endure in order to gain honour and great renown’.
514 A phrase repeated for King John, lines 727-8.
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venge my self/ that in Eng land I underta/ Wes nane off lyve that hym ne dreed' (1.291-3). This connection between honour and violence, it has been argued by Barnie, can explain the motives behind the Black Prince’s sack of Limoges in 1370. Previously, it was presumed that the prince’s decision to kill all the inhabitants of Limoges ran counter to the chivalric ethos, and this was explained in light of his long illness.\(^{515}\) Much of the infamy surrounding the prince’s sack of Limoges is based on the description provided by Froissart. However, Barnie argues that the *Chroniques* were already showing signs of pro-French sympathy by 1370, and contemporary English accounts do not consider the prince’s behaviour problematic. Instead, Barnie justifies the prince’s actions on a point of honour. Jean le Cros was bishop of Limoges and a trusted friend of the Black Prince who betrayed him and turned the city over to the French. The prince sought to avenge his shame, and ‘the ultimate vindication of honour lies in physical violence’.\(^{516}\) The inhabitants of Limoges suffered with the bishop ‘because honour is collective as well as personal’.\(^{517}\)

### Chivalry and reputation

Honour could be vindicated by violence - or prowess - but it also worked the other way: deeds enacted in battle proved a man’s worth and provided recognition of his honour. The more difficult the encounter, the greater the opportunity for a display of prowess, and the more acclaim to be gained. There was no greater honour than the defeat of a large army by a few men. This is explicitly proclaimed by Barbour in the speeches made by King Robert to his men before the battle of Methven and Sir Edward Bruce to his men in Ireland:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{For multitud mais na victory,} & \quad \text{Hame till Schyr Edward raid thai then} \\
\text{As men has red in mony story} & \quad \text{And said weill thai wat mony men.} \\
\text{That few folk has oft vencusyt ma.} & \quad \text{He said agayne, ‘The ma thai be} \\
\text{Trow we that we sall do rycht sua.} & \quad \text{The mar honour al-out haff we} \\
\text{(2.333-6) } & \quad \text{Giff that we bear us manlyly.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{We are set her in juperty} & \quad \text{To wyn honour or for to dey.} \\
\text{We ar to fer fra hame to fley} & \quad \text{We ar to fer fra hame to fley} \\
\text{Tharfor lat ilk man worthi be (14.271-80).} & \quad \text{Tharfor lat ilk man worthi be (14.271-80).}
\end{align*}
\]

‘The ma thai be/ The mar honour al-out haff we’ is a *topos* recurring throughout *The Bruce* where the emphasis is repeatedly placed on the smaller number of the Scottish force:


\(^{517}\) Ibid., p. 78.
That certis hard I never say/ That Inglismen mar aparail/ Maid than did than for bataill./
For quhen the tyme wes cummyn ner/ He assemblit all his power (11.80-4)
Bot thocht thai quhone war thai war wicht,/ And forout drede or effray (14.42-3)
That Scottismen semyt to be/ Worthi and off gret bounte,/ 'Bot thai ar nocht withoutyn wer/
Half-dell a dyner till us her' (14.185-8)
The hardest fycht forsuth this wes/ That ever the gud lord off Douglas/ Wes in as off sa few mengne (15.407-9)
Richard off Clar on this maner/ And all his folk discomfyt wer/ With few folk, as I to you tauld (16.243-5)
And certis I herd never say/ Quhar quheyn mar defence had maid/ That sua rycht hard assailing haid (17.812-15)
And Inglismen with gret maistrys (18.260).

Such a display of prowess served a practical purpose: it secured victory and saved men’s lives:

For nocht had bene his gret bounte
That slew thar chyftane in that fycht
His men had all to dede bene dycht (15.410-12).

But it was also the means to promote a hierarchy of values centred on the use of prowess to achieve honour and establish a reputation. Sir Edward Bruce was renowned above his peers (‘out-over his peris renomme’) because ‘he haid never yeit abaysyng/ Off multitud o men’ (9.490-4). It is for this reason that he is compared by Barbour to Judas Maccabeus, Geoffrey de Charny’s ideal knight, as discussed above. Conversely, it was a great shame for a large English army to lose a battle to a much smaller Scots force (7.625).

The connection between honour and prowess through the fight of the few against the many is confirmed by Barbour’s description of the three greatest feats performed with fifty men on one side facing a much larger opposing army:

Thai war done sua rycht hardly
That thai war priset soveranly
Atour all othir poynitis of wer
That in that tym eschevit wer (16.502-8).

The first was that of Sir James Douglas (16.388-511); the second involved Sir Edward Bruce and fifty men (511-16, as previously depicted at 9.541-647); and the third took place in Eskdale with Sir John de Soulis and fifty men (516-26). This last feat performed by Sir John de Soulis is not elaborated by Barbour who claims it is too common to repeat as it is heard sung by young women every day:

I will nocht rehers the maner
For quha-sa likis thai may her
Young wemen quhen thai will play
Syng it amang thaim ilk day (16.527-30).

Sir John de Soulis was not one of the main heroes in *The Bruce* at any rate and Barbour had various reasons for dismissing his feat in a few short lines. However, his feat is recorded because it is fitting that such worthy deeds be celebrated and it was central to the oral dissemination of a chivalric ethos dependent on the promotion of deeds of prowess. Also, it should be noted that the women ‘syng’ the song thus connecting the celebration of chivalric deeds to the use of verse.

Barbour ‘herd’ these tales and the emphasis on hearing, apart from its reception implications discussed below, further reinforces the importance of the oral disseminations of knightly deeds of prowess. Feats of prowess were dependent on oral dissemination for recognition:

The word sprang weile fer of his deid
Sua that in Ingland ner tharby
Men spak of it commonaly (15.422-4).

Oral dissemination of worthy deeds encouraged a display of prowess and established a knight’s credentials but they also indicate the intertextual circulation of tales depicting noteworthy feats, which in turn points to the insular referential framework established by romance narratives. Throughout *The Bruce* examples are found of stories repeated but for a few minor, if any, differences. One of these is King Robert’s fight alone against his foes; and, while this is repeated in itself, three specific examples are provided by Barbour of King Robert defeating three men who attack him while he is alone (3.93-146; 5.561-658; 7.407-94). After the first fight against three men, Mac Nachtan praised ‘the kingis chevalry’ (3.155):

“For yone knycht throu his douchti deid
And thro his outrageous manheid
Has fellyt intill litill tyd
Thre men o f m ekill prid’ (3.161-4).

And when questioned by his lord why he should praise his foe, Mac Nachtan explained that whether friend or foe, whoever wins prize of chivalry should be acclaimed:

Bot quhether-sa he be freynd or fa
Thatwynnys prys off chevalry
Men suld spek tharoff lelyly (174-6).

Mac Nachtan adds that he had never ‘in sang na ryme’ heard ‘[t]ell off a man that swa smartly/ Eschevyt swag ret chevalry’ (178-9). This is because songs and rhymes, or *chansons* and verse romances, were exactly the medium where such great deeds were
praised. And the circulation of such stories is further supported by the repetition of similar feats throughout *The Bruce*. On two more occasions King Robert is surprised by three men who attack him and both times Barbour draws attention to their treachery. As explained above, King Robert explains that but for their treason, all three would have been worthy men: (5.656-658; 7.493-4). On two of the three times, Barbour applies the *topos* of the epic blow and King Robert splits his opponent’s skull:

Syne with the swerd sic dynt hym gave  
That he the heid till the harnys clave.  
He rouschit doun off blud all rede  
As he that stound feld off dede. (3.137-40)

Roucht him sic rout in randoun rucht  
That he the hede till the harnys claiff  
And dede downe till the erd him draiff (5.634-6).

On the third occasion King Robert does not split his opponent’s skull but he does give two opponents such a hit that they fall dead onto the ground following the previous two examples,

And smate the fyrst sa vygorusly/ That he fell dede doun on the gren [grass] (7.456-7)  
In his ryssing sik rowt him gaff/ That stane-dede to the erd he draff (477-8)

and he splits another opponent’s back in two, once again demonstrating the epic blow:

He him assayllyt on sic wys/ That he the bak strak evyn in twa (466-7).

The blow to the skull, as indicated above, is also described in Sir Henry de Bohun’s surprise attack on King Robert. Sir Henry is introduced as ‘the worthi’ (12.29) thus increasing King Robert’s renown; it was a greater honour to defeat an opponent of repute. And it is important that his opponents are worthy ‘men of mekill prid’ and that he alone should defeat all three men. The repetition of situations suggests such tales were orally circulated. These orally disseminated stories fulfilled romance expectations and were in their turn established within a romance-influenced textual tradition. The textual transmission of these orally circulated accounts was open to exploitation by a king such as Robert I who was concerned to establish his kingship based on his reputation as the leading knight of his day.

Other tales are found repeated in *The Bruce*. Women constantly ‘confort’ (4.670; 5.178) the king; their role is to provide assistance in one form or another: helping King Robert find his men (4.470-89); predicting victory after misfortune (4.635-68); providing the king with men and news (5.133-81); offering sons (7.235-75); and exposing the de Soules conspiracy (19.22-3). The circulation of tales similarly explains Barbour’s inclusion
of the story of Sir John Webiton, the captain of the garrison of Douglas castle who died in its defence and was found to have a letter from 'a lady/ That he luffyt per drouery' in his purse. In the letter this lady claimed that if he successfully defended Douglas castle for a year he could claim her love. Rather than indicating the overlap between literature and life, or the ideal and reality of the concept of chivalry, this tale reinforces the inclusion of the real and the ideal within the chivalric ethos, and romance. Ladders are used repeatedly to capture castles: Forfar (9.313-20); Perth (9.371-6); Roxburgh (10.357-68); Edinburgh (10.358-85). Ladders are also used to capture Berwick town (17.370-5); the success of the employment of ladders throughout these various encounters validates the use of slycht. Also connected with slycht are the hunting scenes repeated in The Bruce. King Robert and his men are hunted and they hunt: ‘And hunyty lang quhill off the day’ (3.478), fulfilling a pastime recommended by Charny to keep men-at-arms active and away from the temptations of dice. But for King Robert and his men hunting is a necessity to procure food and Sir James Douglas, Barbour claims, was first among men when it came to finding food for the ladies in their group (2.585-8). Hunting scenes depicted in The Bruce, however, are both testimony to the textual result of the oral dissemination of renowned exploits and an indication of the function of such circulation.

Tracker dogs hunt the king twice but he escapes, first from the men of Galloway, and then from John of Lorn (6.36-180; 6.471-7.78). In the second example Barbour offers an identity for the tracker dog used by John of Lorn who 'sum men sayis yeit [still]' that King Robert trained himself:

Bot how Jhon of Lorn had him
Ik herd never menciuon be mad,
Bot men sayis it wes certane thing
That he had him in his sesyng [possession] (6.488, 495-8).

And, two different endings to the second story are posited: in the first ending, the hound loses the scent (7.44); and in the alternative, cited above, the king’s archer kills the dog with an arrow (53-75). As mentioned above, this is a tale also told by le Bel but in this case King Robert is pursued by Edward I. In the second instance in The Bruce and in the account provided by le Bel, the chase takes place in a forest:

\footnote{\textit{Livre de chevalerie}, p. 63, section 19, lines 128-9: 'it befits all men of rank to enjoy the sport of hunting with hawk and hound'. And, p. 62, section 19, lines 95-6: 'One should leave playing dice for money to rakes, bawds, and tavern rogues'.
En ce forests et lieux sau­va­ges où ces seigneurs d’Es­co­ce se te­noi­ent, main­tê­fois s’estoi­t tenu le roy Robert quant le bon roy Edowart ta­yon à c’estuy jeun­e roy l’avoit des­con­fit et de­chasse519.

The king to­wart the wod is gane
Wery forswayt and will of wane
Intill the wod sone entryt he
And held doun towart a vale
Quhar throu the woid a watter ran (7.1-5)

Barbour fre­quen­tly ap­pro­pri­ates the pop­u­lar ro­man­ce to­pos of the for­est, ‘that an­cient sym­bol of un­cer­tain fate’520:

Then till a wod that wes ner-hand
He went with his fallow in hy
God sayff thaim for his gret mercy (6.72-4)

Into gret peril now is he,
For bot God throu his gret powste
Save him he sall be slayne or tane (7.525-7).

By con­nect­ing God to this mo­men­t of sus­pen­se, Bar­bour re­i­n­forces the pi­ous frame­work of the chiv­al­ric ethos gen­er­ated by Bar­bour, as dis­cussed be­low. The woods are more than sim­ply a sym­bol of un­cer­tain fate in The Bruce. They are also a place of ref­uge, a safe hav­en for men en­dur­ing much hard­ship; or, rather, a home for a group of men about whom much spec­u­la­tion is in­creas­ing­ly di­se­mi­nat­ed due to their re­course to san­ctu­aries such as the woods with all their con­no­ta­tions of the un­known. Bar­bour of­ten places his her­oes in the woods:

Quhen thai saw thai mycht no mar
Towart Meffayn then gan thai far
And in the aoud thaim iogyt thai (2.307) (15.420-1).521

The woods are as­soci­ated with the the need to fight with slycht, where could be found many ‘fayr poyn­tis off chevalry’:

In all this tyme James of Douglas
In the Forest travaland was,
And it throu hardiment and slycht
Occupyi­t all magre they mycht
Off his fell fayis (9.677-81)

the gud lord of Douglas
To the Forest his wayis tays
(15.420-1).

the dough­ty lord off Doug­las
At that tyme in the Forest was
Qhar he mony a juperty
And fayr poyn­tis off chevalry
(10.343-6)

519 Chronique de Jean le Bel, p. 111, chapter xxii (1333). Translated by Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p 226: ‘In these forests and wild places where the Scottish lords kept themselves, King Robert many a time took refuge when the good king Edward [I] had defeated him and driven him off’.
520 Vinaver, The rise of romance, p. 8. See also Ruck, An index of themes and motifs in twelfth-century French Arthurian poetry.
521 See also 8.1-4; 14.306-9; 14.385.
Such behaviour contributed much to their image as outlaws and facilitated speculation and oral dissemination of their deeds. Barbour in fact calls them outlaws: ‘As utelawys went mony day/ Dreand in the month thar pyne/ Eyte flesch and drank water synce’ (2. 496-8). They took to the hills as refugees with no shoes except those made from hide (2. 511-14).

This description is also used by Jean le Bel in his account of the 1327 Weardale campaign of which he was a participant in the company of John of Hainault, his patron and the uncle of Edward III’s future wife.

The story was obviously well circulated and contributed to the celebration of King Robert and his men as outlaws rather than ridiculed figures of fun like Toom Tabard or a make-believe king, an insult directed at King Robert by his wife, Elizabeth de Burgh, at his coronation. Instead, the more he endured, the more the king was lauded a hero. King Robert and his men suffered hunger and persecution:

So hard anoy thaim then assayit/ Off hunger cauld with schowris snell/ Than nane that leuys can weill it tell (3.376-8)

Thai had full gret default of mete (3.471)

That throu that mycht and thar powste/ Maid sic a persecucioune/ Sa hard, sa strayt and sa feloune/ On thaim that till hym luffand wer/ Or kyn or freynd on ony maner (4.4-8).

Such hardship was central to the nature of the adventures recounted, and commemorated, by Barbour, as explained above. The king is derided as King Hobbe, or Robin Hood, by an English letter dated 15 May, 1307. But Robin Hood is a celebrated figure for fifteenth-century Scottish chroniclers such as Wyntoun and Bower, who praise his defiance of King Edward I, no friend to the Scots. The outlaw is a hero in The Bruce; the pirate Thomas Dun is a friend to King Robert and his men (14.374-8).

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522 Translated by Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 104: ‘spent many days as outlaws, suffering hardship in the Mounth, eating flesh and drinking water’.
523 Chronique de Jean le Bel, 1, p. 69. Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 252. See Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, pp. 710-11 and pp. 775-8 for more comparison between The Bruce and the Chronique de Jean le Bel in relation to the Weardale campaign. Froissart follows le Bel in associating this description of the Scots with the 1327 expedition: Chronicles, p. 47. See also Thea Summerfield, ‘Barbour’s Bruce: compilation in retrospect’ in Writing war: medieval literary responses to warfare, ed. Corinne Saunders, Françoise de Saux and Neil Thomas (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 107-126, p. 119, note 43.
524 Toom Tabard, ‘King Nobody’, a nickname given to King John Balliol following his humiliating treatment by Edward I: the blazon of royal arms on his surcoat, or tabard, was stripped off. In Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 74 and p. 340, note 23: Chron. Bower, ii, 166. Elizabeth de Burgh chastised her husband for playing kings and queens: Barrow, p. 162 and p. 360, note 114; Sir Francis Palgrave, Documents and records illustrating the history of Scotland, 1237-1307 (London, 1837), 357.
525 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 304 for the letter and reference to Robert Bruce as ‘King Hobbe’. It has been suggested that ‘Hobbe’ means Hood, a name used by outlaws identifying themselves with Robin Hood: noted by Thea Summerfield, ‘Barbour’s Bruce: compilation in retrospect’, p. 119 and notes 44 and 45.
Living as outlaws King Robert and his men took on the role of heroes, ‘rogue aristocrats’, and the circulation of these stories was used by Robert I to reinforce his prestige and legitimize his reign. Barbour’s invocation of God in the above-cited depiction of the woods as a symbol of uncertain fate (6.72-4; 7.525-7) confirms his own reflections on the merits and limitations of prophecy. At several instances throughout The Bruce, Barbour considers the use of prophecy and concludes that man cannot predict future events, unless he has been inspired by God. Fate ‘dryvis/ The warldis thingis’ to the end (4.148-9), but only God knows this end. God is omnipotent (1.177-8; 1.459-60; 10.619). King Robert is comforted by a woman who assures him he will be king after suffering much hardship; the king however is not convinced that she can predict this conclusion (4.656-76). Predictions can only be made by men ‘[t]hat throu His haly grace’ have been granted the gift of future insight: David, Jeremiah, Samuel, Joel, Isaiah (678-85). And St Margaret, who received a revelation of the capture of Edinburgh castle by King Robert’s men and instead of prophesying this outcome she made a sign in her chapel of a castle, ladders and a man climbing and wrote in French: ‘Gardys vous de Francais’ (10.752). This was misinterpreted as indicating the capture of Edinburgh by the French until an adherent of King Robert, a certain Fraunsois (755), scoured the wall to claim the castle. A man can break his head studying the stars but astrology cannot determine future events beyond a doubt (707-16). Nor should necromancy be trusted (748-65), thus reinforcing Barbour’s earlier example of the false message received from Satan by Count Ferrand’s mother (4.241-71). Discussions of prophecy within The Bruce also evoke the aura of legend attached to King Robert. As mentioned above, the bishop of St Andrews expresses his wish that the prophecy of Thomas of Ercildune will be fulfilled in King Robert (2.85-6). And, when King Robert and his men sail to the Isles they fulfil the ‘auld prophecy’ claiming that whoever sails between the two Tarberts will subdue the Isles (15.276-303). Barbour’s account mirrors prophecies circulating contemporary with Robert I, claiming him the man who will join together the Scots and Welsh following the death of ‘le Roy Coveytous’, as foretold by Merlin. A contemporary report also claims that there are ‘false preachers’ within the Bruce camp deliberately circulating this prophecy. Writing contemporary or near-contemporary to the events he records, the author of the Vita Edwardi Secundi refers to a story circulating claiming that if the Bruces were successful in their Irish campaign they would move to

528 Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 172 and 361, note 34: Calander of documents relating to Scotland, ii, no. 1909. See also Ibid., p. 317 for the idea of a ‘Celtic empire’.
Wales and incite the Welsh to rebellion. The Bruce therefore reflects the idea of prophecy fulfilled that became attached to Robert I and the first part of the wars of independence; but, more than just a reflection, Barbour’s narrative is also an indication of how Robert I exploited his heroic image to legitimize his kingship, and how the cult of Robert I was continued and developed by his grandson, Robert II, for whose court The Bruce was commissioned.

Barbour reflects that ‘sum men sayis yeit’ (6.488); these tales were remembered because they were memorable. The deeds of King Robert and Sir James Douglas were akin to the matter of romance; the men played the role of outlaws; they were heroes even within their own lifetime, as Barbour explains that men sayis. More than an indication of the origin of legend however, The Bruce elucidates the importance of oral dissemination in the formation of reputation and the implications of the reception of this reputation for a contemporary audience. The Houses of Stewart and Douglas owed their political prominence in late fourteenth-century Scotland to the reception of the reputations of King Robert I and Sir James Douglas. The cultivation of their reputations was initiated during the reign of Robert I who legitimized his kingship through a celebration of the questionable means that brought him there. Documents emanating from his reign, such as the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), emphasize this image of King Robert suffering for his people and heritage, as cited above. Robert I’s exploitation of his early hardships, or adventures, developed his image as hero-king prompting evaluation of his early years as ‘one of the great heroic enterprises of history.’ This is a policy continued and developed by his grandson, Robert II, who was similarly concerned to validate his own contested claim to the throne through an association with his grandfather, Robert I, on whom his royal claim rested. Robert II was aided in no small part by The Bruce. The chivalric ethos generated by Barbour in The Bruce is an instance of the reception of this historiography from the court of Robert I and the means by which monarchical ambition is sustained by Robert II. It is a chivalric ethos amenable to appropriation by a royal initiative concerned to curtail aristocratic ambition, as discussed below; but it is also an ethos created and continued by the dissemination of heroic adventures enacted by the king and his community of loyal companions.


531 See above, Chapter 3: ‘Dominum Robertum, qui pro populo et hereditate suis de minimibus inimicorum liberandis, quasi alter Maccabeus aut Joshua, labores et taedia, inedias et pericula laeto sustinuit animo’.

532 Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 165.
Reputation, therefore, like honour, was dependent on the dissemination of deeds of prowess. King Robert tells his men before the battle of Loudoun Hill that each ‘suld be / Off us worthi off great valour/ For to maynteyme her our honour’. Their high honour would be maintained because news of their feat would spread near and far:

Thynkis quhat glaidschipus abides
Guff that we may as weile betides
Haff victour off our fayis her,
For thar is none than fer na ner
In all thys land that us thar doubt (8.250-7).

King Robert is ‘of full mekiil renom m e’ (4.775). It was for ‘hys price and hys bounte’ that the ‘gud’ Sir James Douglas was renowned in distant lands (1.32-33). In England he was known as ‘the blak Douglas’ (15.562) and feared liked the devil:

The drede of the lord of Douglas
And his renoune sa scailt was
Throu-out the marchis of Ingland
That all that war tharin wonnand
Dred him as the fell devil! o f hell (15. 553-7).

‘His fayis gretly gan him dred’ (15.241); ‘throu his chevalry’ he treated ‘hys fayis rycht fellounly (20.523-4). Whoever would recount all ‘his worschippis ane and ane/ He suld fynd off thaim mony ane’. As men have told me, explains Barbour, he was defeated thirteen times and had fifty-seven victories:

For in his tyme as men said me
Thretten tymphys vencusyt wes he
And had victouris sevin and fifty (8.428-33).

As mentioned above, Barbour claims that were all Douglas’s ‘hard assay’ and ‘mony fayr point off wer’ to be told, ‘his name suld be/ Lestand into full gret renoune’ (8.516-20). For his ‘hard travalys and barganyngis’, Douglas ‘suld ger his price doulyt be’ (1.306-7). Douglas’s ‘mony fayr point off wer’ and his ‘hard travalys and barganyngis’ determined his reputation; ‘hys price and hys bounte’ is quite possibly the very reason he is in The Bruce.

His feats were circulated orally, certainly le Bel celebrated the deeds of ‘le gentil chevalier’ James Douglas.533

Barbour also ensures that others will have their name ‘[l]stand into full gret renoune’ by commemorating their deeds; it is, however, their celebrated deeds to begin with that entitles them to a place in his praise. If Walter the Steward had lived longer, ‘[h]is

533 Chronique de Jean le Bel, p. 86, chapter xvi and see also chapters x (pp. 50-2), xii (pp. 63-77), xv (pp. 82-5), xvi (86-9).
renoun suld have strekyt fer' (17.927-9). It was a great shame, explains King Robert, that his brother-in-law, Sir Christopher Seton, ‘off sa nobill renoun’, should die where he was unable to prove his prowess:

That he suld dey war gret pite
Bot quhar worschip mycht provyt be (5.172, 173-4).

Seton was executed by order of Edward I and it was Sir David Brechin’s similar fate by order of Robert I that moved Ingram d’Umphraville to leave King Robert’s camp. According to Sir Ingram d’Umphraville, Brechin was ‘sa renounyt off worschip’ to be ‘put to sa velanys a ded’ (19.103, 106). Ingram himself was ‘[r]enommyt off sa hey prowess/That he off worschippassyt the rowt’ (9.507-9), as discussed below. Edward Bruce, as discussed above, was renowned above his peers; when he died Edward II rejoiced, ‘[f]or he wes glaid that he wes sua/ Deliveryt off a felloun fa’ (18.227-8). The Herald similarly lists knights of renown:

Touz gentz d’armes de grant pris (718)
Eustace d’Abrichecourt/ Devereux,/ Cressewelle et Briket/ Qui savoient de lui parler fait (1988-90)
Lui noble ducs et redoutez,/ Qui bien doit estre renomez (2622-2)
Et tut li chivaler de noun/ De tout le roialme d’Engleterre (1564-5).

‘Chaundos et Audelée’, the Herald records, ‘[c]ils deuz eurent grant renomée’ (573-4).534 When the French heard Chandos was dead, like Edward II in relation to Edward Bruce, they rejoiced to be ‘[d]eliveryt off a felloun fa’:

QuantFrançois savoient qe Chaundos
Fuist mort, qui avoit grant los,
Moult grant joie firent par tout (3967-9).

It was important that knights deserving acclaim should be praised forever more, explains Barbour:

It is well worth foroutyn wene
That thar namys for evermar,
That in thar tym sua worthi war
That men till her yeit has daynté,
For thar worschip and thar bounté
Be lestand ay furth in loving,
Quhar He that is of hevynyns king
Bring thaim he uo till Hevynyns blis

534 See also line 882: ‘Qui en ce temps avoient grant los’ and line 3236, Chandos, ‘[q]ui celui jour acquisit grant los’.
Quhar allwaysis lestand loving is (16.534-42).

Reputation, above all, vouchsafed a knight’s good name. Fortune could smile on the brave, but it was notoriously fickle, as Barbour explains:

Lo! quhat fading in fortoun is
That will apon a man quhill smyle
And prik on him syne a nother quhill,
In na tym stable can scho syand (13.636-8).

It ‘is destined to come to an end’, writes Charny; but, a good reputation will remain:

if you have the reputation of being a good man-at-arms, through which you are exalted and honoured, and you have deserved this by your great exertions, by the perils you have faced and by your courage, and Our Lord has in his mercy allowed you to perform the deeds from which you have gained such a reputation, such benefits are not the benefits of fortune, but are benefits which by right should last, provided that one knows how to conserve them humbly and honourably.535

The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir, it must be remembered, are records of the very deeds that determined the reputations of King Robert and the Black Prince; Barbour and Chandos Herald composed their narratives in order that these feats should ‘lest ay furth in memory’:

To put in wryt a suthfast story/ That it lest ay furth in memon,\(^\left\text{The Bruce, 1.13-14}\right\)
\(\text{Pur prendre en lour coers remembrance/ De bien et de honour receivoir (La vie, 5-7).}\)

I. iv The chivalric grading system

Whoever ‘wynnys prys off chevalry’, as mentioned above, should be acclaimed. Whether friend or foe, noteworthy deeds were commemorated as part of the universal celebration of chivalric exploits. Admirable feats of manheid won the praise, and fear, of the enemy:

That all thar fayis [foes] had gret ferly
That thai war all o f  swilk manheid
As thai na drede had of thar dede (15.150-3).

Sir Aymer de Valence marvelled at King Robert’s escape: “‘He is gretly to prys’”, he tells his men (7.99). For his ‘worship and wysdome’, Sir John Hainault, as cited above, finds Sir James Douglas fit “‘[t]o governe the empyr off Rome’” (19.473-4). When Douglas was in Spain he was praised by many knights from distant lands, but in particular, he was prized by English knights (20.366-73). English deeds are also praised: ‘This wes a wele gret streth i-wis’, Barbour explains after relating a celebrated English exploit (16.662). The

535 Livre de chevalerie, pp. 73-4, section 24, lines 6, 16-22.
warden of the tower at Roxburgh castle ‘wes a man off gret valour’ (10.473-4). Sir Henry de Bohun is ‘sa styth a knyght and sture’ (12.92). Sir Giles d’Argentine ‘wes the third best knyght perfay/ That men wyst lyvand in his day’ (13.321-2). Sir Aymer de Valence is celebrated as wys (7.7632) and Sir Ingram d’Umphraville, a Scotsman fighting with the English, ‘wes bath wys and averty/ And full of gret chevalry’ (2.212-2). Whether fighting or opposing the king, Barbour, like Chandos Herald, lists the men ‘off gud renoun’ (6.511). Bertrand du Guesclin, according to the Herald, calls the Black Prince and his men the best in the world:

Qi li Prince mayne pur voir.
La est flour de chivalrie,
La est flour de bachelrie,
La sont les meillours combatantz
Qe soient en monde vivantz (2976-80).

Bertrand du Guesclin, who ‘vous savez’, writes Chandos Herald, is in his turn praised as ‘fuist hardi et vaillantz,/ Trahist hors du roialme de France/ Pur sa proesce et sa puissance’ (1669-71). King John is similarly remembered by the Herald for his courage: ‘Moult par fu riche sa vertu’ (1018).

Oral dissemination of knightly exploits celebrated the deeds that ‘[t]hat wynys prys off chevalry’ and established reputations. But it also indicates a grading system that was known and understood by ‘men that usys thai m ysteris’ (12.416). Charny divides knights into three grades: preux, souverain preux and plus souverainement. All deeds of arms are honourable with deeds performed in the tournament outshining those performed in the jousts and the tournament being replaced in its turn by deeds of arms in war. Jean le Bel also distinguished between praus and souverains praus. Keen points to the influence of Arthurian romance ‘with its careful record of who it was that won the sovereign prize for prowess at this or that tournament’, and notes one version of the Vulgate

536 See below: Cuvelier describes Chandos Herald delivering a message to Bertrand du Guesclin.
537 Translated by Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 468 as ‘men who share in those mysteries’.
538 Livre de chevalerie, sections 1-7, pp. 47-50; section 7, p. 50, lines 10-22: Therefore one should value and honour men-at-arms engaged in war more highly than any other men-at-arms; for in the practice of arms in jousts some are pleased enough with what they do without undertaking any other deeds of arms. The same is true in relation to tournaments, for some are satisfied with taking part just in them and not in any other use of arms. And these two uses of arms are both to be found in armed combat in war. It is therefore a great and honourable thing that these users of arms, of which some feel they have achieved enough by performing just one, should all be carried out together by men-at-arms engaged in war each day they have to fight on the battlefield. For this reason you should love, value, praise, and honour all those whom God by his grace has granted several good days on the battlefield, when they win great credit and renown for their exploits.
539 Chronique de Jean le Bel,i, pp. 2-3; Keen, ‘Chivalry, heralds, history’, p. 402.
that attributes this recording to the judgement of prowess. All renowned deeds of prowess are prized: ‘A! Quhat worship is a prisit thing’ (6.327); but some deeds are prized above others. Barbour described the three greatest feats he knew of where fifty men fought and defeated a larger host. Sir Ingram d'Umfraville, Barbour relates, was famed for such prowess (“[r]enommymt off sa hey prowes’) that he always carried a red bonnet upon a spear as a sign that he was at the ‘hycht off chevalry’ (9.508-13). Similarly, Froissart records Edward III rewarding his opponent, Eustace de Ribemont, with a ‘chaplet of pearls’ to wear for a year in recognition of ‘le pris de la bataille deseure tous aultres’. Sir Giles d’Argentine, as explained above, was celebrated by Barbour as the third best knight of his day. Edward Bruce killed a knight known as the best in all Ireland, referred to by Barbour as Mandeville (15.205-8). Even men of lesser status are acclaimed but within their station: fighting alongside Edward Bruce in Ireland, possibly as his herald, Gib Harper, as mentioned above, is described as the doughtiest in deed then living in his position (15.181-3). Barbour compares King Robert’s defeat of two hundred men by himself with the defeat of fifty men by Tydeus of Thebes, forty-nine of whom he slew (6.181-269), and asks his audience to choose which of the two deeds recounted should be prysit:

Ye that this redys, cehys yhe
Quhether that mar suld be prysit be
The king, that with advisement
Undertuk sic hardyment (271-4).

Sir Ralph Cobham, mentioned above, was praised as the best knight of England but because he withdrew in a fight while Sir Thomas Ughtred stayed, Sir Thomas was ‘prisit our [over] him’ (436). This draws attention to a crucial component in the chivalric scale of values: the mobile quality of prowess. As mentioned above, it was important for a knight to perform deeds of renown continuously:

A! Quhat worship is prisit thing,
For it mays men till haiff loving
Gyff it be folowit ythenly [constantly] (6.327-9)

In order to be considered worthy, a knight must constantly prove himself and therefore was repeatedly in search of adventure or battle, in accordance with Charny’s maxim, ‘qui plus fait, mieux vault’.

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Much confusion surrounds the question of Chaucer’s knight. The activities of Chaucer’s portrait of the knight in the ‘General Prologue’ to *The Canterbury Tales* place him on crusade in far-flung lands such as Egypt, Russia and Spain.\(^{542}\) Knights have been found on crusade in the regions mentioned by Chaucer but no one knight travelling to all the lands listed has been identified. Terry Jones has argued that Chaucer’s knight is a professional soldier rather than a member of the nobility who has devoted his life to fighting for Christianity against the infidel.\(^{543}\) Maurice Keen has refuted this theory claiming that rather than representing an out-dated ideal, the knight embodies the ideals followed by only a select few in his day.\(^{544}\) However, regardless of where knights went for adventure in the late fourteenth century, the point is that they went seeking adventure. The greater the adventure, the greater the chance of performing deeds of renown. Neither King Robert nor the Black Prince resists the challenge of an adventure. The Black Prince responds to Don Pedro’s call for aid in Spain, and King Robert opens up a second front in Ireland, which ‘cannot have seemed in any sense a foreign or unfriendly country to Robert Bruce, married to an Irishwoman and inheriting more than a century of family connexions with Ulster.’\(^{545}\) King Robert’s plans for Ireland were anything but arbitrary,\(^ {546}\) and were facilitated by his exploitation of the above-mentioned prophecy of Merlin. But it is the crusade, as recognized by Chaucer, that was graded the ultimate adventure. According to Charny, men-at-arms who undertake distant journeys and pilgrimages are entitled to more praise than those who wage war solely on home ground:

one should honour and respect such men who subject themselves in this way to physical danger and hardship in order to see these strange things and make distant journeys [...] he who does more is of greater worth.\(^{547}\)

Barbour explains the great sadness at the loss of Sir Giles d’Argentine at Bannockburn because truly ‘[h]e wes the third best knycht perfay/ That men wyst lyvand in his day’ (13.321-2). His reputation for valour was secured in his three campaigns against the Saracen:

He did mony a fayr joumë
On Saryzynys thre derenyeyes faucht he (323-4).


\(^{545}\) Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 163.

\(^{546}\) See Duffy (ed.), *Robert the Bruce’s Irish wars: the invasions of Ireland, 1306-1329* (Stroud, 2002).

\(^{547}\) *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 51, section 9, lines 28-31, 33-4.
On each of these three trips he defeated two Saracens. During his *prosperité*, King Robert tells his men, he had resolved ‘[t]o travail apon Goddis fayis’, in order that his ‘synnys to sauffyt be’ (20.183-5). Barbour records King Robert’s anxiety at his death that his heart should be brought on crusade although his body could no longer go. It was the proper end for a knight Barbour titles ‘[t]he best that levyt in his day’:

A! Der God quha had then bene by  
And sene howe he sa hardyly  
Adressyt hym agane thaim all  
I wate weile thar thai suld him call  
The best that levyt in his day (6.173-7)

The story of Sir James Douglas’s attempt to fulfil his king’s vow and take his heart on crusade was well-circulated. It contributed to the association of King Robert with the crusade, and associations were what counted in a culture dependent on oral dissemination. This had the double effect of enhancing Robert’s own heroic stature while also reinforcing the idea of the war of independence as a crusade or a just war, and thus reflecting the Scottish appeals to the papacy during the reign of Robert I. The Black Prince is similarly praised by the Herald as ‘le plus vaillant prince du mounde/ Si come il est tourney a le rounde/ Ne qui fuist puis les tamps Claruz, Jule Cesaire ne Artuz’ (49-52). The deeds recorded in *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* are confirmation of their eligibility for this prize.

The Herald rates knights within grades in a manner similar to Barbour: the prince, he relates, chose a hundred of the best of his vanguard:

Fist eslire chivalers cent,  
Des meillours de son avantgarde,  
Et les fist aler prendre garde  
Coment ils purroient passer (251-55).

And feats are judged on a scale of ‘historical’ merit:

La y eust il fait d’armes tant  
Qe en eust comparé Roland  
Et Oliver et le Danois  
Ouguier qui tant par fu curtois (161-4).

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548 See above: *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, i, chapter xvi and see also chapters x (pp. 50-2), xii (pp. 63-77), xv (pp. 82-5), xvi (86-9).

But, above all, it is the Black Prince who is praised above all others for his ‘tres haute proesse/ Et de sa tres noble largesse/ Et auxi de sa prodhommie’ (4103-5). However, the Herald is more concerned to list than grade knights; and these lists are compiled in order of nobility. The rise of heralds is credited to their role in the tournament where they were to list the participants and record acts of prowess.\(^{550}\) Another factor contributing to the increased importance attached to heralds was their role as messengers during battle. Keen notes that the earliest reference to a herald \textit{eo nomine} is as a messenger.\(^{551}\) Cuvelier and Froissart’s references to Chandos Herald centre on his role as messenger,\(^{552}\) a role confirmed by the Herald himself.\(^{553}\) It was a role that brought him into contact with enemy camps and facilitated the acquisition of information necessary for his lists. Fifteenth-century treatises on heraldry relate a wide range of functions for heralds;\(^{554}\) in wartime, these included recording knightings on the eve of battle, searching the field after battle to identify the dead by their arms and noting the names and arms of those who had displayed prowess in battle just as they had noted such displays in the tournament, all of which are successfully implemented by the Herald. In 1346, the morning after the battle of Crécy, Edward III ordered Sir Reginald Cobham and Sir Richard Stafford to go to the battlefield ‘taking with them three heralds to identify the dead by their arms and two clerks to write down their names.’\(^{555}\) This is how the king of Bohemia was located:

\begin{quote}
Les mortz fist aler visiter
Pur conustre et pur averis,
Et trova leroide Beaume
Qui gisoit mort sur le champaine (365-8)
\end{quote}

This duty to record and list is above all what Chandos Herald conveys most clearly in his narrative, the repetitiveness and monotony of which has contributed in no small part to the allegations of his lack of imagination. The Herald lists the dead, the wounded, the participants and those who deserve to be recorded due to their display of prowess and his

\(^{550}\) Wagner, \textit{Heralds and heraldry in the Middle Ages: an inquiry into the growth of the armorial function of herald}, p. 25 notes that where there were no tournaments, there was no mention of heralds. See also Keen, \textit{Chivalry}, p. 136.

\(^{551}\) Keen, \textit{Chivalry}, p. 135.


\(^{553}\) Lines 2953-7 and 2437-40.


\(^{555}\) Froissart, \textit{Chronicles}, p. 95.
lists are compiled in hierarchical order thus sustaining the link between nobility and feats of chivalry:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ore est bien droit que je vous nomme} & \quad \text{Ovesq moult noble baronie,} \\
\text{Des nobles barons la somme:} & \quad \text{Barons, banerers et countes.} \\
\text{Tut primers li Prince et lui roi} & \quad \text{...} \\
\text{Daun Petro, que bien nomer doi,} & \quad \text{Il arriva en Constantin. (118-9. 120)} \\
\text{Et li roi de Navarre auxi} & \quad \text{(2315-9)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Ore est droit que je preigne garde  \\
A l’avantgarde deviser. \\
Beaux seignours, primers doi nomer \\
Le duc de Lancastre, qui preus \\
Fuist et hardi et corageus, \\
Et si ot en sa compaignie \\
Moult de noble chivalrie (2240-6).

The barons are listed (2317-60), as are the vanguard: ‘Seignour, ore vous ai devisée/ L’avantgarde et tut nomée’ (2247-90; 2291-2). The Herald records the noble entourage accompanying the prince to Gascony (553-76). The enemy is similarly listed according to ‘noble et de puissant linage’ (1015-1060; 1664):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Qe ce fuist un grant meraville.} & \\
\text{Unques homme ne vist tiel apparaillle} & \\
\text{Come feuront de la partie de Fraunce (1057-60).} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Knighted squires listed by the Herald are of high degree: ‘La veist homme chivalers faire/ Des esquires de noble affaire’ (2605-6; 2607-28). Prisoners are listed according to their status in the English (2800-7) and French camps (1369-73). French deaths are also listed ‘Ensi feurent, a voir entendre,/ François celui jour pris et mort,/ Si come j’ay oi en mon recort’ (1374-1400; 1398-1400). And they are listed in order of nobility:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Et la fuist mort Charles de Blois} & \\
\text{Et maint baron noble et curtois} & \\
\text{Et de France et de Pikardie} & \\
\text{De haut et de puissant lignie (1657-60)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Knights are listed on foot (3071) and ‘[a] chival’ (3079). Peoples and places are listed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Et des autres plus que quatremillle,} & \quad \text{Il chivacha parmi Artois} \\
\text{Dount je ne sai nomer les nouns,} & \quad \text{Et Pikardie et Vermendois} \\
\text{Qei d’Espaigne, qei d’Aragons,} & \quad \text{Et Champaigne, Burgoyne et Vrie,} \\
\text{Qei de France, qei de Pikardie,} & \quad \text{Parmy Baiane, je vous affie,} \\
\text{De Bretaigne et de Normandie (3072-6) } & \quad \text{Et vient jesques devant Paris (1525-9)} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Beaux douce seigniour, voillez entendre! Tout Constantin chivacha
Englous et François et Bretoun, Et tout ardi et exila:
Normand, Pikard et Gascoun Le Hoffe, Barflew, Carenten,
Entrent dedeins Espaignie; Saint Lou, Bayeus et jesques a Ken
(1735-8) (169-172).556

Weapons used are listed, as are the numbers of knights involved:

Ovesqe vous averez sanz doute Vous amesnerez nostre areregare
Trois mille homes de vostre route,
Et si averez deux mille servantz Des gentz d’armes, preux et vaillantz
A glaives et a dartz trenchantz, (1002-4).
E bien deux mille arblastiers Et, ensi come dist le nombre
Qui vous aiderent volunteers (949-54) Quatre mille feurent en nombre (993-4).

Some knights are not listed; a reputation could be destroyed by acts of dishonour but this was not the concern of Chandos Herald who declines to enumerate knights who fled the field at Crécy:

Et plusieurs autres s’en fuyerent
Dount je ne sai mie le nombre,
Ne n’est pas droit qe je le nombre (348-50)

His concern was to celebrate and not to denigrate deeds of arms. Chandos Herald’s lists are not purely random: he is clearly listing the names of the nobility recorded on these campaigns. Furthermore, his lists are recounted in a systemized fashion reflecting his attempt to order his narrative according to the campaigns of the life of the Black Prince. He declines to list names that fall outside this pattern that he has conceived for his narrative: ‘Et main bon chivaler hardi/ Qui maintenant ne voille nomer/ Car aillours en vorray parler’ (2254-6).

The Herald’s narrative consists of lists of names of knights of noble status and their battles; and these noble knights are represented by the word chivalrie. Knights are referred to by Chandos Herald as ‘maint bon chivaler’, ‘chivaler de noun’, ‘bon chivaler d’onour’, or ‘chivalers de pris’.557 However, these same knights are sometimes, and interchangeably, called chivalrie:

Voier le flour de chivalrie/ Et tres noble bachelrie (611-12)
La est flour de chivalrie,/ La est flour de bachelrie (2977-8)
Moulc de noble chivalrie (2246)
E mult d’autre chivalrie (2289)

556 See also lines 707-12.
557 For example, lines 262, 609, 1349, 1488, 1741, 2122, 2336, 2368, 3242, 4028, 4072, 4080, 4092.

156
Moult de noble chivalrie (3924).

The knights that are praised by the Herald are understood to be represented by the same word as the above-mentioned deeds of prowess embodied by the Black Prince, also called chivalrie; it is a subject, Chandos Herald acknowledges, of much interest to his audience: ‘Ore est raison qe je vous counte/ De ce douent homme doit faire accomplte,/ C’est du fait de chivalrie’ (95-7). Barbour also makes lists of ‘men of gret noblay’ (15.275), and ‘the gret rout’ (20.436) that accompanied his heroes such as Sir James Douglas on their expeditions: ‘Hys reteneu than gaderyt he/ That war gud men of gret bounté’ (15.473-4). And knights listed, whether friend or foe, are also referred to Barbour as chevalerie. Sir Aymer de Valence and ‘all his gret chevalry’ is repeated like a refrain throughout the opening sections of The Bruce: (2.210, 223-4, 405-6; 6.459-60; 8.207-8). Hannibal and Alexander the Great feature in Barbour’s exempla with all their great chevalry (3.244; 10.716). Sir Richard de Clare assembled chevalry from all Ireland to fight Edward Bruce and ‘all his chevalry’: ‘And of all Irland assemblit he/ Bath burges and chevalry’ (15.572; 16.78-9). Barbour lists Edward II’s impressive force of chevalry before Bannockburn:

And but his awne chevalry
That wes sa gret it wes ferly
He had of mony ser countré
With him gud men of gret bounté.
Of Fraunce worthi chevalry
He had intill his cumpany,
The erle off Henaud als wer thar
And with him men that worthi war,
Off Gascoyne and off Almay
And off the duche of Bretayngy
He had wycht men and weill farand
Armyt clenly bath fute and hand,
Off Ingland to the chevalry
He had gaderyt sa clenly (11.85-98).

All his great display of chevalry did not prevent his defeat at Bannockburn, as Barbour’s list is intended to make clear. And, Barbour has Sir Ingram de Umphraville later explain to King Edward II that despite his chivalry he will not overcome Robert Bruce: ‘For all your gret chevalry/ To dele with him yhe haf na mycht’ (19.160-1).558

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558 See also ‘He gadryt gret chevalry’ (4.187); ‘He thocht with hys chevalry/ To cum apon him sodanly (7.511-2); ‘Entryt with tha chevalry’ (9.558); ‘That thar w es swilk chevalry’ (14.150).
The Nine Worthies

Lists were everywhere; they were indicative of the systematization of a chivalric culture concerned to cultivate cults of heroes embodying the above-mentioned components of prowess that were necessary to enact renowned feats of arms. It was the expressed purpose of Chandos Herald, Barbour, and Froissart, as discussed above, to register these ‘honourable enterprises, noble adventures and deeds of arms’ for posterity ‘so that brave men should be inspired to follow such examples’. The chivalric ethos generated throughout The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir celebrates the deeds of King Robert, Sir James Douglas and the Black Prince in order to confirm and promote their protagonists as representatives of the chivalric ideal. It is, above all, their deeds that entitle them to this accolade. Exemplifying this systematization of chivalric culture in perhaps the most climactic respect is the cult of the Nine Worthies. Listed in three categories of three according to classical, Biblical and Christian traditions, the Nine were prized as models for emulation. Most were familiar examples from the ‘private pantheon of heroes’ established by ‘the historical mythology of chivalry’, as discussed above. Their position at the summit of the heroic hierarchy was determined by a display of celebrated deeds and virtues; and, most importantly, their vogue indicated the relevance of heroic cults to a contemporary audience. More than any other figure within the Nine, Godfrey de Bouillon represents that attainability of this position at the ‘hycht off chevalry’ (9.513). Godfrey was celebrated for his crusading merits, therefore confirming the crusade as the ultimate stage for a display of prowess. Godfrey’s position as the most recent addition to the cult consolidated by Jean de Longuyon in his fourteenth-century Les voeux du paon confirmed the flexibility of the concept of the Nine. Prior to their celebration in Les voeux du paon heroes were grouped together in various traditions. Jean de Longuyon’s poem, however, reflects contemporary concerns to provide chivalry with reputable antecedents, as discussed above. This in turn allowed for the manipulation of the Nine as representatives of an ancient and separate chivalric tradition that offered an alternative identity to one found within feudal or national boundaries. Knighthood was understood as an order; in fact, according to Geoffroy de Charny, ‘there is no religious order in which so much is suffered as has to be endured by these good knights who go in search of deeds of arms in the right way’. It was an order with an attractive identity as manuals of chivalry make clear. According to Ramon Lull, documenting the mythical origins of the order of chivalry, one

559 Froissart, Chronicles, p. 37.
561 Ibid., pp. 282; 285-7.
562 See Keen, Chivalry, p. 121-2.
563 Livre de chevalerie, p. 95, section 40, lines 13-15.
man out of every thousand was chosen to be a knight: ‘the most loyal, most strong and of the most noble courage’.\textsuperscript{564} And its venerable predecessors added to its prestige and allure: Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, Charlemagne, Arthur and Godfrey de Bouillon. But although marketed as a separate cosmopolitan tradition, chivalry was exploited by monarchical programmes dependent on controlling knights in order to realize their ambitions. Charny’s manual was most likely composed for the French king’s Order of the Star.\textsuperscript{565}

One way of securing monarchical ambition was to promote the king as the greatest knight of his time by adding him to the highly esteemed and influential cult of the Nine Worthies. As mentioned above, Barbour calls King Robert the best knight of his day, which is in line with the herald ‘le Roy Robert’ who listed him with the emperor Henry and Sir Giles d’Argentine as the worthiest knights of his time.\textsuperscript{566} His reputation was determined by the deeds and virtues he was considered by his contemporaries to embody, and it was therefore dependent on oral dissemination of his feats. Furthermore, it was necessary to write these deeds down so that they would ‘lest ay furth in memory’ (1.14). The Bruce is an instance of the reception of Robert I’s reputation and the means by which this reputation is established for posterity but it is an account indebted to a textual rather than an oral inheritance. Robert Bruce was too aware of the power of prophecy, speculation and dissemination, which he actively exploited as established below, not to ensure the fame of his own deeds and name within a narrative such as the \textit{hystoire faitte par le dit roy Robert} mentioned by le Bel. Wyntoun refers to ‘King Robert de Brussis buke’ in what McDiarmid argues as a separate instance from his references to The Bruce.\textsuperscript{567} And as mentioned above, Barbour himself concludes an example of King Robert’s ‘utrageous manheid’ with the comment, ‘Sa did this king that Ik off reid’ (9.101, 102). While reputation and honour was acknowledged through the oral circulation of celebrated deeds, it was the textual dissemination of these exploits that ensured his fame. This was due in part to the associations of history and truth (discussed above), and in part it reflected the textual heritage of the concept of chivalry. Chivalric tradition was established and continued by romance and romance-influenced traditions that largely determined its identity, which further prompts an investigation outside the remit of this thesis. Certainly romance

established one of the most influential components of ‘the historical mythology of chivalry’: the Nine Worthies.

It was Jean de Longuyon’s *Les voeux du paon* that secured the fame of the Nine within a universal chivalric sphere for posterity. Similarly, it was the cycle of *chansons* about the first crusade, the *Chevalier au Cygne*, which celebrated Godfrey de Bouillon as the conqueror of Jerusalem and guaranteed his place within the cult. His position within the Nine was no doubt determined by a contemporary chivalric ethos grading the crusade first among adventure; but, it was the textual result of the dissemination of his reputation that entitled him to this position. Hector, Alexander and Julius Caesar are all celebrated by *romans d’antiquité*; Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus form ‘the matter of the Bible’; and, Charlemagne and Arthur are the primary heroes of the matters of France and Britain. Godfrey took his place alongside Charlemagne as a hero of the matter of France. The door was open therefore for further representatives of the chivalric ideal, and the contemporary relevance of this accolade is confirmed by the above-mentioned grading system. *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* are the textual conclusions of the oral dissemination of the deeds of King Robert, Sir James Douglas and the Black Prince, and while there is no evidence to suggest that Chandos Herald intended through *La vie* to add his prince to the Nine, there is every reason to conclude that Barbour intended to confirm an already-circulating affirmation of Robert Bruce’s eligibility for just that role.

Candidates for the Tenth Worthy include Pierre de Lusignan, Bayard, Du Guesclin, Francis I, Henry IV of England, emperors Henry V, Henry VII, Guy of Warwick and Robert Bruce. Robert Bruce’s eligibility rests on three lines in Latin written *circa* 1380 and found in a manuscript dating from the late fifteenth century prepared for use at Sweetheart Abbey in Kirkcudbright, and a poem known as ‘The ballet of the nine nobles’. The three lines in Latin run as follows:

Ector, Alexander, Julius, Josue, David, Machabeus,
Arthurus, Caralus, et postremus Godofrydu-
Robertus rex Scoturum denus est in numero meliorum.

‘The ballet of the nine nobles’ is a title applied by W. A. Craigie to merge the two poems listed separately by Israel Gollancz in his appendix to his 1914 edition of *The parlement of the thre ages* on verses illustrative of the Nine Worthies theme: an extract from the *Buik of

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568 See Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 57-9.
the most noble and valiant conquerour Alexander the Great and a poem printed as ‘Ane ballet of the nine nobles’. These two Craigie concluded were the work of the same author. The poem is found in three fourteenth and fifteenth-century Scotichronicon manuscripts. The poem begins with the line ‘Hector of Troy throu hard feichthyngis’, and lists the exploits of the Nine Worthies, as they have been translated from Les voeux du paon. In ‘The ballet of the nine nobles’ Arthur’s exploits have increased, and a new stanza celebrating the deeds of Robert Bruce has been added.

Robert ye brois throu hard feichyng
Wyt few venkust ye mytchy kyng
Off Ingland Edward twyse in fyt
At occupit his reaism but ryt
At sumtyme was set so hard
At hat not sax till hym toward
Ze gude men yat yir ballete redis
Deme quha docht yat was in dedis

King Robert’s reputation, therefore, as determined by this verse, rest on his dedis, his ‘hard feichyng/ Wyt few’ whereby he ‘venkust ye mytchy kyng/ Off Ingland Edward twyse in fyt’. ‘The ballet of the nine nobles’, like The Bruce, is an instance of the reception of Robert I’s legitimization of his kingship through his reputation as the best knight of his time. The Bruce, however, is also a reflection of how this reception was reinforced by Robert II, and an indication of the contemporary relevance of the need to promote the cult of Robert I.

571 The parlement of the thre ages, ed. I. Gollancz (London, 1897), Apendix ii; ‘Ane ballet o f the Nine Nobles’ p. 134 and an extract from the Buik of Alexander, pp. xvii and xviii. (The Buik of the most noble and vali zeand Conquerour Alexander the Great is later edited as The Buik of Alexander by Ritchie (Edinburgh, 1921–28). W. A. Craigie, ‘The ballet of the nine nobles’, Anglia, xxi, (1899), pp. 359–65, p.359 refers to David Laing (ed.), Buik of the most noble and vali zeand conquerour Alexander the Great (1831), pp. 202-6 and ibid., ‘Ane ballet of the nine nobles’ in Select remains of the ancient popular poetry of Scotland, ed. Small (1885), pp 185-191. For convieniece the poem will be referred to henceforth as ‘The ballet of the Nine Nobles’.

572 Watt (ed.), Scotichronicon, vol. 9, p. 46 fo. 37. Also found inmanuscripts listed in Watt (ed.) Scotichronicon as D fo. 433v and E fo. 343. The fourteenth-century manuscripts were edited as Fordun’s Chronica gentis Scotorum and are now included in Chron. Bower [Watt]. Laing printed the poem from E using the title ‘Ane ballet of the Nine Nobles’, which prompted McDiarmid to comment that it should rather be referred to as ‘The Balletis of the Nine Nobles’ as the second line has the plural,'thir balletis': McDiarmid (ed.), Barbour’s Bruce, p. 33.

573 Ritchie, p. clix.
II  **Narrative structure**

The central defining structure of both *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*, as with romance in general, is the adventure. The adventure and the quest determined the matter that would be included in romance:

The world of knightly proving is a world of adventure. It not only contains a practically uninterrupted series of adventures; more specifically, it contains nothing but the requisites of adventure. Nothing is found in it which is not either accessory or preparatory to adventure. It is a world specifically created and designed to give the knight opportunity to prove himself.

For Barbour and Chandos Herald this adventure was war. The adventure provided an identity for Barbour and Chandos Herald’s heroes; *The Bruce* and *La vie* are a confirmation of this identity and a celebration of King Robert, Sir James Douglas, the Black Prince and their trusted followers as men of war. *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*, as emphasized above, are above all a record of the deeds performed by their heroes on their adventures. The structure of these narratives is explained by this thematic concern with deeds of arms. The adventures related by Barbour and Chandos Herald structure their narratives and are organized according to a biographical grid that will be examined in two sections.

II. i  **Biography, genealogy and the adventure**

As indicated above, a life was applied as the organizing principle for romance and lives are depicted through a record of celebrated deeds. The adventures narrated by Barbour and Chandos Herald follow a biographical frame provided by the lives of King Robert, Sir James Douglas and the Black Prince. *La vie du Prince Noir* begins with the prince’s youth and ends with his death, narrating his adventures in-between. The narrative of *The Bruce* appears to be more complicated but the adventure is still the motivating structural and thematic force. The coherence of the narrative rests in the biographical frame supplied by his two main heroes: King Robert and Sir James Douglas. But their biographies are unevenly presented and there is a tension in their representation.

Sir James Douglas is provided with the more comprehensive biography. Barbour traces Douglas’s youth and closes the poem after his death. Douglas’s life is placed within dynastic time and his identity is established in relation to his ancestors:

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574 Spiegel, ‘Genealogy: form and function in medieval narrative’, *History and Theory* 22, 43-53, p. 44: ‘The literary study of medieval historiography must begin with the recognition that for the medieval chronicler, the events he recorded were also the structure of his history, determining a priori the shape of his narrative.’ See also Tony Hunt’s review of Ryding in *Journal of European Studies*, p. 315. Hunt argues for an examination of structure through action.

Schyr Wilyam was/ That off Douglas was lord and syr,/ Off him thai makyt a martyr (1.282-4)

[King Robert] thocht weile [Douglas] suld be worthy./ For all his eldris was douchty (2.165-6)

His father’s fate at the hands of the English is described in order to establish Douglas’s motivation to ‘wyn again his heritage/ And his men out of all thryllage’ (1.351-2), the same desire driving King Robert, whose quest Douglas supports in order to fulfil his own goals: “I wald tak with him gud and ill./ Throu hym I trow my land to wyn” (2.110-1). Barbour depicts Douglas as an ideal knight in order to establish his identity with the very pursuit that granted him acquisition of his heritage and guaranteed his noble status. Through deeds of arms Douglas claimed his heritage and established Douglas dominance in Scottish politics. The House of Douglas owed its importance in late medieval Scottish affairs to the fame and wealth gained by Sir James Douglas during the first round of the war of independence, as discussed below. It was therefore an identity actively acquired rather than one passively assumed and as such mirrors King Robert’s aggressive pursuit of his royal name.

Through his exploits Douglas proved himself worthy of his douchty ancestry, secured his heritage (8. 500-520) and bequeathed his legacy, founded on renowned deeds of arms, to his heirs. When he died his bones were placed in the kirk of Douglas where his son Sir Archibald made ‘a tumbe sa richly/ As it behovyt to sua worthy’ (20.599-600). His son features in The Bruce in order to attach his name to his father’s fame, and as discussed below, his position in the narrative is revelatory. Douglas is therefore placed within a genealogical grid that mimics the primary commemoration of the foundation of the Bruce-Stewart dynasty celebrated in The Bruce. Sir James Douglas established his reputation on deeds of arms and his presence in The Bruce is a celebration of the acclaim attained for the House of Douglas due to his name. The means by which this is achieved is through the appropriation of a biographical grid emphasizing his lineage and descendants and structured by the adventures for which he was famed: in other words, a romance.

Barbour does not include King Robert’s youth or early career thus prompting allegations of neglect of evidence relating to Robert’s allegiance to Edward I. But this was not Barbour’s intention; his narrative celebrates the foundation of the Bruce-Stewart dynasty and takes for its primary hero a king. It is therefore genealogically motivated and as such reflects a primary concern of Old French chansons and romance, and, more markedly, Anglo-Norman romance (discussed below). Chansons de geste, as discussed above, commemorated the ancestral deeds of ‘the aristocratic life of a warrior caste’ for whom the songs were intended. They were structured genealogically: geste could

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indicate ‘deeds’, ‘tales about a hero’s exploits’ and ‘lineage’ and ‘cycle of songs about a lineage’. Concerns with genealogy prompted poets to include originally independent chansons within cycles. These cycles related to specific families such as the gestes of Charlemagne, Garin de Montglane and William of Orange. As discussed above, this genealogical mindset was continued by romans d’antiquité such as Roman de Thèbes (c.1150-1155), Roman d’Enéas (c.1160) and Roman de Troie (c.1160-1170), which outlined the origins of dynasties and kingdoms. Contemporary vernacular verse chronicles concerned with the matter of Britain such as Wace’s Roman de Brut (c.1155) followed romans d’antiquité in ‘translating’ past Latin texts into the vernacular and traced the foundation of the kingdom of Britain (as previously recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his Historia regum Britanniae). Through a system of translatio imperii these narratives established mythical origins from Troy and Rome for the kingdoms of France and England. Genealogical organization of narrative structure functioned on two main levels: first, it legitimized a family by providing them with illustrious and recognized ancestors; and second, it controlled a narrative through dynastic time. ‘Raised to a royal level, genealogy took on the overtones of a dynastic myth’; in this respect, a kingdom was represented through the lives of its kings, and its narrative history was structured through generational change.

The adventures narrated in The Bruce are unified by the biographical pattern set by the life of King Robert, but his life is placed within dynastic time. As mentioned above, Morse has argued that ‘[h]istory begins at the first chronological moment appropriate to what will be narrated’. Barbour therefore describes how the ‘land sex yer and mayr perfay/ Lay desolate’ after the death of Alexander III, how Edward I was invited to intervene and how he asserted his lordship oppressing the Scots so much it moved Bruce to pitie for ‘all the kynryk swa forfayr./ And swa troubltyt the folk saw he’ (1.39-40; 478-90). Before Robert Bruce actively enters the narrative and the ‘romanys now begynnys’ (1.446), Barbour recounts the background of the events that incite his hero to claim the kingship; these events belong to the history of his grandfather, Robert Bruce the Competitor. The Bruce therefore conforms to a tripartite narrative division that has its origins in the classical epic and was appropriated by the ‘translation’ of these epics into romans d’antiquité in a quantitative ratio of 1:2:1 where the hero’s struggle to fulfil his destiny constitutes the bulk

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578 Ibid., Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 294.
581 Ibid., Romancing the past, p. 236.
582 Morse, “‘This vague relation”, p. 95.
of the narrative. The first section traces the origins of the hero’s quest and the final section describes provisions for his succession in order to place the hero within a genealogical grid necessary to establish and continue his identity. This pattern becomes more pronounced in romance emanating from the fifteenth-century Burgundian court where the adventures before the hero’s birth, the adventures of the hero’s ancestors, are described first, followed by the adventures of the hero and then the adventures of his successors.

The hero is the unifying impulse and this is one of the reasons why Barbour connects Robert I to his grandfather Robert Bruce the Competitor, which has been read as a deliberate move by Barbour to veil Robert I’s early allegiance to King Edward I, and has led scholars to challenge the historicity of The Bruce. Two key characteristics of epic are the ‘merging of the deeds or attributes of figures who share the same name’ and the ‘assignation of the son’s deeds or characteristics to the father’. These two epic devices offer an explanation for Barbour’s apparent ‘confusion’ of Robert the Competitor with his grandson, King Robert I. It is on the basis of the above-cited description of King Robert’s pity at the oppression of the kingdom of Scotland (1.477-9) that Barbour is presumed to have deliberately merged Robert I with his grandfather. This may have been added by the scribes of the two extant manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century as it does not feature in an earlier version of The Bruce used by Wyntoun. Whether or not Barbour merged these names, Barbour’s inclusion of the events surrounding Edward I’s arbitration in the Great Cause and his vote in John Balliol’s favour are intended to demonstrate the superiority of Robert the Competitor’s claim over that of Balliol, and therefore to establish Robert I’s right to the throne, which rests on his grandfather as, in turn, his grandson Robert II’s claim would later depend on the Bruce name. Robert I’s grandfather’s history was still part of his own and it is this ancestral emphasis that makes King Robert’s biographical grid the principal framework for the romance.

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583 Le romans d’Enées, ed. Aimé Petit, in Lettres Gothiques, gen. ed. M. Zink (Paris, 1997), p. 7: Ainsworth, ‘Legendary history: historia and fabula’, p. 400. The three mains sections are ‘escape and voyage, the theme of the wanderer and his quest; the war undertaken by the hero to obtain both fief and wife; the fulfilment of his destiny.’

584 Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 59.


586 Both of the extant manuscripts quote the passage as above; however, in Wyntoun’s Cronykil, the passage is borrowed from an older manuscript of The Bruce and distinguishes Robert I from his grandfather:

Thys lord the Bruys I spak of ayr
Saw all the kynryk swa forfayr,
And swa troubytlyt the folk saw he
That he tharoff had gret pitté
(1.477-80)

Quhen all this sawe the Brwss Robert
That bare the crowne swyn efrwart
Gret pytte off the folk he had
Set few wordis tharoff he mad
The adventures of the hero are placed within a genealogical framework that in the case of *The Bruce* establishes King Robert's right to be king by first outlining his grandfather's claim, then narrating King Robert's own active confirmation of his eligibility for the role of king based on his identity as the best knight of his time, and finally by securing the succession of this dynasty founded on war by chronicling the marriage and entailies that ensured its continuance and justified Robert II's kingship. Although independence for Scotland was not recognized until the 1328 Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton, King Robert effectively claimed his heritage, the kingdom of Scotland, after his victory at Bannockburn. It is at this point that Barbour records the exchange of prisoners that returned King Robert's daughter Marjory to her father, her marriage to Walter Stewart and the birth of their son, the future Robert II, who claimed the kingship after his uncle David II had reigned for forty-two years (13695-708). The parliamentary entail, or tailzie, issued at the Cambuskenneth parliament of July 1326 following the birth of King Robert's son, David, revised the previous tailzie of 1318 naming Robert the Steward as heir to King Robert. Following the 1326 tailzie, Robert the Steward was placed after David:

The King Robert gert ordane thar,
Giff it fell that his son Davy
Deyit but ayr male of his body
Gottyn, Robert Stewart suld be
Kyng and bruk all the realte (20.132-6).

David's position, and that of Robert the Steward, was recognized by the community of lords present: 'And at this tailye suld lelely/ Be haldyn all the lordis swar/ And it with selys affermyt thar' (138-40). King Robert was determined to ensure dynastic succession and Barbour even records him crowning his young son during his lifetime (20.126-130). Chandos Herald similarly ends his poem with a provision ensured for the inheritance of the Black Prince's heir, the future Richard II. Before his death, as mentioned above, the Black Prince asked his company of lords to serve his son loyally as they had served him: (4135-8). He then requested his father Edward III and his brother John of Gaunt to swear to protect Richard's rightful inheritance: 'en son droit li maintiendroient' (4148). These provisions reinforce a genealogical pattern confirming the continuation of the dynasty celebrated.

Although the poem continues after King Robert's death, his life is still the structural frame. It is King Robert's heart that Douglas is carrying on crusade, the last adventure for both Douglas and his king. Douglas's life is subservient to but independent from the biographical grid provided by the life of King Robert. This reflects the tension
between Douglas’s status of vassal to Robert I in support of the Bruce cause and his own personal drive to reclaim his heritage. It is a tension mirrored in the late fourteenth-century relations between Robert II and the House of Douglas considered below. The poem ends with the death of Douglas, the burial of King Robert’s heart in Melrose and the death of Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray. Barbour describes Randolph as joint guardian of the land together with Douglas during King David’s minority, as established by the Cambuskenneth tailzie (141-152); Randolph was the last survivor of the core group of heroes celebrated by Barbour: Sir Edward Bruce, Sir Walter Steward, King Robert, Sir James Douglas, and Sir Thomas Randolph. *The Bruce* ends with a prayer for their descendants:

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Thir lordis deyt apon this wis
He that hey Lord off all thing is
Up till his mekill blis thaim bring
And graunt his grace that thar offspring
Leid weill the land, and ententyve
Be to folow in all thar lyve
That nobill eldrys gret bounte (20.621-7).
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The implications of this message for a contemporary audience are addressed below but structurally it closes dynastic time.

Barbour and Chandos Herald have been criticized for what they fail to include in their narratives. But this is an anachronistic assumption of what *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* ought to chronicle, and it is based on the premise that these narratives should resemble exactly that, a chronicle, or a history, and not the tradition within which they expressly state they are writing:

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de faire et recorder beaux ditz/ Et de novelle et de jadis’ (41-2)
Lordingis, quha likis for till her,/ The romanys now begynnys her (1.225-6)
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Nor does such an argument respect the avowed intention outlined by these authors in their prologues:

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To put in wryt a suthfast story/ That it lest ay furth in memory (The Bruce, 1.13-14)
Pur prendre en lour coers remembrance/ De bien et de honour receivoir (La vie, 5-7).
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Prologues serve several functions in medieval historiography and *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir*, as established above, adhere to typical assertions such as the claim to tell the truth through a careful adherence to facts- or sources- and to edify through a value system that prioritizes virtues requisite to the chivalric ideal, of which God approves. Above all,

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emphasis is placed on preserving deeds for posterity.\textsuperscript{588} Both Barbour and Chandos Herald, following their stated intention, celebrate their heroes so that their deeds will ‘lest ay furth in memory’, and this implies presenting them in a favourable light. It was not their concern to dwell on motivational impulses behind such episodes as the Black Prince’s sack of Limoges, King Robert’s murder of John Comyn at the altar or the hanging of Sir David Brechin for treason. These unfavourable incidents were not the matter with which Barbour and Chandos Herald were primarily concerned but nor did they omit them; following their truth claims (discussed above) they pledged a fidelity to source and such incidents were included.

The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir are concerned to celebrate the deeds performed by their heroes and this is the substance of their narratives. As mentioned above, Barbour refers to his craft as compiling: ‘And in the tyme of the compiling/ Off this buk this Robert wes king’ (13.709-10). This status is supported through the inclusion of different versions of events; but, in medieval historiography, it was also the discretion of the compiler to decide exactly what he would include, and how it would be arranged.\textsuperscript{589} Deviations from fact or potential omissions are themselves revealing. Barbour records Edward I’s death in The Bruce after his issue of a death sentence for Scottish prisoners including King Robert’s brother, Neil Bruce. Edward I died on 7 July 1307 while Neil Bruce was hanged in September 1306.\textsuperscript{590} By depicting Edward I on his deathbed ordering that the prisoners should be “‘Hangis and drawys’” (4.322), Barbour emphasizes Edward’s failure to adhere to the ending fitting for a reputable monarch:

\begin{quote}
That wes wonder off sik sawis, 
That he that to the ded wes ner  
Suld answer apon sic maner  
Foroutyn menyng and mercy  
How mycht he traist on Hym to cry  
That suthfastly demys all thing  
To haiff mercy, for his criying,  
Off him that throu his felony  
Into sic point had na mercy (4. 324-31)
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{590} 4. 184-335; see also Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 160, note 184.
Barbour contrasts the death of this king with his antithesis, the good King Robert, whose
death is described in terms fitting for a virtuous king: he atoned for his sins and received the
praise of his men (20. 153-249), recognition of his renown in the eyes of his
contemporaries; their lamentation is a measure of his worth, and similar scenes follow the
deaths of Edward Bruce (18. 205-11), Walter Stewart (19. 205-28), Douglas (20. 487-588)
and Randolph (20. 619-20).

The question of omissions highlights the anachronistic approach adopted by
scholars questioning Barbour’s historicity. Barbour is accused of failing to include the
history of William Wallace, and by dismissing John Balliol’s kingship in a few lines. An
understanding of Barbour’s motivation for inclusion in his compilation might best be
sought in the sources he consulted, which were received from the court of Robert I who
even within his own lifetime was revising his role in the war of independence at the
expense of King John Balliol and through the appropriation of the cult of Wallace, as
discussed below.

II. ii The episode, repetition and the adventure

Adventures related by Barbour and Chandos Herald prioritize the episode. La vie
du Prince Noir is an account of the campaigns in the life of the Black Prince, which can be
divided into Crécy (1346), the recovery of Calais (1349), Poitiers (1355-6) and the Spanish
campaign (1367), in which the Herald participated and which therefore comprises most of
the narrative (1649-4252). The emphasis throughout these sections is on lists of knights
and deeds performed in battle. The repetitiveness of these lists is not an indication of the
Herald’s ‘lack of imagination’, for which he has been consistently criticized by all previous
editors to date, but his function, as explained above. As Morse had observed in her study of
romance at the fifteenth-century Burgundian court, ‘the search for modern ideas of “unity”
is simply anachronistic’: ‘Multiplicity had its own pleasures, and the recognition of analogy
is one of them.’ Analogous situations in The Bruce are more intricately devised than La
vie du Prince Noir, which, it must be remembered, never asserts its intention to present its
matter as romance like The Bruce but rather adheres to a chanson and romance tradition in

591 The historicity of The Bruce has been disputed on a number of other counts: McDiarmid (ed.),
Barbour’s Bruce, p. 89; Sonja Cameron treats the reception of The Bruce from Wyntoun and Bower
in the fifteenth century onwards concluding that The Bruce has been accepted for the most part as the
history of the reign of Robert I. She has challenged Barbour’s portrayal of Sir James Douglas with
the record evidence of his life: Cameron (Vathjunker), ‘A study of the career of Sir James Douglas:
the historical record versus Barbour’s Bruce’.
593 Morse, ‘Historical fiction in fifteenth-century Burgundy’, p. 58. See also Poirion, ‘Chanson de
order to support the Herald’s introductory declaration ‘[d]e faire et recorder beaux ditz/ Et de novella et de jadis’ (41-2).

Barbour’s concentration on episode explains the repetition of situations outlined above, which were intended to emphasize the virtues and deeds determining the reputation of his heroes. His purpose has been obscured by the modern division of *The Bruce* into twenty books. Neither the Cambridge nor Edinburgh manuscripts are divided into books; the division was first made by Pinkerton in 1790 and was followed by subsequent editors except for John Jamieson in 1820, who divided the poem into fourteen books, and Cosmo Innes in 1856, who followed the paragraphs according to the manuscripts. The paragraphs in the manuscript are indicated by an illuminated letter. The chapter divisions confuse the episodic structure of *The Bruce* in which the focus is on the adventure narrated in order to illuminate noteworthy deeds. Episodes depicting celebrated deeds are repeated and each scene reinforces the last so that the themes are re-expressed ‘as if what mattered most were not in the first instance knowing what is going to happen next’. *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* are, as indicated above, a ‘celebration of the already known’, a ‘confirmation of values coupled with a remembrance of past heroes whose actions preserved the social group’. The constant re-enactment of virtues and deeds forming the chivalric ideal also mirrors the mobility of the chivalric ethos informing *The Bruce* and *La vie*.

The use of the present tense in narrative time reinforces the episodic structure through the repetition of ‘nows’. The Herald uses the present tense to build momentum, a procedure to heighten the tension in the battle scenes with which he is concerned:

Ore commence bataille fier (3225)
Archiers traient a la volée (3227)
Li ducs de Lancastre devant/ S’en va come homme vaillant (3229-9).

Barbour also uses the present tense to heighten tension,

Now is the king in gret peril (7. 193)
God help the king now for his mycht (7. 423)
Into gret peril now is he (7. 525)

And to change scenes in the narrative:

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594 Pinkerton (London, 1790); John Jamieson in 1820 (Glasgow, 1820); Cosmo Innes (Aberdeen, 1856).
595 Advocate’s Library, Edinburgh Adv.19.2.2 (i) and St John’s College Cambridge MS.G.
597 Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 285. Duggan’s comments here are directed at epic alone.
Now in Ingland is the Persy (5.217)
Now takis James his viage/ Toward Douglas his heritage (5.255)
The king now takys his gate to ga (6.67)
Now gais the nobill king his way (8.271)
Now Douglas furth his wayis tais (12.1)

Authorial interjections also appropriate the present tense in an attempt to attach past heroes
to a present audience:

Ore est bien temps de commencer (43; 1649)
Ore est raison qe je vous counte (95; 2651)
Ore commence noble matiere (1817)
Ore est droit qe je preigne/ A l’avantgarder deviser (2240-1)
Ore est bien droit qe je vous nomme/ Des nobles barons (2315-6).^{598}
Seignours, cel temps qe je vous di (2015; 2877)
Seigniour, le temps qe je vous di (3473).

Such scenes are typically changed by emphasizing the author’s own involvement in the
narrative and the audience’s participation in the story recounted through the stress on we:

Now agayne to the king ga we (2.49)
In Rawchryne [Rathlin] leve we now the king (4.1)
Now leve we intill the Forest (9.1)
Now ga we to the king agayne (9.295)
Bot now of thaim I will be still,/ And spek a litill quhill I will/ Off the douchty lord of
Douglas/ At that time in the Forest was (10.341-4)
Off him no mar now spek will we/ Bot to king Robert will we gang/ That we haff left
unspokyn o f lang (15.266-8)
Now lat him in the Forest be,/ Off him spek now no mar will we (15.569-70)
Now leve we her the noble king (16.335)
Now leve we thir folk her lyand (17.491).

This series of ‘nows’ is augmented by ‘ands’, which have been obscured by editors who
have made changes to facilitate interpretation of the narrative, but such changes detract
from the constant pressure in the narrative and the use of the continuous present, which is
intended to relive past deeds in present time.^{599}

The purpose of the use of the present tense is to fuse past and present, to bring the
past deeds narrated to the audience for which the narrative was intended. Repetition

^{598} See also: 46; 93; 2064; 2224; 2382; 2398; 2681; 3038; 3113; 3136; 3170; 3784; 4179; 4191. In
University of London Ms. 1 the capital ‘O’ in ‘Ore’ is typically illuminated.
^{599} Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 33: ‘In the translation I have sometimes omitted the cheville ‘in hy’,
which, if taken literally, would have chivalric society in a lather of perpetual hurry. I have also
broken up Barbour’s long sentences into two or three, omitting “and”, or have treated “he did this
and then he did that” as “he did that after doing this.”'
4 Biographical Interpretation: Part II

follows the rhetorical procedure of amplificato and serves several functions: it confers order,°°° reinforces the chivalric value system promoted throughout these narratives, and supports an oral recitation of the narrative, which is central to the invocation of myth.°°° Repetition functions as a memory aid to lists of names and deeds throughout The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir. It is indicative of oral recitation but can also designate diction, as Diller has argued for Froissart’s Chroniques.°°° It is used by Barbour and Chandos Herald to disseminate the noteworthy deeds of arms with which their narratives, and audience, are concerned.

III Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance

Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance resonate with the thematic and structural concerns of The Bruce in particular. Middle English romance was composed contemporaneously with The Bruce,°°° and, as discussed above, may have been appropriated by Barbour as a source. Whether or not Barbour heeded the dictates of Middle English romance, there are striking similarities between the two that indicate how Old French chansons and romance could be moulded by contemporary compositions to accommodate comparable chivalric and political climates.

III. i Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance

Anglo-Norman romance is often classed as ‘ancestral romance’ due to its concern with territorial claims. Such a description has been challenged by scholars emphasizing the limitation of this approach, which treats these narratives apart from other romances of English heroes thus preventing ‘an appreciation of the corporate identity of this type of

°°° Ainsworth, Jean Froissart and the fabric of history, p. 8.
°°° Spiegel, Romancing the past, p. 68. See also Morse, Truth and convention, p. 63: the rhetorical device amplificato, characteristic of medieval literature, provides a series of examples saying the same thing in many different ways.
°°° The earliest Middle English romances (King Horn, Floris and Blanchefleur) appear in manuscripts from the mid-thirteenth century when Anglo-Norman romances, for the most part, are no longer composed. Anglo-Norman romances continued in the fourteenth century: Wadsworth, ‘Historical romance in England’, p.302. The greatest period of productivity for Middle English romance is considered the fourteenth century but these romances were composed into the mid-fifteenth century: A.C. Baugh, ‘The Middle English romance’ in Speculum xlii (1967), 1-31; W.R.J. Barron, English medieval romance (London, 1987); Pearsall, ‘The development of Middle English romance’, Mediaeval Studies, 27 (1965), 91-116. There is a Middle English descendant of every Anglo-Norman romance and the themes explored in Anglo-Norman romance are continued by later English romances but with a different emphasis reflecting their contemporary circumstances: Crane, Insular romance, p. 13: every Anglo-Norman romance had an English descendant, although the Middle English ‘Fulk’ and ‘Waldef’ are lost.
But it is a description that reflects a dominant thematic concern with establishing identity that is found in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance. Anglo-Norman romance represents the desire felt on the part of an immigrant aristocracy to establish their place through the appropriation of native myths. And, in a manner similar to the matters of France, Rome and Britain discussed above, the author of Anglo-Norman romance typically claimed to be translating from an Old English source. In this respect, Anglo-Norman romance shares traits with Old French genealogical literature, which was often composed in order to establish the foundations of a patrimony and legitimize an authority through a celebration of illustrious ancestors. Duby has argued that this literature reflected contemporary developing ideas and provided exemplars that contributed "to the history of chivalry, and of the emerging awareness of a separate class, the existence of which, at this juncture was fundamental to the development of the whole notion of nobility." This idea of a class consciousness resonates with scholars of English romance such as Crane who has argued that "the romances of English heroes generate an ideal of achievement that responds broadly to the feudal situation of the insular barony." This idea of a distinct lineage separating the nobility as a group and encouraging their celebration of a (mythical) shared ancestry is countered by later scholars who attribute the growth of dynastic histories among the nobility to their loss of knowledge of their ancestors. In general, dynastic histories offer security to a family intent on pressing their claim to their territory. This can follow a family's first successful acquisition of a territory or it can represent a response to threats of loss of control of this territory such as a succession crisis. Families and their territories become intertwined in such narratives

604 Rosalind Wadsworth, 'Historical romance in England. Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance', p. 195. Wadsworth is reacting to Legge's classification of four of the Anglo-Norman romances of English heroes (Boeve, Waldef, Gui and Fouke) as ancestral because they were commissioned by families eager to establish their right to lands or titles: M. Dominica Legge, Anglo-Norman literature and its background (Oxford, 1963), pp.139-45. Crane, Insular romance, p. 16, disputes the ancestral theory on the grounds that none of the romances classed as 'ancestral' praise a patron or refer to a contemporary family holding the title of the celebrated hero. But she concedes that they are all concerned with 'family stability and continuity'. Wadsworth adheres instead to Wilson's classification of these romances as 'the matter of England': R.M. Wilson, The lost literature of medieval England (London, 1952; 1970).

605 Wadsworth, 'Historical romance in England', pp. 6, 173.

606 Ibid., p. 48.


608 Ibid., pp. 156-7. See also Spiegel, Romancing the past for an application of this approach to the thirteenth-century translations of the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle; p. 3: Spiegel argues that Old French prose historiography was "an ideological initiative on the part of a threatened elite to authenticate its claims to historical legitimacy'.

609 Crane, Insular romance, p. 12.


611 Ibid., p. 247
producing national, or insular, characteristics indicative of romance in England and Middle English romance in particular, as discussed below.

III. ii  

**The ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’**

Romances described as ‘ancestral’ were often legitimizing for a family that was considered to be foreign. The hero, either a king or on his way to becoming one, is the founder of the family and, if possible, must undergo a period of exile or displacement from his feudal inheritance; marriage emerges as a central theme. All these themes are found in *The Bruce*. The genealogical concerns in *The Bruce* can be attributed however to the above-mentioned questions of ancestry and succession. Ancestral themes reflected in *The Bruce* are, moreover, a result of Robert II’s exploitation of the legacy his grandfather created for himself in order to legitimize his kingship. Genealogies are not at any rate an exclusive narrative tradition; they were often incorporated into other narratives and the term ‘dynastic history’ covers a broad range of generic traditions. But Barbour did compose a genealogical history of the Stewart family, and this, it has been argued, was patterned on the *Brut*. The now lost ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ is attributed to Barbour through citations by Wyntoun and one by Bower. Questions surround the date of composition of this genealogy and its contents. Robert II appears to have been linked to Godfrey de Bouillon. It was originally confused with Wyntoun’s reference to a *Brute*, the authorship of which was similarly ascribed to Barbour. But rather than claiming Barbour...
as author of a *Brut*, Wyntoun seems instead to indicate how the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’ followed the genealogical pattern of the *Brut*.\(^{618}\) From Wyntoun’s references it is clear that the genealogy ‘traced Robert II’s ancestors back through and beyond the line of British kings descended from Brutus to the mythical Sir Dardane, lord of Frigia’.\(^{619}\) The Stewarts therefore celebrate the same genealogical material that the English kings used to claim lordship of Scotland. The exploitation of the *Historia regum Britanniae* by the kings of England is discussed above, but it was also the same matter that John of Fordun, writing contemporaneously with John Barbour, was deriding in his *Chronica gentis Scottorum*.\(^{620}\) Boardman’s reassessment of the Scottish reception of the matter of Britain concludes in favour of its overall acceptance. This challenges the popular image of its rejection in retaliation of English exploitation of Arthurian matter to legitimize England’s position of lordship over Scotland. And it is accounted for, argues Boardman, by the existence of ‘a well-established account of the origins of the kingdom that Geoffreype was simply unable to displace.’\(^{621}\) Robert II’s commissioning of his genealogy was intended therefore to claim the matter of Britain for Scotland, to establish his own dynasty based on origin legends associated with England that he was claiming for himself. And it is a baronial lineage Robert II is establishing argues Boardman, ‘despite the royal status of the family after 1371’.\(^{622}\)

However, rather than designating aristocratic ambition, Robert II’s appropriation of the matter of Britain announces his royal claim. The matter of Britain, long exploited by the kings of England who appropriated Arthur in particular as their own, was rejected by the aristocratic patrons of Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance in favour of national heroes less tainted with royal associations. In fact, where Arthur is used in English romance, such as the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, he reflects baronial aspirations.\(^ {623}\) This is most clear in the representation of the Round Table in the *Morte Arthure*, which conveys a revelatory departure from its French model. The Round Table, introduced by Wace in his *Roman de Brut*, as indicated above, reflects the Angevin court under whose patronage he

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\(^{618}\) Steve Boardman, ‘Late medieval Scotland and the matter of Britain’, p. 51, note 11: ‘Barbour agreed with the account given “to be the Brwte” in relation to the British king “Gurgwnt-Badruk”.’

\(^{619}\) Ibid., p. 51.

\(^{620}\) Ibid., pp. 53-4. For dates for Fordun’s *Chronica gentis Scottorum*: Broun, ‘A new look at the *Gesta Amalida* attributed to Fordun’, p. 20.

\(^{621}\) Ibid., p. 60

\(^{622}\) Ibid., p 59.

\(^{623}\) Wadsworth, ‘Historical romance in England’, p. 331. See also pp. 334-351 for the three other poems of the Alliterative Revival who take Gawain rather than Arthur as their primary hero. Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 4 and McKim, *The Bruce: A study of John Barbour’s heroic ideal*, p. 46 for passing comparisons (based largely on form) between *The Bruce* and the contemporary *Morte Arthure*.
worked and provides a flattering view of Arthur as the king. In French romances the Round Table is a locus to which knights could take their aspirations and then report their adventures. In the *Morte Arthure*, representation of the Round Table as a fellowship of 'knights nearest the king' is stressed: 'It is an idealised fellowship, the corporate identity of which is more important than the individual within it.'\(^{624}\) It is, argues Wadsworth, a 'reconciliation of Arthur with baronial aspiration' through the depiction of the Round Table as the king's council.\(^{625}\) Arthur himself is a member of the Round Table 'and it is evident that he is regarded in this version as *primus inter pares* to an extent quite foreign to the chronicles and earlier romances'.\(^{626}\) Collective action is stressed throughout the *Morte Arthure* at the expense of individual prowess.\(^{627}\) These themes resonate with *The Bruce* and they stress the fusion of an aristocratic and royal identity reflected in *The Bruce*, as discussed below, and one that mirrored the monarchical programme of Robert II. Robert II, as Barbour emphasized, was stationed as an aristocratic lord for forty-two years waiting to claim the throne. He remained in many ways an ambitious lord despite his accession to the throne, his identity having being shaped for so long by this baronial status, as discussed below. But through *The Bruce*, and references to the 'Stewartis Oryginalle', glimpses are offered of a fusion of his noble and royal identities, which are determined in many respects by the contemporary chivalric ethos depicted by Barbour.

### III. iii Middle English romance

Middle English romance derived its insular characteristics from its Anglo-Norman predecessors. Anglo-Norman romance is considered a product of the baronial and not the royal court.\(^{628}\) Thematic concerns with family divisions, feudal tradition and requirements for kingship reflect this baronial patronage.\(^{629}\) Aristocratic patronage is similarly a feature of Middle English romance, which is characterized by its representation of the hero as an ideal king to rule the kingdom rather than his previous role in Anglo-Norman romance as an ideal leader of the baronage.\(^{630}\) The main themes of Middle English romance focus on the connection of the fate of the hero with his kingdom thus indicating its relevance to Barbour's matter. These themes have been outlined as follows: the hero will suffer a period

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\(^{625}\) Ibid., p. 331.
\(^{626}\) Ibid., p. 334.
\(^{627}\) Ibid., p. 337.
\(^{628}\) Wadsworth, 'Historical romance in England', pp. 8, 165-8 traces the origins of Anglo-Norman romance: 'Most Anglo-Norman romance dates from a period of resurgent baronial power between the succession of Richard I and the de Montfort rebellion', and reflects contemporary events and issues. See also Crane, *Insular romance*, p. 9.
\(^{629}\) Ibid., pp. 107-9, 165.
\(^{630}\) Wadsworth, 'Historical romance in England', p. 154, who argues this throughout her investigation of Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances.
of exile and 'displacement from his home and the security of self-definition in relation to familiar circumstances, and his society will experience a corresponding loss'; his exile will take place on unfamiliar territory where he will be tested; his 'restoration at the end of that process marks a return to order for himself and his society'; the romance ends with a natural death, provisions to ensure the continuation of his dynasty and the assurance of eternal salvation for his soul. Barbour through his emphasis on the ancestry and succession of the Bruce and Douglas dynasties (discussed above) achieves this tripartite genealogical narrative division, which is intended above all to secure a dynasty's prestige through an association with its most prominent, and typically founding, representative. This division follows romans d'antiquité, as discussed above, and provides an opportunity for the hero to validate his worth in testing circumstances; it provides Douglas and King Robert with the opportunity to prove themselves in the field of battle and display the perseverance ('dryve the thing rycht to the end', 1.311) in the face of great hardship ('gret payn and gret travail', 1.308), which is the reason for their successful acquisition of their respective heritages and their celebrated reputations on the international chivalric circuit. Through King Robert's quest it is clear how the personal claim of a hero's heritage is made to represent the ambition of the kingdom, which is further expressed within a cosmopolitan chivalric culture that celebrated the deeds and virtues necessary to secure such a pursuit. This fusion of personal, national and chivalric ambition is central to the mindset received by Barbour following the historiography emanating from the first round of the wars of independence and it is furthered in The Bruce to accommodate a similar yet more sentient monarchical programme promoted by Robert II.

The Middle English hero's goals are typically self-interested, but these romances 'construct a world in which self-advancement is in consonance with the defence of the community'. The 'displacement of the hero is often brought about by an illegal or illicit action'; this adheres to the chansons explored above and the list of examples from romance provided by Barbour in support of Comyn's alleged 'betrayal' of Robert Bruce. The hero falls, in effect, through a lack of justice that his restoration will redress, which is in line with Barbour's emphasis on the importance of 'rycht! And for the rycht ay God will fycht' (12.235-6). This explains King Robert's reaction to the de Soulis conspiracy, as addressed above, and also resonates with Chandos Herald's emphasis on droit, which the Black Prince embodies: (1627-8). Noble companions of the hero voice what is considered

632 Crane, Insular romance, p. 11.
633 Diane Speed, 'The construction of the nation in medieval English romance', p. 147.
right, and their advice is considered a dominant feature of English romance. 634 'The king with his consaill preve' (12.388) is a primary feature of both The Bruce and La vie, as discussed above; and this explains the emphasis on mesure, which is central to the collective approach necessary to ensure victory, as similarly expressed in Middle English romance. 635 The English hero's strength depends on law, custom and justice and not simply 'might'. 636 Mycht in The Bruce requires more than a large display of knights, as Ingram d'Umphraville tells Edward II: 'For all your gret chevalry/ To dele with him yhe haf na mycht' (19.160-1). The fate of the kingdom and hero are intertwined in Middle English romance so that the kingdom suffers with the hero and rejoices with his success. 637 And, to complement this identification of the hero with his nation the geographical setting is emphasized: features of the landscape are highlighted to place the hero within a familiar realm. 638 This is a complementary feature of both The Bruce and La vie, where places are listed, as outlined above; these were familiar locations for their intended audience no doubt, and for the court of Robert II they were a comforting confirmation of the acquisition of territories acquired following much struggle. For Barbour, the landscape offers a mirror to the fortunes of his heroes as expressed most clearly in his use of the woods. The fortune of his heroes begins to change as they emerge from their hideout in the forest and come down to the plains:

The king fra Schyr Aymer wes gane
Gadryt his menye everilkan
And left bath woddis and montanyis
And held lys way strak till the planys
For he wald fayne that end war maid
Off that that he begunyn had,
And he wyst weill he mycht nocht bring
It to gud end but travelling (8.1-8).

The emphasis on both Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance on the hero and his location and the stress on forebears reflects an exploitation of the past to provide a present with a prestigious ancestry. In effect, it provides a contemporary audience with a sense of their identity and for the dynasties commemorated this was a confirmation of their status whether aristocratic or royal, and it ensured their continued prominence. The use of the past in these romances is reinforced through their exploitation of a traditional structure to reinforce past values: 'Romance is not unique in its representation of the past but it

634 Ibid, p. 147.
635 Ibid., p. 147.
636 Ibid., p. 147.
637 Crane, Insular romance, p. 11-14.
638 Diane Speed, 'The construction of the nation in medieval English romance', pp. 147-8.
transforms a concern with the past into a literary style. Past values celebrated by *The Bruce* and *La vie* are important to their contemporary audience and respective patrons. The question of lineage is part of this emphasis on the past. Although aristocratic and royal goals were both catered for through the appropriation of a past legacy, they are exploited differently in each case. And the differences are revelatory not only for the governing political influences they indicate but also for the way in which the chivalric ethos expressed by Barbour and Chandos Herald reflects contemporary concerns with notions of nobility and royalty on the part of the audience for which these works were intended, while simultaneously actively constructing these identities. Why then was the past important to the courts of Robert II and Richard II?

### IV Language and patronage

The choice of language for *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* complements the dominant thematic concerns of these narratives, and also indicates the audience for whom they were composed. These narratives confirm a sense of the past that reinforces an identity cultivated by aristocratic and royal patrons supporting the composition of these poems. Both narratives, therefore, make a deliberate choice in the language they have chosen to convey their matter.

#### IV. i Anglo-Norman and French

Although the subject of *La vie du Prince Noir* is an English prince, the historical background is the Anglo-French Hundred Years War, the events narrated take place mostly outside England, whether in France or Spain, and, most importantly, not only was Chandos Herald writing in French, not Anglo-Norman and not Middle English, but he was also not an Englishman. French was the language of romance and the fortunes of the French language are typically addressed in relation to its literature. As mentioned above, Taylor, following Gransden, saw the decline of the French language in England as the primary reason for the dearth of 'chivalrous histories' in fourteenth-century England. However,
for Denys Hay, ‘French or Anglo-Norman was demonstrably still a living vernacular in England in the fourteenth century, used by all literary groups and not only by nobles and gentry.’643 The use of English, French, and Anglo-Norman, in England during the fourteenth century has been the subject of much investigation. Froissart notes that the Black Prince’s father, Edward III, spoke English but the occasions he lists are those where Edward III possibly did so to avoid being understood by foreigners and so it is unclear as to whether this was his custom.644 Again, according to Froissart, the parliament of September 1337 ordered all lords, knights and townsmen to teach their children French because it was useful in the war.645 As there is no documentary proof for these statements made by Froissart, they have been dismissed as aspects of his ‘fertile imagination’.646 In addition, the fact that a statement was recorded in French does not necessarily mean it was spoken in French.647

According to John Trevisa, writing during the fourteenth century, there was one French dialect in England as opposed to the ‘divers manner’ of ‘English’ or Middle English:

It is seemeth a great wonder how English, that is the birth-tongue of Englishmen and their own language and tongue, is so diverse of sound in this one island, and the language of Normandy is coming of another land, and hath one manner sound among all men that speaketh it alright in England. Nevertheless there is as many divers manner French in the realm of France as in divers manner English in the realm of England.648


647 Clanchy, From memory to written record, p. 206. See also ibid., p. 209: although more French was written down in England from the thirteenth century, this does not necessarily mean that it was spoken.

England during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and the formal language used in the royal courts of England from the thirteenth century, which derived from Anglo-Norman but used so much technical vocabulary that it is described as ‘law French’. A further distinction was made in French-language sources between *francois* or *francien* and *roman*, between the ‘Frensch of Parys’ and ‘the scole of Scratford ate Bowe’. *Francien*, indicating the French of the Ile-de-France and the Paris basin, was the more precise of the two and was considered the superior dialect in written form from the twelfth century onwards. It was contrasted with northern dialects in France much as *francien* in England was set in opposition to Anglo-Norman, which was the more popular dialect among upper and middle classes and a ‘living speech’.

On examining the dialect of the poem, Mildred Pope concluded that the Herald had ‘certainly not learned his French at the schole of Stratford ate Bowe’: Chandos Herald’s French was ‘not of the debased fourteenth-century Anglo-French type’. Fourteenth-century England witnessed a revival of *francien* – English writers were schooled in France and this French was set apart from the ‘the courier-like jargon into which the earlier Anglo-Norman was rapidly sinking’. *Francien* was considered a written language for ‘an educated class whose members either had French blood, had studied in France, or who had learned French in England to further their careers’. Chandos Herald’s cases, genders and conjugations all conform to continental standards, but whether this is due to his schooling in France or because he was a native speaker needs to be clarified. An example of a native Englishman schooled in French is Gower, and to determine whether Gower’s French is the same as the Herald’s, Pope compared works by Gower with *La vie du Prince Noir* concluding that ‘Gower’s French, with all its superficial appearance of correctness and metrical smoothness has an unmistakable English ring; it is the French of a tolerably well-

649 Based on the divisions made by Ormrod: ‘The use of English’, p. 753.
650 And Frensch she spak ful faire and fetsily,
After the scole of Scratford ate Bowe,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe
652 Ibid, p.286 and Clanchy, *From memory to written record*, p. 216 for the phrase ‘living speech’.
653 Anglo-Norman was popular among the upper and middle echelons of society. The wider use of Anglo-Norman and its status as a ‘living language’ as opposed to the written French can be compared with the differences between Parisian and provincial French: Vale, *The princely court*, p. 266 and note 191.
taught and fluent foreigner.'\(^{657}\) The Herald's French, on the other hand, while not free from Anglo-Normanisms,\(^ {658}\) remains the French of a native speaker.\(^ {659}\) Furthermore, Pope concluded that the French in which La vie du Prince Noir is written is a provincial dialect, marked by local traits peculiar to the north of France and consistent with the characteristics of both the Walloon and Picard dialects. In fact, together, these traits point to the region of Hainault; Chandos Herald's language closely resembles that of Froissart.\(^ {660}\)

The status of French and Anglo-Norman in England are traditionally contrasted with Middle English. English, it has been argued, was the language of pre-Norman Conquest England. From c.1100-1250, a form of French (Norman French or Anglo-Norman) was the language of the upper classes and English that of the lower. Royal and aristocratic marriages into continental families reinforced the use of French. From the early thirteenth century onwards, however, following the loss of English lands in France and the 1244 decree prohibiting the holding of lands in both countries, English returned to the fore and gradually gained ground despite the marriage of Eleanor of Provence to Henry III, which brought a francien-speaking following in its wake. Ultimately, the late fourteenth century, therefore, as is conventionally argued, witnessed what has been called 'the triumph of English'.\(^ {661}\) Testimony to the triumph of English, it is argued, is the 1362 Statute of Pleading (written in Anglo-Norman French), which was issued by the government of Edward III in order to make English and not French the language of pleading in all the law courts in the land.\(^ {662}\) This together with the assertion by John Trevisa that English had

\(^{657}\) Ibid, p. xxxi

\(^{658}\) These Anglo-Norman traits also find their way into fourteenth-century poems composed in the north of France and can also indicate the 'superficial accommodation of his language to the environment of his later life, an accommodation induced probably to no small extent by metrical exigencies and the paucity of his vocabulary' (p. xxxi).

\(^{659}\) Ibid, p. xxxi: this Pope concluded after evaluating his morphology, syntax, vocabulary and prosody. Pope argues that this point has been obscured by the presentation of the poem in the Worcester manuscript. She contends that the original poem by Chandos Herald was altered slightly by the copyist (who added the rubrics and changed French words he did not know to an estimated equivalent in Anglo-Norman) before the Worcester scribe faithfully rendered the copy he had before him to present the Worcester manuscript as it appears now (pp. xxxiv-xlvi).


\(^{661}\) As synopsized by Stanley Hussey in 'Nationalism and language in England c.1300-1500', p. 96. This has produced what Ormrod calls the 'triumph of English' scholarship e.g. Basil Cottle, The triumph of English, 1350-1400 (London, 1969) and Janet Coleman, English literature in history, 1350-1400: medieval readers and writers (London, 1981). See also Clanchy, From memory to written record, p. 213 and Elizabeth Salter, English and international: studies in the literature, art and patronage of medieval England for royal and aristocratic marriages.

replaced French as the compulsory language in grammar schools by the 1380s, has produced the image of a Middle English court and literary culture during the latter half of the fourteenth century. However, this is a much distorted picture of the court of Richard II.

In a study of literary culture at the court of Richard II, John Scattergood notes that 'if one does not look too closely it is easy to see Richard II as presiding at the centre of a literary court culture based on the English language and having as its most famous representatives John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer.' He refutes this theory by examining the books owned by Richard II and members of his aristocracy and concludes that the culture of the court was 'still overwhelmingly Latin and French, and French of an old-fashioned sort too.' Again, this evidence is reinforced by A.I. Doyle in a study of the books of the courts of Edward III to Henry VII. Doyle concludes that, from examining surviving manuscripts and records, it is clear that most books belonging to English monarchs and their noble contemporaries during this period were in French and Latin and not English. While the vernacular languages such as Middle English became more popular in the latter half of the fourteenth century it is clear that French was still the main medium of communication for courtly and aristocratic culture when Chandos Herald wrote *La vie du Prince Noir.*

By the fourteenth century, French appears 'the primary medium of courtly and aristocratic expression' throughout north-west Europe. It has been argued by Michael Clanchy that Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French derives not from the dialect of Normandy but directly from the popularity of French on the international arena:

It has never been convincingly shown that 'Anglo-French', which has been called 'Anglo-Norman' by twentieth-century scholars for convenience, was decisively shaped by the dialect of Normandy. Anglo-Norman was not a vernacular, in the dictionary's sense of being the language or dialect of the country, because Anglo-Normandy never existed as one homogeneous country and it ceased altogether with King John's loss of Normandy in 1204. Yet French only became a common written language in England for business purposes fifty years or so later. For the Norman conquerors, Latin and not French was the indispensable language of the lordship and management. It was not primarily the Norman Conquest but

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664 V.J. Scattergood, 'Literary culture at the court of Richard II' in *English court and culture in the later Middle Ages,* pp. 29-43, p. 30.

665 Ibid, p. 36. The French books were mostly older romances.

666 A.I. Doyle, English books in and out of court from Edward III to Henry VII' in *English court and culture in the later Middle Ages,* pp. 163-181.

the advance of French as an international language, particularly in the thirteenth century, that caused its increasing use as a written language for written records.  

Malcolm Vale addresses this question of a uniform francophone culture throughout the courts of north-west Europe in the later Middle Ages, and while chronicling the development of competing insular vernacular languages such as Middle English during this period, nevertheless concludes in favour of a common French court culture:

The court, as a focus and forum of literary activity therefore functioned as both a centre and a vehicle for the reception and dissemination of primarily French literary themes and genres, in both written and oral form.

Such literary themes and genres were largely disseminated by minstrels and singers such as the jongleurs derided by the Herald. And, together with the theme and tradition appropriated by the Herald to relay his message, the use of French contributes to his (or his patron's) choice of verse. Indeed, the theme, narrative tradition, language and choice of verse in which La vie du Prince Noir is composed were all popular at the court of Richard II, as mentioned above.

La vie du Prince Noir, therefore, is arguably as much a royal initiative as The Bruce, and the determining factors are the form. The question of potential patronage for La vie, however, remains unresolved, and can only be hypothesized through internal evidence. J.J.N. Palmer has argued that John of Gaunt was the Herald's patron and that La vie is biased in his favour. But Chandos Herald singles out several noble companions of the Black Prince for favour including Sir Simon Burley, Sir Guichard d'Angle and most prominently, Sir John Chandos himself, as much as he does Gaunt. Sir Simon Burley and Sir Guichard d'Angle were entrusted with the role of tutor to the young Richard II, and Diana Tyson has argued for Simon Burley's possible patronage based on his faithful service to Richard and his library of twenty-one books. Tyson also - and primarily - suggests that Chandos Herald's patron was Richard II. Tyson's book collections are mentioned above. His literary interests are further supported by dedications and gifts presented to him: Gower dedicated his Confessio Amantis 'for King Ricahrdes sake' and Froissart gave him a collection of dittiers on love in 1395. Tyson maintains that there is no 'special emphasis' on Richard's role in La vie, which she explains partly through 'the Herald's lack of poetical

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668 Michael Clanchy, From memory to written record, England 1066–1307, p. 213.
669 Vale, The princely court, p. 287.
671 Tyson (ed.), La vie du Prince Noir, p. 31; details of Burley's library are found in M.V. Clarke, Fourteenth-century studies (Oxford, 1937), pp. 120-2.
672 Ibid., p. 31. See also Mathew, Court of Richard II, p. 117.
673 Ibid., p. 32. Froissart's gift was not commissioned by Richard II. It has been noted that Richard seems more to like collecting than reading books.
talents and imagination. She concludes that 'in the absence of a better solution to the problem of the identity of the Herald's patron, the theory that it was Richard II may be tentatively accepted.' However, Richard II is strongly emphasized by Chandos Herald as the Black Prince's heir, as detailed above. And throughout the poem there is a strong emphasis on nobility in general, on the prince's nobility in particular, and on his royal lineage (discussed below). Furthermore, Chandos Herald specifically notes that it is chivalrie that his audience wishes to hear (94-7), and Richard II's passion for the pageantry associated with chivalry is well attested. The Herald devotes much of his narrative to the pomp and regalia of battle, as detailed below. It seems certain that La vie was a royal commission but this does not necessarily indicate Richard as patron; it might just as well point to prevalent royal interests surrounding Richard at court. Chandos Herald's prince, like King Robert, works at all times with his consaill prevé (12.388), and it is as leader of the nobility and best knight of his day that he is commemorated. Moreover, it should be remembered that Chandos Herald, like Barbour, was in service to the crown. Following Sir John Chandos's death in 1370 he became Ireland King of Arms and in 1377, at the beginning of Richard's minority, he was named English King of Arms, as mentioned above. La vie du Prince Noir is therefore arguably part of his service to the crown, and the court of Richard II.

IV. ii Early Scots

The Bruce is claimed as the oldest extant work in Early Scots. Fifteenth-century narratives such as Andrew of Wytoun's Orygynale cronykil and Blind Harry's Wallace, which borrow substantially from The Bruce, continue in this vernacular tradition. While not responsible for inaugurating this tradition of Early Scots literature, Barbour's narrative did however provide it with an authority and prestige. The Bruce was considered the

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675 Ibid., p. 33.
677 As discussed above: Wagner, Heralds and Heraldry, p. 36; Tyson (ed.), La vie du Prince Noir, p. 17 and note 74.
680 See below for reference to a late thirteenth-century Early Scots poem on the death of Alexander III. The Bruce is conventionally considered to inaugurate the tradition of Early Scots historiography: See A. Gransden, Historical writing in England, ii, p. 62.
681 Clanchy, From memory to written record, p. 213: 'Any standardized language needs a powerful authority, whether political or cultural, behind it in order to maintain uniformity.'
authoritative account of the reign of Robert I by later Scottish chroniclers, as discussed above. It is a royal commission, as argued above.\textsuperscript{682} As explained above, an entry for 1429 in the Exchequer Rolls states that this annual pension was ‘pro compilatione libri de gestis quodam Regis Roberti de Brus’.\textsuperscript{683} The Bruce was commissioned five to seven years after Robert II came to the throne, and Robert had many reasons to encourage the compilation of a book detailing the exploits of his grandfather, the hero-king, as detailed below. The vernacular chosen by Barbour is deliberate and it cannot be separated from the function of The Bruce. Barbour’s choice of language has been attributed to various factors. It is tied to the promotion of national identity; it has been argued that Barbour’s use of Scots made The Bruce available to a wider textual community.\textsuperscript{684} This corresponds with arguments connecting the language chosen to class divisions: English books often acknowledged they were writing for the lewed.\textsuperscript{685} Language could therefore cement questions of identity, or national sentiment, and reach those ignorant of Latin. It has been argued that narratives written in English, rather than those in Latin or French, which were commonly composed for an aristocratic or royal elite, could reach a wider audience and issues of national identity are typically addressed in Middle English texts.\textsuperscript{686} In addition, it could be argued that Middle English literature (discussed above) reflects insular sentiments, as opposed to the international concerns found in Old French narratives, such as the chivalric ethos pervading La vie du Prince Noir.

However, The Bruce places insular concerns within a cosmopolitan chivalric milieu and it is, as has been noted above, full of French borrowings and phrases, supporting Barbour’s schooling in France,\textsuperscript{687} and French references of ‘an old-fashioned sort’ too.\textsuperscript{688}

\textsuperscript{682} Cf. McDiarmid (ed.), Barbour’s Bruce, p. 7 for reservations about Robert II’s role in the composition of The Bruce. Sally Mapstone, ‘Was there a court literature in fifteenth-century Scotland?’, Studies in Scottish Literature, 26 (1991), pp. 410-22 argues against the automatic assumption that The Bruce initiated an era of royal patronage in late medieval Scotland: ‘I am not seeking here to deny the importance of an aristocratic audience, but to take the emphasis away from the royal court as the main centre for literary stimulus and composition and to challenge the importance of royal patronage’ (p. 413). Her comments are restricted to the fifteenth century.

\textsuperscript{683} The exchequer rolls of Scotland, iv, 5; Watt, Dictionary of graduates, 29.

\textsuperscript{684} Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, p. 134: ‘The prestige and authority of the Scots vernacular was greatly enhanced with the appearance of The Bruce. Barbour’s use of the vernacular ensured that Scottish would be familiar to a large textual community, since access to that discourse was now available to every Inglis-speaking Scot who came within hearing distance.’ For textual communities: Brian Stock, Listening for the text (Baltimore and London, 1990).

\textsuperscript{685} See also Hussey, ‘Nationalism and language in England c.1300-1500’, p. 100: Lewed may simply mean lacking Latin but also indicated the unlearned.

\textsuperscript{686} See also Thorlac Turville-Petre, England the nation: language, literature, and national identity, 1290-1340 (New York, 1996), p. 22. For an argument that such sentiments of national expression are found outside Middle English narratives too, see Edward Donald Kennedy’s review of Turville-Petre: Speculum, vol. 73, no, 2 (April 1998), 616-8, p. 617.

\textsuperscript{687} For example: ‘Gardez-vous de Francois’ (10. 752); pardew (14. 487); perde (19. 693). It has been calculated that 52% of the words in the poem derive from Old English and 37% from French—Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p.4.
The choice of Early Scots for Barbour supports his avowed claim to adhere to *suthfastness* and compose a *romanys*. His intention was entertainment and edification, and following his Old French *romans* sources, this was achieved through translation. Latin is translated. Barbour follows lines related in Latin ("Rex rudet in bello tum ilique carebit honore/ Ferrandus comitissa tuus mea cara Minerva/ Parisius veniet magna comitante caterva") with a rendition into Scots: ‘This wes the spek he maid perfay/ And is in Inglis toung to say’, whereupon he provides a translation (4.249-54). Barbour’s translation from Latin would indicate that he was writing for an audience unfamiliar with Latin, but this does not necessarily mean his poem was intended for a wide textual community, or the lewed. It seems certain that *The Bruce* was specifically composed for a royal audience. As established above, French was in favour at the English royal court. Barbour therefore decided against writing in a language associated with the royal court in England and a language with which he was evidently familiar. There are several possible reasons for this. It is tempting to associate the primacy of Scots at the Scottish royal court with a reaction against French at the English court, but David II spoke French, and circulated among an international francophone culture. Of course David II spent his formative years in France where he was removed for his own safety in 1334 following the invasions of Edward Balliol and his English supporters in pursuance of the claim inherited from Balliol’s father, King John. And he then spent eleven years as a prisoner at the French-speaking court of Edward III, following his capture at the battle of Neville’s Cross in 1346. Robert II, on the other hand, did not grow up in a francophone environment. This is not to say that he did not have French sympathies, which he evidently did; but, these sympathies appear to be politically motivated. It seems clear, however, that French was not the language of everyday usage at the Scottish royal court during the later Middle Ages.

See Chapter 3: Barbour’s *exempla* are largely from *romans d’antiquité*. As mentioned above, these lines are underlined in red in St John’s College Cambridge MS.G. 23. See above for David II’s acquaintance with Guillaume de Machaut. His friendship with Edward III is attributed to their shared enthusiasm for chivalric culture; the closeness of their relationship was celebrated: ‘For thare wes rycht gret specialte/ Between hym and the King Edward’ (Chron. Wyntoun [Laing], ii, pp. 501-2): Nicholson, *Scotland*, p. 174, note 72. Edward III’s treatment of David II adheres to conventions associated with a chivalric ethos governing behaviour towards prisoners, especially royal prisoners, as discussed below.


Steve Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys greter boute.’ Politics, history and literature in the reigns of Robert II’ (1371-1390) and Robert III (1390-1406), forthcoming, p 6: one of Robert II’s first acts (1371) was to renew the Franco-Scottish Treaty initiated by Robert I in 1326. See also Nicholson, *Scotland*, p. 186.


Barrow, ‘French after the style of Petithachengon’ in *Church, chronicle and learning in medieval and early renaissance Scotland*, ed. B. E. Crawford (Edinburgh, 1999), 187-93. See also Boardman,
Robert II's choice of Early Scots - because, the choice of language applied by Barbour was invariably the choice of his patron - could be attributed to his aristocratic sympathies. He spent most of his life as an aristocratic lord waiting for his chance to succeed to the throne: he was heir presumptive for six years until David was born to Robert I in 1324, and he had fifteen years running the kingdom as guardian during the absences of David II, and was sole guardian following David's capture at Neville's Cross. Robert II's identity was therefore very much formed from his long period as a lord (albeit one approaching royal status). Middle English romance, as discussed above, was very much the initiative of the aristocracy as opposed to the royal court; and it was deliberately established as separate from royal interests in order to cement an aristocratic authority independent of royal power. However, there seems something more calculated in Robert II's sponsorship of a poem in Early Scots commemorating the foundation of the Bruce-Stewart dynasty. The genealogy he reputedly commissioned Barbour to pen, the 'Stewartis Oryginalle', was also apparently written in Scots. Arguably, therefore, Robert II's choice of Early Scots was more than the use of an insular vernacular to cement 'national identity', or a reflection of his familiarity with contemporary romance in English emanating from the aristocratic courts. It would appear that Robert II in his use of Scots was making a deliberate stand against the francophone reign of his uncle, for which he had several reasons. First, Robert the Steward's succession to the throne was never secure; it would depend on David II not producing any heirs, and David II had his share of chances. Second, David II actively threatened Robert's succession. Following his return from France in 1341, David arranged the marriage of his sister, Margaret, to William, earl of Sutherland. John Sutherland was born in 1346 and was therefore third in line, behind Robert, to the throne. In addition, and more potentially damaging, David II contemplated ransom terms with Edward III that would have allowed the English king or one of his sons to be named as David's heir in

"Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte", pp. 7-8 and notes 48 and 49; the government of Robert III (1390-1406) paid for a translation of the Treaty of Leulinghem from French to 'linguam nostram', indicating Scots (The exchequer rolls of Scotland, iii, p. 376). And, writing to Henry IV in 1400, George Dunbar, earl of March excused himself for writing in English rather than Latin or French (Facsimiles of the national manuscripts of Scotland (London, 1867-3), ii, no. liii).

Tyson, 'Authors, patrons and soldiers- some thoughts on four Old French soldiers' Lives', p. 111.


See Boardman, "Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte", p.7 and note 39: Boardman disputes suggestions forwarded by McDiarmid and Goldstein that 'the Stewartis Oryginalle' was composed in French (Mc Diarmid (ed.), Hary's Wallace, ii, 127; Goldstein, Matter of Scotland, p. 333, note 42).

Duncan, Honi soit qui mal y pense: David II and Edward III, 1346-52' in Scottish Historical Review 61 (1988), pp. 136-7; Nicholson, Scotland (1989), pp. 182-3: David II married Joanna, sister of Edward III, when he was five years old; she died childless in 1362. His mistress Kathleen Mortimer (from 1357) also died childless. In 1363, David married Margaret Drummond who although having a son from a previous marriage did not produce an heir for David and he divorced her and intended to marry Agnes Dunbar when he died in 1371.

Sutherland died in 1361; Boardman, The early Stewart kings, p. 8.
place of Robert the Steward. Third, David II formed an inner circle of lesser nobles around him at court that excluded—and therefore threatened—some of the most important nobles of the realm, including Robert the Steward, and the earls of Douglas and March. These three were involved in a conspiracy against David II in 1363 but their rising came to nothing in the end: Robert abandoned Douglas and March, and they submitted to David.

The policies implemented by Robert II throughout his reign mark a distinct departure from his uncle’s advancement of lesser nobles. Instead, ‘the most notable feature of Robert II’s kingship was the transfer of a large number of lordships, earldoms and royal offices and rights to the king’s own offspring and other great regional lords’, which consolidated his authority over the kingdom. Such policies echo those implemented by Edward III, but, moreover, they are a reflection of the land grants that mark the reign of Robert I, as discussed above. Robert II commissioned *The Bruce* in Early Scots as a point of direct connection with the reign of his grandfather; he bypassed David II and legitimized his own contested claim to the throne by establishing himself as the natural heir to Robert I, the hero king. He sponsored the composition of a *buk* to celebrate the life of his grandfather thus connecting the use of Scots with the reign of Robert I, and that of his own. This was part of Robert II’s overall promotion of the cult of his grandfather, upon whom his authority rested. Robert II commissioned a poem that was avowedly a *romanys*, and therefore by definition concerned with the act of *translatio*, and a poem whose primary *exempla* originated with *romans d’antiquité*, as established above. The first Stewart king therefore buttressed his kingship with the established prestige of *translatio imperii* from Rome to Scotland. And he did this by endowing the Scots form of English with all the authority associated with the celebrated reign of Robert I. Furthermore, he ensured the

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701 Bruce Webster, ‘David II and the government of Scotland’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, xvi, 115-30; Michael Penman, *David II, 1329-71* (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 311-25. These discussions took place between 1362 and 1363 but as early as 1350-2, David II was in negotiations for his release with Edward III, which proposed Robert the Steward’s replacement as heir presumptive with that of a younger son of Edward III, probably John of Gaunt. Edward Balliol, King John’s son, had relinquished his claim to the Scottish throne to Edward III in 1356.
703 Ibid., p. 169. See also Webster, ‘David II and the government of Scotland’: according to Sir Thomas Gray’s *Scalacronica* (p. 203), which is considered the best source for the event, the earl of Douglas, and not the Steward, was the leader of the conspiracy ‘because of various causes from which it seemed to the earl that the king did not show him as good lordship as he deserved.’
705 Ibid., p. 3.
continuing prestige of the reign of Robert I by implementing measures intended to exploit his heroic ancestry, which are discussed below.
Conclusion: Biographical Function of Chivalry in The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir

This chapter will address the nature of the chivalric ethos generated by Barbour and Chandos Herald and its relevance to contemporary patrons and audiences.\(^\text{705}\) It will be divided into three sections. The chivalric ethos informing The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir will be considered in relation to violence, piety (and hence the church), and nobility and kingship. The Bruce again merits a more detailed examination than La vie du Prince Noir. The image of the Herald’s poem suffers in comparison with The Bruce, which is longer and more ambitious in scope. However, it should be noted that this does not reduce the importance of La vie, which the foregoing study has endeavoured to establish. Rather, it indicates that while complementing each other in the present examination of biography and genre, and the contemporary chivalric vogue celebrated by both narratives, both poems would benefit from further individual evaluation in relation to their respective court cultures. What follows is an overview of the contemporary relevance of the concept of chivalry as it is conceived by Barbour and Chandos Herald. The celebrated past embodied in the lives of Barbour’s and Chandos Herald’s heroes cements a collective identity for a contemporary audience. This identity is formed through channelling the central tenets of the chivalric ethos pervading The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir - violence, piety and nobility - towards royal interests.

As is clear from the previous two chapters, the concept of chivalry as it is expressed in The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir encapsulates the reality of late fourteenth-century martial life, and its ideal. The word chivalrie/chevalry in these narratives denotes renowned deeds of prowess, knights themselves, and the ability to enact deeds of arms. But the word is not used to indicate adherence to a code of conduct that demanded anything other than prowess, or strength and courage to fight.\(^\text{706}\) The association of chivalry with a system of virtues is inferred rather than stated by Chandos Herald and Barbour, and the inference rests on the celebration of a knight as the best of his day because of his embodiment of virtues central to an ideal. Chivalrie or chevalry specifically refers to knights and their deeds of

\(^{705}\) The ambition for this chapter has been reduced significantly; this concluding chapter will therefore sketch the outlines of an argument explored thoroughly in my forthcoming monograph on The Bruce and the court of Robert II (Brepols).

\(^{706}\) See also Glyn S. Burgess, ‘The term chevalerie in twelfth century Old French’ in Medieval codicology, iconography, literature and translation: studies for Keith Val Sinclair, eds. Peter Rolfe Monks and D.D.R. Owens (Leiden, 1994): Burgess concludes from the narratives examined that chevalerie means ‘a body of knights’, ‘a military act or series of acts performed by a chevalier’, and ‘the possession of the skills required to perform such acts’ (pp. 356-8); ‘chevalerie certainly predicated on prowess and courage and best knights may have displayed loyalty to their lords and courtesy to women and a general desire to protect the weak but it is far from clear that these were clearly defined principles and there is nothing in the use of the term chevalerie itself that implies these virtues’ (p. 358).
arms; that it became associated with a code of conduct, and a system of virtues generating a prevailing ethos, relates to its exploitation by governing bodies.

Both Barbour and Chandos Herald laud the pomp and ceremony attached to chivalry. It was the ceremony of battle that made chivalry attractive and encouraged men to take up arms, as discussed below. These grandiose displays of knights in all their glory typically feature before battle:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Men mycht se than that had bene by} & \quad \text{Trumpes, tabors chors et bussines} \\
\text{Mony a worthi man and wycht} & \quad \text{Oissex parmi l'ooost bounder} \\
\text{And mony ane armur gaily dycht} & \quad \text{Tout faisoit la terre tenter} \\
\text{And mony a sturdy sterand stede} & \quad \text{Le grant bataille de dauffin (988-1)}^{707} \\
\text{Arayit intill ryche wede} & \quad \text{Men mycht se than that had bene by} \\
\text{Mony helmys and haberjounys} & \quad \text{Men mycht se than that had bene by} \\
\text{Scheldis and speris and penounys,} & \quad \text{Mony a worthi man and wycht} \\
\text{And sa mony a cumly knycht} & \quad \text{And mony ane armur gaily dycht} \\
\text{That it semyt that into fycht} & \quad \text{And mony a sturdy sterand stede} \\
\text{Thai suld vencus the warld all haile} & \quad \text{Arayit intill ryche wede} \\
\end{align*}
\]

But Barbour's intention here in presenting the English host as fit to 'vencus the warld' is to make the Scottish victory all the more praiseworthy. After his depiction of the English host before Loudon Hill (8.225-34), Barbour has King Robert tell his men: ""Lordis now ye se/ How yon men throu thar gret poweste/ Wald, and thai mycht fulfil thar will,/ Sla us, and makys sembland thartill"" (235-8). To defeat the English in all their 'gret poweste' he urges his men to ""mete thaim sa hardly/ That the stoutest o f thar mengye/ Off our meting abaysit be"" (241-3). And, following the victory of King Robert and his men, Barbour notes there never was such a miserable end to so grand a display: 'Fell never men sa foule myscgance/ Eftre sa sturdy countenacne' (9.273-4). His point is reiterated throughout the narrative. As discussed above, Sir Ingram de Umphraville explains to King Edward II that despite his chivalry he will not overcome Robert Bruce: '"For all your grete chevalry/ To dele with him yhe haf na mycht"’ (19.160-1). As King Robert tells his men before

707 See also La vie: 'Moult par fuy riches sez arras/ La fuist lui quartime des rois' (283-4); 'Moult par [fu] riches lui arrois' (583); 'La eust maint banier fine/ Et si avient auxi tost après/ Qu'il fist carker touz sez vesseaux,/ Toutes vitaille et joialx,/ Hauberks, helmes, launces, escouzt/ Arcs, seattes et unqore plus' (602-6); 'De soye et de sendal auxi,/ Car puis le temps qe je vous di,/ Sitres noble chose a voirit/ Ne fuist a recorder le voir (2598-2602); 'Unques tell mervaille ne feu/ Ne tiel plenté de people veu/ Come il acel journée/ La ot maint banier overée/ Auxi de sandal et de soi' (3091-5).

708 See also 8.225-34: 'Thar bassynetts burnyst all brycht/ Agayne the son glemand off lycht,/ Thar speris pennonys and thar scheldis/ Off lycht enlumynt all the fieldis,/ Thar best and browdyn brycht baneris/ And hors hewyt on ser maneris/ And cot-armouris off ser colour/ And hawbrekis that war quhyt as flour/ Maid thaim gleterand as thai war lyk/Till angels hey off hevynnys ryk'.
Methven, highlighting the purpose of the *exempla* cited: ""For multitud mais na victory/ As man has red in mony story"" (2.333-4). Barbour's heroes are endowed with a moral sanction instead, because they are fighting for the *rycht*.

Chandos Herald reiterates this approach; the Black Prince reminds his men how God aided them to claim their *droit* and defeat France, although the power of the king of France was known throughout Christendom:

> 'Fols est qui s'affie en puissance.
> Vous avez bien view qe France
> Estoit le plus [puissant] pais
> Des cristiens, solom m'ayvs,
> Et ore ad droit et Dieux consentu
> Qe nous avons et vertu
> Pur la nostre droit conquerst' (1895-1901).

Charny cautions against placing trust in one's own might and cites Samson, Absalom and Solomon as examples of great men who fell through such folly.\(^{709}\) Such superficial pomp encouraged vainglory, one of the vices most equated with chivalry.\(^{710}\) Pomp encouraged brazen individual feats of valour and had no place in the collective ethos promoted by *The Bruce*. Avarice is another vice associated with chivalry by contemporaries, and one that Barbour attributes to the motive for the de Soulis conspiracy, as discussed above. Avarice, like pomp and spectacle, encouraged men to 'take up arms for material and not moral means'.\(^{711}\) *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* attach piety to *chivalrie/chevalry* to confirm their heroes in their *rycht/droit* in order to further monarchical ambition through the control of violence.

**I Violence**

Much has been written on chivalry and violence in medieval society and literature. Violence was long considered inimical to the concept of chivalry. This is an assumption that has lingered despite studies establishing the centrality of violence to the concept of chivalry. For Keen, chivalry promoted violence because of the ideal it advocated: 'by prompting men to seek wars and praising those who did so, its tendency, for all its idealism

\(^{709}\) *Livre de chevalerie*, pp. 86-7, lines 72-125.

\(^{710}\) Keen, 'Chaucer and chivalry re-visited' in *Armies, chivalry and warfare in medieval Britain and France. Proceedings of the 1995 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Stamford, 1998), pp. 1-12, p. 8 where he lists the three great vices of chivalry as follows: cruelty, the lust for blood; covetousness, the greed of riches; vainglory, the thirst for worldly honour. Keen is here quoting Sir John Clanvowe, *The two ways in The works of Sir John Clanwove*, ed. V.J. Scattergood (Cambridge, 1965), p. 69. Keen, p. 11 for Chaucer's stance against vainglory. See also *Livre de chevalerie*, pp. 64-5.

and because of it, was rather to make those wars endemic'. Kaeuper instead treats violence as an integral component of the concept of chivalry. He counters arguments that chivalry, as a code of restraint, brought about changes in the conduct of warfare: ‘war as conducted by the chivalrous still meant raiding and ravaging’; ‘chivalry was a code of violence associated with a prickly sense of honour (and the honourable acquisition of loot to be distributed in open-handed largesse) just as thoroughly as it was a code of restraint.’ As gauged from the foregoing study of The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir, it is clear that violence is part of chivalry. The same knights lauded by Chandos Herald as ‘le flour de chivalrie/ Et tres noble bachelrie’ (611-2) enact violent deeds of arms that cause much destruction:

Mais les Englois pur yceux esbatre
Mistrent tut en feu et a flame.
La firent mainte veoie dame
Et mainte poevre enfant orpharin (236-39)
Devers Tholouse se chivacha.
Unques ville n’y demora
Qu’il ne faisist tout exiler (645-7)

Illoeqes demurroient tant
que la ville fuist afamée (390-1)
Devers Paiters prist son chimin;
Moul t ove lui menoit grant train
Car moult eurent fait de damage
En France, par lour grant baronage (745-8).

Late medieval accounts reflect concerns about the repercussion of the endemic violence generated by chivalry. Writing in 1387 to King Charles VI, Honoré Bonet described how ‘the man who does not know how to set places on fire, to rob churches, usurp their rights and to imprison the priests, is not fit to carry on war’. The writings of Christine de Pisan, Honoré Bonet and Philippe de Mézières similarly convey images of ‘bad government,

716 Honoré Bonet, The tree of battles, p. 189.
exactions, the cupidity and violence of the great, wars and brigandage, scarcity, misery and pestilence.\textsuperscript{717} This is considered, following Huizinga, to indicate a late fourteenth-century crisis of chivalry. The theory of the decline of chivalry in the late medieval period rests on an understanding of chivalry as an institution initiated to check the violence inherent in warfare: without the confinement of emotion, it was argued, 'passion and ferocity would have made havoc of life.'\textsuperscript{718} For Huizinga, the reality of the day led to literature of escapism 'in the way of dream and illusion'.\textsuperscript{719} Huizinga was supported by R.L. Kilgour who considered chivalry 'a sort of game, whose participants, in order to forget reality, turned to the illusion of a brilliant, heroic existence.'\textsuperscript{720} Huizinga relied on what is understood by the umbrella term 'chivalric literature' because he felt documentary evidence was focused on to the exclusion of other source material: 'For the history of civilisation, every delusion or opinion of an epoch has the value of an important fact.'\textsuperscript{721} He concluded that chivalry declined as courtesy was replaced by violence, and has been subsequently challenged on a number of fronts including his reliance on what has been called 'prescriptive literature'.\textsuperscript{722} Huizinga’s argument departed from a conception of chivalry as a control of violence. His conclusions are not sustained by a study of chivalry in The Bruce or La vie du Prince Noir: the control of violence was executed by governing bodies concerned to channel chivalry for their own purposes; but, chivalry itself necessarily entailed the use of violence. However, Huizinga’s methodology emphasized the importance of examining romance and romance-influenced narratives in order to appreciate contemporary conceptions of chivalry, and these were more than simply prescriptive.

The idea of a golden age conjured up an ideal past but this past never existed; it created reputable antecedents for 'the historical mythology of chivalry' in the same way that 	extit{chansons de geste}, 	extit{romans d'antiquité} and 	extit{romans Breton} claimed to use a prior text in order to establish their narratives within an authoritative tradition. From the onset, romance reflected this idea of a past golden age. Chrétien de Troyes chose to write of the knights in King Arthur’s court because he felt they exemplified the chivalric ethos he was seeking to convey far more than contemporary twelfth-century knights:

But let's not speak of the men of yesteryear
and leave the men alive today!

\textsuperscript{717} J. Huizinga, \textit{The waning of the Middle Ages} (London, 1927), p. 25: ‘to this is contemporary history nearly reduced in the eyes of the people’.

\textsuperscript{718} Ibid., p. 9.

\textsuperscript{719} Ibid, p. 48; Vale, \textit{War and chivalry}, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{720} R.L. Kilgour, \textit{The decline of chivalry as shown in the French literature of the late Middle Ages} (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), p. 8. See also A.B. Ferguson, \textit{The Indian summer of English chivalry: studies in the decline and transformation of chivalric idealism} (Durham, North Carolina, 1960).

\textsuperscript{721} Huizinga, \textit{Waning of the Middle Ages}, p. 55; Vale, \textit{War and chivalry}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{722} Vale, \textit{War and chivalry}, p. 12.
For to my mind, a dead gentleman
Is to be preferred to a living boor.\textsuperscript{723}

Prologues to the thirteenth-century ‘translations’ of the *Pseudo-Turpin chronicle* similarly sought to revive contemporary chivalric virtues considered in decline.\textsuperscript{724} The *History of William Marshal* laments the past age of chivalry, and prays that it will return.\textsuperscript{725} The notion of present-day decay is reiterated time and again: Charny devotes a section in his manual for advice to young men-at-arms on how to act in accordance with the vocation of chivalry. Judas Maccabeus is celebrated as an exemplar to imitate, an ideal knight from a past Biblical age.\textsuperscript{726} As Charny sees it, the present state of decay is due to men who eat too much fine food, drink too much wine, play dice and real tennis, and sleep late in soft beds; they are therefore pampered and unprepared for the rigours of war.\textsuperscript{727} The decay of chivalry is therefore connected by Charny to the inability to enact violence, which draws attention to the legitimizing function of the golden age trope that Barbour in particular endorsed.

Rather than appropriating the *topos* of a remote past, Barbour and Chandos Herald present the time that they are recounting to their audience as the golden age of chivalry and one which their audience should aspire to emulate.\textsuperscript{728} Chandos Herald opens his poem with an appeal to times of old: ‘Ore veit homme du temps jadis’ (1). But, as he explains, this is not something on which he will dwell (14), and he continues to relate his *matiere*. Barbour begins his narration of the Great Cause with the death of Alexander III, echoing an Early Scots poem preserved by Wyntoun and thought to date to c.1286.

\textsuperscript{723} *Ywain*, vv. 29-32; Zaddy, ‘The courtly ethic in Chrétien de Troyes’ in *The ideals and practices of medieval knighthood III* eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 159-180, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{724} Spiegel, *Romancing the past*, pp. 89-91.
\textsuperscript{725} *History of William Marshal*, 2686-92:
\begin{quote}
Mais or nos ront mise en prison  
Chevalerie le halt home.  
Par perece qui les asome  
E par conseil de coveitise  
Nos ront largesse en prison mise,  
E l’esrer e le tourneir  
Si sunt torné al pleudier.
\end{quote}
Translated Kaeuper, *Chivalry and violence*, p. 120 [using Meyer’s edition]:
But now the high lords have imprisoned chivalry for us; by their lethargy and because of greed, largesse is thrown into prison. And the knights errant and the tourneyers have been transformed into courtroom litigants.

And, lines 2666-700 for its return in the time of Henry III.
\textsuperscript{726} Ibid, as previously cited section 35: ‘The men-at-arms of supreme worth’, pp. 162-163.
\textsuperscript{727} *Livre de chevalerie*, p. 62, section 19, lines 95-6.
\textsuperscript{728} ‘Far auld storys that men redys/ Representis to thaim the dedys/ Of stalwart folk that lyvyt ar/ Rycht as thai than in prescence war ’(1. 17-20).
Alexander III’s reign was considered a golden age by later Scottish narratives, and it has been argued that such a description rests largely on the introduction of the concept by Bower in the 1440s. The earlier poem seems to suggest that this is not the case as the idea of the reign of Alexander III as the golden age is already advocated there. However, even though Barbour appears to have borrowed from this poem, he does not invoke the lost golden age but uses his reference to Alexander III to place the Great Cause in historical time and set the scene for the conflict in which his heroes will be engaged. Furthermore he continues the association of the reigns of Alexander III and Robert I, dismissing the ineffective reign of King John, whose claim to the throne of Scotland was undermined by Robert I as an unnatural succession, as discussed below. Barbour was commemorating the foundation of the Bruce-Stewart dynasty and linking the Stewart kingship to that established by Robert I, whose reign was the golden age celebrated rather than that of Alexander III. Both Chandos Herald and Barbour end their poems with a prayer for their heroes, and Barbour explicitly connects this prayer to the descendants of his heroes, who presumably comprised his audience.

The past golden age trope was employed to further present interests. As discussed above, Barbour and Chandos Herald use the present tense to fuse the past deeds narrated with present time, which adds immediacy to the events recounted but also supports their avowed intention for edification and indicates the contemporary relevance of the matter related: (17-20). The success of the ethos of chivalry is that the virtues it espoused could further the various interests dictated by the church, the nobility and the king. Barbour and

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731 Quhen Alysandyr our king wes dede
That Scotland led in luwe and le,  
Away wes sons offale and brede,  
Off wyne and wax, off gamyng and gle: 
Oure gold wes changyd in to lede.  
Cryst, borne into Vyrgynyte, 
Succoure Scotland and remede. 
That stud is in perplexyte.


522 This closing prayer mirrors Barbour’s reflections after the Scots victory at Bannockburn: ‘God grant that that thay cumyn ar/ Off his offspiring manteyme the land/ And had; the folk well to warand/ And manteyne rycht and leawt/ Als wele as in his tyme did he’ (13. 718-22). This in turn raises questions as to the composition of the narrative as a whole, or in two instalments: one before Bannockburn, and one after. For this theory see Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, pp. 10-11. But the prayers are most interesting for the message they are intended to relate to the intended audience, as discussed below.
Chandos Herald associate these virtues with heroes living in the recent past. And, in the case of *The Bruce*, the virtues embodied by Barbour’s heroes were the virtues necessary for Robert I to secure his claim to the throne, and ensure the independence of Scotland from English lordship. The commemoration of the heroes of the reign of Robert I is tied to the celebration of the successful defence of Scotland’s autonomy. But this is exactly how Robert I intended it should be conceived and it is a conception promoted by Robert II, as discussed below. *The Bruce* is a reception and reflection of this fusion of the destinies of king and kingdom. It is based on a need to present a stable monarchy to thwart the threat of English intervention. Furthermore, not only were the destinies of king and kingdom fused, but the identity of the kingship was associated with one dynasty, the Bruce-Stewart line. Robert I’s kingship and the independence of Scotland were founded on channelling the martial virtues celebrated by chivalry to the service of the crown, the exact procedure necessary for his heirs to ensure Scottish sovereignty and sustain monarchical control. Chivalry was a powerful tool for exploitation specifically because of the violence it entailed, and it was a tool channelled by royal interests supporting the composition of *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* through the promotion of piety and nobility, which were endorsed as chivalric virtues.

II Piety

Chivalry, as explained above, was considered an order comparable with, and in many respects superior to, religious orders. Religious observance in romance has been attributed to the measures implemented by the church to curtail the violence inherent in knightly deeds. However, religious reflections in *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* indicate the integration of piety within the chivalric ethos. Piety amenable to appropriation by the chivalric ethos generated by Barbour and Chandos Herald revolves around the idea of the just war. Barbour and Chandos Herald seek divine support to implement their tasks (1.34-36; 46), and they claim divine aid for the projects with which their heroes are concerned. Piety therefore functions as a legitimization for the violent measures undertaken to ‘druye the thing rycht to the end’ (1.311). Moreover, King Robert’s claim to the kingship of Scotland, Sir James Douglas’s desire to reclaim his heritage and the Black Prince’s adventures in France and Spain on behalf of his father and

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734 R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval French literature and law*, pp. 196-7 for knights who waged war according to the rules of the church, citing in support John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*, Etienne de Fougère’s *Livre des manières*, Alain de Lille’s sermon for knights, the romances of Chretien and the thirteenth-century *Prose Lancelot*.

735 See Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 18-43: ‘the historical mythology of chivalry’ was established as independent from religious control through the appropriation of pre-Christian origins.
Don Pedro, are provided with a sanction from God. *The Bruce* and *La vie du Prince Noir* are examples of how piety could be exploited by a chivalric ethos in order to provide a moral sanction for monarchical ambition.

Both narratives are saturated with references to 'God'. The London manuscript of *La vie du Prince Noir* shows a full page illuminated miniature divided into two compartments: the upper compartment contains a picture of the Holy Trinity, which Chandos Herald claims the prince held in particular veneration all the days of his life:

> Et si bien amoit seinte Esglise
> De bon coer, et sur tut guise
> La tres hauteine Trinitée;
> La feste et le solenintée
> En comenca a sustenir
> Tres le primer de son venire
> Et le sustient tut sa vie
> De bon coer, sanz penser envie (85-92)

In the lower compartment the Black Prince is shown kneeling, dressed in armour, in adoration of the Holy Trinity depicted above and with the words ‘Et hec tres unum sunt’ (1 John v.7) coming from his mouth. In fact, so saturated is *La vie* with the prince’s piety that the manuscript is catalogued as being composed ‘to commemorate the leading events in the life of “the most noble Edward who never turned craven,” [4186] and to eulogise his valiant feats of arms and his piety.

On a basic level this religious sanction manifested itself in the adherence by knights to pious conventions: knights hear mass before battle, say prayers to thank God, demonstrate their humility by attributing their success to God and, finally, indicate their resolve to fight in His name by going on crusade. Barbour emphasizes the collective spirit adopted by King Robert and his men during their demonstrations of such conventions:

> On Sonday than in the morning/ Weile sone after the sone rising/ Thai hard thar mes commounaly (11.381-3)
> The Scottismen commounaly/ Knelyt all doune to God to pray (12.478-9).

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736 Duncan (ed.), *The Bruce*, p. 11: Barbour uses the word ‘God’ about a hundred times. As discussed above, he employs the present tense when narrating situations where his heroes are placed in great distress, and invokes the name of God (1.444-5; 3.366; 6.674; 7.423).

737 See also line 819 where the Holy Trinity is invoked.

738 University of London Ms.1.

739 ‘Catalogue of the manuscripts and autograph letters in the University Library at the central building of the University of London’, available at Univeristy of London Library.

740 See also: 12.409-10.
Thus Barbour’s celebration of the collective ethos that marked Robert I’s reign through his cultivation of this image of community concord (discussed below), benefits from a religious endorsement. Furthermore, Barbour’s presentation of a community of knights kneeling down to pray before battle does much to further Charny’s arguments for the association of knighthood with an order of religion. The image is powerful, and images like reputation were what mattered in a culture dependent on dissemination and outward presentation.

Humility was a prized quality for a knight, and king. Barbour has King Robert lead by example and always acknowledge the hand of God helping him in his exploits: (6.309-12; 7.792). Honour is a gift from God. God determines the outcome (1.128-31; 4.527; 5.579-81; 8.258-69). Robert’s personal piety is attached to national concerns; it is ‘throu Goddis grace’ (5.535; 7.495) that King Robert will win his heritage and reclaim the kingdom of Scotland from English control. God will help the Scots, who were ‘sympill folk and worthy’, seek vengeance for the wrongs inflicted on them:

Bot God that maist is off all mycht
Preservyt thaim in his forsycyth
To veng the harme and the contrer
At that fele folk andaultener
Dyd till sympill folk and worthy
That couth nochth help thaim self (1.459-64).

The Black Prince similarly attributes his success to the intervention of God: “Sire douls,/Dieux l’ad fait et noun mie nous/ Si lui ent devons remercier/ Et de bon coer vers lui prier” (1428-32). His virtues were a gift from God: ‘Qe Dieux lui ot done vertus’ (1839). Chandos Herald’s words echo Charny’s Livre de chevalerie: ‘there is no wisdom, worthiness, strength, beauty, prowess, or valour that may be found in anyone and may remain and endure save only by the grace of Our Lord.' When Don Pedro thanks the Black Prince for his help, the prince responds by urging him to praise God instead (3496-501). The prince’s royal parents thank God: (1472-8); the queen specifically offers thanks for a son of such valour (hardiz: 1478).

741 Livre de chevalerie, section 23, p. 71, lines 19-29.
742 Ibid., section 10, p. 52, lines 18-19: ‘And when God by His grace granted them honour for their great exploits’.
743 However, see 11. 50-3: God assigns destinies, but men should be governed by wyt so as not to place themselves in unnecessary danger.
745 Livre de chevalerie, p. 88, section 32, lines, 141-3. Charny’s manual advocates prowess, together with piety, as the perfect formulation for the ideal knight, such as Judas Maccabbeus. Charny features briefly in La vie, with a speaking part in which he invokes the name of God in reference to battle (902).
Barbour presents his praise of prowess as a prayer: ‘A! mychty God quha thar had bene/ And had the kingis worship sene’ (8.309-10). Feats enacted in battle are approved by God. Audeley asked the prince’s permission to charge ahead in battle because of a vow he had made to God: ‘‘je en ay voée,/ A Dieu promis et jurée’’ (1285-6). When fighting against the Saracens, Douglas told his men not to fear death ‘'[f]or hevynnys blys suld be thar mede/ Gyff that thai deyt in Goddis service’ (20. 424-5). Leaving battle the Scottish host thanked God for their victory over the king of England, which they had achieved ‘'[t]hou worship and throu strenth o f hand/ And throu thar lordis gret bounte’ (18.566-7). The hardships endured by the heroes of The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir, a point much emphasized by Barbour and Chandos Herald (discussed above), function as a penance for their sins.”

This is a point made by Barbour in relation to King Robert’s murder of Comyn: ‘Tharfor sa hard m yscheiff him fell. That Ik herd never in romanys tell’ (2.45-6). Douglas spent ‘hys lyvetyme’ in ‘gret payn and gret travaill/ And never v/ald for myscheiff faill/ Bot dryve the thing rycht to the end/ And tak the ure that God wald send’ (1.308-12). The prince similarly accepts what God will give: ‘Tut lui covenoit prendre en gree/ Ceqe Dieux lui avoit donée’ (4065-6). James Douglas dies ‘in a holy way in battle, like a saint in paradise’, which was Geoffrey de Charny’s description of Judas Maccabeus’s death but could equally be applied to Charny’s own fate.”

King Robert and the Black Prince die in their beds, fulfilling all that is proper for a ‘gud crystyn man’ (20.258): their sons are recognized as their successors, as discussed above, and they atone for their sins. When provisions for the continuance of his dynasty have been secured, King Robert makes his testament ‘'[b]efor bath lordis and prelatis’ (20.164-5), gives silver to religious orders (166-8) and provides ‘for his saule weille’ (169). Finally, he thanks God for the possibility of repenting for the ‘rycht gret spilling’ of blood he had caused through his werraying and accepts his sickness as penance: ‘Tharfor this sekness and this payn/ I tak in thank for my trespass’ (20.175-8; 180-1). And he ensures his heart will travel with Douglas on crusade.”

Through his heart’s participation in the crusade King Robert furthers his association with the Biblical heroes, Judas Maccabeus and Joshua, initially established in the Declaration of Arbroath (quasi alter Maccabeus aut Joshua). The Black Prince

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748 Livre de chevalerie, p. 88, section 32, line 159. Charny died at Poitiers in 1356, the oriflamme of St. Denis in his hand.

749 There is nothing to suggest that Robert I did not fully intend to partake in a crusade in his lifetime following the example set by his grandfather the Competitor: Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 24.

750 Carol Edington, ‘Paragons and patriots: national identity and the chivalric ideal in late medieval Scotland’, p. 74: it is the image of the crusading king that Robert hoped to promote by sending his heart on crusade, and not simply a response to contemporary Plantagenet participation on crusade, which, Edington argues, influenced the arguments found in the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath.
similarly makes a ‘noble repentance/ Qe Dieux’, requests salvation for his soul and ‘pardoun de touz ses mesfaitz’ (4165-9).

Both Chandos Herald and Barbour emphasize that their heroes were fighting for their 
rycht/ droit. As mentioned above, pre-battle speeches and prayers claim God on their side, and that God will aid the right:

‘Ensi, verrai Dieux celestial./ Qe vous savez qe j’ai bon droit’ (La vie, 12712-3)
‘Dieux voille conforter le droit/ Ou il semble qe meillour soit’ (917-8).
Ore voile Dieux eider le droit! (2681)
‘Lede us and saiff us for his mycht/ And help us for till hald our rycht’ (The Bruce, 8.263-4)
To God for thar rycht prayit thai (11.387)
‘we haf the rycht/ And for the rycht ay God will fycht’ (12.235-6).
The Scots were fighting for their lyvis, childer and wyvis, ‘[a]nd for our fredome and for our land’ (12.145-8) as opposed to Edward II and his army who ‘thought our fayis haf mekill mycht/ Thai have the wrang, and succundry/ Amovys thaim foroutyn mor’ (296-299), discourse reminiscent of the Book of Maccabees.

The church, as indicated above, clearly works in unison with King Robert’s objective, which was promoted as a communal goal. God sanctioned their fight, as He sanctioned the violence of knights. But the church is part of the collective goal fought for by the Scots and it does not control it, as evidenced by the support received by Robert I from the bishops of Scotland, despite his excommunication. Indeed, the bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow were imprisoned in England for their part in Robert’s revolt. The idea of the crusade or the just war was attached to the Scottish war of independence: Robert Wishart, the bishop of Glasgow, encouraged his congregation to fight for King Robert, and said that it was tantamount to participating on a crusade. Contemporary chivalric discourse reinforced the divine approval of a just war; the soul of a knight was saved if he fought for a just cause:

Were anyone, therefore, to say that those who are engaged in a career of arms would not be able to save their souls they would not know what they were saying, for in all good, necessary,

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51 See also: 3172-87.
52 Note the resemblance to 1 Maccabees 3, 19-12: ‘They march against us in the plenty of pride and lawlessness […] we, however, will fight for our souls and laws; and the Lord himself will crush them before our faces.’ Cited in Ernst H. Kantorowicz, ‘Pro patria mori in medieval political thought’, American Historical Review, vol. 56, no. 3 (April, 1951), 472-492, p. 477.
53 See also Kaeuper, Chivalry and violence, pp. 50-51.
54 The declaration issued by the clergy at the St Andrews parliament in 1309 legitimized the reign of Robert I: Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 184-5. But, regardless of parliamentary presentation, during his reign Robert I received support from most of the clergy: ibid., Robert Bruce, pp. 262-9; Grant, Independence and nationhood, pp. 7, 91.
55 Grant, Independence and nationhood, p. 7.
56 Ibid.
and traditional professions anyone can lose or save his soul as he wishes. But when in the profession of arms, in which one can and should win these high honours, one can indeed make one's personal career honourably and valiantly and save one's soul, as for example in the proper manner and in due form and in the battles which ensue.\footnote{Livre de chevalerie, p. 89, section 32, lines 187-95.}

Furthermore, a just cause entailed the support by vassals of their lord's enterprise and the defence of heritage:

This is the case when lords have wars, and their men can and should fight for them and move confidently and bravely into battle for such causes, for if one performs well there, one is honoured in life, and if one dies there, one's soul is saved, if other sins do not stand in the way of this. In addition, if someone is intent on disinheriting a man's kinsman or if there is a need to defend their estate, when under such compulsion, men can embark on wars and battles without fear for body and soul, for the circumstance makes this legitimate and necessary.\footnote{Ibid., lines 195-203.}

The just cause advocated by King Robert was presented as a communal, and national, cause. And it was promoted through the discourse of freedom. King Robert urges his men to fight 'to mak thar countré fre' (11.386).\footnote{See also 11.62-3; 12. 247; and 1.225-40.} Indeed, Barbour's celebration of freedom - 'A! Fredome is a noble thing' -\footnote{See 1.225-40 for Barbour's praise of freedom.} is a feature most associated with The Bruce. In fact, so eloquently are these lines expressed that the theme of freedom often dominates discussion of the narrative.\footnote{Cf. Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce', Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, pp. 150-3, Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 9: ‘Freedom takes the place of courtly love, a motive in most romances...’, Hans Utz, 'If Freedom Fail...’Freedom’ in John Barbour’s Bruce’ English Studies 50 (1969): 151–65. Mackenzie (ed.), The Bruce (1909), p. xviii dismissed ‘freedom’ as a central concern of Barbour’s and argued instead for the purpose of composition being the commemoration of the two heroes and the virtues they embody as established by Barbour in his prologue. Ideas of freedom and national identity are important in considering The Bruce but they are appropriated as a means to an end and have all too often been seized on within anachronistic discourses of ‘nationalism, democracy and freedom’: see below.} Chivalry, it has been argued, is subservient to the dominant narrative concern with freedom.\footnote{See also 12.204-7.} But freedom is used by Barbour, as it was King Robert, to further a collective ethos in support of a monarchical goal. The concept of a fre countré is endowed with a religious sanction: "'And a thing will I to you say,/ That he that deis for his cuntre/ Sall herbryit intill hevyn be'" (2.342-4).\footnote{Cf. Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce’, Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, pp. 150-84.} And the religious sanction it entailed was part of the chivalric ethos that supported its implementation. The Bruce and La vie du Prince Noir are examples of how piety could be exploited by a chivalric ethos in order to provide a moral sanction for monarchical ambition.

\footnote{Livre de chevalerie, p. 89, section 32, lines 187-95.}
\footnote{Ibid., lines 195-203.}
\footnote{See also 11.62-3; 12. 247; and 1.225-40.}
\footnote{See 1.225-40 for Barbour's praise of freedom.}
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\footnote{Cf. Kliman, ‘The idea of chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce’, p. 503: ‘Chivalry is an international ideal, but Barbour makes it serve the ideal of nationalism, democracy and freedom’. See also Goldstein, The matter of Scotland, pp. 150-84.}
\footnote{See also 12.204-7.}
III  Nobility and royalty

Religious observance, as with a display of virtues associated with the chivalric ideal in general, indicated nobility. Arguments advocating chivalry as a code of conduct, or a code of restraint, limit their application to the aristocracy; the chivalric code is not thought to have affected the ordinary soldier.\(^\text{764}\) This argument is qualified with examples of chivalry influencing knights of a lower status;\(^\text{765}\) but this is considered the exception and not the rule. However, chivalry as a code was not only applicable to the aristocracy, it was created by them. An international elite participated in formalised displays of ritual associated with a chivalric ethos.\(^\text{766}\) The idea of a code of chivalry, a set of manners expected from a knight, was fused with the behaviour indicative of nobility not only in order to identify a noble knight, but to justify his position.\(^\text{767}\) This behaviour operated according to the virtues associated with the chivalric ideal (listed above), and it is channelled by Barbour and Chandos Herald towards a communal, and monarchical, goal.

_The Bruce_ and _La vie du Prince Noir_ take royal knights as their primary heroes and are concerned to depict their deeds alongside their noble companions. The adventures undertaken by King Robert, the ‘nobil king’ (7.53), are related with those of ‘[t]he lordis off his cumpany’(12.89). Chandos Herald relates adventures undertaken by the prince and ‘son noble chivaler’ (657). Their nobility is an important consideration and the reasons their names are on his list; _La vie_ is clearly concerned with _chivalrie_ and ‘[d]es esquiers de noble affaire’(2606), the status of the congregation for whom his narrative was intended. The chivalric ethos found in _The Bruce_ and _La vie_ exploits nobility, like piety, in order to legitimize monarchical ambition. And this is done by associating nobility with chivalry, and placing it in service to the crown.

From the end of the thirteenth century, hereditary eligibility for knighthood was increasingly prioritized over the ceremony of dubbing.\(^\text{768}\) Nobility and martial life were

\(^{764}\) Richard Barber, _The knight and chivalry_, p. 210. See also John Barnie, _War in medieval English society_, p. 71. The _Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois_ (p. 241) is cited in support: to a knight seeking his surrender, the Gascon captain Jean de Grailly asked, “Are you a man of great birth? For I would sooner die than surrender to one who was not.” Froissart records the French knights with Jean de Villemur fighting to the end to defend Limoges surrendering with the words, “Sirs, we are yours and you have beaten us. Treat us according to the law of arms.” To this John of Gaunt is said to have replied: “By God, Sir Jean [...] we would never dream of doing anything else. We accept you as our prisoners”: Barnie, _War in medieval English society_, p. 82.

\(^{765}\) For example: William Marmion as recorded by Sir Thomas Gray, _Scalacronica_, p. 145: Barnie, _War in medieval English society_, p. 82.

\(^{766}\) For example: Chandos Herald’s account of the Black Prince tending to King John II of France after he is captured at Poitiers (1412-28) and Edward III’s treatment of David II, as mentioned above.


\(^{768}\) Keen, _Chivalry_, pp. 143-5 152-3.
increasingly fused so that nobility and chivalry became synonymous. This connection between nobility and chivalry was reinforced by romance and manuals of chivalry:

In this book you will learn of things delectable and worthy to be remembered for the exaltation of noblesse and chivalry and to the edification and example of all men; and above all those whose will it is to achieve in arms the highest honour.  

Byhold that noble kynge of Brytayne, Kyng Arthur with all the noble knyghtes of the Round Table, whose noble actes and noble chyvalry of his knyghtes occupye so many large volumes.

In fact, nobility came in time to be included among virtues associated with the chivalric ideal. The Black Prince is described by Chandos Herald as the embodiment of noblesse:

Car jolitee et noblesse  
Fuist en son coer parfitement  
Tres le primer commencement  
De sa vie et de sa jeofnesse (76-9).

Nobility and virtue are synonymous for the Herald; his lists, as explained above, are structured according to nobility. Heraldic erudition included an understanding of the laws and rules of noble and other inheritance. Heralds were required to ensure that contestants in tournaments ‘were of sufficient gentility in blood to enjoy the privilege of participating’. When Don Pedro implores the prince’s aid, he asks him ‘pur amour et pur linage/ Et pur Dieux et pur vassellage’ (1843-4), all of which are central components of the chivalric ethos found in La vie.

A demonstration of prowess is therefore an indication of nobility: ‘Je n’entens pas par bas lignaige/ Ce villain, mais par vil courage’.

For Chandos Herald, a noble ‘sojourn’ implied many attacks: ‘Moult par fu noble le sojourn,/ Car maint assaut et maint estour/ Fescient countre le chastelle’ (695-7). Through his great nobility, King Robert subjects himself to great danger in order to encourage his men:

Bot he that throu his gret noblay  
Till perallis him abandounys ay


772 Keen, Chivalry, pp. 137-141.

773 Ibid., p 138.

Conclusion: Biographical Function

To recomfort his menye
Gerris thame be off sa gret bounte
That mony tyme unliiciy thing
Tha bring rycht weill to gud ending (9. 95-100).

Nobility was recognized through feats of arms, ‘which led inexorably to the service of the prince.’ The king of France attracted many knights eager to demonstrate their prowess under his command:

Donqe approcha lui roi de France
Qui amesnoit sa grant puissance,
Car vers lui se voilloit traire
Cils qui voilloir out de bien faire (1245-8).

The primary duty of a knight was defence: ‘pour garder et def fendre le prince, la contrée et le bien commun.’ Knights should fight for the honour of their lord. And, through such fighting knights not noble by birth could claim nobility.

Reputation could replace birth as an indication of nobility. Charny’s manual sought to include all men-at-arms. The Bruce celebrates the heroes of the war of independence and these men were nobles, but also records lesser knights, if they have achieved acclaim through deeds worthy of dissemination, as explained above. At the beginning of his career with King Robert, Sir James Douglas was of little renown: ‘James off Douglas thar wes syne/ That yheyt than wes bot litill off m ycht’ (2.240-1). But through his active pursuit of ‘his destine’ (5.428), which involved noteworthy feats of arms, his reputation spread far and he was commemorated ‘[a]s it behovyt to sua worty’ (20.560). Sir James Douglas’s nobility rests on his chevalry. Through his active service to King Robert he was provided with the opportunity to reclaim his ancestral domains of Douglasdale and Carmichael. In addition, in recognition of his service he received from King Robert the numerous lordships including Lauderdale, Jedburgh and Selkirk. But,

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775 Vale, War and chivalry, p. 23.
778 Keen, ‘Chivalry, nobility and the man-at-arms’, p. 39, quoting Jean de Bueil, Le Jouvencel, ref, ii, 80: ‘We poor soldiers are for the most part noble by birth, and those who are not are noble by the exercise of arms, for the metier of arms is noble of itself.’ Arguments were advanced in legal proceedings to support the ‘notion that proven service as a man-at-arms could of itself constitute a claim to noble status’: Keen, ‘Chivalry, nobility and the man-at-arms’, p. 39 for examples.
780 Barrow, Robert Bruce, p. 284 for a full list: ‘No other man save Randolph had grants of land and power to compare with [Douglas].’ See also Grant, Independence and nationhood, p. 27.
although Douglas’s status derives from his deeds of arms, and The Bruce celebrates the establishment of his House, Barbour emphasizes his reputable ancestry. King Robert thought that Douglas ‘suld be worthy/ For all his eldris war douchty’ (2.165-6). Elspeth Kennedy notes that in thirteenth-century Old French prose romances the theme of the unknown knight who sets out to establish his name without help from an established family is fused with ‘a strong emphasis on hereditary virtues of the hero’s father’. Douglas establishes his name through his exploits, but he is placed within a venerable lineage, as discussed above. Thus his entry into high nobility, which was attained through the work of his hands, is validated by reference to his lineage. The pomp and ceremony attached to chivalry, as indeed all the trappings understood by ‘men that usys thai mysteris’ (12.416), created a closed world for an aristocratic elite who cultivated a chivalric culture. Nobility was desirable because of what Keen calls its ‘social mystique’, an aura necessary to sustain in order to retain its appeal. But it was marketed as attainable through renowned feats of arms in order to provide military service, a function invaluable for the crown. Chivalry therefore implied the service of man, rather than God; but it justified its stance through divine sanction.

In return for this service, the lord should provide good governance. King Robert’s men mourn the loss of his great comfort, as discussed above: ‘[f]or better governour than he/ Mycht in na countre fundyn be’ (20.289-90). Chivalry was referred to as ‘the disposition with which the knight helps the prince maintain justice’ by Ramon Lull. Late fourteenth and fifteenth-century narratives concerned with chivalry stress the role of the king or prince in keeping the peace. Geoffrey de Charny devotes a section of his Livre de chevalerie to advice for rulers. Emperors, kings and princes were chosen to endure and withstand greater physical hardship, painful exertions, and mental anxiety than any of their people because of the heavy responsibility they had taken on in the task of government for which they had been chosen and with which they had been entrusted. They

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781 Michael Brown, The Black Douglases (East Linton, 1998), pp. 12, 27: in 1342 David II noted that the Douglas family had received their lands on account of ‘the faithful deeds and good services of James lord of Douglas in defence of our realm’ (Regesta Regum Scotorum, ed. A.B. Webster (Edinburgh, 1982), vol. vi, no. 51).

782 Elspeth Kennedy, ‘The quest for identity and the importance of lineage in thirteenth-century prose romance’, p. 75.


showed then great diligence in giving their people good government and they were chosen that they might love, fear and serve God and all his works.\textsuperscript{786}

In 1395, de Mézières addressed a plea to Richard II to end the war against France in which he created an image of the King of Peace who 'stood for authority and the common good [...] so loved and looked up to that he might have been the father of each and of all.'\textsuperscript{787} Christine de Pisan urged good rule to harmonize the orders of society.\textsuperscript{788}

The basis of monarchical authority, like that of nobility, is therefore sense of duty; it is behaviour that confirms royal, and noble, status. This is the reason why King Robert and the Black Prince are commemorated as the best knights of their day. Much has been written on the presentation of King Robert as an ideal king by Barbour in \textit{The Bruce}, and his use of Edwards I and II for contrast.\textsuperscript{789} King Robert’s representation in \textit{The Bruce}, however, is a reflection of Robert I’s fusion of the chivalric ethos here discussed and the national sentiment generated by the historiography of the wars of independence. The hero king is depicted as the ideal knight ‘[h]is bataill with ane ax in hand’ and ‘hey croune that he wes king’ (12. 20, 24). And his celebration as knight, like that of the Black Prince, involved a sense of duty to his community of lords, who in return would pledge their loyalty to him, and this resonated with contemporary compositional interests.

\textbf{IV Conclusion}

The depiction by Barbour and Chandos Herald of their royal heroes as the best knights of their day consolidated the identity of a governing stratum of contemporary society. While the identity of Chandos Herald’s intended audience and potential patronage remains unclear, it seems certain that royal interests at the court of Richard II were served by a presentation of the harmonious relationship between the Black Prince and ‘son noble chivaler’. Together, the prince and his company worked toward securing the monarchical ambitions of Edward III and Don Pedro ‘pur amour et pur linage/ Et pur Dieux et pur vassellage’. And, having confirmed Edward III and Don Pedro in their \textit{droit}, the prince asks his company and his family to ensure the \textit{droit} of his heir, the future Richard II.

\textsuperscript{786} \textit{Livre de chevalerie}, section 25, p. 77, lines 11-18; see also lines 19-95.

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More is known about Barbour’s connections with the court of Robert II, and his depiction of King Robert and Sir James Douglas complements contemporary measures initiated by Robert II and the House of Douglas to exploit their heroic ancestry. Robert I and Sir James Douglas were heroes even within their own lifetime, as discussed above. Robert I actively developed his own image of hero king in order to legitimize his kingship. He had several reasons for doing this. His reign was openly contested by supporters of the Balliol-Comyn faction representing King John. As discussed above, it was not certain that King Robert’s enterprise would be successful, and according to Barbour’s record, he suffered much hardship in his first few years living as an outlaw and hunted by Edward I and the supporters of Comyn. Robert’s success justified his seizure of the throne and the historiography received from his reign legitimized his kingship through two main policies that are continued by Robert II, and reflected in The Bruce: the assurance of dynastic security and the promotion of an accord between the king and ‘the community of the realm’.

Issues of succession were essential for dynastic security, which was fused with the survival of Scottish autonomy following the ensample of Edward I’s exploitation of his intervention in the Great Cause to implement his desired lordship of Scotland. The most important factor in securing Scottish autonomy from its English neighbours was to ensure uninterrupted dynastic succession, a message that worked to the advantage of the Bruce-Stewart monarchy. This, at any rate, is the message generated by Barbour in The Bruce. As discussed above, Barbour emphasizes King Robert’s provisions for his succession and he lists the tailzies of 1318 and 1326 when Robert the Steward was recognized as heir behind David Bruce. In addition, Barbour justifies Robert I’s claim to the throne through his presentation of the Great Cause. The Bruce claim is presented as the male claim and set against the female Balliol claim: (1.49-65). The female claim is considered, according to Barbour’s synopsis of the arguments advanced by the Bruce faction, as weaker: ‘For thar mycht succed na female/ Quhill foundyn mycht be ony male’ (59-60). Robert Bruce the Competitor’s claim is denied by Edward I because of his refusal to hold the kingdom from the English king; the Competitor asserts that he will govern the kingdom freely, as befits a king, and according to the rule of his ancestors:

‘And gyff God will that it sa be
I sail als freely in all thing
Hald it as it afferis to king,
Or as myn elderis forouth me
Held it in freyast reawté’ (1.160-4).
Balliol is therefore chosen as king because he agreed to Edward's 'likyng' (180), and was in the end 'defawtyt and undone' (182) by the English king. Robert I presented his claim as the natural, but thwarted, choice of the nobles of the realm. In 1309 at his parliament in St Andrews the nobles and clergy issued declarations legitimizing his kingship and denying John Balliol's claim to the throne:

The faithful people of Scotland always believed without hesitation, as they had understood from their ancestors and elders, and held to be the truth, that Robert the Competitor, grandfather of the king, was the true heir of Alexander III and his granddaughter.  

Robert was therefore promoted as the choice of the community of the realm and was presented as the legitimate heir to Alexander III, specifically because this was contested and it threatened his dynastic supremacy and the stability of the realm. Robert's image as king by the choice of the community is further reinforced in the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, nominally issued by the nobles of the realm:

Yet if he should give up what he has begun, seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own right and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king.

It is clear here that the king must be able to enact defence to ensure Scottish autonomy, and so the image of the king is necessarily affixed to that of the ideal knight, which further accords with the message from the 1309 Declaration of the Clergy. Through his inherited right, Robert was set over the realm and formally established as king of Scots, and with him the faithful people of the realm (fidelis populus regni) wish to live and die, as with one who, by right of birth and by endowment with other cardinal virtues, is fit to rule and worthy of the name of king and of the honour of the realm.

Lineage and virtues were required for the role of king. Robert was king by virtue of his inherited right; but it was his ability to ensure defence of the kingdom of Scotland through the martial virtues celebrated by the chivalric ethos found in The Bruce that sustained his claim. Thus the violence enacted by Robert I to claim his kingship and establish his

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790 Cowan, 'Identity, freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath', p. 39; Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 182-6; Grant, Independence and nationhood, pp. 8, 29.

791 See Mason, 'Kingship, tyranny and the right to resist in fifteenth-century Scotland', in Kingship and the commonweale, pp. 8-39, p. 29 for Fordun's similar emphasis on hereditary succession and Bruce's legitimate claim to the throne, which was unlawfully given to Balliol (Chron. Fordun, ii, 312-6).

792 Declaration of Arbroath in Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, p. 780.

793 Ibid., p. 780; Cowan, 'Identity, freedom and the Declaration of Arbroath', p. 47.
dynasty was justified and channelled towards a celebration of martial virtues necessary to sustain Scottish independence.

King Robert therefore celebrated his reputation as the leading knight of his day. And it has been argued that he cultivated the image of the patriot knight by appropriating the legacy of Wallace. Fraser argues that the account of Wallace’s career presented by the Gesta Annalia II conforms to the historical record of the early years of the reign of Robert I. Wallace’s career as it is presented in the Gesta Annalia II would benefit Robert I through its celebration of Wallace’s leadership of the communitas Scociae and his fight in defence of his kingdom, which are two of the main arguments informing the Declaration of Arbroath. If this is to be accepted, Robert I appropriated the cult of Wallace as his own in order to promote a sense of community concord in defence of Scottish independence, and made the Comyns responsible for Wallace’s downfall. The account of Wallace’s life found in the Gesta Annalia II concludes the events of Falkirk with the comment: ‘we seldom, if ever, read about the Scots being overcome by the English, unless through the envy of lords or the treachery and deceit of natives.’ Wallace’s position as dux of the communitas terre is confirmed by chronicles composed contemporary to his career such as Walter of Guisborough; Robert I’s use of the words dux or capitaneus may have been an attempt to emphasize an affinity between himself and William Wallace. Whether or not Robert I appropriated Wallace’s legacy as his own, Barbour, as shown above, celebrates King Robert as an outlaw, the same reason Wallace was derided by English chronicles and the inspiration behind the development of his cult. Furthermore, it reinforces Robert I’s endorsement of martial values as central to the Scottish struggle. In 1315 at the parliament in Ayr and prior to the birth of David Bruce or the marriage of Robert’s daughter Marjorie to Walter Steward, King Robert decreed that should he die without male heir the crown would go to Edward Bruce who was ‘a man of great prowess in warlike actions for the

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795 Broun (see above) has dated the Gesta Annalia II to circa 1363 noting that it includes ‘discursive material’ (Broun, ‘A new look at the Gesta Annalia’, p. 19) that Fraser argues comprised both pro-Bruce and pro-Comyn propaganda: Fraser, “‘A swan from a raven’”, pp. 3-6. 11-14. Fraser argues that Wallace’s career in GA II is not consistent with historical fact (p. 13).
796 The GA II suggests that the Comyns are responsible for betraying Wallace at Falkirk and for Wallace’s resignation of the guardianship of Scotland: see Fraser, “‘A swan from a raven’”, pp. 17-18.
797 Chron GA II (Skene), p. 101: Fraser, “‘A swan from a raven’”, p. 17.
800 The chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, p. 294 (he ‘gathered to him all of the outlaws (exulantes) and acted as if he were their prince’): Fraser, “‘A swan from a raven’”, p. 5.
defence of the rights and liberties of the Scottish realm. This was a departure from the succession policy established by Alexander III, and highlights the necessity of the king’s embodiment of martial virtues in order to ensure defence. Edward, as related by Barbour, was second to none in chivalry but his brother the king, who was the best knight of his day.

Robert II used the precedent set by his grandfather to issue a series of entail designs to legitimize his accession and ensure his son’s succession and thus establish dynastic security. His concern to entail his son is explained in light of his advanced age and the questions of legitimacy surrounding his sons. According to his 1373 Act of Succession only male heirs were to succeed. Robert II, however, owed his royal claim to his mother, Robert I’s daughter, so it is tempting to connect his reasons for this decree to political expediency, much as Robert I reversed the terms for entail s stipulated by Alexander III. Robert II justified the tail male by explaining that male succession ensured political stability and security; however, it also had the additional benefit of ensuring the survival of Stewart monarchy by invalidating any Douglas claim to the throne through a daughter of Robert II. Robert II gave his daughter in marriage to William earl of Douglas as part of an appeasement package granted in 1371 following Douglas’s challenge to the new king’s accession. William initiated a rising in the name of Balliol and Comyn. He did not have any legitimate claim but the rising was serious enough to merit substantial concessions from the Steward to William Douglas and his supporters, who opposed the Steward in an effort to protect the territorial gains they had acquired during David’s reign. It is argued that rising in the name of Balliol and Comyn threatened Robert II because of the invitation it offered Edward III who as late as 1366 was pressing his claim to Balliol’s lands. Thus William not only challenged Stewart monarchy but Scottish autonomy.

As discussed above, the supremacy of the male claim is reflected in Barbour’s presentation of the Great Cause in The Bruce, where the Bruce claim is presented as the

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802 Ibid., p. 293.
803 Robert was fifty-five when he succeeded to the throne in 1371. He was married to Elizabeth Mure, a daughter of Adam Mure of Rowallan, within forbidden degrees according to canon law. He obtained a papal dispensation for this marriage in 1347, but John earl of Carrick, Robert’s eldest son (the future Robert III) was born before this dispensation was received and the other two sons mentioned in the entail were also born before their parents were legally married (Robert earl of Fife and Alexander lord of Badenoch). The Steward later married Euphemina Ross in 1355 and had two more sons: David and Walter: Boardman, *The Stewart kings of Scotland*, pp. 39-61.
804 Ibid., pp. 42-3.
805 Ibid., p. 40
806 This could be enacted through Edward’s own claim from Balliol or from John of Gaunt’s son, Henry, who was half-Scottish through his mother, Blanche, who was related to the Comyns: Boardman, *The Stewart kings of Scotland*, p. 43.
rightful, and male, claim. And it corresponds with contemporary polices implemented by Edward III, and the English nobility in general. The emphasis on entailing by Roberts I and II was promoted as a means of ensuring uncontested succession and therefore Scottish sovereignty by countering the circumstances favourable to a renewed English invasion. However, through their emphasis on succession, Roberts I and II were ensuring dynastic control of the crown, and both kings were justifying their contested successions.

The sovereignty of the late medieval Scottish kingdom depended on the presentation of a secure monarchy, because the alternative was very easily English intervention. A stable monarchy was ensured through dynastic succession but it was also promoted by the concept of the 'the community of the realm' in order to establish 'regnal solidarity'. What exactly was understood by the phrase *communitas regni* is disputed. The earliest known instance of the term in Scotland follows the death of Alexander III but this does not mean it was first formed then; it is however very much associated with the political theory developed by Robert I to cement solidarity with his community of nobles. It would seem that Robert I cultivated a concept that promoted accord between king and his noble community to sustain his position as king. And, furthermore, this was done by projecting a united front in the defence of the kingdom, as interpreted from the arguments developed in the Declaration of Arbroath. The extent of community concord is debated: within a few months some of the signatories of the Declaration were punished for their role in the de Soules conspiracy. However, this does not negate the contemporary relevance

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808 See also Watt (ed.), *Scotichronicon*, vol. 9, p. 329 for Bower’s emphasis on hereditary right, which reflected contemporary fifteenth-century Stewart concerns with monarchical control: ‘For Bower, clarifying the succession issue is a further means of justifying the Stewart line and confirming the value of its strong and continuous rule.’

809 Mason, ‘Kingship, tyranny and the right to resist in fifteenth-century Scotland’, p. 27.

810 The phrase ‘regnal solidarity’ is from Susan Reynolds, ‘Medieval origines gentium and the community of the realm’, *History*, 68 (1984), 375-90; Roger Mason, ‘Chivalry and citizenship: aspects of national identity in renaissance Scotland,’ p. 84.


812 Whereas English political discourse differentiated between *les hautes homes* and *la communaute*, in Scotland it is argued that *communitas regni Scotie* comprised both groups: Fraser, ‘“A swan from a raven”’, p. 6 and note 25; Barrow, *Robert Bruce*, p. 16. However, although the concept as it was applied by Robert I seems intended to cover both meanings, it could be argued that it was a deliberate attempt to appropriate phrases such as *communitas Scociae*, which were attached to Wallace (as discussed above), but this is an argument that would merit further investigation.

of these theories and their appreciation by Robert I and his nobles alike. Robert I’s concern with community solidarity is reflected in his distribution of grants and titles among his nobles to foster loyalty, a policy continued by Robert II, as discussed above. Furthermore, implicit in the idea of *communitas regni* is the notion of *bonum commune* - the “common profit” or “common good” of the realm as a whole - which resonates with the chivalric ethos generated by Barbour in *The Bruce*, with its emphasis on the collective enterprise fronted by King Robert. Central to the success of this collective cause is loyalty: *The Bruce* depicts the loyalty of Robert I’s group of trusted companions, as discussed above; and Barbour emphasizes the necessity of the loyalty of ‘his offspring’ to ensure pes in the realm:

| God grant that that that cummyn ar                      | For the gud king had in entent,                     |
| Off his offspring manteyme the land                   | Send God sa fayr grace had him lent                  |
| And had; the folk weill to warand                     | That he had wonnyn all his land                      |
| And manteyme rycht and leawté                         | Throu strenth off armys till his hand,              |
| Als wele as in his tyme did he                         | That he pes in his tyme wald ma                    |
| (13.718-22)                                          | And all landis stabil sual                         |
| And graunt his grace that thar ofspring               | That his ayr eftre him suld be                     |
| Leid weill the land, and ententyve                    | In pes, gif men held lawté (19.133-40)              |
| Be to folow in all thar lyve                           |                                                      |
| That nobill eldrys gret bontye (20.624-7).            |                                                      |

Barbour’s prayers for peace and loyalty are centred on ancestral commemoration; they are narrated following the success of Robert I at Bannockburn and the birth of Robert II (13.718-22) and after relating the deaths of Robert I, Sir James Douglas and Sir Thomas Randolph (20.624-7).

‘Regnal solidarity’ could also be fostered by ‘focusing national loyalties on a royal house of venerable antecedents’. The reigning dynasties in Scotland, most notably the line of Malcolm Canmore and Queen Margaret, had long cultivated a ‘usable past’. The past could be used to consolidate identity, confirm legitimacy, guarantee authority,

815 Mason, ‘Chivalry and the civilizing process’, p. 91.
816 Roger Mason, ‘Chivalry and citizenship: aspects of national identity in renaissance Scotland,’ p. 84.
817 Ibid., p.79 applies the phrase to indicate the collective identities of pre-modern communities: the term is from Anthony Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations* (oxford, 1986), pp. 21-22. For the use of the past by the Scottish monarchy see Mason, ‘Chivalry and citizenship’, p. 83; Broun, ‘The origin of Scottish identity’ in *Nations, nationalism and patriotism in the European past*, pp. 35-5; Cowan, ‘Myth and identity in early medieval Scotland’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 63 (1884), 111-35.
818 See Duggan, ‘Appropriation of historical knowledge by the vernacular epic: medieval epic as popular historiography’, p. 311.
ancestors were celebrated in origin myths, ancestral histories such as the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’, and romance. The recent past commemorated in The Bruce can be considered part of the overall ‘ancestral project’ initiated by Robert II to promote the cult of Robert I.*819* Robert I, as shown above, promoted himself as the natural heir to Alexander III. Through the arguments espoused by such letters as the Declaration of Arbroath, Robert’s unlawful disinheritance of King John was interpreted as a communal move by the community of the realm because of Balliol’s failure to defend his kingdom. The Bruce dynasty was established as the ruling house of Scotland. Robert II’s claim to the throne was based on the Bruce name. Following his accession to the throne in 1371 he embarked on an active promotion of his maternal and paternal ancestry.820 The career of Walter Stewart is celebrated by Barbour, as discussed above.821 There may even have been an attempt to emphasize the early Stewart connection with Wallace during the reign of Robert II.822

Robert II’s exploitation of his grandfather’s legacy is mirrored by the house of Douglas’s veneration of ‘the gud’ Sir James. As discussed above, their status as one of the most powerful noble families in the realm the late fourteenth century and fifteenth centuries depended on the service of James Douglas to Robert I. Barbour records Douglas’s son Sir Archibald commemorating his ancestor in a rich alabaster tomb, ‘[a]s it behovyt to sua worthy’ (20,600). The ‘bludy hert’ was used by the Douglas dynasty to symbolize the special bond between Robert I and Sir James Douglas worth ‘mair [...] than ony lordschip or land’,823 and therefore indicate the special favour in which Douglas’s heirs should be kept in relation to the new Stewart dynasty. The appropriation of the symbol of the heart

*819 For the phrase ‘ancestral project’ see Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte”’. See also Robin Frame, The political development of the British Isles, 1100-1400 (Oxford, 1990), p.194 for what he calls ‘the impudent success of the Bruce and Stewart dynasties in seizing the national past for themselves’; Fiona Watson, ‘The enigmatic lion: Scotland, kingship and national identity in the Wars of Independence’, p. 32.

*820 Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte”’, pp. 8-9 for details of the ‘programme of monumental commemoration of the king’s ancestors and relatives, focussed on the lineage’s principal mausoleum at Paisley’ (p.8); alabaster tombs were built at Paisley for his father, Walter the Steward and his grandfather Robert I in 1375-6 and his mother Marjorie Bruce and his first wife Elizabeth Mure in 1380 (The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, ii, 503, 622)

*821 His is one of the few deaths to be followed directly by a prayer (19. 226-8). Barbour’s two other prayers -at the close of Bannockburn and the close of his buk- speak directly to the heirs of his heroes.

*822 Barrow, Robert Bruce, pp. 82-3: James Stewart was Wallace’s feudal lord. Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte”’, p. 12 for the possible focus on this connection in the ‘Stewartis Oryginalle’. See ibid., pp. 11-12: the appearance of a Wallace herald in 1395 suggests that the Stewarts may have cultivated both the Bruce and Wallace cults, but it is not known if he was a royal herald. See p. 12 for fifteenth-century connections between the Stewarts and Wallace.

*823 Richard Howland, ‘The buke of the Howlat’ in Longer Scottish poems, ed. P. Bawcutt and F. Riddy (Edinburgh, 1987), i, p. 63; Brown, The Black Douglases, p. 27. The heart was appropriated as an heraldic device by Archibald and William, earl of Douglas (Sir James Douglas’s legitimate nephew): Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte”’, p. 11; Brown, The Black Douglases, p. 122. The house of Douglas may also have appointed themselves protectors of Melrose, where Robert I’s heart is reputed to lie: Boardman, “‘Thar nobill eldrys gret bounte”’, p. 12
referred of course to Sir James Douglas’s celebrated expedition against the Saracens carrying his king’s heart; but, it was intended to commemorate the celebrated relationship between lord and vassal, and Douglas’s steadfast loyalty to King Robert (his ‘love’). And, furthermore, it established an ancestral connection between the two dynasties.824

One person to profit in particular from an association with Sir James Douglas was his illegitimate son, Sir Archibald ‘the Grim’, whose place as Douglas’s heir had been assumed by his legitimate cousin, William. Archibald’s rise to prominence owes much to the favours he received as part of David II’s inner circle,825 and during David’s reign he may have spent time travelling with Barbour.826 As mentioned above, he features in The Bruce and he is one of the few contemporaries to do so. It is possible to read too much into Archibald’s presence in The Bruce and his association with Barbour, but it would be equally trivializing not to allow for the possibility that the celebration of James Douglas in The Bruce was due to the stories Barbour heard recounted by his son during their travels. Duncan has argued that James Dougals’s presence in The Bruce must be explained by the existence of a now lost source commemorating his exploits.827 Perhaps instead The Bruce is that source celebrating his international reputation, and the person to benefit most from it would be Archibald who during the early years of the Stewarts reign was still carving out his name, but who was to become one of the most powerful magnates in late medieval Scotland.828

It has been argued that the impetus for the development of chivalric ideology was a ‘perception of loss of status and function’.829 Chivalry provided an identity based on martial values, which was cultivated by both the aristocracy and the king but not without a tension that is mirrored in romance. Both Barbour and Chandos Herald legitimize the enterprises of their royal knights through divine sanction, community concord and their duty to protect their men. In The Bruce, the king’s duty to protect his men is connected to his defence of his kingdom, through the fusion of the destinies of king and kingdom. The chivalric ethos generated by Barbour and Chandos Herald promoted a collective identity between the king, or prince, and his community in order to further monarchical ambition. These two narratives reflect the contemporary demand for royal control of the chivalric

827 Duncan (ed.), The Bruce, pp. 25-8.
828 For the career of Sir Archibald Douglas see Brown, The Black Douglases, pp. 53-64.
829 Spiegel, Romancing the past, p. 4: referring to the work of R. Howard Bloch, Geoges Duby, Jean Flori. Erich Köhler, Jacques le Goff and Eugene Vance.
ethos in their presentation of the lives of their royal heroes as knights. Moreover, as an instance of the reception of the historiography of the reign of Robert I, *The Bruce* mirrors its success.
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