

THE BRUCE:
A STUDY OF JOHN BARBOUR'S HEROIC IDEAL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine John Barbour's Bruce (c. 1375) as a literary work from the point of view of the author's heroic ideal. There has been singular confusion about the nature and form of the work and about Barbour's theme. Until recently, critics who have attempted to characterize and categorize the poem have concluded that although it shares some of the qualities and conventions of romance, epic, biography and verse-chronicle, it is a mixture of forms and is unusual because of Barbour's realistic treatment and patriotic emphasis. Various assumptions about medieval narratives have been brought to bear in these judgements and, on the whole, The Bruce has been found wanting or has been regarded as a modification of conventions especially with respect to chivalric codes of conduct and courtly ideals. Little attention has been paid to the poet's own statements, which are frequent and expository, about the nature of his work, his understanding of chivalry and heroism, and the relationship of the values he expressly admires to these concepts.

This study attempts to explore these ideas, mainly through an examination of the language and vocabulary of the poem. The first chapter examines the nature of the work and Barbour's description of his narrative as a romance and as a "suthfast story", and demonstrates that he conceived of his work as a romance about real historical personages and events and that he chose the romance form because he regarded it as the vehicle for the celebration of great deeds of prowess tempered by prudence and mesure.

The second chapter examines the theological-philosophical framework of The Bruce, which the prevalence of a number of significant abstracts indicates. It is here that one can trace the foundations of the poet's heroic ideal, in particular, his insistence on the need for prudence and the use of reason in all human undertakings.

The third and fourth chapters are devoted to his portraits of Douglas and Bruce respectively as heroes, especially to his presentation of them as ideal figures--Douglas as an ideal knight and vassal and Bruce as an ideal king and general--effected, on the whole, through the epithets employed to characterize them.

The last chapter demonstrates how Barbour promoted the view of Bruce and Douglas as heroes by comparing them to other renowned historical and pseudo-historical individuals who had been celebrated in romances, and shows that the various references to romances were used by the poet to elucidate his own heroic ideal.

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, we know very little about John Barbour, the author of The Bruce. He seems to have been born about 1320, although details of his birth and early life are wanting. But because of the nature of his public life--he was Archdeacon of Aberdeen for nearly forty years--documentary information¹ has survived which makes it possible to construct a circumstantial, if patchy, account of his career.

His first known preferment was to the precentorship of Dunkeld, to which he seems to have been appointed shortly after June, 1355,² and which he occupied until he succeeded Alexander de Kininmund to the archdeaconry of Aberdeen--having as his prebend the parish of Rayne in Garioch--following the latter's appointment as bishop of the diocese in 1356. Barbour must have attained possession before 12th July, 1356 when Andrew Umfray succeeded him as precentor of Dunkeld. He is first referred to as Archdeacon of Aberdeen on August 13th, 1357 when he was

¹Most of the official records have been brought together by W. W. Skeat in the introduction to his edition of The Bruce, 2 vols. (E. E. T. S., 1870, 1889; reprint ed., 1896), 1, pp. xviii-xxviii. I rely here mainly on Skeat's biographical notes (pp. xxix-xxxv) and on D. E. R. Watt, A Bibliographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to A.D. 1410 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), s.v. "Barbour".

²Watt, p. 28. See also his Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Medii Aevi ad annum 1638, 2d draft (St. Andrews & Scottish Record Society, 1969), p. 96.

given a safe-conduct by Edward III to go with three scholars to Oxford for the purposes of study.³

This was the first of four safe-conducts granted by Edward III, three of which expressly state that Barbour may pass through England in order to pursue his academic studies. He is amongst those granted a safe-conduct to study in England for a year on 4th November, 1364.⁴ Another issued on 16th October, 1365, again for one year, allowed him to pass through England on a pilgrimage to St. Denis near Paris, and may have been used to visit Paris University. Four years later he still appears to have been prosecuting his academic studies, for he received another safe-conduct on 30th November, 1368, for one year, to travel through England and France, causa studendi.⁵ Watt notes that in this last safe-conduct Barbour occurs for the first time with the style of Master,⁶ and although papal records and contemporary records of Aberdeen Cathedral do not attach any degree to his name, he suggests that Barbour may have taken an M.A. at Paris in the period February 1364/5-June 1368, for which the records of the English nation there are missing. However, he also feels that this would have been

³Rotuli Scotiae, i, 808, cited by Skeat, p. xviii.

⁴Ibid., i, 886, cited by Skeat, p. xix.

⁵Ibid., i, 926, Skeat, p. xix.

⁶He is also so styled in the exchequer accounts of March 1384/5 and April 1386 (Exchequer Rolls, iii, III, 681) and after his death by Wyntoun, The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland, ed. David Laing, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 2, bk. VIII, 978, and in the 16th century obituaries of Aberdeen Cathedral. Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis (Spalding Club, 1845), 2: 7, 212.

rather late in life to take such a degree (Barbour would have been in his forties by this time), and considers it more likely that Barbour's studies were in law in which he may have obtained the bachelor level, which could have earned him the occasional courtesy of the style Master.⁷

The probability that Barbour's studies were in law receives support from the fact that the professional work of the higher clergy consisted almost entirely in ecclesiastical administration, for which a study of Canon Law was considered the most important qualification.⁸ The Faculty of Decrees at the University of Paris had a high reputation for the study of this discipline.⁹ An archdeacon was the most important official in the diocese after the bishop, and it was his duty to administer his bishop's jurisdiction. He was responsible for parochial visitation and the imposition of fines for moral and ecclesiastical offences, although it soon became customary for him to receive a fee instead of visiting and to collect fines out of court by deputy.¹⁰ For all that, as Coulton points out,¹¹ he

⁷Watt, p. 28.

⁸Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 3 vols., 3: 447.

⁹Scotland had no universities at this period. The first, St. Andrews, was not founded until 1411.

¹⁰As a result, he was under great temptation to accept bribes and he is frequently the object of satire on this account in the writings of the period. See, for example, the beginning of Chaucer's Friar's Tale.

¹¹G. G. Coulton, Medieval Panorama (Cambridge: University Press, 1938; reprint ed., 1949), p. 135.

needed to be something of a lawyer if he was to be at all efficient.

It was certainly common for ecclesiastics of all ages to obtain leave of absence to study at the universities, although more often than not they did not graduate with degrees.¹² It may be that Barbour was amongst those who attended courses but did not actually graduate as a licentiate or doctor in decrees. Skeat, noting the long period Barbour devoted to academic studies after he had been promoted to the archdeaconry of Aberdeen, suggests that a love of learning may have been the incentive rather than a desire for preferment.¹³ If this was the case, then Barbour was an unusual man for his time. According to Rashdall, university distinction was closely linked to clerical promotion. The universities were thronged with beneficed clergy "hanging on in search of preferment", and, he goes on:

The idea of making a man a bishop or an archdeacon on account of his zeal, his energy, and success in the humble round of parochial duty is one which would hardly have occurred to sensible men in medieval times.¹⁴

This would lead one to suppose that Barbour had attained some measure of academic distinction, presumably in theology, before he became an archdeacon, and indeed the speed with which he was

¹²Rashdall comments on the small number of graduates in relation to the number of students who attended medieval universities, op. cit., 3: 447.

¹³The Bruce, p. xxx.

¹⁴Op. cit., 3: 446, 447. He also notes that the Faculty of Decrees in Paris attracted those most desirous of church preferment since it enjoyed strong ecclesiastical influence, 1: 438-39.

promoted from precentor of Dunkeld to Archdeacon of Aberdeen lends support to this.

What is perhaps surprising is that he did not rise higher in the echelons of the Church, but remained as Archdeacon of Aberdeen for almost forty years. When the see of Aberdeen fell vacant in 1380, following the death of Alexander de Kininmund, Barbour does not seem to have been a candidate for the office, although there was a precedent in that the two previous incumbents had been archdeacons of the diocese when they were promoted to the bishopric. Instead, Adam de Tynningham, dean of Aberdeen, was appointed. It is possible that Barbour was ill at the time for there is evidence that he anticipated death. On February 15th of that year he was granted a plenary indulgence at the hour of death,¹⁵ and on June 24th he made arrangements for a pension of £1, granted by Robert II on 29th August, 1378, to be paid after his death to the chapter of Aberdeen to pay for an annual mass for his soul and those of his relatives.¹⁶

However, various other sees fell vacant during Barbour's long career as Archdeacon of Aberdeen. The see of Dunblane was vacant in 1361 and again in 1372, that of Glasgow in 1367, Dunkeld in 1370, and St. Andrews in 1385. It may be that Barbour's lack of academic qualifications prevented his further advancement. Certainly the men who were appointed to these bishoprics were not deficient in this respect. Walter de

¹⁵Glasgow University Scottish History Department, Reg. Av., 223, fo. 96^v, cited by Watt, Bibliographical Dictionary, p. 28.

¹⁶Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis, 1: 129-31.

Coventre, dean of Aberdeen, who was appointed Bishop of Dunblane in 1361 was an M.A. and a Licentiate in Civil Law.¹⁷ Walter Wardlaw, Archdeacon of Lothian, who was provided to the bishopric of Glasgow in 1367, was a Master in Theology.¹⁸ Michael de Monymusk, dean of Glasgow, who became Bishop of Dunkeld in 1370 was a Licentiate in Decrees,¹⁹ and Walter Trail, dean of Glasgow, appointed Bishop of St. Andrews in 1385, was an M.A. and a Doctor of Canon Law.²⁰ Academic distinction was also notable among those appointed to the see of Aberdeen. William de Deyn, Bishop of Aberdeen from 1344-1350 was a Licentiate in Decrees.²¹ John Rait, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, provided to the see in 1351, was a Master in Theology.²² Alexander de Kinimmund, Archdeacon of Aberdeen (1351-1355) and bishop of that diocese from 1355-1380, was a Licentiate in Arts and a Scholar in Decrees, and was remembered in Aberdeen tradition as doctor theologus.²³

Papal favour was also of some importance in procuring ecclesiastical advancement. Most benefices in Scotland at this time were filled by papal provision under the theory of reservation. The career of Adam de Tynningham, who was appointed to the see of Aberdeen in 1380, is a good example. He appears to

¹⁷ John Dowden, The Bishops of Scotland, ed. J. Maitland Thomson (Glasgow: Maclehose & Sons, 1912), pp. 203-4.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 314.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

²¹ Ibid., p. 112.

²² Ibid., p. 113.

²³ Reg. Ep. Ab., 2: 248.

have been an ambitious man who sought and enjoyed papal patronage. Much of his early career was spent at the papal curia in Avignon.²⁴ He was a sub-collector of papal revenues for some twelve years (he is first mentioned in this capacity on 12th November, 1359) and when the curia moved back to Rome he is found there in March 1368/9 and appears still to have been there in 1370 when it was arranged that he should go to Scotland as a papal nuncio and collector.²⁵ His services were rewarded. On 9th November, 1361 he was granted provision to Dunblane deanery on the promotion of Michael de Monymusk to Aberdeen deanery, but he obtained provision to Aberdeen deanery himself on 20th March, 1361/2. He therefore somehow managed to obtain Aberdeen deanery despite the later date of his provision and before Monymusk took possession. When the latter arrived and turned him out, a litigation between the two began. Monymusk started the proceedings but initially only Tynningham went in person to Avignon, where his proctor obtained a sentence in his favour. By June 1365 Tynningham had received two more sentences in his favour and Monymusk was turning to Glasgow deanery instead. Tynningham occupied Aberdeen deanery in March 1365/6 and held it until his consecration as bishop of the diocese.

In 1378 the pope made him a member of his household with expectation of a prebend.²⁶ After the death of Alexander de

²⁴The papal court moved from Rome to Avignon in 1309 and remained there until 1377 apart from a temporary return to Rome by Urban V in 1367.

²⁵Watt, Bibliographical Dictionary, s.v. "Tynningham".

²⁶Dowden, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

Kinimmund, Bishop of Aberdeen, on 29th July, 1380, Simon de Ketenis was elected as his successor by the chapter, but Tynningham secured papal provision to the see motu proprio at Avignon on 15th October, 1380, and Ketenis was compensated by provision to Aberdeen deanery and a Glasgow prebend.²⁷

Barbour, on the other hand, seems to have been a royal rather than a papal curialist. Watt suggests that there may have been a family link with the Stewarts and that Robert Stewart, who governed Scotland during the imprisonment of David II, may have been instrumental in Barbour's preferment to the archdeaconry of Aberdeen.²⁸ At any rate, he certainly appears to have enjoyed good relations with the Stewarts, serving them well in various ways, not least by producing a genealogy²⁹ of the family, and receiving fairly liberal emoluments in return. One of the earliest surviving notices of him records that on September 13th, 1357 he was appointed as one of the commissioners to go Edinburgh to discuss terms for the release of David II, then a prisoner in England. There is no evidence that he actually attended the discussions, and Skeat suggests that, since Barbour had been issued with a safe-conduct to go to Oxford the previous month, he probably set out on his journey instead.³⁰ On the

²⁷Watt, p. 552.

²⁸Ibid., p. 28.

²⁹Wyntoun is the chief source for the information that Barbour was the author of a work, now lost, entitled either "The Stewartis Orygenalle" or "The Stewartis Genealogy", Orygynale Cronykil, 1, bk. III, 621-6, 2, bk. VIII, 1445-50.

³⁰The Bruce, p. xxx.

other hand, he may have postponed his departure for Oxford.³¹ Information on his administrative activities during the next fifteen years is lacking, although we know that much of his time was devoted to academic studies. In February 1372 he appears as audit clerk in the service of the new king, Robert II, at a salary of £40, in Perth, and he was there again in the same capacity and also as auditor of the exchequer in the following year. He was not present in 1374-75, when he was probably in retirement at Aberdeen writing The Bruce.³² He was in the chapter there on 19th August, 1376,³³ and on 3rd October, 1377.³⁴ As Mackenzie notes, it is likely that Barbour completed The Bruce in the course of 1376 since this suggestively coincides with a grant of £10 from Aberdeen customs at the king's order in that year, first recorded in the accounts of March 14th, 1377,³⁵ and on 29th August, 1378 the king granted "his beloved clerk" a perpetual pension of £1 from the city's revenues, to himself and his assignees.³⁶ This was the pension that Barbour assigned, on his death, to the cathedral church of Aberdeen in June 1380. The

³¹Watt, p. 29.

³²Barbour tells us that he was engaged on the poem in 1375, The Bruce, ed. W. W. Skeat, 2 vols. (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 11,21, 29,55, 1896), bk. XIII, 699-704. All subsequent references to the poem will be to this edition. Skeat's text is a collation of the two surviving MSS.--Cambridge MS. G. 23 (1487) in the Library of St. John's College, and the Edinburgh MS. (1489) in the National Library of Scotland--with corrections from Hart's 1616 printed edition. Skeat's emendations, included within square brackets in his edition, have been accepted and the square brackets omitted. I have normalized ȝ to y or g and ȝ to ss.

³³Reg. Ep. Ab., 1: 108-9.

³⁴Scottish Record Office, RH. 2/6/1/42, cited by Watt, p. 29.

³⁵The Bruce, ed. W. M. Mackenzie (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1909), p. xvii. See Exchequer Rolls, ii, 566.

³⁶Reg. Ep. Ab., 1: 129, cited by Skeat, p. xx.

accounts of 1429 state expressly that this pension was made by Robert II pro compilatione libri de gestis quondam regis Roberti de Brus.³⁷

He was a witness to a charter of William Keith Marischal at Kincardine, Fordoun on 10th December, 1375 and again on 20th October, 1380, and to various acts, mostly relating to land tenure, at Aberdeen in 1381, 1383 and 1386.³⁸ He was again exchequer auditor in 1382, 1383 and 1384 at Perth and Stirling.³⁹ In 1382 he was paid £6 13s 4d for consideratis laboribus et expensis suis, £10 for expenses in 1384, and he received royal gifts of £5 and £6 13s 4d in 1386.⁴⁰ On 5th December, 1388 he was granted another pension of £10 for life pro suo fideli servicio nobis impenso,⁴¹ which was paid each year until the account period ending April 1395. He also had a gift from Robert II of the ward of a minor and his lands in his prebendal parish of Rayne in 1389, which he held until his death. He was still active in 1391-92 when he occurs as a witness on several occasions to agreements over land tenure.⁴² On April 25th, 1396 the first

³⁷Exchequer Rolls, iv, 520.

³⁸Reg. Ep. Ab., 1: 141-43, 163-64, 171-72.

³⁹Exchequer Rolls, iii, 84, 663, III, 670.

⁴⁰Ibid., 661, 675.

⁴¹Skeat suggests that the second of these royal gifts and the pension of £10 were given to Barbour for the genealogy of the Stewarts, The Bruce, p. xliii, note 1.

⁴²Reg. Ep. Ab., 1: 188-90, 192-95.

payment of £1 was made to the dean and chapter of Aberdeen so that Barbour must have died in 1395. His anniversary is recorded in 16th century lists as 13th or 14th March, so one of these dates in 1395 was probably the date of his death.⁴³

The Bruce is the first substantial work in Scottish literature attributable to a known poet. Just as Barbour now appears as a rather shadowy figure, so his work seems curiously isolated from any continuous tradition in Scottish literature. The various attempts to describe and categorize the poem have been far from satisfactory. Although Barbour called his work a romance⁴⁴ critics have been more inclined to see it as a verse-chronicle or metrical history imbued with the spirit of romance,⁴⁵ and to regard the author as a writer of history rather than of poetry.⁴⁶ It has been argued that Barbour was fulfilling a political as well as a historical purpose,⁴⁷ and that The Bruce is ultimately propaganda intended to flatter the Stewarts and to remind the Scots of the importance of the ideals of freedom and right.⁴⁸ In

⁴³Ibid., 2: 7, 201, 212.

⁴⁴The Bruce, I, 446.

⁴⁵A. M. Kinghorn, "Scottish Historiography in the 14th century--A New Introduction to Barbour's Bruce", Studies in Scottish Literature VI (1968-69), p. 132.

⁴⁶A. M. Kinghorn, "Romantic History and Poetry in Medieval Scotland", Dalhousie Review 37 (Spring, 1937), p. 66, and more recently Maurice Lindsay, History of Scottish Literature (London: Robert Hale, 1977), p. 14.

⁴⁷Lindsay, History of Scottish Literature, p. 13.

⁴⁸Lois A. Ebin, "John Barbour's Bruce: Poetry, History and Propaganda" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Columbia, 1969). Her arguments are more easily accessible in an article with the same title in Studies in Scottish Literature 9 (1972): 218-242.

so far as Barbour has been reckoned a creative writer⁴⁹ rather than a historiographer, his work has been described as a national epic.

The struggle for freedom has been regarded by the majority of the poem's critics as Barbour's theme.⁵⁰ This view has been most fully developed by Friedrich Brie⁵¹ and even the most recent studies of The Bruce have been influenced by his arguments. He observes:

Da uns die Frage nach Wesen und Bedeutung des Bruce fast identisch vorkommt mit der Frage, wie weit der Bruce von einem nationalen Empfinden getragen ist.⁵²

He goes on to argue that in the poem the motif of freedom is tightly bound up with pride in Scotland and her heroes. Moreover, Barbour's heroes are not chosen because of their willingness to undertake adventure, but for the significance they possess as champions of their native country. As a result, "Am Klarsten und Stärksten äußert sich der nationale Gedanke im Bruce an der Rolle, die der Freiheitsgedanke spielt".⁵³

⁴⁹Bernice W. Kliman's "John Barbour, the First of the Makars: A Study of the Poet as Craftsman" (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1969), is the only serious study to date which deals with Barbour as an artist. Her thesis is more readily available in an article entitled "John Barbour and Rhetorical Tradition", Annuaire Mediaevale XVIII (1977): 106-135.

⁵⁰See, for example, Cosmo Innes in the Preface to his edition of The Brus (Spalding Club, 1856), p. viii, Skeat, The Bruce, p. lviii, Kurt Wittig, The Scottish Tradition in Literature (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1958), pp. 12-13, Hans Utz, "If Freedom Fail--'Freedom' in John Barbour's Bruce", English Studies 50 (1969): 151-65, Lois A. Ebin, "Poetry, History and Propaganda", S.S.L. 9 (1972): 218-42, and Bernice W. Kliman, "The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce", Mediaeval Studies 35 (1973): 477-508.

⁵¹Die Nationale Literatur Schottlands (Von den Anfängen bis zur Renaissance (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1937): 33-122.

⁵²Ibid., p. 46.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 52-3.

Brie comes up with this argument by interpreting the second prologue (I, 445-76), and especially the lines on the Maccabees (465-76), as a statement that the theme of the poem is freedom, and by drawing attention to Barbour's claim to say only "suthfast thing", arguing that any relation of the deeds of Bruce and Douglas required treatment of the actual theme of Scottish history--the struggle for independence--and consequently a presentation of these men as embodiments of the Scottish struggle for freedom.⁵⁴ However, he does not deal adequately with the objection he himself raises that freedom is not mentioned in the first prologue (I, 1ff). Of more concern is his postulate that Barbour as a poet was restricted by what his audience expected him to say. Such an argument begs some very important questions about a poet's role. Barbour as a creative artist organizes his material imaginatively and not historically, and although quite frequently he mentions that various incidents are true, or at least derived from eye-witness accounts, the selection of material, the emphasis, and the arrangement of episodes are the poet's own.

I accept that nationalism and patriotism existed in fourteenth century Scotland.⁵⁵ My understanding of these terms is

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁵E. M. Barron, The Scottish War of Independence: A Critical Study, 2d ed. (Inverness: Robert Carruthers & Sons, 1934), argues that Scotland was a nation at the close of the thirteenth century, and that patriotism or love of independence did not arise because of the War of Independence but was the cause that really lay at the root of it, pp. 3-4; and G. W. S. Barrow, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: University Press, 1976), regards the Declaration of Arbroath (1320) as a clear statement of Scottish nationalism and patriotism, preface to the first edition, p. xiii.

based on Louis L. Snyder's helpful study, The Meaning of Nationalism, in which he offers this definition:

Nationalism is primarily concerned with the independence and unity of the nation, whereas patriotism is more specifically the passion that influences the individual to save the object of his devotion--his country, either in defending it from invasion, or in protecting its rights, or in maintaining its laws and institutions in vigor and purity. Nationalism is inseparable from the idea of power; patriotism, on the other hand, is by nature defensive, both culturally and militarily. But so ambivalent is the character of patriotism that it can easily be used to justify aggression.⁵⁶

It is interesting in the light of this that, from a consideration of the patriotic elements in medieval Scottish, English and French works (mostly chronicles), Brie distinguishes two kinds of patriotism--one defensive, as encountered in The Bruce, which he sees as growing out of the country's need and struggle for freedom, but which nowhere becomes a "romantisch-imperialistischen Vorstellung von Schottland als eines Landes";⁵⁷ the other offensive, which is predominant in the English, and to some degree in the French, works, largely taking the form of boasting of one's own merits and abusing the enemy.⁵⁸ Offensive patriotism of this kind is fairly remarkable in Pierre de Langtoft's chronicle (c. 1310-1320):

Escoce sait maudite de la mere De,
Et parfond ad deable Gales enfoundre!
En l'un ne l'autre fu unkes verite.⁵⁹

⁵⁶The Meaning of Nationalism (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. 148.

⁵⁷Die Nationale Literatur Schottlands, p. 51.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 46.

⁵⁹The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft, ed. with parallel English translation by T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1866-68), 2: 220.

Langtoft's overriding concern was for England's victory over Scotland: this provided him with a recurrent theme. In the application of this theme he made extensive use of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae, but unusually, to provide precedents justifying the acts of the king of his own day, especially with regard to the subjugation of Scotland. He represents Edward I as a second Brutus and as Arthur returned,⁶⁰ and he refers to a prophecy of Merlin to explain what looked to him, after the victory at Dunbar and the imprisonment of Baliol, like its fulfilment:

Ha, Deus! ke Merlyn dist sovert veritez
En ses prophecyes, si cum ws les lisez!
Ore sunt les ij ewes en un aryvez,
Ke par grauntz mountaynes out este seurez.⁶¹

The author of the Westminster continuation of the Flores Historiarum⁶² which covers the years 1265-1327, goes further and, as Antonia Gransden puts it, describes the Anglo-Scottish war in almost Manichean terms.⁶³ Edward is good: the Scottish leaders are bad. Wallace is described as a murderer, cruel and debauched; Bruce is a patricide and usurper, crowned by conspirators. Edward I, on the other hand, is the hero, the lord and king of two realms, the glorious victor overcoming rebels.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 254, 264, 266, 278, 296, 368, and 380.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 264.

⁶²The Flores Historiarum was started by Roger of Wendover between 1204 and 1231 and continued until 1234, then continued by Matthew of Paris, starting 1231, and his copy went to Westminster Abbey soon after 1265 and was there continued to 1327. See Antonia Gransden, Historical Writing in England c. 550 to 1307 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 357, 377-79 for details. The standard edition of the Flores Historiarum with its continuations to 1327 is that by H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1890) in 3 volumes.

⁶³Historical Writing in England, pp. 455-56.

This kind of abuse is alien to The Bruce. Barbour's deliberate blackening of Edward I's character is the only exception, and this has a literary purpose in terms of the poem's theme, rather than a patriotic one based purely on the fact that he is a king of England and Scotland's aggressor.⁶⁴ In addition, Barbour praises valiant knights regardless of the side on which they fight; and a good deal of the action involves Scot fighting against Scot.

That Bruce is motivated by nationalism in the sense of concern for the independence and unity of Scotland, and patriotism in the sense of a desire to defend the kingdom from invasion and to protect its rights, cannot be denied. Nevertheless, I cannot agree with Brie that the theme of the poem is the struggle for freedom. To support his argument he cites various references to freedom in the poem (I, 219-20, 469, 475-76, 500-2; IX, 3-4, 308-9; XI, 62-63, 377-79; XII, 205-6, 247, 281-83) which he argues indicate national feeling and patriotic sentiments. Most of these references arise fairly late in The Bruce, occurring in relation to Bruce's decision to fight the English at Bannockburn and in his speech to his host before the battle. It is only at this stage in his career that Bruce can rely on patriotic zeal to unite his followers, and even then it is only one feature of a rather complicated speech, the real tenor of which can only be assessed when it is compared to its model--Judas Maccabeus's speeches to his men before the battles against the armies of Seron and Gorgias (1 Macc. 3:19-20; 4:17-18). The lines in Book IX, on Douglas's

⁶⁴ He does not feel the need to blacken the characters of Edward II and III in this way.

unrest until the country is delivered from the English (3-4) and on Bruce's campaigns in the north of Scotland (308-9, 328-29), are made to appear more significant than they might be by Brie.

On the other hand, the earlier references, all in the first book, deserve more attention, especially as the brunt of Brie's argument derives from them. As I mentioned earlier, he makes a good deal of the second prologue, especially the allusion to the Maccabees, which he sees as Barbour's statement that the theme of the poem is the struggle for freedom.⁶⁵ Brie draws attention to lines 469 and 475-76, which say that the Maccabees fought "For to delyuir thar countre":

And delyueryt thar land all fre;
Quharfor thar name suld lovyt be.

As a result, he sees the whole passage as having a patriotic emphasis: the struggle for freedom and the praise due to liberators. However, these lines have to be considered in their context. Certainly Barbour's allusion to the Maccabees is intended to illuminate his theme, for the analogy is returned to again and again in The Bruce. The point of the story which is consistently reiterated is that a few can succeed against many if sufficiently motivated. This is a fundamental aspect of his conception of heroism and true valour. His theme is the celebration of great men who won renown for their deeds, clearly announced in lines 445-64 where he develops the statement made in his first prologue that he intends to commemorate Bruce and Douglas.

⁶⁵R. L. Graeme Ritchie seems to understand this passage in a way that comes close to Brie's interpretation for he summarizes these lines thus: "Here begins the Romance of men who from distress came to victory and renown and who were like the Maccabees in their patriotism". The Buik of Alexander, 4 vols. (S. T. S. 12, 17, 21, 25, 1921-29), 1, p. cxxvi.

Moreover, these references have to be examined in relation to Barbour's conception of freedom as it is revealed in the much quoted, but I believe often misunderstood, apotheosis of freedom (I, 225-74). There it is clear that the poet is not thinking in purely political, patriotic terms. Freedom for Barbour is a philosophical concept, and T. H. Kean, commenting on these lines, is one of the few critics to realize this:

In this point of view, and in the famous lines on thralldom, there is a philosophical idea, that of the Natural Law, which medievalism inherited from the Stoics, the idea that God has built into man and nature the pattern of His will, a will to which man conforms by the right exercise of free choice, "freelyking". Thralldom is cursed because it deprives a man of the opportunity to choose the right. By extension, there is the right of free peoples to live according to their ancient custom.⁶⁶

Even a superficial reading of the poem reveals the presence of a great number of philosophical abstracts and a closer examination discloses that the work is constructed on a philosophical-theological framework. Barbour's conception of human goals and above all human excellence is derived from his philosophy concerning man's relationship to God. The influence of scholastic, particularly Thomist, thought is clearly discernible in the poem, and this is perhaps not surprising when one considers the long period Barbour seems to have spent in the schools of Oxford and Paris.

I find one other comment by Brie particularly interesting. He writes: "Die Liebe zur Freiheit steht für Barbour so hoch, daß sie gelegentlich fast religiösen Charakter annimmt",⁶⁷ and cites

⁶⁶T. H. Kean, "The Religion of Barbour, A Scots Poem of the Fourteenth Century", Month XXII (1959), p. 213.

⁶⁷Die Nationale Literatur Schottlands, p. 61.

the following words of Bruce to his men before Methven:

And A thing will I to yow say,
That he that deis for his cuntre
Sall herbryit in-till hewyn be.
(II, 339-41)

This exhortation certainly contains patriotic sentiment, appealing as it does to the ideal of pro patria mori. Such a concept was viable in the Middle Ages (at least from the thirteenth century), being a secularized adaptation of the Crusader idea of death in battle for defensio Terrae Sanctae.⁶⁸ Charlemagne's soldiers as presented in the Chanson de Roland die fighting not only against the Saracens in Spain but at the same time for the French emperor. The slain are depicted as martyrs who have died in a quasi-holy war for the defence of the realm as symbolized by the French "crown".

So it is therefore not surprising that Bruce's words here have a religious as well as a patriotic flavour. The two ideas are not, however, inseparably linked in the poem. For example, later when Douglas prepares to take his men into battle against the Saracens in Spain the prospect of death on the battlefield has no patriotic or national aspect; it is regarded as a purely religious ideal. He urges them to fight well and not to be afraid:

For hewynnys bliss suld be thair meid,
Gif that thai deit in goddis seruiss.
(XX, 414-15)

The battle is not between Scots and Saracens but between Christians

⁶⁸See E. H. Kantorowicz, "Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought", The American Historical Review 56 (1950-51): 472-92, in which he traces the concept from the Classical period through the Middle Ages.

and Paynims.⁶⁹

Even when Bruce rouses his men to fight and if necessary die for their country, he does not appeal to them solely in terms of a shared idea of the state or nation as a territory. Kliman is nearer the mark when she says that Bruce has so little hope of victory at this stage in his career that "the only advantage he can adduce is honor".⁷⁰ Before he introduces the idea of pro patria mori he says:

Ye are Ilkan wucht and worthy,
And full of gret chewalry;
And wate rycht weill quhat honour Is.
Wyrk yhe then apon swylk wyss,
That your honour be sawyt ay.
(II, 334-38)

He appeals as much to their idea of chivalry and personal honour as to any love that they may feel for their country. Shortly afterwards, when a rout seems inevitable we learn that those brave knights who stand their ground do so to win personal honour (397). Indeed the fact that the "small folk" are not sustained by such an appeal to patriotism and scatter during the battle seems to indicate that something else is needed to rouse them sufficiently, and of course this will come later with Bruce's personal example and sound leadership.

There is, too, the point that the feudal ethic has some relevance here. Kantorowicz remarks that politically the concept of patria was not well-defined during the centuries of western

⁶⁹Cf. the many references to Franks fighting Paynims in the Chanson de Roland, especially in Roland's last battle.

⁷⁰"Speech as a Mirror of Sapientia and Fortitudo in Barbour's Bruce", Medium Aevum 44 (1975), p. 152.

feudalism. A knight was much more likely to display heroic self-sacrifice because of personal fealty to his feudal lord or master rather than for any idea of state, so that political sacrifice would have been personal and individual rather than public.⁷¹

Hans Utz, who discovers traces of the new sort of allegiance to the state in The Bruce, observes:

Feudalism, however, was long in dying. Society, for Barbour, is still divided into the three estates. We are shown that the core of fighters who stood by him [Bruce] when he was still a fugitive and outlaw in his native Scotland, were noblemen. . . . The baronage continued to assert its position within the framework of feudal society, although feudalism was declining. The nobles still owed their power and their rank to the homage rendered in person to the liege lord, not to any service due to such new-fangled abstract concepts as state or country or nation.⁷²

Given the strong interest in feudal relationships in The Bruce, and the fact that the men who are with Bruce at Methven are those few who only a short time before came forward willingly to pay homage to him at Scone, it is not surprising that the idea of preserving one's honour and displaying personal fealty means more to them than any idea of nationhood.

Indeed, the importance of the feudal element in The Bruce has not been sufficiently stressed. The Bruce-Douglas relationship, based on a feudal contract, stands at the centre of the narrative, and throughout the poem the heroes are identified with their respective roles of king and knight-vassal. Bruce is roused to action by his "pitte" for his fellow-countrymen, but he is also motivated by a conviction of his right to the throne of Scotland:

⁷¹"Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought", pp. 476-77.

⁷²"If Freedom Fail--'Freedom' in John Barbour's Bruce", pp. 156-57.

I will blythly apon me ta
The state, for I wate that I have ryght;
And ryght mayss oft the feble wycht.
(I, 508-10)

Douglas is equally motivated by a sense of his right to his heritage and the desire to release his vassals from thralldom (I, 349-52), and he perceives that by joining Bruce he can achieve his purpose (II, 99-112, 153-61).

But the "ryght" as understood by Barbour is broader than feudal rights. It is also more comprehensive than the right of an independent country to rule itself. Barbour's heroes fight because of a conviction of the justice of their cause: "we haf the richt; / And for the richt ilk man suld ficht" (XII, 235-36). The poet conceives their struggle as a just war.

The Decretals of Gratian of Bologna (twelfth century) provided the beginning of systematic thought about the Christian concept of the Just War. By the fourteenth century conditions as to the purposes for which a Just War could be fought and laws and limitations on the conduct of war were elaborate, much written about, and fairly uniform throughout western Christendom.⁷³

Thomas Aquinas laid down three conditions for a war to be justified: the authority of the sovereign, a righteous cause, and a rightful intention on the part of the belligerents (broadly speaking, the advancement of good or the avoidance of evil), and sanctioned war for the protection of the state and as a means of establishing peace.⁷⁴ Christine de Pisan, in "Le Livre des Faites d'Armes et

⁷³Michael Howard, War in European History (Oxford: University Press, 1976), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴Summa Theologica, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas (London: Burnes, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1911-1925): II, Part II (Second Part), Q40, art. 1.

de Chevalerie" (1408-9), translated by Caxton (1489), sanctions war "for to susteyne right & iustice . . . for to withstonde the euyl that wold defowle griewe / & oppresse the londe the contree & the people . . . for to recoure / londes / seignoryes / or other thynges / by other taken & vsurped by iniuste cause".⁷⁵ John de Legano compiled a code of international military law, De bello, de reprasaliis, et de duello (1360), based primarily on the Canon Law contained in the Decretals of the Church. This treatise was the major source of L'Arbre des Batailles by Honore Bonet (1387), a work which brought the code to a wider audience by presenting it in the vulgar tongue. Bonet's work was very popular and was the chief source of Christine de Pisan's "Le Livre des Faites d'Armes et de Chevalerie" and of Gilbert Haye's Scottish translation, The Buke of the Law of Armyes (? 1456).

Margaret Gist has observed that the romances are as seriously concerned as the moralists with the problem of just and unjust wars, and that the views expressed in these works correspond at many points with the definitions and judgements of the theorists.⁷⁶ Those fighting for just causes are guaranteed victory and are given as battle slogans the phrases "good cause", "ryght quarrell", and their equivalents.⁷⁷ Barbour's treatment of the Scots' struggle is consonant with this view.

⁷⁵The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye, ed. A. T. P. Byles (E. E. T. S., O. S. 189, 1932), pp. 11-12.

⁷⁶Love and War in the Middle English Romances (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 118-19.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 118.

As well as feudalism and the Church, chivalry was one of the chief influences determining just and unjust wars. The precepts of chivalry exhorted the knight to fight in defence of his lord, in defence of the Catholic Church, and in defence of the weak and helpless.⁷⁸ It is surely no accident that Barbour's ideal knight, James Douglas, fulfils all three charges in the course of the narrative--he fights for his liege, Bruce, for the weak and helpless (I, 459-64: "Sympill folk and worthy, / That couth nocht help thaim-self"), and finally against the Saracens in Spain.

Kliman notes, quite rightly, that it is appropriate to focus on the ideal of chivalry in The Bruce because Barbour's subject and treatment invite such a consideration.⁷⁹ She argues:

It seems reasonable to use the word chivalry for his concept of the ideal knight and to compare it to the courtly code in order to determine how it interacts with the themes that govern the work.⁸⁰

However, there are two misconceptions in her approach. She considers that the poem is about the War of Independence and that Barbour's theme is the struggle for freedom. Secondly, she identifies the chivalric ideal with the courtly code, and as a result comes to the conclusion that Barbour had difficulties in reconciling the ideal (whose object she says is personal fame,

⁷⁸Le Livre de l'ordre de chevalerie, a fourteenth-century version of Ramon Lull's Le Libre del orde de cauayleria (c. 1276), was the most important chivalric manual in the Middle Ages. It was translated by Caxton in 1484 and there are two Scottish translations, one by Gilbert Haye (1456) and one by Adam Loutfout (1494) who translated Caxton's version.

⁷⁹"The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce", p. 477.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 478.

defeat of unbelievers, achievement of personal salvation, and the winning of a lady's love) with the nature of his work.⁸¹ She argues that Barbour had to manipulate and modify the chivalric ideal in order to express his understanding of the War of Independence.

But the evidence would suggest that Barbour's concept of chivalry had little to do with the courtly code, and was in fact derived from those handbooks of chivalry which expressed the theory of the institution and the ideal of conduct to which knights should aspire. The love and service of women, for example, so important in the courtly code, have no place in the manuals of Lull, Pisan and Bonet. On the contrary, Lull regarded the doctrine of courtly love as the most degrading feature of chivalry and in his manual he omitted any reference to it, and John Gower in his Vox clamantis argued that this doctrine undermined true chivalry.⁸²

Kliman describes Bruce's military tactics as unchivalrous and concludes that Barbour was obliged to change the code of chivalry in order to accomodate strategy and stratagems:

It is obvious however because of the pains Barbour takes to make the way they [the Scots] wage war seem pardonable that he is weighing it against an ideal of chivalry that they are not able to realize. In other words, Barbour is fully conscious of the deviation from a chivalric norm.⁸³

I disagree. It is possible to demonstrate that Barbour's ideal of chivalry is very much in agreement with the views expressed in the manuals, and it would appear that he was quite concerned to show that his heroes can match that ideal. The moralists and theorists

⁸¹Ibid., p. 479.

⁸²Vox clamantis V, 2-5.

⁸³"The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce", p. 492.

did not object to the use of guile or strategy, so long as breaches of faith or the use of treachery were not involved. The attitude is essentially the same in the romances, although on occasion treachery goes uncondemned if the party employing it has the author's sympathy.⁸⁴

For Barbour strategy and stratagems represent the application of military prudence and practical wisdom, and prudence was essential to the chivalric ideal. According to Lull:

wisedome, resoun, and discrecioun ar the ledaris and governouris of chevalrye bathe in knyght, king, and Emperoure, and but wisedome the order is pervertit; for impossible thing it is that foly and ignoraunce governe that worthy ordre. And than mon it on nede force be governyt be wisedome.⁸⁵

Wisdom and discretion are also integral to Barbour's heroic ideal, and it is perhaps not insignificant when one considers the poet's use of the Maccabean analogy, that in the French derivatives of Lull's handbook of chivalry Judas Maccabeus is cited as an example of one who possessed the quality of "wit":

for oft tymes bataillis ar mare wonnyn be grace, na be force, and be wit and subtilitee na be multitude of armyt company, as sais Macabeus to the Peple of Israel, quhen he sawe his inymyes cum on him sex tymes ma na he; "Ha! Ha! Dere brethir, reconfourt yow, and makis gude chere, and traistis wele that God sall help us in this houre. For traist nocht that grete multitude makis grete victory, bot mekle erare, grete confusion. For sa grete multitude mycht nocht be governyt togedir, for thay may nocht wit in the tane end, quhat the tothir dois; and a lytill misreugle or affray makis all to flee, etc." And gert his peple put thame in gude estate, and

⁸⁴Gist, Love and War, pp. 170-71.

⁸⁵Gilbert Haye's translation, The Buke of Knychthede, ed. J. H. Stevenson, Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript, 2 vols. (S. T. S., 44, 62, 1901, 1914), 2, ch. 3, 26.

prayde to God to help thame. And thus was the bataill wonnyn throu his wit and counsaile, and confourt quhilk come of grete prudence and grace. And thus suld all gude princis and lordis that wald have thaire barnis worthy and wyse men, and hable to the ordre foresaid.⁸⁶

Finally, an examination of those narratives which influenced The Bruce reveals why the courtly code has so little relevance in any assessment of the nature of Barbour's poem. Evidence of his familiarity with some of the most popular Romances of Antiquity is manifest in The Bruce, and these works were clearly models for his own narrative and for his treatment of his heroes. It seems to me that by focussing on Barbour's heroic ideal, and by tracing the philosophical, theological, political and literary influences which shaped it, it is possible to form a fairer estimation of his achievement.

⁸⁶Ibid., ch. 7, 55. Several of the illustrative passages in Le Livre de l'ordre de chevalerie, including this one, do not occur in Lull's original and seem to be the work of the French scribes. See A. T. P. Byles's Introduction to his edition of Caxton's translation, The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry (E. E. T. S., O. S., 168, 1926), pp. xxx-xxxiv.

CHAPTER 1

Form and Theme

In choosing to write a literary work about historical personages Barbour has left both the student of medieval literature and the student of medieval history with the problem of assessing his contribution to their particular fields of study. One literary critic argues that although the heroes of The Bruce were real persons and near contemporaries of the poet, they are literary creations, products of the poetic imagination. In his view:

No second-hand knowledge of the intimacies of a hero's personal life is needed for the creation of such a character in a literary work. His virtues, prowess and the goals to which he aspires are constructed according to a formula, that of the chivalric romance.¹

On the other hand, a historian who has studied the career of the historical Bruce in some detail and compared documentary evidence with Barbour's account, has come to the conclusion that while one must acknowledge that Bruce is the hero of a work of art which emphasizes his chivalric qualities, Barbour's narrative cannot be dismissed as legend:

on the score of general reliability Barbour must be reckoned a biographer, not a romancer. . . . Barbour, though only a

¹A. M. Kinghorn, The Chorus of History: Literary-historical relations in Renaissance Britain (London: Blandford Press, 1971), p. 29.

boy when Bruce died, was a most careful and exact recorder, especially of names, personalities, incidents and points of detail. We shall not be on unsafe ground if we accept Barbour's portrait of the king, even though we must correct it by more reliable evidence wherever that is necessary and possible.²

The issue seems to be further confused by Barbour's own description of his work as a romance (I, 446) and his equally explicit assertion that he intends to write only "suthfast thing" (I, 36). This emphasis on "suthfastnes", that is, truth, invites the reader to consider Barbour as a historian, although one has first to understand what medieval historians meant by truth. They had inherited a number of classical theories about the writing of history which affected their own attempts at historiography, the most influential of which was the Ciceronian principle that it was the duty of the historian to set forth the truth with no suggestion of partiality.³ But in outlining the methods to be employed, Cicero encouraged historians to express opinions on the facts they were recording and to elaborate on the causes of the events and the performances of those involved:

since, in reading of important affairs worth recording, the plans of campaign, the executive actions and the results are successively looked for, it calls also, as regards such plans, for some intimation of what the writer approves, and, in the narrative of achievement, not only of a statement of what was done or said, but also of the manner of doing or saying it; and, in the estimate of consequences, for an exposition of all contributory causes, whether originating in accident, discretion or fool-hardiness; and as for the

²Barrow, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland, pp. 431-32.

³See Denys Hay, Annalists and Historians (London: Methuen & Co., 1977), p. 4.

individual actors, besides an account of their exploits, it demands particulars of the lives of such as are outstanding in renown and dignity.⁴

This method of writing history, with the introduction of the subjective element in the interpretation, need not in itself detract from the essential objectivity of the facts since Cicero advocates presentation of the facts with judicious commentary. However, medieval historians also inherited from another classical writer, Livy, a justification for writing history which strongly influenced Renaissance as well as medieval practice: the study of history was profitable because history taught moral lessons; in particular, it provided examples of what conduct to imitate and what to shun.⁵ A combination of these ideas gave medieval scholars a theory of historiography according to which the function of history was to improve as well as to instruct, and since the truth of history called for analysis as well as an account of the facts, interpretation in moral terms could be counted as part of the historian's task. One can see how such a theory of historiography could give rise to an extensive biographical literature dealing with the lives of outstanding past and contemporary personalities who were presented as models worthy of imitation. Early examples of this activity were the saints' lives which in turn offered a pattern for biographies of kings and princes.

⁴De Oratore, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, 2 vols. (London & Cambridge, Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1917), 1: 234-35.

⁵Ab urbe condita, ed. and trans. B. O. Foster (London & Cambridge, Mass., rev. ed., 1967), 1:243-45.

Inevitably, the desire to present some prominent person as an exemplary figure tempted biographers to emphasize the good qualities and to pass over the less praiseworthy ones, and to favour "argued episodes"⁶ rather than simple record. The Bruce can be related to this form of historical writing for it is fairly obvious that Barbour presents a deliberately glorified portrait of Robert Bruce, omitting those details (most notably Bruce's early career on the English side) which might mar the image he wished to present, and that he treats historical incidents in such a way as to emphasize their moral significance.

Most forms of historical writing in the Middle Ages, apart perhaps from the annal, were concerned with rather more than the recording of facts. In addition to the purpose of instructing and improving, history could provide entertainment. Denys Hay has observed that the growth of literature in the vernacular, particularly in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, indicates a tendency for Northern Europe to merge history with entertainment.⁷ This trend can be most clearly observed in the sagas and chansons de geste, but it can also be traced in vernacular chronicles.⁸ Furthermore, the distinctions which a modern reader would make between history and story, between fact and fiction, were not at all clear during this period.

⁶Hay, Annalists and Historians, p. 54.

⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁸See below, pp. 42-43.

By these standards The Bruce can be placed in the medieval historiographical tradition, and it is unfair to criticize the work because the author does not confine himself to reporting facts. However, it is also apparent that it is a creative work, influenced by literary conventions and modes. In order to reach any worthwhile conclusions about Barbour's place in the medieval literary tradition, it is necessary to consider the poet's own comments on the form and nature of his work and to attempt to understand his description of it as a "suthfast story" (I, 13). This requires a closer look at the two ingredients which he identifies in true stories, "suthfastnes" and "carpyng" (I, 6-7), that is, truth and narrative, for it was a combination of these two elements which allowed him to mingle a certain amount of fiction with fact. Those departures from strictly historical truth which can be traced in the poem rarely constitute grave distortions of the facts, but can be seen as embellishments or omissions which are in the interests of effective story-telling. As Alain de Lille points out, it is the poet's privilege to "combine historical events and imaginative fancies, as it were in a splendid structure, to the end that from a joining of diversities, a finer picture of the story may result".⁹

By "suthfastnes" Barbour meant historical truth in the sense that his heroes were real persons and that the events he describes actually took place. His belief that "suthfastnes, / . . . schawys the thing rycht as it wes" (I, 7-8) also seems to indicate a concern with accuracy. His claim to "say nocht bot

⁹The Complaint of Nature, trans. Douglas M. Moffat (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1908), pr. IV.

suthfast thing" (I, 36) is further impressed upon the reader by his frequent assertions that he has based his account on reliable sources. At one point he suggests that he is drawing on a written source, perhaps a chronicle or annal:

This tym that the gud Erll thomas
Assegit, as the lettir sais,
Edinburgh,
(X, 352-54)

but more commonly he claims to have trustworthy oral reports, transmitted to him by eye-witnesses. For instance, when he is describing one of Edward Bruce's encounters with the English, he comments:

A knycht that than wes in his rout,
Vorthy and vicht, stalward and stout,
Curtass and fair, and of gude fame,
Schir alane of catcart be name,
Tald me this taill as I sall tell.
(IX, 572-76)

His description of James Douglas is also presented as deriving from information given by people who knew him:

[He] had blak har, as Ic hard say;
Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,
With banys gret & schuldrys braid.
His body wes weyll maid and lenye,
As thai that saw hym said to me.
(I, 384-88)

But most frequently, he simply says that such and such an event took place "as I herd tell" or "as Ic hard say", a submission of evidence sufficiently vague to be as applicable to legendary material as to eye-witness accounts.

On other occasions the source of his information is just as equivocal, but the affirmation of its validity is quite pronounced. For example, when he pauses to consider the exploits of Edward Bruce, he writes:

For in that tyme thair him befell
Mony fair poynt, as I herd tell,

The quhilk that ar nocht writin heir.
 Bot weill I wat that, in that yeir,
 xiii Castellis with stryngth he wan,
 And ourcom mony A mody man,
 Quha-sa the suth of hym vald reid.
 (IX, 654-60)

The claim that all that he has heard about Edward Bruce's achievements at this particular stage in his career has not been reproduced in the poem, is an interesting one. It may be that there were too many of them to be recorded in a work which is not essentially devoted to the career of Edward Bruce. On the other hand, Barbour's assertion that he knows for certain that in that one year Edward captured thirteen castles seems to hint at another reason for passing over some of his exploits: that they are recounted in stories whose authenticity is uncertain. That he has a criterion for distinguishing accounts that may be included from those which are omitted is revealed in the passage in which he discusses some of James Douglas's great deeds:

. bot I
 Will let fele of thame pas forby.
 For I can nocht rehers thame all,
 And thouch I couth, trow weill ye sall
 That I mycht nocht suffice thar-to,
 Sa mekill suld be thair ado.
 Bot thai that I wat vittirly
 Eftir my wit rehers sall I.
 (X, 344-51)

Behind the conventional modesty topos one can detect Barbour's reluctance to relate episodes of which he is doubtful, which indicates that he believed himself to be exercising some degree of judgement in selecting from the available material.

Moreover, when he feels unable to choose one account of the same incident rather than another, he gives both. Hence when Bruce and his foster-brother are pursued by the men of Lorne and a sleuth-hound, he offers two accounts of how the king escaped.

According to the first, he eludes the hound by crossing a stream with the result that the animal loses the scent. Then Barbour remarks:

Thus eschapiþ the nobill kyng;
Bot sum men sais, this eschaping
Apon ane othir maner fell
Than throu the vading;
(VII, 53-56)

at which point he goes on to relate this other version in which Bruce is saved by his archer who shoots the hound. He then concludes:

Bot quethir his eschaping fell
As I tald first, or now I tell,
I wat it weill, without lesyng,
At that burn eschapiþ the king.
(VII, 75-78)

Barbour wrote The Bruce about forty-five years after the death of Robert Bruce,¹⁰ close enough in time to the events he narrates for eye-witnesses still to be around, but after a sufficiently long interval for additional material in the form of not strictly factual accounts of the deeds of Douglas and Bruce to have attached itself to men who had become legends in their own time. From the example above, we gather that different reports of at least one episode in Bruce's career were available to him. It is more than likely that this was not the only instance, but that in the other cases he used some standard to judge which was the true one. What this criterion was is not disclosed: the reader is simply asked to accept Barbour's allegation that he knew some things for certain.

He does not cite his written sources of information, although, as was mentioned earlier, one comment suggests that he

¹⁰Bruce died in 1329 and Douglas in 1330.

used at least one and, as will become evident later, he was familiar with John of Fordun's Chronica Gentis Scotorum and Gesta Annalia. The preponderance of the "as I hard say" form of substantiation may well indicate that he relied more heavily on oral accounts and the hearsay with which he had been familiar from his youth and accepted as truth. Certainly the frequency of such affirmations is striking and seems to demonstrate his concern that his account be accepted as a truthful one.

At the same time, it has to be recognized that when Barbour uses the word "suthfast" he intends it as a qualification of "story", for he is aware that stories are often mere fiction, and it is not without significance that he begins his Prologue with this familiar connotation of story: "Storyss to rede ar delitabill, / Supposs that thai be nocht bot fabill" (I, 1-2). Pleasure is derived from being told a story, from what a few lines later he calls the "carpyng" (6). This being so, says Barbour, true stories "Hawe doubill plesance in heryng" (5). The primary pleasure still derives from being told a story, but there is additional enjoyment when the story is true. It is not necessarily better because it is true; it requires good presentation (4). In other words, there must be skilled narration. The aim is to entertain the reader or hearer; when the story is true, his delight is increased. Even then, the "suthfastnes" in these stories is circumscribed, since only those true things which men like to hear, are pleasing (9-10).

Having outlined what he sees as the charm of true stories, and announced his intention to write one (11-12), Barbour goes on to give more specific reasons for writing a true story and in doing so reveals his view of the function they fulfil. He intends

to record for posterity the commendable deeds of the past which otherwise might be forgotten.

For aulde storys that men redys,
Representis to thaim the dedys
Of stalwart folk that lywyt ar,
Rycht as thai than in presence war.
(I, 17-20)

He does not regard narrative as simply a means of reporting historical events, but as a medium for dramatizing, for bringing to life again, those stalwart ancestors. His declared purpose is to celebrate the achievements of men who won renown for their prowess and prudence (21-26), an objective which will almost inevitably direct him away from factual account towards eulogy.

As C. S. Lewis has pointed out, Barbour's approach has a good deal in common with that of authors whose material we regard as wholly legendary.¹¹ The author of the fourteenth century Gest Hystoriale¹² goes to some lengths to distinguish his account of the Trojan war from works which he considers fictitious. He argues that "sothe stories" tell:

Off aunteris ben olde of aunsetris nobill,
And slydyn vppon shlepe by slomeryng of Age:
Of stithe men in stoure strongest in armes,
And wisest in wer to wale in hor tyme,
That ben drepit with deth & there day paste,
And most out of mynd for there mecull age.
(GH, 5-10)

Like Barbour he is concerned lest the glorious deeds of our ancestors be forgotten, but unlike him he is suspicious

¹¹The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 178.

¹²The "Gest Hystoriale" of the Destruction of Troy, ed. Rev. Geo. A. Pantou and David Donaldson (E. E. T. S., 39, 56, 1869). All subsequent references are to this edition. I have normalized ζ to th.

of stories designed to entertain, and he bemoans the fact that his contemporaries prefer more recent stories which aim to embolden hearts (11-14). The desire for entertainment on the part of the audience and the willingness of authors to cater to superficial and fickle tastes have led to the production of books that are "feynit o fere & ay false vnder" (18). He then criticizes those poets who "With fablis and falshed fayned there speche" (34) and who are guilty of inadequate research, citing Homer as an example, since in describing the Trojan war he "traiet the truth" (42) when he said that gods fought on the battlefield alongside the Trojans.

These fictitious accounts are contrasted to those old stories which offer true accounts. He distinguishes true accounts as ones based on diligent research which draws on eye-witness reports written down at the time of the events.

But the truth for to telle & the text eyn
Of that fight how it felle in a few yeres,
That was clanly compilet with a clerk wise,
On Gydo, a gome, that graidly hade soght,
And wist all the werks by weghe he hade,
That bothe were in batell while the batell last,
And euther sawte & assemely see with there een.
Thai wrote all the werkes wroght at that tyme,
In letturs of there langage, as thai lernede hade:
Dares and Dytes were dully there namys.
(GH., 51-60)

It is obvious that the author of the Gest Hystoriale thought that he was making a necessary distinction between fact and fiction, and that his choice of Guido of Colonna as an authority was a discriminating one. He believed that Guido "wist it in dede" (23) because he had used the eye-witness accounts of Dares and Dictys. In fact the author of the Gest Hystoriale was doubly duped. Guido of Colonna actually drew heavily on Benoît de St. Maure's Roman de

Troie (c. 1185).¹³ In addition, although the works of Dares and Dictys passed for true accounts during the Middle Ages, it is now more or less accepted that the De excidio Troiae and the De bello troiano were forgeries. (They are available only in Latin versions, that of Dictys dating from c. 5th century and that of Dares from c. 4th century.)

Although the author of the Gest Hystoriale may have been deceived, it is still worthy of note that, like Barbour, he could claim that he was presenting a true account because he had used, if indirectly, eye-witness reports. One also discovers that, as happened so often in the Middle Ages, claims to the authenticity of a history rested on citation of a Latin authority. Even though the author of the Gest Hystoriale was aware that his source, the Hystoria Troiana (1287), was an expansion of the version of Dares' history which had reached Guido,¹⁴ he unquestioningly accepts the veracity of his source because he believed that it was a Latin history. In reality, the Hystoria Troiana was a translation of a French romance (Roman de Troie) which Benoît, wittingly or unwittingly, had filled with medieval concepts and values.¹⁵

¹³In his Prologue Benoît states that his material is drawn from Dares of Phrygia rather than Homer because while the latter lived more than a hundred years after the siege of Troy and had filled his account with fables, the former gave the true account because he had been an eye-witness. Roman de Troie, ed. Léopold Constans, 6 vols. (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1904-12), 1: ll. 44-56.

¹⁴Gest Hystoriale, ll. 68-77.

¹⁵Jean Frappier's comment on the so-called Romances of Antiquity, including the Roman de Troie, is interesting in this connection: Ils gardent en effet une allure de "geste" ou de chronique et leurs auteurs se réclament de la vérité historique, sans qu'il soit toujours facile de discerner dans quelle mesure ils sont dupes eux-mêmes de cette assertion, car ils ne pouvaient ignorer, pour leur propre compte, la part de romanesque et

Indeed the particular example of falsification of which Homer is accused and which led Benoît, Guido and the author of the Gest Hystoriale to prefer Dares and Dictys, demonstrates a typically medieval attitude: it originates in a Christian revulsion at the pagan belief in false gods, rather than in any sound distinction between fact and fiction.

The citing of an authority who claimed to present a true account was not restricted to the use of Latin sources. In Scottish literature one has only to turn to Andrew of Wyntoun to find a similar kind of undoubting acceptance of the veracity of an other author's account: he actually passes over the career of Robert Bruce, referring his readers to The Bruce where all his deeds are recorded "in all lele suthfastnes".¹⁶ Moreover, Wyntoun's approach to his own work deserves some attention here, especially in relation to the extent to which it conforms with or deviates from that of Barbour and the author of the Gest Hystoriale.

The resemblances are most apparent in the opening lines of Wyntoun's Prologue:

As men ar be thare qualyteys
Inclynyd tyl dywersyteys,
Mony yharnys for tyll here
Off tymys that befor thaim were,
The statys chawngyde and the greis.
Quhar-for off swylk antyqwyteys,
Thai that set hale thare delyte

d'invention qu'ils ajoutaient à leurs sources historiques ou pseudo-historiques en latin. "Remarques Sur La Peinture et de La Vie et Des Heros Antiques Dans La Littérature Française Du XII^e et Du XIII^e Siècle", L'Humanisme Medieval Dans Les Littératures Romanes Du XII^e au XIV^e Siècle, Actes du Colloque de L'Université de Strasbourg, 1962, (Paris: Libraire C. Klincksieck, 1965), p. 15.

¹⁶Orygynale Cronykil, ed. Laing, bk. VIII, ch. V, 981. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.

Gest or story for to wryte,
Owthir in metyre, or in prose,
Fluryside fayrly thaire purpose
Wytht queynt and curyous circumstance,
To rays hartis in plesance,
And the heraris tyll excyte
Be wyt, or wyll, tyll thaire delyte.
(1-14)

Although he is a chronicler, like Barbour he regards history as stories about the past which satisfy man's desire for knowledge about his forebears and also serve to entertain him. I say history, but Wyntoun acknowledges alternatives: "Gest or story". While it is possible that these are synonyms, and according to medieval usage both words could mean history or legend,¹⁷ it seems from the context that Wyntoun may actually be referring here to alternatives: heroic tales ("gestes") or histories ("storys", for example, chronicles). This receives support from the fact that while "story" could mean either history or tale, in usage "story" most commonly refers to history.¹⁸

¹⁷In the Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST), ed. W. A. Craigie (Chicago, 1931-), "gest" is defined as "A tale or a story, a legend or history", and in the Middle English Dictionary (MED), ed. Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, 1952-), "geste" is defined as: (a) a poem or song about heroic deeds, a chivalric romance; (b) a poem or song of any kind; (c) a prose chronicle or history, a prose romance or tale. The DOST and the MED have not been completed as far as words beginning with 'S', so I have been unable to consult their definitions of "story". However, see below, n. 18.

¹⁸Although the relevant volume has not been published yet, the staff of the DOST kindly allowed me to consult the material which will eventually be included s.v. "Storie/Story". While "story" can mean history or tale, most of the citations testify to its use in the sense of history, e.g. Haye: "the stories and cronykis of thai tymes" (The Buke of the Law of Armyis, lxxxii, p. 216), Wyntoun: "The paganys made in thaire storys" (II, 137), and Wallace, V, 473.

In contrast to the author of the Gest Hystoriale, Wyntoun does not distinguish the authors of histories in terms of the factual or fictional nature of their compositions, but rather according to the manner in which they present their works, classing Guido of Colonna with Virgil and Homer as authors who "curyowsly dytyde thare storis", in contradistinction to Dares of Phrygia whose style was plain (15-25). The author of the Gest Hystoriale had criticized those poets who had embellished their material (they "made more of that mater than hom maister were"), but Wyntoun, like Barbour, seems to consider enhanced narration a desirable feature. He later writes:

Swa stablyst have I my delyte
Consequenter now to dyt
 Wytth delytabyll incydens,
 And in plesand conveniens.
 (III, Prologue, 25-28)

His treatment, on his own admission, is influenced by what will entertain his readers (II, Prologue, 24-26). He also sees history as a useful vehicle for moral instruction, and states that part of his purpose is to set before his readers great personages of the past who he regards as exemplary figures. In the Prologue to Book III he says that he intends to concentrate on the morally praiseworthy:

Oure eldrys we sulde folowe off det,
 That thaire tyme in wertu set;
 Off thame, that lyvyd wytyously,
 Carpe we bot lytyll, and that warly.
 (19-22)

Clearly Wyntoun, who actually identifies his work with that of others in the medieval tradition of chronicle-writing (I, Prologue, 95-122), had all sorts of intentions in writing apart from recording historical events. We might almost say that Wyntoun too regarded his task as a creative activity. His work represents not

only a selection from available chronicles and translation from Latin into his native tongue, but the imposition of form on amorphous matter. He even borrows the Aristotelian terms--forma and materia--to describe the process:

Allsua set I myne intent,
My wyt, my wyll, and myne talent,
Fra that I sene hade storis sere
In Cronnyklys, quhare thai wryttyne were,
Thare matere in tyll fowrme to drawe
Off Latyne, in tyll Ynglys sawe.
For Romans to rede is delytabylle,
Suppose that thai be quhyle bot fabyllle,
And set tyll this I gawe my wylle,
My wyt, I kene, swa skant thare-tylle,
That I dowl sare thaim tyll offende
That kane me, and my werk amende,
Gywe I wryte owthir mare or les
Than the storis berys wytne.

(I, Prologue, 25-38)

His comments also reveal something of his concept of "suthfastnes". For Wyntoun it means fidelity to his sources, especially his Latin authorities. He has translated various histories ("storis sere") into the vernacular because narratives in the vernacular give pleasure. The sentence, "For Romans to rede is delytabylle", obviously reminded Wyntoun, or his scribe, of the first couplet of Barbour's poem, for the echo is pronounced,¹⁹ and led him to complete it as Barbour had done. But Wyntoun is anxious to emphasize that, although his work is in "romans"--in the vernacular--it is a true history, for he goes on to express his concern about fidelity to his sources: he writes as "the storis berys wytne".

Since we have already observed that he lacked the kind of discriminating attitude which the author of the Gest Hystoriale

¹⁹In some MSS. "storis" occurs instead of "Romans".

demonstrated towards the various accounts of the Trojan war,²⁰ or, for that matter, the kind of standards for inclusion or exclusion of material one can attribute to Barbour, there is no evidence that Wyntoun appraised his sources from the point of view of their authenticity. Of course we are not entirely justified in criticizing Wyntoun on these grounds. He was, after all, a chronicler, which is to say a compiler, and his own description of the procedure he has adopted shows that he employed the main method of assembling general histories practised at the time, which was to provide a summary of world history from the creation, with increasing space given to the history of his native country as he approached his own day.

It is my purpos tyll afferme
This Tretis in tyll certane terme,
Haldand tyme be tym the date,
As Cronyklerys be-for me wrate,
Reqwyrande the correctioun
Off grettare of perfectyoun.
For few wrytys I redy fande,
That I couth drawe to my warande:
Part off the Bybyll wytth that, that Perys
Comestor ekyde in hys yherys;
Orosius, and Frere Martyne,
Wytth Ynglis and Scottis storys syne,
And othir incedeyns sere,
Accordand lyk tyll oure matere.

(I, Prologue, 109-122)

Furthermore, this outline of the scheme on which his work is constructed, provides an important clue to the difference in nature of the works of Wyntoun and Barbour, a difference which outweighs the similarities. Both would have regarded their works as the imposition of form on shapeless matter, but they chose

²⁰This, despite the fact that Wyntoun seems to have been well acquainted with the Gest Hystoriale and, as Rev. G. A. Panton observed in his introduction to that poem, that the beginning of Wyntoun's Prologue was evidently composed with that of the Gest Hystoriale in mind (p. xxxiv).

different forms. Wyntoun was working in the medieval tradition of chronicle-writing: he adopts the pattern of the Seven Ages, his narrative is ordered chronologically, and he identifies his sources as the common ingredients of chronicles.²¹ Barbour, on the other hand, presents his readers with a thematic narrative. We have already discovered that his primary interest in "suthfast stories" lay in the "carpyng", the narrative or means of telling the story. For Barbour this also meant shaping the material available to him. He collected various stories about the exploits of Robert Bruce and James Douglas and then ordered them in a narrative which is structured in a way which reveals a conscious awareness and development of theme. It is precisely this element which Skeat overlooked when he attempted to assess the nature of the work in the introduction to his edition of the poem:

We are hardly to regard it in the light of an exact history, but rather as a succession of episodes telling us various stories about the great perils and adventures of the heroes.²²

In broad terms, his theme is the celebration of the great deeds of Robert Bruce and James Douglas, as he intimates in his Prologue:

And, certis, thai suld weill hawe pryss
That in thar tyme war wucht and wyss,
And led thar lyff in gret trawaill,

²¹According to Denys Hay these were a summary of world history from the creation usually drawn from Peter Comestor's paraphrase of the Bible (Historia Scholastica), ancient history as epitomised by Eusebius-Jerome and Orosius, and the material accumulated by the Easter tables, Annalists and Historians, pp. 63-64. Wyntoun, writing in the fifteenth century, used the thirteenth century Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum of Martinus Polonus instead of Eusebius-Jerome, and English and Scottish chronicles rather than Easter tables.

²²Vol. 1, p. lv.

And oft in hard stour off bataill
 Wan richt gret price off chewalry,
 And war woydyt off cowardy.
 As wes king Robert off Scotland,
 That hardy wes off hart and hand;
 And gud Schyr Iames off douglas,
 That in his tyme sa worthy was,
 That off hys price & hys bounte
 In fer landis renownyt wes he.
 Off thaim I thynk this buk to ma.
 (I, 21-33)

It is his intention to concentrate not only on a particular period of Scottish history, but on particular individuals and their achievements. 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.²³ But Barbour's emphasis leads us to expect an elaboration of the historical in which the heroic and the chivalrous will be stressed.

A similar approach to historical material is found in the alliterative Morte Arthure (late fourteenth century). In the preamble the author can offer the prospect of a true story because his work was derived from chronicles (Wace and Layamon), but it is quite clear that with this work we move in to thematic narrative:

Ye that liste has to lyth or luffes for to here,
 Off elders of alde tym and of theire awke dedys,
 How they were lele in theire lawe and lovede God
 Almyghty,
 Herkynes me heyndly and holdys yow styll,
 And I sall tell yow a tale, that trewe es and nobyll,
 Off the ryeall renkys of the rownde table,
 That chefe ware of chevalrye and cheftans nobyll,
 Bathe ware in thire werkes and wyse men of armes,
 Doughty in theire doyngs, and dredde ay schame,

²³I am thinking of the kind of classification of chanson de geste and romance as essentially different literary modes offered by critics like John Finlayson in his introduction to Morte Arthure (Evanston: Northwestern University Press for York Medieval Texts, 1967; reprint ed., 1971), pp. 5-11.

Kynde men and courtays and couthe of courte thewes;
How they whanne wyth were wyrchippis many,
Sloughe Lucyus the lythyre, that lorde was of Rome,
And conqueryd that kyngryke thorowe craftys of armes.
Herkenes now hedyrwarde and herys this storrye.²⁴

Paramount here is the delight of story, and the prospect of additional enjoyment from being told a true story is thrown in. His theme offers several parallels with Barbour's, but the most significant is that the work will deal with the chivalrous deeds of brave ancestors.²⁵

Earlier in this chapter I pointed out that Barbour suggests in at least one place that he had a written source. In fact, it is possible to relate The Bruce to the Scottish chronicle tradition in much the same way as Morte Arthure can be related to the Brut chronicles. Very few medieval Scottish chronicles are extant, but there is some evidence that Barbour took not only information but his cue from John of Fordun's Gesta Annalia.²⁶ In those chapters of the annals which deal with the career of Bruce, Fordun's admiration for this king of Scotland is quite obvious. But precisely because he was an annalist, he confined himself to a chronological treatment of Bruce's well-known battles and exploits

²⁴Ed. John Finlayson, ll. 12-25.

²⁵Ultimately the development of what Denys Hay calls chivalrous historiography affected the chronicle tradition. Froissart's Chronicles is a striking example. His conception of history is totally centred on individuals and their valiant deeds. Annalists and Historians, pp. 75-76.

²⁶Ed. Skene, Chronica Gentis Scotorum. The annals appear to have been compiled in 1363, and Fordun then spent the next twenty-four years putting together a general history of Scotland until his death in 1385. See Skene's introduction, pp. xxx-xxxiv.

(bella famosa, et gesta publica, per annos, quibus accidebant).²⁷

However, he makes a comment which indicates that he thought that someone else might attempt to write in greater detail about Bruce and his individual feats of prowess:

Insuper, inter tot adversa, et innumerabiles angustias, quas laeto animo pertulit et invicto, si quis suos particulares conflictus, et singulares triumphos, victorias et duella, quibus, Domino opitulante, propriis viribus, et humana virtute, hostium cuneos penetrabat securus, hos potenter prosternens nunc, et potenter nunc declinans poenam mortis evadendo, noverit recitare, probabit, ut arbitror, quod infra mundi climata, in suis temporibus, in arte pugnandi, et corporis vigore, nullos similes habebat.²⁸

This passage might be considered almost as an invitation which Barbour took up, for his poem concentrates on the very aspects to which Fordun alludes, but which the latter refrained from describing because, as he later says, Bruce's individual deeds were so numerous and details as to when and where they happened were known to few of his contemporaries.²⁹

It certainly seems likely that Barbour based his portrait of Bruce on Fordun's description of him as the God-appointed saviour and champion of Scotland who, moved by pity³⁰

tanquam alter Machabaeus, manum mittens ad fortia, pro fratribus liberandis, innumeros 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.³¹

²⁷Ibid., ch. CXVIII.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰C.f. Barbour, who says that Bruce "Saw all the kynryk swa forfayr; / And swa trowblyt the folk saw he, / That he tharoff had gret pitte", I, 478-80.

³¹Gesta Annalia, ch. CXII.

Barbour's concept of Bruce's heroism is summed up in his description of him as a "man sa hard sted . . . / That eftirwart com to sic bounte" (II, 47-48), and is developed with particular attention not only to his prowess, but to his courageous endurance. Long sections of the narrative are devoted to the tribulations which Bruce has to bear, including physical hardships in the days after Methven and the treachery of professed friends.

Although Barbour may have been indebted to Fordun for his theme, he extended and amplified it considerably. From the idea about false friends, Barbour was led to consider the importance of true friends with the result that in his presentation Bruce's success is attributed in large part to the loyalty of such men as James Douglas. Fordun has little to say about this knight,³² but the oral accounts of his deeds must have impressed Barbour greatly, for he makes Douglas the joint hero of his narrative, and accords him this status mainly because of his loyalty. In addition, Fordun's reference to Bruce as an "alter Machabaeus" is taken over and developed by Barbour, but the analogy is broadened by the poet and ultimately he stresses quite different parallels. Fordun compares Bruce to Judas Maccabeus because he took up arms and underwent numerous sufferings in order to liberate his fellow-countrymen (pro fratribus liberandis). While this resemblance is recognized by Barbour in his allusion to the Maccabees in Book I, 464-76, his main emphasis is quite different. For him the significance of the similarities to the biblical story lay in the fact that his heroes with a small band of faithful men overcame much mightier enemies

³²There are three short references to Douglas in the annals: chs. CXXX, CXL, and CXLIV.

through their great valour and with God's help. Hence Barbour introduces the comparison in what is really an expanded statement of his theme (I, 445-76) in which he announces that his narrative will tell:

Off men that war in gret distress,
And assayit full gret hardynes,
Or thai mycht cum till thar entent;
But syne our lord sic grace thaim sent,
That thai syne, throw thar gret walour,
Come till gret hycht & till honour,
Magre thar fayis euirilkane,
That war sa fele, that ay for ane
Off thaim, thai war weill a thowsand.
(I, 445-55)

Their goal, like that of the Maccabees, is the freedom of their country, but, significantly, it is not this resemblance that is stressed so much as the valour of men who succeeded against a numerically superior foe:

. for-thi
Thai war lik to the machabeys,
That, as men in the bibill seys,
Throw thar gret worschip and walour,
Fawcht in-to mony stalwart stour,
For to delyuir thar countre
Fra folk that, throw Iniquite,
Held thaim and thairis in thrillage:
Thai wrocht sua throw thar wasselage,
That with few folk thai had wictory
Off mychty kingis, as sayis the story,
And delyueryt thar land all fre;
Quharfor thar name suld lovyt be.
(I, 464-76)

Throughout the narrative the idea that a few can succeed against many, if sufficiently motivated, occurs again and again. Part of Barbour's conception of the heroic disposition is revealed in his presentation of his heroes' unwavering faith in the possibility of victory over a mightier enemy. Hence Bruce encourages his small company at Methven by telling them that "multitud maiss na victory;
/ As men has red in mony story, / That few folk oft has wencusyt
ma" (II, 330-32). But although the poet here makes Bruce echo

Judas Maccabeus's words to his men before a battle with Seron and the Syrian army (1 Macc. 3:19), it is not Bruce but his brother who is compared to the biblical hero later in the narrative. After describing a battle between Edward Bruce's small army and a huge English host commanded by Richard of Clare near Kilross, Barbour says of Edward:

This gud knycht, that so vorthy was,
Till Iudas, machabeus that hicht,
Micht liknyt weill be in that ficht.
Na multitud he forsuk of men,
Quhill he hade ane aganis ten.
(XIV, 312-16)

It is always rewarding from the point of view of ascertaining the nature and purpose of Barbour's work to heed the poet's own comments, which are frequent and expository. From first to last he is consistent about his theme and its presentation. Fordun may have inspired The Bruce, but the emphasis and development are Barbour's own. So, although he takes up Fordun's suggestion for a more detailed treatment of the deeds of Robert Bruce with particular attention to the individual feats and the human qualities which made them possible, and although he went on to make use of the Maccabean analogy, one cannot possibly account for Barbour's poem wholly in terms of his source of inspiration.

He started out with a controlling idea: to celebrate the deeds of Robert Bruce and James Douglas ("Off thaim I thynk this buk to ma"). He is, above all, interested in the qualities of the men who led the struggle for Scottish independence, rather than the ideals for which they fought. This is why I cannot agree with the kind of interpretation of the poem offered by Lois A. Ebin who says that:

It is more accurate to view the Bruce as an exemplum or mirror designed to illustrate the importance of the ideals of freedom



and loyalty for the Scottish nation.³³

She supports this view by referring to the form of the narrative in the MSS. in which individual episodes appear as self-contained units, and arguing that:

By developing the narrative in this way, Barbour directs the reader's attention to the incident rather than to longer sections of narrative or continuous strands of action. Each episode is carefully developed as a unit with a definite beginning, middle and end and Barbour typically develops the action by techniques which draw attention to its exemplary value.³⁴

But such an interpretation overlooks the fact that Barbour does impose a form on the narrative, since the individual episodes--most of which are designed to point up his heroes' qualities--are united by the careers of his heroes. The action begins³⁵ with Bruce's entry on the scene, and his decision to assume the kingship of Scotland (I, 477-510), and Douglas's embarkation on his career as a knight (II, 91-174), and is not brought to a close until their natural lives, and simultaneously their professional careers, are over. While individual episodes are developed in a way that underlines their exemplary value, the intention is not so much "to illustrate the importance of the ideals of freedom and loyalty for the Scottish nation" as to indicate the various respects in which Bruce and Douglas may be regarded as an exemplary king and knight. Most of these episodes are designed to demonstrate the

³³Lois A. Ebin, "John Barbour's Bruce: Poetry, History and Propaganda", p. 220.

³⁴Ibid., p. 221.

³⁵After the Prologue Barbour outlines the background to the events with which his narrative is concerned (I, 37-444) and then announces that "The Romanys now begynnys her" at line 445.

particular qualities Bruce and Douglas possessed and which Barbour believed to be essential in an ideal king and knight. The emphasis is therefore always thrown back on the individuals as exemplary types as when, for instance, the poet expresses the hope that Bruce's descendants will govern the land as well as he did:

God grant that thai, that cummyne ar
Of his ofspring, maynteyme the land,
And hald the folk weill to warrand,
And maynteme richt and ek laute,
As weill as in his tyme did he!
(XIII, 708-12)

He also closes his narrative on a similar note, this time in the form of a prayer, entreating the descendants of Douglas and Randolph to follow the example set by their forebears:

He, that hye Lorde of al thing is,
Vp till his mekill bliss thame bryng,
And grant his grace, that thar ofspryng
Lede weill the Land, and ententif
Be to folow, in all thair liff,
Thair nobill elderis gret bounte!
(XX, 612-17)

By appreciating Barbour's emphasis on the achievements of Bruce and Douglas one can also gain an insight into the reasons behind his description of his work as a romance (I, 446). He found the inspiration for his theme in Fordun's annals, but he had to look elsewhere for a model for a suitable presentation. It is not surprising that he thought of works in which other great historical or pseudo-historical figures such as Alexander, Julius Caesar and Arthur, had been commemorated, and that he set out to produce a similar work on Bruce. The clearest indication that he was thinking in these terms is found early in the poem when he elaborates on the subject of treason where the examples he cites to parallel the treachery of John Comyn towards Bruce are all pseudo-historical instances of treason perpetrated against Alexander,

Julius Caesar and Arthur. These men had been the subjects of romances or romantic histories devoted to their great exploits.

It was almost certainly through the influence exerted by the reading of such narratives³⁶ that Barbour came to conceive his work as a romance. When he announces "The Romanys begynnys her" (I, 446), he does not intend to contradict the description given earlier in his Prologue of his narrative as a "suthfast story". Jamieson in his definition of "romance" actually gives as his first meaning of the word "a genuine history"³⁷ because of Barbour's use of the word. He cites the reference in The Bruce and argues: "This word Romanys does not mean what we now term a romance, or fiction, but a narrative of facts in romance, or the vulgar tongue". ("A work of fiction" is given as a second meaning of romance.) In fact, I doubt if Barbour did intend such a precise meaning as that offered by Jamieson. The word simply meant a narrative in the vernacular and, like story, could equally well deal with facts, fictions, or a combination of these. As I noted earlier, Wyntoun also uses the word in this sense.

Nevertheless, in another way altogether Barbour is very precise and consistent in his use of the word "romanys". It is the vehicle for the celebration of great warriors who won renown for their chivalric deeds.³⁸ From the Prologue we learn that

³⁶For evidence of Barbour's reading and the influence of medieval romances on The Bruce see chapter 5.

³⁷An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language (Edinburgh, 1808; new ed., Paisley, 1927).

³⁸The DOST definition, yet to be published, offers this primary meaning of Romanis: "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". Examples from The Bruce and The Buik of Alexander, among others, are cited in support.

Barbour wished to commemorate Bruce and Douglas in this manner (I, 21-33). When he gives a fuller exposition of his theme he uses the word romance to describe his narrative and reveals that in his view it is the nature of such a work to present examples of spectacular human achievement in the face of adversity:

The Romanys now begynnys her,
Off men that war in gret distress,
And assayit full gret hardynes,
Or thai mycht cum till thar entent;
Bot syne our lord sic grace thaim sent,
That thai syne, throw thar gret walour,
Come till gret hycht & till honour.
(I, 446-52)

That he understands romance as particularly concerned with men whose mettle as well as muscle is taxed, that is to say it is about men who achieve success through great personal and persistent endeavour, is underlined when he says of Robert Bruce:

. . . . sa hard myscheiff him fell,
That Ik herd neur in Romanys tell
Off man sa hard sted as wes he,
That eftirwart com to sic bounte.
(II, 45-48)

This conception of romance as a narrative about men who, in Barbour's phraseology, are "hard sted", is further illuminated by the summary he offers of the romance of Ferumbras. The king reads to his men the

Romanys off worthi ferambrace,
That worthily our-cummyn was
Throw the rycht douchty olywer;
And how the duk-peris wer
Assegyt In-till egrymor,
Quhar king lawyne lay thaim befor,
With may thowsandis then I can say.
And bot xi within war thai,
And A woman: and war sa stad,
That thai na mete thar-within had,
Bot as thai fra thar fayis wan.
(III, 437-47)

Romance deals with great feats of prowess, "chewalry", and

celebrates the men who, through "hard assay" and "gret trawail", win personal renown, especially when they are outnumbered. Hence, when Barbour expresses admiration for Edward Bruce's great exploits, he remarks that they would provide fitting material for many romances:

This Schir Eduard forsuth, I hicht,
Wes of his handis a nobill knyght,
And in blithnes swet and Ioly;
Bot he wes outrageouss hardy,
And of so hye vndirtaking,
That he neuir had none abasing
Of multitude of men; for-thi
He discumfit commonly
Mony with quheyn; tharfor had he
Outour his peris renowne.
For quha reheress wald all his deid,
Of his hye vorschipe and manheid
Men mycht mony romanys mak;
And, nocht-for-thi, I think till tak
On hand, off hym to say sum thing,
Bot nocht the tend part his traualing.
(IX, 480-95)

Yet Edward Bruce is not one of the heroes of Barbour's romance. For the poet the truly heroic man possesses the virtue of mesure, that is to say, he always tempers his valour with prudence. He points out that although Edward deserves praise for his intrepidity, he must be criticized for his desmesure (IX, 661-72). This emphasis on mesure reveals the influence of French romances in which the hero was not only renowned for his prowess but also for his mesure. In his Prologue he expresses the view that the men who most deserve to be honoured are those who not only "led thar lyff in gret trawail" but who "in thar tyme war wucht and wyss" (I, 21-23). These two elements constitute true valour in Barbour's opinion, and on various occasions throughout the narrative the poet stresses the close relationship between them:

Bot priss of vorschip, nocht-forthi,

Is hard to vyn but gret travale;
Oft till defende and oft assale,
And till be in thair dedis wiss,
Gerris men of vorship vyn the priss,
Thar may no man haf worthyhede,
Bot he haf wit to steir his stede,
And se quhat is to leif or ta.
(VI, 328-35)

The necessity of prudence is specifically stressed, since true
valour:

Has so gret varnasyng of vit,
That it all peralis weill can se,
And all avantagis that may be.
It wald till hardyment hald haly,
With-thi away war the foly.
For hardyment vith foly is viss;
Bot hardyment, that mellit is
Vith vit, Is vorschip ay, per-de;
For, but vit, vorschip may nocht be.
(VI, 350-58)

The influence of romances is further underlined in the epithets Barbour employs to describe his heroes, but especially in the frequent application of the word "curtaiss". The three primary qualities of the romance hero were prowess, mesure and courtoisie. In romances, courtoisie operated in three different but inter-related areas of experience: refinement of the laws of combat, social intercourse, and service of women.³⁹ In The Bruce the fair treatment of prisoners is attributed to this quality. Hence, after Bannockburn, when an English knight, Sir Marmaduke Betoun, surrenders to Bruce, Barbour says that the latter treated him "curtasly" by welcoming him to Scotland and later sending him home to England ransom free and laden with gifts (XIII, 516-36). The poet then draws attention to Bruce's admirable conduct:

³⁹John Finlayson, ed. Morte Arthure, Introduction, p. 9.

A worthy man that wald swa do
Micht mak him gretly for to priss.
(XIII, 536-37)

Similarly, after a battle near Byland when some French knights have been captured by the Scots and brought before the king, we are told that he "gert tret thame curtasly" (XVIII, 538), and once again the ransom is waived and the prisoners are sent home with presents for the king of France. Barbour remarks:

His frendis thusgat curtasly
He couth ressaue, and hamely,
And his fais stoutly to-stonay.
(XVIII, 545-47)

Courtoisie as a courtly, social attribute is not really depicted in the poem since most of the action takes place on battlefields. However, Barbour is concerned to convey that his heroes are not simply warriors but that they are socially accomplished knights. The comment that Bruce was as courteous to his friends as he was militant with his foes illustrates this. He takes the opportunity to point out that his heroes possess courtoisie whenever he lists their prominent qualities. So Randolph is not only valiant but "Curtas at poynt, and debonar" (X, 283), and early in the catalogue of Douglas's virtues we learn that he is "curtaiss, and deboner" (I, 362). Indeed, Douglas is loved by those around him because of his courteous conduct (I, 379-80), but again this is a facet of his behaviour which is contrasted with his pugnacity:

Quhen he wes blyth, he wes lufly,
And meyk and sweyt in cumpany;
Bot quha in battaill mycht him se,
All othir contenance had he.
(I, 389-92)

The frequency with which a fearless demeanour on the battlefield is offset by courteous conduct in social intercourse suggests that

Barbour regarded these two as complementary aspects of true nobility. It will be remembered that in Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose "curtesye" and "valour" are depicted as the two feathers on the arrow of "fraunchise".⁴⁰

The action of The Bruce leaves little scope for any detailed treatment of courtoisie as a social attribute, but it leaves even less for the practice of this virtue in the service of women, at least in the conventional, medieval literary mode. One could perhaps argue that Barbour recognized that it operates in this area of experience when he describes Bruce's halt during a campaign in Ireland because a poor laundress is in labour as "a full gret curtasy" (XVI, 289).

The influence of romance ideals can therefore be traced in the poem in the qualities ascribed to the heroes and is most obvious in his concept of the hero as "curtaiss and wyss and wycht". However, it is equally apparent that the emphasis which Barbour places on these qualities, the context in which they operate, and the end which they are made to serve differ considerably from those in conventional medieval romances. For the typical hero of the courtly romance courtoisie is the ideal to which he aspires, and, above all, his deeds of prowess are directed towards the winning of personal glory and very often the love of a lady. Of central concern is the testing of an individual through a series of adventures and his progress towards union with the lady he loves.

⁴⁰Ed. F. N. Robinson in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1970), ll. 955-57. All subsequent references to Chaucer's works are to this edition.

Barbour is aware of this aspect and even incorporates references to this kind of motivation in his narrative. He tells how after one of James Douglas's successful attacks on the English garrison in Douglas Castle a letter was found on the body of the dead captain, Sir John Webtoun, from a lady declaring that:

. . . . 'quhen he had yemyt a yer
In wer, as ane gude bachiller,
And gouernit weill, in all maner,
The auenturus castell off douglas,
That to kepe so perelous was,
Than mycht he weill ask ane lady
Hir amouris and hir drowry;'

(VIII, 493-98)

But this is an unusually full reference to a romance motif. On the whole allusions to a knight's love for a lady are very few and far between and are not developed in a way which suggests that love is the spur for feats of prowess. We are told that Edward Bruce mourns the death of Sir William Ross at Bannockburn because he loved that knight's sister rather than his own wife (XIII, 484-87), and although the Earl of Murray is said to be "In cumpany solacius / . . . and thar-with amorus" (X, 290-91), his amatory exploits are not treated in the poem. This is because this aspect of the romance hero had no significant interest for Barbour, and indeed it is notable that in the summary of the romance of Ferumbras the love story is not mentioned. He simply says that eleven knights "And A woman" (III, 445) were besieged in Aigremont, although the woman was the sultan's daughter who had defied her father because of her love for one of Charlemagne's knights, and she plays an important role in the romance.⁴¹

⁴¹Barbour's synopsis (III, 437-62) corresponds to the subject of the French Fierabras (12th century), ed. A. Kroeber and G. Servois (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1860) or the Middle English Sir Ferumbras (c. 1357), ed. S. J. Herrtage (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 34, 1879), which is a close translation of Fierabras.

Apart perhaps from the laundress the women who are mentioned in The Bruce are mainly women with whom Bruce has brief liaisons and who show their loyalty to the king by warning him of any danger he might be in, and women like the two goodwives who offer their sons as liegemen to Bruce as proof of their loyalty (IV, 663-67; VII, 237-66). Indeed, for Barbour love and friendship are synonymous with loyalty whether it is love of a knight for his fellow knights or love between the sexes. He actually uses the terms "leyle luff" and "leawte" interchangeably to describe sound marital relationships (II, 516), and loyalty as true friendship and service is expressed in the poet's description of the Bruce-Douglas relationship: "Thair frendschip woux ay mar & mar: / For he [Douglas] serwyt ay lelely" (II, 170-71).

The action of the poem offers more opportunities for concentrating on the relationships between knights and between lord and vassal, that is to say, man to man relationships rather than man to woman relationships. Therefore, just as the emphasis shifts from love to loyalty, so the greatest stress on courtoisie is as the virtue which creates bonds between men. Hence Bruce's followers rejoice that they have

A lord so swet and debonar,
So curtass and of sa fair effer,
(VIII, 381-82)

and after his death they miss "our all, the gret Cumpany / That he oft maid thame curtesly" (XX, 261-62). Douglas is similarly mourned after his death and Barbour comments:

Men may weill wit, thouch nane thaim tell,
How angry, sorrowfull, and how fell
Is till tyne sic ane lord as he
Till thame that war of his menghe.
For he wes swete and debonar,

And weill couth tret his frendis far,
(XX, 507-12)

where Douglas's courteous treatment of his vassals creates the same ties of friendship associated with loyalty. In fact, the courtoisie of a lord inspires the loyalty of his men. But courtoisie in a lord is not only the correlative of loyalty in his followers; it also characterizes a knight's relationship with his overlord. So when Douglas pays homage to Bruce we are told that he "lowtyt him Full curtasly" (II, 154).

This emphasis on the lord-vassal relationship, and on feudal ties in particular, pulls away from the romance tradition. One cannot fail to note the pervasive use of terms associated with feudalism throughout the poem--"athis", "bacheler" (knight bachelor), "band", "bundin" (bound), "byddyng", "chewalry", "cheyff" (tenure), "clamys", "conand" (covenant), "cunnand" (agreement), "deuour" (duty), "enbandownyt" (made subject), "erll", "fay" (fealty), "fewte", "feys" (fiefs), "forfalt" (forfeited), "hecht" (to pledge), "homage", "hostage", "knychtis", "laute", "lege" (free), "lege pouste" (full power), "lowtyt" (made obeisance to), "manrent" (homage), "menske" (honour), "releif" (a sum of money paid to a lord on entrance to an inheritance), "retennew", "sekirness" (security), "senyory" (lordship), "service", "shyrreffys", "taill" (payment of a due by an heir on succession), "tailye" (covenant), "vassalage", "warrand" (protection), and "yemanry"--all of which characterize the various persons, duties, bonds and responsibilities involved in the feudal system. Certainly, Barbour succeeds in conveying the very real obligations attached to status. The world of the poem is clearly not the world of romance in which the individual exploits of

knights in pursuit of private goals are presented, but Scotland at a time of crisis. The context is war, a real war, and in Barbour's view victory was made possible by the men who led the Scots and the particular virtues they possessed. His heroes are not knight-adventurers or courtly heroes, but feudal warriors whose goal is a political one--the liberation of their country from a foreign occupying force.

In many ways The Bruce resembles the subject-matter of chansons de geste, especially those of the Charlemagne cycle, in its concern with nationalism, war, warrior-heroes and a warrior-king. John Finlayson has distinguished chansons de geste from romances chiefly on the basis of the different values stressed and the different concepts of the hero. He observes that in the former the group is dominant, feudal loyalty is stressed, and valour, to be admirable, must be employed in the defence of a worthy object such as God or king, or a combination of the two.⁴²

Certainly all these features are prominent in Barbour's poem. However, the hero of the chanson de geste was chiefly renowned for his prowess and the measure of his heroic stature was usually the magnitude of his undertakings. Barbour expresses his admiration for feats of daring and the courageous spirit which motivates them, and frequently draws attention to the "worschippe", "walour", "cheuelry", "prowes", or "bounte" displayed by individuals. For example, he says of Edward Bruce:

Throu his cheuelrous cheuelry
Galloway wes stonayit gretumly,

⁴²Introduction to his edition of Morte Arthure, pp. 7-11.

And doutit hym for his bounte.
(IX, 536-38)

Moreover, he speaks in glowing terms of one of Bruce's staunchest adversaries because he seems to feel that great valour even in an enemy has to be commended:

Schir yngerame vmphrevell, that ves
Renownit of so hye prowes,
That he of vorschip passit the rout.
Tharfor he gert ay ber about
Apon a sper ane red bonat,
In-to the takyn that he wes set
Into the hicht of cheuelry.
(IX, 502-8)

But in Barbour's conception of heroism, valour is only one of the ingredients. Prudence is the other. It was not necessary for the hero of the chanson de geste to possess mesure. In fact, his inordinate courage, bordering on rashness, is often the cause of his death. In Edward Bruce, Barbour depicts this kind of hero. He might have been the hero in another work, cast in the epic mould, but in The Bruce his conduct is criticized, precisely because it lacks mesure. This shortcoming is not only regrettable, but reprehensible. It originates in the sin of pride, "succudry" (XVIII, 176-77), for which he is censured, but more significantly, it is responsible for the unnecessary death of the men in his charge:

For had thair outrageouss bounte
Beyne led with wit and with mesure,
Bot gif the mair misadventure
Befell thame, it suld richt hard thing
Be till leid thame till outraying;
Bot gret outrageouss Succudry
Gert thame all deir thair vorschip by.
(XVIII, 178-84)

His failure to exercise prudence and moderation amounts to a betrayal of responsibility to his men. In Barbour's view the

practice of these virtues formed part of the obligation of a leader and earned in return the loyalty of his followers. As a result, words such as "wyss" and "awise" are not simply conventional tags in The Bruce but represent real and desirable qualities in leaders of men.

In Bruce and Douglas Barbour presents epitomes of the ideal leader, and in their relationship the type of the ideal feudal alliance. Kingship is identified with active leadership and involvement with one's subjects, and knighthood with real service and commitment. The duties and responsibilities which come with office are stressed, and shown to be based on personal ties. The struggle for independence provides the context, but it is noteworthy that it is not the glories of war, but the merits of sound leadership and loyal support, that are highlighted.

One could argue that Barbour believed that the reign of Robert Bruce was exemplary. It may well be that he found the government of Scotland in his own day less than satisfactory, and that his emphasis on feudal qualities and values in the poem reflects his admiration for the sense of unity that was forged as a result of the strengthening of military feudalism under Robert I. In Barbour's lifetime there was serious rivalry among the great feudal barons who had acquired large territories in Scotland. Robert Bruce had rewarded loyal service with grants of land to his most trusted vassals, but their successors were not bound by the same ties to the crown. During the reign of Robert II, when Barbour was writing The Bruce, Scotland faced internal rather than external problems and, as Ranald Nicholson points out, "opposition was bought off; loyalty was not taken for granted but was richly

rewarded".⁴³ It is possible that Barbour looking back saw the reign of Robert Bruce with its strong royal authority which commanded loyalty as a sort of golden age. In this kind of retrospect, Bruce emerges as a strong king, the supreme landlord of Scotland who, through his personal qualities, inspired the loyalty of men like James Douglas.

However, to suggest that The Bruce is simply the vehicle for political propaganda is to vastly underestimate Barbour's achievement. Equally well, it is rather more than a manual of good kingship and knighthood; had Barbour intended to produce such a work, it would have been easier to provide a list of prescriptions in the imperative instead of a story in the indicative. The work is a thematic narrative offering a literary treatment of historical events, governed by the desire to celebrate the heroic achievements of great men. It is a complex work, not only because of the mingling of truth and fiction, history and romance, romance ideals and epic values, which makes satisfactory categorization in terms of the medieval literary tradition very difficult, but because of the nature of the poet's heroic ideal. An understanding of Barbour's attitude to human action and the way it is developed in the poem is clearly necessary, and it is to this that I turn in the next chapter.

⁴³Scotland: the Later Middle Ages, The Edinburgh History of Scotland, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1974), p. 185.

CHAPTER 2

The Theological and Philosophical Framework

We have discovered that Barbour considered romances to be about outstanding men who exert themselves, enduring "gret trawail", often in the face of more powerful enemies, and who win renown for their achievements. This view is expressed in various places in the poem when he has occasion to refer to romances, but also in his own thematic statements. Early in the narrative he compares the struggle and ultimate goal of his heroes with those of the Maccabees, an analogy which has important repercussions on his handling of his subject-matter. The statement of theme which leads up to the comparison with the Maccabees therefore deserves close examination:

Lordingis, quha likis for till her,
The Romanys now begynnys her,
Off men that war in gret distress,
And assayit full gret hardynes,
Or thai mycht cum till thar entent:
Bot syne our lord sic grace thaim sent,
That thai syne, throw thar gret walour,
Come till gret hycht & till honour,
Magre thar fayis euirilkane,
That war sa fele, that ay for ane
Off thaim, thai war weill a thowsand.
Bot quhar god helpys, quhat may withstand?
Bot and we say the suthfastnes,
Thai war sum tyme erar may then les.
Bot god, that maist is of all mycht,
Preserwyt thaim in his forsycht,
To weng the harme and the contrer,
At that fele folk and pautener
Dyd till Sympill folk and worthy,
That couth nocht help thaim-self; for-thi
Thai war lik to the machabeys.

(I, 445-65)

The emphasis is on the men and their efforts, who with God's help

finally achieved their goal, in the face of enemies who almost always outnumbered them by a thousand to one. Through divine grace, his heroes were able to take revenge on a foe whose oppression is identified with evil (461-62), so that the struggle is presented as a battle between good and evil, with God on the side of right which, although weak and helpless alone, is strengthened by his might.

Then comes the comparison with the Maccabees (I, 465-76), and the same argument is reiterated in more or less parallel fashion. He draws attention to the valiant efforts of these biblical heroes ("worschip", "walour", "stalwart stour", "wasselage") who delivered their country from people identified with evil ("Iniquite"), and who, although only a few against many, achieved victory. Then Barbour seems to sum up: "Quharfor thar name suld lovyt be" (476), which reminds the reader of the first few lines where he announced that his romance is "Off men . . .", indicating that it is men who are held up for praise.

Indeed, it is important to recognize that The Bruce is not a homilectic romance. Diane T. Leo distinguishes "homilectic romances" from "romances proper" on the basis of their different conceptions of the hero. In the former there is a tendency "to diminish the role of the hero in order to emphasise the greatness of God". In the latter, although the reader may be often reminded of the hero's "relationship to the larger context of things eternal . . . yet we do not lose sight of him as the central character and as a human being, admirable for doing his human utmost and for so trusting himself, fate, and God that he unflinchingly faces

powerful enemies and insuperable odds".¹ It is the hero and his human qualities which are the central concern of the authors of these romances, as they are of Barbour. He regards romances as primarily "aulde storys" that represent "the dedys / Of stalwart folk" (I, 17-19), and as the means of perpetuating the memory of men who deserve praise for their great deeds.

However, it is impossible to ignore the attention that Barbour devotes to his heroes' "relationship to the larger context of things eternal". In the passage under consideration one cannot fail to note the important role assigned to divine intervention, so that the victory of the Scots seems ultimately attributable to God; his heroes suffer great distress before God comes to their aid; they succeed because God "Preserwyt thaim in his forsycht"; the enemy is defeated because "quhar god helpys, quhat may withstand?". But Barbour makes it clear that God's help is in the form of grace, and that it is the continued efforts of these men, as well as the fact that they are fighting a just war, which earns this grace.

They

. . . assayit full gret hardynes,
Or thai mycht cum till thar entent:
Bot syne our lord sic grace thaim sent,
That thai syne, throw thar gret walour,
Come till gret hycht & till honour.

Time and time again he alludes to the salutary effects of God's grace, and the vital part it has in the turn of events. But just as frequently he invites his readers to admire the ability of his heroes to utilize their own resources and strengths. There is

¹"The Concept of the Hero in the Middle English Verse Romances" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburg, 1970), pp. 195-96.

no contradiction since he postulates the necessary correlation between their faith in God's aid and their grim determination to fight to the end. This premise is most evident in the presentation of his heroes' willingness to "tak the vre that God wald send" and at the same time to drive their destinies to the end (Bruce resolves "till the end hys werdis drywe", III, 390, and Douglas to "dryve the thing rycht to the end", I, 311). When it seems that "vre rynnys agane" them (II, 434), they are willing to trust that God will "send eftsonys grace" (II, 436). As A. M. Kinghorn points out:

Barbour's references to "ure" or "destiny" are generally qualified by allusions to God's power to aid the brave, for it is accepted that "ure" originates with God, who leaves the individual to take his own chance.²

Frederick Pickering has argued³ that medieval narratives were written in conformity with one of two philosophies of history. One was a scheme of history going back to St. Augustine and the early fathers of the Christian Church who offered a theological argument, derived from the Judaic position, according to which universal history was grounded in the persistent action of a just Providence which judged the actions of individuals. The other was the basic philosophy of history presented in the De Consolatione Philosophiae of Boethius which, still Christian, but secular, "makes the decisions of mortal men taken in the exercise of their

²"Scottish Historiography in the 14th Century--A New Introduction to Barbour's Bruce", p. 137.

³"Historical Thought and Moral Codes in Medieval Epic", in The Epic in Medieval Society: Aesthetic and Moral Values, ed. Harald Scholler (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1977), pp. 1-17.

free-will the mainspring of the action, action followed by consequences, an eventus which is the work of fortune".⁴ Augustine attempted to dispense with the idea of fortune, and attributed all except the most trivial happenings to God's will. Man's freedom of action was dependent on the divine will, and his salvation required God's grace. Clerical historians tended to adopt this position in regard to man's fate at the hands of God, the punisher of evil and the rewarder of good.⁵ Boethius also believed that the universe was governed by God, but he stated that men whose concerns were entirely of this world need not expect the intervention of God. This view could be, and was, accomodated in a purely secular philosophy. As Kinghorn observes, it enabled such writers as Froissart to adopt a philosophy of history in which the governance of the external world is seen as lying in the hands of Fortune, outside the control of men, and in which worldly success or failure is largely the result of accident.⁶

Pickering tends to oversimplify the issue by identifying two different kinds of narrative on the basis of his thesis that

⁴Ibid., p. 16.

⁵Kinghorn, The Chorus of History, p. 35.

⁶Ibid., p. 34. Some romances were written from a purely secular point of view. George Cary, in his study of medieval Alexander literature, observed that although there is no one secular attitude towards the conquests of Alexander, from the fundamental theme of conquest an idea emerges which is purely secular, and dissociated from any tendency to diminish Alexander's prowess by the ascription of his victories to God or Fortune. The accentuation of his personal qualities "minimizes the controlling influence of God or a stable providence, and tends to admit only an inconstant Fortune as the intrusive power from above which can influence Alexander's career". The Medieval Alexander, ed. D. J. A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956), p. 196. The portrait which emerges is of Alexander as a man unaided, since an inconstant Fortune can only highlight, not detract from, the hero's personal valour.

there were two distinct philosophies on which medieval narrators could draw. In the main, clerical histories conform to the historical doctrine which he refers to as "Heilsgeschichte", or modifications of it, while chansons de geste and romans d'aventure are written according to the Boethian philosophy of history. However, medieval authors often incorporated features of both philosophies in their works. As Kinghorn observes, "romantic historians ask their audience to admire great men and to follow their examples with the help of God, or Fortune, or both".⁷ Clerical historians, on the other hand, sometimes allowed Fortune a place in their narratives. Barbour's attitude to human action, as expressed in The Bruce, comprehends fundamental elements of both philosophies, so that the success or failure of human endeavour is represented as the result of the dispensation of divine grace and the turn of the Boethian Wheel of Fortune.

"Vre" is one of the key words introduced in the first book of the poem along with others such as "will" (ll. 169, 213), "resoune" (488), "skill" (214), "grace" (450), "fredome" (225), "hardy" (28), "hardynes" (448), "rycht" (177, 214, 509), "entent" (449), "poweste" (131), "prescience" (133) and "forsycht" (460). Their frequent reiteration thereafter indicates that Barbour's poem is, amongst other things, the expression of a theological and philosophical system. These words are the terms of reference for the action of The Bruce, for they define the heroes' relationship to the world and to God as Barbour conceived of it, an understanding of which leads us to view the action of the poem in Barbour's intended context.

⁷The Chorus of History, p. 36.

For Chaucer "vire" or "destinee" was the "ministre general,
/ That executeth in the world over al / The purveiaunce that God
hath seyn biforn",⁸ and indeed, once adopted into the system of
Christian philosophy, Destiny seems to have been conceived by
medieval man as the executor of the decrees of Providence.⁹
Medieval poets and secular philosophers had inherited the Boethian
conception of Providence as the "perfected and all-embracing
plan"¹⁰ of God, and of Fate as the planned order inherent in things
subject to change:

Omnium generatio rerum cunctusque mutabilium naturarum
progressus et quicquid aliquo mouetur modo causas, ordinem,
formas ex diuinae mentis stabilitate sortitur. Haec in suae
simplicitatis arce composita multiplicem rebus gerendis modum
statuit. Qui modus cum in ipsa diuinae intelligentiae puritate
conspicitur, prouidentia nominatur; cum uero ad ea quae mouet
atque disponit refertur, fatum a ueteribus appellatum est.¹¹

Chaucer's Theseus speaks of "The Firste Moevere of the cause above"
(Knight's Tale, l. 2987) who "stable is and eterne" (l. 3004), which
follows the Boethian tradition of regarding the Godhead as the
stable and eternal source of all things and "the ever-changing web"¹²

⁸The Knight's Tale, I (A) 1663-65.

⁹F. N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,
n. 1663, p. 675. Augustine actually objected to this aspect of
secular philosophy to the point of asking for restraint in the use
of the term "fate" for "God's decree". See also Murial Bowden,
A Reader's Guide to Geoffrey Chaucer (London: Thames & Hudson,
1965; reprint ed., 1970), pp. 82-3.

¹⁰Bowden, p. 82.

¹¹De Consolatione Philosophiae, ed. Ludovicus Bieler,
Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Opera, Pars I, Corpus Christianorum,
Series Latina XCIV (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols Editores
Pontificii, 1957), IV, pr. 6, p. 79.

¹²Ibid., IV, pr. 6, p. 80: ita est fati series mobiles.

of Fate as the medium through which God binds everything in a planned order. This providential government of the world is sustained through God's omnipotence and omniscience,¹³ but Boethius argued that God's foreknowledge of the future did not preclude freedom of action for the individual, since foreknowledge did not impose necessity upon events and actions (V, pr. 3).

The theological tradition was dominated by Augustinian doctrine according to which man's will was dependent on God's will, and since man's nature was corrupt, his will could only be directed towards good if he was in receipt of divine grace. An important part of Augustine's theology of grace is that God predestines a minority of souls for salvation by a decree which is antecedent to any differences of merit.¹⁴

Throughout the Middle Ages theologians and philosophers continued to address themselves to the problem of predestination and human free will. Barbour's contemporaries were more inclined to discuss the providential government of the world in terms of the divine will, rather than as the workings of "the unchanging mind of God". Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1290-1349), for example, an Augustinian, describes Providence as the active dispensation of the divine will which influences the individual's will through Fate (fatum diuinum est maxime voluntatis diuinae, quae est efficax

¹³Deum, inquit, esse omnium potentem nemo dubitauerit, III, pr. 12, p. 61; est autem deo semper aeternus ac praesentarius status, scientia quoque eius omnem temporis supergressa motionem in suae manet simplicitate praesentiae infinitaque praeteriti ac futuri spatia complectens omnia quasi, iam gerantur in sua simplici cognitione considerat, V, pr. 6, p. 102.

¹⁴See Henry Chadwick, The Early Church (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967; reprint ed., 1973), pp. 225-35.

rerum causa).¹⁵ Disputes raged in the schools especially with regard to the nature of divine activity, and the fourteenth century witnessed a tremendous upheaval in theological and philosophical thought.¹⁶ Commentaries of the time revolve around the themes of the relation between various attributes in God, such as omnipotence, will and knowledge and correspondingly the relation of the faculties in the human soul such as will, knowledge and love. Of major concern was the priority of the divine will over the divine intellect, and the relation of human free will to the divine will with the attendant problems of grace and predestination. To some extent the issues which had exercised Augustine in the fourth century and Boethius in the sixth century were also matters of grave preoccupation in the fourteenth century. Chaucer's translation of the De Consolatione Philosophiae¹⁷ would therefore have had a peculiarly apt relevance, since once again:

In this matere men weren wont to maken questiouns of the symplite of the purveaunce of God, and of the ordre of destyne, and of sodeyn hap, and of the knowynge and predestinacioun devyne, and of the liberte of fre wil.

(Boece, Bk. IV, Prosa 6)

Indeed, Chaucer's Nun's Priest refers to the ongoing disputes in the schools and raises the vexed question of "what that God forwoot", and whether his foreknowledge precluded freedom of action

¹⁵De Causa Dei, ed. Henry Savile (London, 1618), Cap. XXVIII, C, p. 265.

¹⁶Gordon Leff, Bradwardine and the Pelagians (Cambridge: University Press, 1957) describes the period and the disputes in some detail.

¹⁷Chaucer's translation (c. 1380) was only one of the many vernacular renderings of the De Consolatione Philosophiae in the Middle Ages. See the list of translations into English, French, German, Italian and Spanish before 1600 compiled by R. R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), Appendix II, pp. 526-27.

for his creatures (The Nun's Priest's Tale, VIII, 3234-50). He claims that "any parfit clerk" is aware of the "greet altercacioun" in the schools, and it is interesting that he cites Boethius along with Augustine and Bradwardine as leading authorities in this "greet disputisoun", which certainly suggests that the arguments of secular philosophy had an important place in what at first glance appears to be a theological debate.

While it would be unwise to speculate too much, it is unlikely that Barbour, as a high-ranking clergyman who studied in the schools and presumably acquired his theological training there, remained unaffected by these contemporary disputes. His own brief statements on man's relationship to God suppose many of the complexities of medieval theology and must be examined against this background.

Aquinas in the thirteenth century had resolved the problem in a carefully worked-out analogue:

There is a First Being, possessing the full perfection of all being, whom we call God, and who also, of the abundance of His perfection, bestows being on all that exists, so that He must be recognized to be not only the first of beings, but also the first principle of beings. Now this being bestows being on others not by any necessity of His nature, but according to the decree of His will, as we have shown above. Hence it follows that He is the Lord of all things He has made, as we too are the masters of those things that are subject to our will. And this dominion which He exercises over all that He has made is absolute, for since He has produced them without the help of an extrinsic agent, and even without matter as the basis of His work, He is the universal efficient cause of the totality of being. Now everything that is produced through the will of an agent is directed to an end by that agent; because the good and the end are the proper object of the will, wherefore whatever proceeds from a will must needs be directed to an end. And each thing attains its end by its action, but this action needs be directed by Him Who endowed things with the principle whereby they act.¹⁸

¹⁸ Contra Gentiles III, 1, quoted by Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, trans. A. H. C. Downes (London: Sheed & Ward, 1936), pp. 161-62.

God created and ordered all things in view of an end, that end being God himself. Human beings are under his special care for they are invited to share in his perfection. Their uniqueness is manifested in the fact that through the power of reason they are free to direct themselves in their own way so that, although God leads them towards the end he intends for them, they have the responsibility of attaining that end. Therefore, "in a manner analogous with that of God" they "are capable of conceiving an end, which is the good, and ordering the means necessary to achieve it".¹⁹

By co-operating with God, man is able to associate himself with the divine government. In other words, there was no conflict between the necessity of God's will and the freedom of man's will since every action by an individual was both entirely from its own movement as a secondary cause and entirely from God's as the first. For Aquinas the very power of a secondary cause to act freely was the result of the first cause moving it to act freely. Through God's providence man's predestination was incorporated in God's ordered universe, but man had the power to collaborate in his own destiny.

However, by the early fourteenth century the Thomist synthesis had broken down, and doubts were raised as to the possibility of knowing God at all. An important part of Aquinas's system rested on a sharp distinction between faith and reason. He argued that while many fundamental Christian truths lie beyond the province of reason and require faith, there was a large area in which reason was paramount. He developed a theory of knowledge,

¹⁹Gilson, p. 166.

owing much to Aristotle, in which knowledge derives from sense-perceptions²⁰ and which led him to argue that the existence of God could be proved through his traces in this world. Duns Scotus (1265-1308), however, denied the Thomist analogy and causality between the divine and the created, believing that it was impossible to ascertain a cause through its effects.²¹ He stresses the primacy of the will over the intellect, for though posterior in activity, it is more perfect. As H. A. Oberman remarks:

In assessments of the systems of Thomas and Duns, the main difference is generally considered to be that whereas with Thomas one can speak of the primacy of the intellect, which finds the right purpose that determines the direction of the will, with Duns on the contrary it is a question of the primacy of the will, in which God's sovereignty as a willing Person expresses itself.²²

The far-reaching effects of this dissension are pointed to by E. C.

Thomas:

This dispute as to the Priority of the Will and the Intellect . . . affected the interpretation of the dogmas affecting Grace and the Last End. From the side of pure speculation, it affected the question of the nature of Divine Activity, and also indeed involved the question of determinism, that is to say whether man had free choice as to end as well as means.²³

Out of all this Scepticism was born, and is most notable in the writings of William of Ockham (1285-1347). Scepticism for Ockham and his followers originated in the theory that what was not

²⁰The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. E. A. Livingstone (1977), s.v. "Thomas Aquinas, St."

²¹Leff, p. 6.

²²Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A Fourteenth Century Augustinian (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoom, 1957), p. 101.

²³History of the Schoolmen (London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd., 1941), p. 568.

knowable could not be proved to exist, including God. A barrier was erected between the natural, which was knowable, and the supernatural, which was not, between faith and reason. The only things that were real were those that man could ascertain through his reason. The only point of contact between God and his creatures lay in his acting through his will,²⁴ and since nothing could be known of its mode of operation, nothing could be excluded from his power, and no order assumed. God was infinitely free to act as he willed through his potentia absoluta. All his other attributes, such as omniscience, justice, mercy and love, were subsumed to the power of his will, and regarded as areas of unprofitable speculation.

The result was that man became the starting-point of all verifiable knowledge instead of God's traces in the world. Human acts therefore took on a greater significance, particularly in Ockham's writings: "The venerable Inceptor in handling the concept 'potentia absoluta' has exalted God as sovereign so far above the earth that man has taken up an independent position".²⁵ A more important place was allotted to human free will by which man was capable of attaining his own salvation through meritorious acts which he had willed. Indeed, Ockham asserted that an act is only meritorious if it is voluntary. Since he took no account of the difference between natural and supernatural action, there was no reason to believe that there was any inherent goodness in grace. It

²⁴Leff, p. 12. Ockham's views are presented in his "Commentary on the Sentences" (1318).

²⁵Oberman, Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, p. 34.

became superfluous, since God in his infinite freedom had no need of supernatural habits and in dealing with man directly could decide whether a deed merited reward.

Bradwardine's De Causa Dei (1344) is principally addressed to a refutation of Scepticism. He denied that any act of man could win glory. For him grace is the beginning of all salutary activity. Only with grace acting upon it could free will achieve good actions, since man was without worth or merit in his own right: these qualities were God-given. He went so far as to eliminate any autonomous activity on the part of man, arguing that man was totally dependent on the divine will. By asserting that God as the first cause permeates all through his immutable will, he left little room for secondary causes, and in his own way contributed to the breakdown of the scholastic balance.

Ockham's belief that man could attain his own salvation inevitably affected his views on predestination. He envisaged mankind as divided into two classes: the predestined and the unpredestined. The predestined were those ordained by God to eternal life without condition; and the unpredestined were those who, though unelected, can be saved on account of their merits. God's will remained the final arbiter, so that although men in the second class are able through good works to prepare for salvation and God's grace, the salutary effects of these works are qualified by God's will to accept or refuse them. In short, fundamental to Ockham's doctrine is the belief that God, if he so wills, can reward men because of their merits, and not of his own forewilling.

Bradwardine attacked Ockham for making what God predestines conditional and dependent upon human actions. He argued that God

predestines by his own will unconditionally and eternally, so that once the divine will has decided, what he accepts and rejects he accepts and rejects eternally. In contrast to Ockham, he upheld that the future is as determined as the past because God's will is immutable.

So although both men regarded God's will as omnipotent, their diverse conceptions of its operation in this world led them to view man's relationship to God in very different ways. The doctrines of Ockham and Bradwardine were condemned,²⁶ the one because it denied the place of supernatural aid in a meritorious act,²⁷ and the other because it denied the effect of human dispositions in gaining grace.²⁸ The orthodox line prevailed, according to which a degree of co-operation on man's part, made possible through the gift of free will, and the habit of grace, were necessary for salvation.

The immediate effects of the disputes between Bradwardine and the Sceptics are still uncertain,²⁹ but the main long-term consequence was the destruction of the scholastic synthesis of faith and reason. Ockham promoted man's independence and his powers of reason, relegating faith to those matters of belief which were not amenable to reason, while Bradwardine denied any independent existence to man or reason, advancing the arguments of faith as the answer to Scepticism. In the second half of the

²⁶Those of Ockham at Avignon in 1326, and of Bradwardine at the Council of Trent, 1545-1563.

²⁷Leff, p. 189.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 150-51.

²⁹Ibid., p. 260.

fourteenth century the same problems continued to arouse conflict in the schools, as witnessed by the fact that John Wyclif (c. 1330-1384) found himself in opposition to the "prevailing scepticism of Oxford thought".³⁰

Wyclif was writing and lecturing at Oxford in the late 1350's and during the 1360's, at a time when we know that Barbour visited Oxford for the purpose of study. The poet also spent some time in France for causa studendi,³¹ possibly at the University of Paris, which was famous throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as the stronghold of Thomist and Scotist scholasticism, but where heterodox speculation was a feature of philosophy between 1340 and 1360.³² Barbour's own statements, which I shall examine shortly, may well have been influenced by contemporary trends in the schools.

Wyclif's doctrines are worthy of particular note, especially when one bears in mind that for most of his life he was "an orthodox academic" and that it was really the teachings of his last seven years that led to condemnation of his doctrines.³³ His non-controversial treatises on logic, physics, metaphysics and theology belong to the period c. 1356-1373, and were brought

³⁰The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. "Wycliffe".

³¹Rotuli Scotiae, i, 926, cited by Skeat, p. xix.

³²J. A. Robson, Wyclif and the Oxford Schools (Cambridge: University Press, 1961), p. 40. See particularly his discussion of trends in speculation at Oxford 1350-70, pp. 97-112.

³³V. J. Scattergood, Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century (London: Blandford Press, 1971), pp. 248-49.

together in a compilation entitled Summa de Ente.³⁴ Wyclif starts from the conviction that God, who is outside time, has an eternal foreknowledge of all that was, and is, and will be. His views on grace and predestination owed much to Bradwardine, but he criticized the workings of Bradwardine's system and its particular arguments. Like Bradwardine he is a determinist, but in his exposition he emphasizes the divine foreknowledge as distinct from the foreordaining effected by the divine will. Hence all things are predestined through God's foreknowledge and not through his ineluctable will. The result is that on the question of free will or determinism he "reverts to the old pre-Scotist position".³⁵ Although, like Bradwardine, he believed that it is God's will that necessitates future contingents, he argued that it is rather his foreknowledge, naturally preceding his volition, that is their cause.³⁶ This leaves freedom of action for the individual. Indeed, Wyclif insists on a place for human free will and argues that every human act depends on a specific volition that only the will can elicit. However, his definition of free will is limited to the power to seek the just and shun the unjust, since freedom is restricted to the extent that all human beings tend towards some appointed end.³⁷

³⁴For details of the various treatises, the MSS. and printed editions, see Robson, Wyclif and the Oxford Schools, pp. 115-40. I am indebted to this work for the content of the rest of this paragraph.

³⁵Geoffrey Shepherd, "Religion and Philosophy in Chaucer", in Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. D. Brewer (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1974), p. 282.

³⁶Wyclif deals with these issues in the De scientia Dei which is the second tract in Book II of the Summa de Ente.

³⁷Robson, pp. 197-98.

Early in The Bruce Barbour states the case for God's providential government of the world, and it must be considered indicative of his theological position that he describes this government in terms of God's foreknowledge, not his forewilling:

For in this warld, that is sa wyde,
Is nane determynatly that sall
Knew thingis that ar for to fall;
But god, that is off maist poweste,
Reserwyt till his maieste
For to know, in his prescience,
Off alkyn tyme the mowence.

(I, 128-34)

His omniscience and omnipotence are presented conjunctly as his primary attributes. There is no uncertainty about his knowledge of the future, for he knows "Off alkyn tyme the mowence", and what he knows he knows "determynatly". Furthermore, Barbour later describes this mode of foreknowing when he says that God "all thing euirmar / Seis in his presciens, / As it war ay in his presens" (IV, 679-81). The Sceptics had made God's knowledge of the future contingent, so that by an act of will he could decide that a man by his actions could merit reward, and so be saved. For Barbour God is the sovereign disposer of all things.

On the question of God's mode of operation and his relationship to man, Barbour writes:

Na manis mycht may stand agane
The grace of god, that all thing steris;
He wat quhat-to all thing efferis,
And disponis at his liking,
Eftir his ordinanss, all thyng.

(XI, 26-30)

It is Barbour's belief that God's grace directs all things and that man's natural powers (his "mycht") are relatively impotent. Again he stresses that it is God's omniscience which allows nothing to escape divine providence, and that it is this omniscience which leads him to will what is best for each individual thing or person

("quhat-to all thing efferis"), which recalls Aquinas's view that every action of every individual man is known to God: divina providentia ad omnia singularia se extendit, etiam minima.³⁸ In contrast to the Sceptics, he asserts that there is an ordered plan in God's government ("Eftir his ordinanss") which extends to all created things, in opposition to the idea that the world is subject to an arbitrary will. So he also seems to take up a pre-Scotist position.

Barbour's emphasis on the importance of grace, the priority of the divine intellect over the divine will, and his assertion that there is an ordered plan in God's government, reveal his orthodoxy. He avoids the extremes to which Ockham on the one hand, and Bradwardine on the other, were led by their preoccupation with the primacy of God's will. We can assume that, like most scholastic theologians in the fourteenth century, he supported a moderate predestinarianism, since this was a "contemporary orthodoxy".³⁹ Nowhere does he suggest that God's foreknowledge imposes necessity on events or on the actions of his creatures. On the contrary, the presentation of the action of The Bruce is designed to show that individuals do have the freedom to govern their destinies through the exercise of their free wills. But before I move on to an examination of how this philosophy is applied in the poem, it is necessary to consider Barbour's comments on the practice of astrology in which he develops his argument about foreknowledge, and in the course of which he insists on the power of human free

³⁸Quoted by Etienne Gilson in The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 165.

³⁹Robson, p. 61.

will.

In Book IV Barbour considers at some length the possibility of any human being being able to foreknow and foretell the future. Bruce's hostess offers to foretell his future, claiming:

For in this warld is nane trewly
Wat thingis to cum sa weill as I.
(644-45)

Her words closely echo I, 128-30, and are deliberately and ironically employed by the poet to point up this human conceit. The only way that he can conceive of any man being able to foretell the future is if he is inspired by God, as were the prophets in the Bible:

As dauid wes, and Ieromy,
Samuell, Ioell, and ysay,
That throu his haly grace can tel
Feill thingis that eftirward befell.
(681-84)

However, he goes on, men are so curious to know the future that they are prepared to expend a great deal of time and energy in this pursuit. The two main ways of trying to satisfy this desire are astrology and necromancy. Astrologers attempt through the study of the heavens to discover "How that the disposicioune / Suld upon thingis virk heir doune" (699-700). But Barbour considers that

. . . . it war gret mastry
Till ony astrolog to say,
This sall fall heir, and on this day.
(706-8)

Even if they do succeed on occasion, he argues, it has usually been the case that even the most learned of astrologers are unlikely to make more than three certain predictions in their lifetime. Where there is always doubt, there can be no certain foreknowledge.

Barbour's interest in astrology is of some importance,

since astrological predictions assume that the future is determined. Not surprisingly, the fourteenth century witnessed an increase in the number of astrological treatises in which the old dispute between determinism and free will which had long exercised the theologians, was raised in the Arts faculty as well, although it was not the divine will or foreknowledge but the stars which might be thought to necessitate the future.⁴⁰

Barbour distrusts astrology on religious grounds, and in doing so he follows the established theological tradition. In the course of the thirteenth century a distinction was made between astrology as a science and astrology as a divinatory art. Theologians, with Aquinas once again in the forefront, accepted it as a physical science, but condemned the practice of astrology when it inclined to fatalism. Aquinas followed his predecessor, Albert the Great, in accepting that the stars exert an influence over matter, but not over the human intellect and will, at least not directly.⁴¹ He allowed that the stars could influence the will indirectly when the will was ruled by man's lower appetites. Hence the predictions of astrologers could sometimes come true:

The majority of men, in fact, are governed by their passions, which are dependent upon bodily appetites; in these the

⁴⁰Robson, p. 101. He cites the example of John Ashenden, a Mertonian, who, in the conclusion of his astrology (1357), is careful to stress the contingency of his predictions, and expresses his belief that astronomy and other techniques of the Arts faculty should not be employed to prove the determinist propositions of theology, pp. 101-3.

⁴¹For a full discussion of the medieval theological position on astrology see Theodore Otto Wedel, The Mediaeval Attitude Toward Astrology (Yale: University Press, 1920; reprint ed., 1968), ch. V.

influence of the stars is clearly felt. Few indeed are the wise who are capable of resisting their animal instincts. Astrologers, consequently, are able to foretell the truth in the majority of cases, especially when they undertake general predictions.⁴²

However, in particular predictions he argues that there cannot be certainty, since human beings have the capacity to resist their lower appetites and to govern their passions with their wills. He goes on to condemn this aspect of judicial astrology (the term applied to the practice of predicting the future from the configuration of the stars at birth) largely because it abrogates free will, and identifies it with the occult arts:

If any one employs the observation of the stars . . . for predicting with certainty (per certitudinem) a man's future actions, he does so falsely. In this sort of prophecy the activity of demons is called into play.⁴³

Barbour's expressed views are clearly in line with the position adopted by Aquinas and the scholastic theologians. He does not dismiss astrology out of hand, but accepts it in its scientific aspect. The study of astrology can yield general predictions, for it is the science

Quhar-throu clerkis, that ar vitty,
May know coniunctione of planetis,
And quethir that thair cours thaim settis
In soft segis, or in angry;
And of the hevyn all halely
How that the disposicioune
Suld upon thingis virk heir doune,

⁴²Summa Theologica, I. I. 115. 4, Ad Tertium (5. 544),
quoted by Theodore Wedel, The Mediaeval Attitude Toward Astrology,
p. 68.

⁴³Summa 2. 2. 95. 5 (9. 320), quoted by Wedel, p. 69.
Wedel also points out that most fourteenth century theologians
accepted the moderate astrology of the scholastic theologians.
Bradwardine, for example, rejects astrological fatalism but makes
no objection to the science of his own day, while Wyclif, at least
in his earlier works, seems to have subscribed to astrological
theory, pp. 124-29.

On regiones, or on climatis,
That virkis nocht ay-quhar a gatis,
Bot sum ar less, sum othir mair,
Eftir as thair bemys strekit air,
Owthir all evin, or on wry.
(IV, 694-705)

But he is sceptical about the astrologer's ability to make certain predictions about future events:

Bot me think it war gret mastery
Till ony astrolog to say,
This sall fall heir, and on this day.
(IV, 706-8)

In fact his scepticism derives from his disbelief that

. . . ony man throu steris may
Knew the thingis that ar to cum
Determinabilly, all or sum,
Bot gif that he enspirit war
Of him, that all thing euirmar
Seis in his presciens,
As it war ay in his presens.
(IV, 675-81)

This is of course consistent with his theological position, which we have discovered is orthodox, so that it is not surprising that one can even detect the phraseology of scholastic theology: as Wedel suggests,⁴⁴ "Determinabilly" probably translates the per certitudinem of Aquinas.

Similarly, while he accepts that the stars influence men, and that through the casting of nativities general predictions can be made, fatalistic astrology is rejected:

Or gif thai men, that will study
In the craft of astrology,
Knew all mennis nacioune,
And als the constillacioune,
That kyndly maneris giffis thaim til
For till Inclyne to gud or Ill;
How that thai, throu craft of clergy,
Or throu slicht of astrology,
Couth tell quhatkyn perell apperis

⁴⁴The Mediaeval Attitude Toward Astrology, n. 1, p. 123.

To thame that haldis kyndly maneris,
I trow that thai suld fail to say
The thingis that thame happyn may.
(IV, 717-28)

Here Barbour's condemnatory attitude to practical astrology as a divinatory art is expressed as much through his choice of words as through the particular objection he raises. Astrology is now a "craft" which employs "slicht"; he has moved away from those studious scholars referred to in lines 693ff. Like Aquinas, he asserts that man has free will and judgement to overcome his natural inclinations:

For quethir sa men Inclynit be
Till vertu or to mawite,
He may richt weill refrenye his vill,
Outhir throu nwrtour or throu skill,
And to the contrar turne him all.
And men has mony tymis seyn fall,
That men, kyndly to Iwill giffin,
Throu thair gret vit away has drivin
Thair ewill, and vorthyn of gret renoune,
Magre the constillacioune.
(IV, 729-38)

A similar view is expressed by Dante who, in the Purgatorio, using the spirit of Marco Lombardo as a mouthpiece, affirms that the stars cannot compel human beings to act in a particular way, since this would destroy free will, although he accepts that every man is born with certain tendencies.⁴⁵ It will also be recalled that in The Kingis Quair the narrator is advised by Minerva that

⁴⁵Canto XVI, 67-84. Wedel describes these lines as an "expression of the orthodox doctrine concerning astrology", p. 81. He also notes that Dante condemns astrology in the Inferno (20: 38-39) in so far as it is a diabolical art, but restores it to its proper place in Christian cosmology and ethics in the Purgatorio and Paradiso. For Dante the heavens are the instruments of God. It is to them that the First Mover has delegated the power to mould the destinies of the world. The Mediaeval Attitude Toward Astrology, pp. 80-82.

. . . clerkis halden that the man
Has in him self the chose and libertee
To cause his awin fortune, how or quhan
That him best lest, and no necessitee
Was in the hevin at his natiuitee.⁴⁶

Barbour then cites Aristotle⁴⁷ as an example of a man who overcame his natural disposition, according to which he should have been "fals and couatuss", and led a virtuous life (741-42). Consequently, he concludes, the predictions of astrologers cannot attain certainty:

. . . syn men may on this kyn viss
Virk agane that cours, that is
Principal causs of thair demyng,
Me think thair dome na certane thing.
(IV, 743-46)

At this point he moves on to a brief consideration of the other favoured method employed to foretell the future--necromancy. This practice is swiftly discredited as a wicked art (747-60). Indeed, his rather peremptory treatment of this practice contrasts with the rationale employed in his discussion of astrology. Yet the fact that the two are so obviously associated in his mind, reveals his low opinion of practical astrology at least. His disapprobation is barely disguised in the lines in which the two arts are first mentioned:

Bot feill folk ar sa curioss,
And to wit thingis sa covatouss,

⁴⁶Ed. M. P. McDiarmid (London: Heinemann, 1973), stanza 147, p. 107.

⁴⁷Wedel remarks that Barbour's reference to Aristotle is curious, since the example of a man conquering his evil nature usually cited in the literature of the fourteenth century was that of Hippocrates (n. 2, p. 124). He suggests that Barbour had in mind the passage in the Secretum Secretorum, attributed to Aristotle in the Middle Ages, in which Hippocrates is portrayed thus.

That thai, throu thair gret clergy,
Or ellis throu thair deuilry,
Of thir twyn maners makis fanding
Of thingis to cum to haf knawing.
(687-92)

Barbour's concern with the fallibility of astrological prognostications is unusual in a romance writer. According to Wedel, on the whole

The attitude of the romancers toward astrology hardly admits of logical analysis. A narrator was as little hampered in the Middle Ages by questions of science or ethics as he is to-day. It may be said, in general, that astrology, to the mediaeval mind, was a wonderful science, vaguely defined, and seldom condemned, whose omnipotence was proverbial. It is spoken of everywhere as the chief of the seven arts, and was hardly distinguished from necromancy and magic. The reality of its powers was never doubted.⁴⁸

It is worthy of note that Barbour does not actually deny that astrologers have the ability to foretell the future; he is not entirely convinced that such things are impossible, and in the end he has to admit that things did fall out as Bruce's hostess predicted (IV, 769-74). He confines his arguments to a confutation of the certainty of such predictions. His fundamental premise is that events and human actions are not determined, and that man has the power to shape his own destiny because he has free will. Fate in the form of astral coercion is rejected. His references to fate ("vre", "werd") usually make clear that it originates with God, although the intention is not to substitute one form of determinism for another. Fate is the temporal application of God's will: it is "werd, that to the end ay driffis / The varldis thingis" (IV, 148-49), and Barbour's heroes consistently recognize this in expressions like: "God may rycht weill our werdis dele" (II, 329)⁴⁹ but they

⁴⁸The Mediaeval Attitude Toward Astrology, p. 108.

⁴⁹cf. XI, 50; XVIII, 46.

also accept that they have personal responsibility for their actions. They are willing to accept God's will and what he has predestined, and at the same time to drive their destinies to the end. The action of the poem is firmly grounded in Christian metaphysics: Barbour stresses man's dependent relationship with God (his need for grace and so on), and this stems from his belief that man is more free when he subjects himself to the will of God. More precisely, Barbour's view seems to assume the kind of co-operation Aquinas proposed, whereby man fulfils his true destiny by striving to identify his personal will with that of God, thus collaborating in his own destiny. Since virtue is a subjective process of will, this co-operation requires an active not a passive collaboration. It is part of Barbour's philosophy that taking the "vre / That god wald send" (IX, 68-9) requires one to be of "sic will and sic bounte" (IX, 70) that one is prepared to "put him till assay" (71). His heroes are presented as men who succeed by their own efforts, sustained by faith in God and belief in the justice of their cause.

Since destiny or fate derives from the providential plan of God, there is nothing haphazard about the Scottish defeat of the English. Barbour is not only convinced that the Scots had the "rychtwiss" cause and therefore have God's approval and assistance, but he also portrays them as acting on just such a conviction, sustained by faith in God's grace. It is this faith that encourages hope of victory, and, significantly, in theological terms hope is "the elevation of the will, made possible by grace" which makes man "confident of the omnipotent aid of God".⁵⁰

⁵⁰The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, s.v. "Hope".

The Scottish chronicler John of Fordun also represented the Scottish victory in these terms. In his account of the preparations for the battle of Bannockburn he points up a telling contrast in the attitudes of the English and Scottish kings. He first describes the approach of Edward's army to the field of battle: quorum caterva circumvallatus, et gloria humanae potentiae confisus, Scociam hostiliter intravit; and then that of Bruce's host: Cui rex Robertus cum paucis occurrens, non in multitudine populi sed in Domino Deo spem ponens, cum antedicto rege Angliae bellum commisit.⁵¹ Edward relies on the glory of man's might, whereas Robert Bruce places all his trust in God. The latter accepts that "Na manis mycht may stand agane / The grace of god".

Earlier in his narrative Fordun affirms that not only is it a matter of faith to trust in God's omnipotence, and consequently evidence of faithlessness to trust in man's might, but also that the English defeat in their war against the Scots is the outcome of God's righteous judgement (which implies, conversely, that the righteous merit his aid):

Atque, Dei virtute, gens Anglorum perfida, quae multos injuste cruciaverat, jam justo Dei iudicio diris subicitur flagellis, et, quae victrix extiterat, jam victa gemens succumbit.⁵²

Interestingly enough, the English author of the Vita Edwardi Secundi⁵³ also implies that the English defeat is the result of a divine judgement, although, for obvious reasons, he does not dwell

⁵¹Gesta Annalia, ed. Skene, CXXXI.

⁵²Ibid., CXXVIII.

⁵³Ed. and trans. N. Denholm-Young (London: Nelson & Sons, 1957), p. 56.

on the question of righteousness or unrighteousness:

Queret forsan et dicet aliquis quare percussit nos hodie
Dominus, quare subcubuimus coram Scotis cum uiginti annis
preteritis semper uictoriam habuerimus.

Barbour's view is consonant with Fordun's: their defeat occurs because "vre demanyt thaim swa" (XV, 376), and since we have noted that "vre" originates with God, their defeat is attributable to divine judgement on the iniquity they perpetrate, just as the Scottish victory is brought about because God preserves the Scots "in his forsycht".

According to 1 Macc. 2:62, omnes qui sperant in eum non infirmantur. Obviously Barbour saw in the Maccabees' story a prototype of the Scottish situation. First of all, they have faith in God,⁵⁴ and despite their small numbers trust in his aid to help them win through. Secondly, they have a just cause, and so become instruments of God's righteous judgement: they "weng the harme and the contrer" (I, 461), which echoes 1 Macc. 2:67. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important parallel from Barbour's point of view, the Maccabees abandoned passive resistance, took up arms, and resolved to fight their oppressors as the means to restore the Old Law and righteousness (1 Macc. 2:39-41). Barbour seems to admire these biblical heroes most of all because they used their prowess to combat injustice. Their willingness to fight represents a particular application of their moral convictions. Moreover, it realizes that active participation in, and fulfilment of, true destiny. It is in this most important

⁵⁴William Langland depicts Faith with Judas Maccabeus in his lap, Piers the Plowman, ed. W. W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), C Text, Passus XX, 21-23.

respect that the Scots are the spiritual descendants of the Maccabees.

In the words of Sir Aymer de Valence: "Vre helpis ay hardy men" (VI, 17). That is to say, a beneficial "vre" in the form of God's grace aids those who not only put their faith in God, but who are also "hardy". Gilbert Haye in The Buke of the Law of Armyes,⁵⁵ a Scottish translation of Honoré de Bonet's L'Arbre des Batailles, claims⁵⁶ that "the haly writt sais, that he that is nocht in the grace of God sall nocht be hardy in bataill na happy".⁵⁷ Now "hardyment" is the most lauded virtue predicated of Barbour's heroes; it is the quality that "gerris men cum to thair entent" (XI, 491), that is, it enables them to achieve what they have willed.⁵⁸ At Bannockburn it is closely linked with the will:

For thai [the Scots] that with thame fechtand weir
Set hardyment, and strynth, and will,
With hart and corage als thar-till,
And all thair mayne and all thar mycht,
To put thame fouly to the flycht.
(XIII, 220-24)

It is distinct from "strynth" or "corage", yet associated with them. It is a moral virtue which, in conjunction with these other

⁵⁵Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript, ed. J. H. Stevenson (S. T. S. 44, 1901).

⁵⁶Haye's translation is often fairly free. C. f. Bonet: "car selon le contenu de l'Escripture sainte la personne qui n'est aimé de Dieu ne sera ja forte en bataille". L'Arbre des Batailles, ed. Ernest Nys (Brussels and Leipzig: Trübner & Co., 1883), p. 75.

⁵⁷The Buke of the Law of Armyes, Part Three, ch. iv, p. 81.

⁵⁸"Entent" or intention is "the real movement of a will tending to its end", Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, p. 347.

qualities, empowers men to achieve what they have willed, to participate in "v're", always assuming that the cause is a just one. As Haye remarks:

thare is nane sa gude as he that is hardy for defens of gude rycht, and for vertu, and for gude knaulage, the quhilk has his hert set fermly in the vertu of hardynes⁵⁹ for lautee, and justice tobe defendit, and has his hert ferme sett to sustene all adversitee that may cum throu his verray curage of hardynes, traistand in God, and in his gude rycht to bring him through.⁶⁰

Like Barbour ("Set hardyment . . . With hart"), Haye equates the setting of one's heart on something ("his hert set fermly in . . ."; "his hert ferme sett to . . .") with having the will to do something, as can be seen by considering his French original in which "volonté" is the word used to convey the writer's meaning:

Or sachiez maintenant que en toutes ces hardemens n'y a vertu aucune senon en celui qui est hardy de droite cognoissance et de droit scavoir et qui ait volonte de entendre a raison et a justice et volonte de soustenir toutes choses deues et possibles par la vertu de forteresse.⁶¹

Early in the poem we learn that James Douglas has this quality of "hardyment". Barbour writes:

Thair wes nane auentur that mocht
Stunay hys hart, na ger him let
To do the thing he wes on set.
(I, 298-300)

That the possession of this quality betokens a disposition to accept and participate in "v're" is highlighted a few lines later when Barbour says that Douglas

. . . neur wald for myscheiff faill,

⁵⁹Haye obviously refers to the same quality of "hardyment" when he uses the word "hardynes".

⁶⁰The Buke of the Law of Armys, Part Three, ch. vii, p. 85.

⁶¹L'Arbre des Batailles, Troisième Partie, ch. VI, p. 79.

Bot dryve the thing rycht to the end,
And tak the vre that god wald send.
(I, 310-12)

In a line which falls between those that describe his "hardyment" and those that define his attitude to his destiny, we are told that Douglas believes that the man who is not prepared to persevere in the face of adversity shall "ger his price dowblyt be" (307). In 1 Maccabees the children of Mattathias are encouraged to be courageous and grow strong in the law, for by it they will gain honour (2:64). It was also a medieval convention to regard honour as one of the goods of fortune. The others were "hiyenesses . . . riches, delices, prosperites".⁶² The goods of fortune were God-given, as were the goods of "kynde" and of grace.⁶³ Gilbert Haye evidently followed this tradition when he remarked that the man who is not in the grace of God will not only not be "hardy" in battle, but he will also not be "happy", that is, he will not enjoy good fortune.

Medieval writers seem to have used the concepts of fortune and God's grace interchangeably. For example, the author of the Vita Edwardi Secundi describes the English defeat at Bannockburn as the Lord smiting the English. In another reference to the same battle, he comments: Sed quicquid dicant alii, non erat tecum manus Domini.⁶⁴ Yet later he employs the hand metaphor,

⁶²The Book of Vices and Virtues, a fourteenth-century English translation of the "Somme Le Roi" of Lorens D'Orleans, ed. W. Nelson Francis (E. E. T. S. O. S., 217, 1942), p. 19. C.f. Chaucer: "Goodes of fortune been riches, hyghe degrees of lordshipes, preisynges of the peple", (The Parson's Tale, X(I), 453).

⁶³The Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 19.

⁶⁴Ed. Denholm-Young, p. 54.

but this time it is a personified Fortune that is responsible for the turn of events: Nam licet Scotis fortuna semel arriserit, manum forsam retrahens ad Anglos conuolabit.⁶⁵ The goddess Fortuna was, of course, a personification of Fate, which in turn derived from the providential plan of an omnipotent and omniscient God. Although to ignorant man the effects of fortune may seem fickle and arbitrary, the vicissitudes of fortune are part of a design beyond man's ken. Chaucer reveals an awareness of this when he writes:

. . . O Fortune, executrice of wyrdes,
 O influences of this hevenes hye!
 Soth is, that under God ye ben oure hierdes,
 Though to us bestes ben the causes wrie.
 (Troilus and Criseyde, III,
 617-20)

John Lydgate acknowledges the order in apparent disorder when he speaks of "The envious ordre of Fortune meving, / In worldly thing".⁶⁶

In the De Consolatione Philosophiae Boethius averred that there was a moral purpose in the fortune allotted to each man. He asserted that all fortune is good, whether it is pleasant or adverse, because it is intended to reward or discipline the good or to punish or correct the bad.⁶⁷ In other words, God dispenses in the form of fortune "quhat-to all thing efferis". For the medieval Christian fortune could be accomodated in the scheme of things divinely ordained when it was regarded as an instrument for

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁶Troy Book, ed. H. Bergen, 4 vols. (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 97, 103, 106, 126, 1906-35), 1, bk. II, 1-2.

⁶⁷De Consolatione Philosophiae, IV, pr. 7.

the bestowing or withholding of grace.

Hence for Barbour there was no contradiction in simultaneously presenting the progress of his heroes in terms of the favours of fortune and the conferment of grace:

Bot syne our lord sic grace thaim sent,
That thai syne, throw thar gret walour,
Come till gret hycht & till honour,
Magre thar fayis euirilkane.

(I, 450-53)

While later, in Book XIII, he introduces the image of the wheel of fortune to describe the downfall of Edward II:

This mychty kyng of yngland
Scho [Fortune] had set on her quheill on hicht,
.
And on a nycht syne and a day
Scho set hym in so hard assay,

(XIII, 636-37, 643-44)

and the ascendancy of Robert Bruce:

Bot of this ilk quhelis turnyng
Kyng robert suld mak no murnyng;
For his syde, throu the quhele on hicht,
Wencust thar fais, wes mekill of mycht.

(XIII, 647-650)

Since "all gude grace, gude fortune, and gude victory cummys fra God, and of his grace",⁶⁸ the deprivation of grace, adverse fortune, and defeat, are also attributable to "The grace of god, that all thing steris" (I, 27). As noted above, Boethius believed that all fortune was good because of the moral intention behind it. Barbour shares this belief; indeed, it is an essential aspect of his conception of heroism that his protagonists are men in "gret distress" who eventually, through God's grace, "come till gret hycht & till honour" (I, 452). Of Douglas we are told:

⁶⁸Haye, The Buke of the Law of Armys, Part Four, ch. liii, p. 170.

Bot wondirly hard thingis fell
Till him, or he till state wes brocht.
(I, 296-97)

That is to say, he undergoes hardship and adversity before he is allowed to enjoy good fortune in the form of a good estate, or "state" ("hiyenesses" or Chaucer's "hyghe degrees of lordshipes"). Moreover, Barbour presents Douglas as someone with a positive attitude to adversity, one that derives from his virtue of "hardyment":

He thocht weill he wes worth na seyle,
That mycht of nane anoyis feyle;
& als for till escheve gret thingis,
And hard trawalys, and barganyngis,
That suld ger his price dowblyt be.
Quharfor, in all his lyve-tyme, he
Wes in gret payn, ec gret trawaill.
(I, 303-9)

His belief that "hard trawalys and barganyngis" constitute a test of one's moral and physical fibre leads to a commitment to the ideal of per ardua ad astra. The same conception of life as trial by ordeal is present in Barbour's assessment of Bruce's career:

. . . sa hard myscheiff him fell,
That Ik herd neuir in Romanys tell
Off man sa hard sted as wes he,
That eftirwart com to sic bounte.
(II, 45-48)

According to Boethius, Providence stings some people in order to strengthen their virtues:

Quosdam remordet ne longa felicitate luxurient, alios duris agitari ut uirtutes animi patientiae usu atque exercitatione confirment.⁶⁹

Barbour's men in "gret distress" are subjected to "full gret hardynes, / Or thai mycht cum till thar entent". It is their

⁶⁹De Consolatione Philosophiae, IV, pr. 6, p. 82.

fortitude that is tested, their "hardyment", by which "a man is stark to bere all tribulaciouns and mak enterpris".⁷⁰ Through their steadfastness they are able to remain stable in the face of instability of fortune, and to meet the challenge of "hardyment" with a strengthened will.

That Bruce is aware of the value of this quality is evident when, after the Scots are routed by the men of Lorne, he comforts them by telling them

Auld storys off men that wer
Set in-tyll hard assayis ser,
And that fortoun contraryit fast,
And come to purpos at the last.
(III, 269-72)

He cites Caesar as one such man who achieved his "entent" by taking "purpos sekryly", and following it "syne ythandly" (III, 287-88).

As M. P. McDiarmid has observed, it is "a reiterated conviction of the reality of free will, that gives the poet his belief in heroes".⁷¹ Such a conception of heroism was hardly new. The pagan view of heroic character was similarly based. As E. V. Gordon has remarked, with reference to the Old Norse sagas:

The heroic problem of life lay primarily in the struggle for freedom of will, against the pains of the body, and the fear of death, against fate itself. The hero was in truth a champion of the free will of man against fate, which had power only over material things. He knew that he could not save his body from destruction, but he could preserve an undefeated

⁷⁰Haye, The Buke of the Law of Armys, Part Three, ch. iv, p. 82.

⁷¹"The Early Heroic Poetry of Scotland", Actes du 2^e Colloque de Langue et de Litterature Ecossaises (Moyen Age et Renaissance), University of Strasburg, 5-11 July, 1978, pp. 43-44.

spirit, if his will were strong enough.⁷²

The essential difference is that Barbour's heroes operate in a Christian world, governed by a just providence. As long as they have faith in God and are willing to participate in "vne", they have nothing to fear.

It has been demonstrated that Barbour presents his heroes as having the necessary disposition to accept and participate in "vne", and that it is a fundamental aspect of his philosophy that they strive to identify their personal wills with the divine will. In order to fully appreciate his concept of heroism it is necessary to consider the particular application of this philosophy offered in the poem, and to focus on the precise nature of his heroes' "entent", or the end to which they aspire with their wills.

On the face of it, his heroes' objective is the political freedom of Scotland, the deliverance of their country from English rule. As a result, most previous critics of the poem have regarded the now famous passage on freedom (I, 225-74) as the poet's expression of a fervent patriotism. According to this view, Bruce and Douglas are the nationalistic deliverers of their fellow-countrymen, and the poem is a monument to their chauvinism. However, it seems to me that Barbour's intentions were much more universal, and that his conception of freedom evidences moral and philosophical, as well as political, preoccupations.

Book I is the key to Barbour's philosophy and to the structure of the whole poem. To summarize: in the Prologue we are told that the poem is about Bruce and Douglas who ought to be prized because they won great honour through "gret trawall"; the

⁷²Introduction to *Old Norse*, 2d revised ed. by A. R. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. xxx.

poet then surveys the historical background to the rise of these men, dwelling on the fact that the death of Alexander III leaves Scotland a "steirless" realm, so that Edward I is able to take advantage of the indecision of the Scottish nobles; there follows the statement on God's power and foresight; then the Bruce-Baliol conflict, followed by Edward's takeover and Scotland's resultant "thrylldome"; the poet offers a full description of the English reign of terror in Scotland and the effects on the Scottish people; this is followed by the digression on freedom. As I intend to show, all that precedes the passage on freedom is designed to underline the philosophical statement it makes.

The moral context of Barbour's general argument has been discussed above, where it became evident that his conception of his heroes as men who led their lives in "gret trawail" derived from his philosophy concerning man's relationship to God. The background to their achievements now requires examination. Barbour argues that the state of "thrillage" comes about because of the folly of the Scottish nobles in electing Edward as the arbiter in their dispute over Alexander's successor. He accuses:

Haid ye wmbethocht yow enkrely,
Quhat perell to yow mycht apper,
Ye had nocht wrocht on that maner.
(I, 92-94)

In other words, had they used their powers of judgement, their reason, to consider carefully their course of action, they would not have proceeded as they did. Their folly amounts to a lack of the use of reason. The result is that Scotland becomes the victim of the unreasonable ambitions of Edward and his officers.

According to Boethius: extrema uero est seruitus cum uitiiis

deditae rationis propriae possessione ceciderunt.⁷³ The Scots are to blame for giving themselves up to the wickedness of, and enslavement by, the English, because they enslave themselves in the first place by losing possession of their proper reason. They are slaves to their own folly and consequently become victims of the English who are "sa wykkyt and cowatouss, / And swa hawtane and dispitouss" (195-96). The English reveal themselves to be enslaved by passion rather than governed by reason. The only extenuation offered in defence of the Scots is that they could not know that their simple faith in Edward would lead to such a state of affairs, since no human being has the foresight which belongs to God alone (125-33).

The gift of reason was what distinguished man from lower beasts. This reflected the belief that man was made in God's image. In the York cycle of miracle plays God decides to complete the creation of the world by making a creature "That accords by kindly skill";⁷⁴

To keep this world, both more and less,
A skilful beast then will I make
After my shape and my likeness.⁷⁵

For all who followed Boethius rationalism was integral to the doctrine of free will. Even Bradwardine believed that man is a rational creature who can assert his free will through God's

⁷³De Consolatione Philosophiae, V, pr. 2, p. 90.

⁷⁴"The Creation of Adam and Eve", Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, ed. A. C. Cawley (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1956; reprint ed. 1970), l. 15, p. 13.

⁷⁵Ibid., ll. 21-23, p. 13.

determinism, and that he is superior to other beasts in this respect. In Thomist philosophy reason was regarded as the governor of the will. Hence the narrator of The Kingis Quair regrets his misspent youth:

The rypenesse of resoune lakkit I
To governe with my will.⁷⁶

Barbour also regards reason as vital to the correct use of free will: "will, / . . . suld als accord to skill" (III, 285-86). While "hardyment" is always admired by Barbour, displaying as it does a conscious effort of will on man's part, it must always conform to reason. Therefore when Caesar is cited for his exemplary "hardyment" the moral that is drawn stresses that success is always possible when a man's will is steadfast and governed by reason:

Men may se be his ythand will,
And It suld als accord to skill,
That quha taiss purpos sekyrly,
And followis It syne ythandly,
For-owt fayntice, or yheit faynding,
With-thi It be conabill thing,
Be he the mar be wnhappy,
He sall eschew It In party.
(III, 285-92)

Significantly, when Douglas's "hardyment" is first described,⁷⁷ his practical wisdom is mentioned at the same time:

Thair wes nane auentur that mocht
Stunay hys hart, na ger him let
To do the thing he wes on set;
For he thocht ay encrely
To do his deid awysily.
(I, 298-302)

This translates in terms of the action into true valour which is "hardyment . . . mellit . . . / Vith vit" (VI, 356-57). For

⁷⁶Ed. McDiarmid, stanza 16, p. 81.

⁷⁷See above, p. 101.

Barbour, "wit" and "mesure" derive from "skill" or practical reason. This is what Edward Bruce lacks:

Couth he haf gouernit hym throu skill,
And fallowit nocht to fast his will,
Bot with mesour haf leid his deid,
(XVI, 321-23)

he not only might have conquered Ireland, but would also have merited Barbour's esteem. But to borrow a phrase from Blind Harry's Wallace, his "will unskillful is".⁷⁸

An ungoverned will reflects an abuse of God's gift to man. On several occasions in the poem Barbour conveys the interdependence of will and "skill" by seeming to point up an opposition:

We vend robert the bruce had beyn
Swa discumfit that, be gud skill,
He suld nouthir haff hert no will
Swilk Iuperdy till vndirta.
(VII, 361-64)

Bruce himself is presented as showing up the defect in the enemy's argument when he asserts:

And sen we knaw thar felloune will,
Me think it suld accorde till skill
To set stoutness agane felony,
And mak swagat ane Iuperdy.
(XII, 259-62)

A "felloune will" can be combatted by a will, a "stoutness", governed by reason and a desire for justice.

That Edward I's conduct in Scotland is viewed by Barbour as the result of his abuse of the gift of free will is clearly conveyed in the poem. We first learn of a dichotomy between Edward's will and the divine will when he approaches Bruce the

⁷⁸Harry's Wallace, ed. M. P. McDiarmid, 2 vols. (S. T. S., Fourth Series, 4, 5, 1968-69), 2, bk. XII, 477.

elder and Baliol with the aim of soliciting their homage. Bruce responds by refusing the kingship on the terms offered by Edward, saying:

The kynryk yharn I nocht to have,
Bot gyff It fall off rycht to me:
And gyff god will that It sa be,
(I, 158-60)

by which he acknowledges that "rycht" comes of God's will, and not Edward's, whereas Baliol is prepared to submit to Edward's will:

. . . schir Ihon the balleoll perfay
Assentyt till him, in all his will;
Quhar-through fell eftir mekill Ill.
(I, 168-70)

Barbour then proceeds to describe the wrongs that are brought about by Baliol's ill-considered submission, and he does this by making a very pointed use of the word "liking". This word may connote several, though closely related, things: happiness or contentment; liberty of will or choice; pleasure.⁷⁹ We learn that after Edward has "done his likyng / Off Ihone the balleoll (180-81) he occupies Scotland. Here "likyng" means "as he wished" or "what he pleased", that is to say, he acted according to his personal will or pleasure. This meaning of "likyng" is reiterated at lines 198 and 208 when we are informed that Edward's officers in Scotland, following the example of their king, behave in such a way "That Scottis men mycht do na thing / That euir mycht pleyss to thar liking", and seize the possessions of the Scots "That plesand war to thar liking". Their conduct imitates that of their king, for in behaving as they do, they are acting in accordance

⁷⁹Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (hereafter referred to as DOST), s.v. "Liking / Lyking".

with personal will or desire which is not based on reason:

For thai dempt thaim eftir thar will,
Takand na kep to rycht na skill.
(I, 213-14)

They have, in Boethian terms, lost their proper reason, and so abuse the gift of free will. They behave according to what pleases them, rather than according to what the use of reason would dictate. That their conduct is unreasonable is pointed up by the observation that they can "fynd sone enchesone" (203) for their wickedness, which is really "litill enchesoune or than nane" (217), just as Edward caused Baliol to be arrested and deposed "For litill enchesone or nane" (173). Barbour chooses the word carefully; it is suitably ambiguous, for while it generally means reason in the sense of cause, here it implies excuse.

Barbour therefore defines "thrillage" in terms of "likyng" which signifies rule by personal will and which is not founded on reason. This is morally iniquitous because it is an abuse of the power to govern given by God, and which should accord with the divine will. John of Ireland, in his Meroure of Wyssdome⁸⁰ (1490), a manual on good kingship composed for the young James IV, illuminates this viewpoint:

All kingis and princis suld knaw that the power js nocht gevin to thame to gouerne the cristin pepil eftir thar will and plesaunce, bot eftir law & resson conformand to the law of jhesu & his wil & plesaunce.⁸¹

⁸⁰The MS. preserved in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh (18.2.8) is believed to be unique. The first third of the MS., Books I-II, has been edited by Charles MacPherson, Johannes De Irlandia's Meroure of Wyssdome (S. T. S., N.S. 19, 1926), hereafter referred to as vol. 1. Books III-IV have been edited by F. Quinn (S. T. S., Fourth Series, 2, 1965), hereafter referred to as vol. 2. The remaining third of the MS., Books VI-VII, is still unedited.

⁸¹1:7.

Barbour, through a very particular use of the words "likyng", "enchesone" and "skill", demonstrates that Edward's rule represents a negation of God's intention in bestowing power on him.

Having described the state of "thryldome" that results from Edward's rule, the poet seems to digress in order to acquaint his readers with his views on the nature of freedom. However, I believe that all that he has to say before this excursus is intended to serve as an introduction to the arguments presented there. Barbour launches straight in with: "Fredome mayss man to haiff liking" (226). Although Craigie and Aitken cite this line⁸² to testify to the use of the word "liking" in the sense of happiness, contentment, enjoyment or satisfaction, I think that when it is analysed in the context in which it appears, that is, immediately after the passage on "thryllage", in which the various shades of meaning of the word are implied, it is obviously laden with a complication of meanings. Its particular significance in this context derives from the foregoing references to will and reason where "liking" characterized rule by personal will as opposed to rule by law and reason based on the correct use of power and free will. So that if the line, "Fredome mayss man to haiff liking", is translated: freedom gives man happiness / contentment / enjoyment / satisfaction, much of the import of the word is missed. On the other hand, if one considers the negative associations of the word contained in the previous lines, one realizes that Barbour is arguing that in a

⁸²DOST, s.v. "Liking/Lyking".

state of "thryllage" the true meaning of "liking" becomes degraded and becomes synonymous with "plesaunce", that is, rule by corrupted will issuing in the corrupt moral order imposed by Edward. In a state of freedom, however, man has free will: "Fredome mayss man to haiff liking". In other words, in a state of freedom man has liberty of choice.

A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyff fredome faillyhe.

(229-31)

Through the imposition of "thryldome", the imposition of rule by "plesaunce", happiness, or the liberty to please oneself, to choose, is denied the conquered.

That "liking" is synonymous with liberty of choice or free will, is made clear in the next line: "for fre liking / Is yharnyt our all othir thing" (231-32). The freedom to choose, to exercise free will, is the state God allotted to man. This is the essence of his freedom, and in denying him freedom, "thryldome" deprives him of this right. The condition of the "thryll" is such that he has:

. . . nocht sa mekill fre
As fre liking to leyve, or do
That at hys hart hym drawis to.
(246-48)

He has not the freedom to do or leave undone that which he would wish. Moreover, he is deprived of the freedom of his will since he cannot do that which "hys hart hym drawis to", which is one of the ways, as noted earlier, in which Barbour describes the operation of the will.

So Barbour defines freedom by first considering its negation, for, he argues, "contrar thingis euir-mar, / Discoweryngis off the tothir ar" (241-42). He brings his

readers to a realization of the true nature of freedom by emphasizing the way that "liking" can be abused. His definition of freedom is really concentrated in one line: "Fredome mayss man to haiff liking", but the line is made arresting by the indirect elucidation contained in the description of the state of "thryllage".

Barbour's discussion of freedom is philosophical rather than political, or at least it is not political in that it does not deal with the right of an independent nation to self-government. Marsilius of Padua, for instance, defines political freedom as self-government in the sense that the laws under which men live derive from their consent.⁸³ On the other hand, in medieval political theory freedom was more commonly understood as a philosophical concept. Hence John of Salisbury in the Policraticus writes that "Liberty means judging everything freely in accordance with one's individual judgement",⁸⁴ and Dante argues:

It must be understood that the first principle of our freedom is freedom of will . . . the freedom of the will means a free judgement concerning will.⁸⁵

The closest Barbour comes to a more political definition is when

⁸³Marsilius of Padua: The Defender of Peace, trans. Alan Gewirth, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia U. P., 1951, 1956), 2, The Defensor Pacis, I, xii; 6.

⁸⁴Trans. John Dickinson, The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), VII, 25.

⁸⁵De Monarchia, trans. F. J. Church, The 'De Monarchia' of Dante (London: Macmillan & Co., 1879), I, xii.

he compares the English reign of terror in Scotland with her past freedom:

Alas! that folk, that euir wes fre,
And in fredome wount for to be,
Throw thar gret myschance and foly,
War trefyt than sa wykkytly,
That thar fays thar Iugis war;
Quhat wrechitnes may man have mar?
(I, 219-24)

Even here, he speaks of the people, rather than the nation. Nevertheless, freedom is understood as independence, and is contrasted with the tyranny which English domination imposes, a state in which there is no justice and no appeal to law, since the law is in the hands of their oppressors.⁸⁶ But this is not developed. Instead, Barbour moves on to an apotheosis of freedom in which he restricts his arguments to what freedom means to the individual--the exercise of his free will--rather than what it means to the nation.⁸⁷

That Barbour understands freedom as a moral rather than a political concept, and that he is talking here about universal rather than specifically Scottish experience, is pointed up by

⁸⁶Cf.: Marsilius of Padua's concept of slavery: it is the lack of political power to which one is subject, as well as the unbearable conditions which result from that lack. Defensor Pacis, I, ix, 5.

⁸⁷It is noteworthy that those critics who consider that political freedom is the theme of Barbour's poem have difficulty in accomodating this passage in their analyses. Friedrich Brie, for example, cites lines 219-20 to demonstrate the national feeling and strong patriotic sentiments that characterize The Bruce, but makes a good deal less of the apostrophe to freedom (225ff) than one might expect. Die Nationale Literatur Schottlands, p. 60. Similarly, Hans Utz in his article, "If Freedom Fail--'Freedom' in John Barbour's The Bruce", discusses the political connotations of "fre" and "fredome" in The Bruce and, while he cites lines 219-20, he, too, makes little comment on the passage on freedom, pp. 152, 154.

the echoes of the moral of Walter the Englishman's version of the Phaedrian-Romulus fable, "The Wolf and the Bandog".⁸⁸ Barbour's observation that freedom is to be prized more than all the gold in the world (239-40) is strongly reminiscent of Walter's maxim that liberty cannot well be sold for all the gold in existence. For Walter freedom is a heavenly good that excels all earthly wealth.⁸⁹ When Barbour claims that "thryldome" is worse than death (269) there is an echo of an additional distich which appears in many MSS. of this fable, namely, that servitude is generally called the image of death.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Barbour's remark that a serf does not own either himself or his property (243-45) is very close to a line in Walter's fable to the same effect.⁹¹ It is significant that it is the moral nature of freedom which is emphasized in Walter's fable: it is the food of the soul.⁹²

Moreover, when Barbour returns to the issue of "thryldome" (233ff), it is not the effects of foreign occupation or tyranny but the institution of serfdom that he denounces. The association of ideas may seem random, especially when he goes on to compare servitude with the duties of marriage (249-

⁸⁸Ed. Léopold Hervieux, Les fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge, 5 vols. (Paris: Libraire de Firmin-Didot, 1892-99), 2: 344. I am indebted to Halvdan Koht, "Medieval Liberty Poems", The American Historical Review 48 (1942-3): 281-90, for drawing my attention to this allusion.

⁸⁹Les fabulistes latins, 2: 344.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 363.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 344.

⁹²Ibid.

274). But what Halvdan Koht finds an argument for liberty which "sinks down to rather subtle arguments"⁹³ is in fact quite logical to Barbour who is thinking in terms of moral obligations, and the impossibility of exercising freedom of choice when one is a thrall.

Indeed, it is almost worthy of note that Barbour's discussion of freedom does not contain patriotic elements.⁹⁴ However, his particular preoccupations become even clearer when compared to Andrew Wyntoun's treatment of this whole section, which he copied from The Bruce. He follows Barbour fairly closely from I, 37-178⁹⁵ but he does not go on at that point to reproduce the lines on the appointment and deposition of Baliol and the subsequent occupation of Scotland by Edward's forces (The Bruce, I, 179ff). Instead, he prefers to consider the succession crisis in detail, particularly the claims of Bruce the elder and John Baliol (Cronykil, bk. VIII, ch. III). He quotes what is supposed to be Edward's letter to the "wys men" of France presenting the conflicting claims and emphasizing his own position as overlord of Scotland. Wyntoun is obviously anxious to demonstrate the political machinations of Edward I, for he writes:

⁹³"Medieval Liberty Poems", p. 288.

⁹⁴Petrarch's famous song of liberty, "Parma liberata" (1341), is highly patriotic, singing the praises of the fatherland, contrasting the ancient pride of the nation with the recent tyranny etc. Ed. Francesco Berlan, Scelta di curiosita letterarie (Bologna, 1870), disp. CIX. It is interesting that the idea that the loss of liberty makes the value of it really felt (The Bruce, I, 233-38) is also found in the "Parma liberata".

⁹⁵Andrew of Wyntoun's Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland, bk. VIII, ch. II.

Befor Edward off England Kyng
 Had made, as yhe herd, this karpyng,
 The effect oure sé he wrate,
 Cownsale til hawe off this debate.
 Bot he mad fals suggestyown:
 Fals wes his relatyown,
 And infurmyd richt falsly,
 And set the case all swykfully;
 Quhen he sayd, in herytage
 That kynryk [Scotland] wes haldyn for homage
 Aucht till a kyng off grettare mycht,
 He sayd all fals, and na thyng rycht.
 The kynrik, that he that tale off made,
 As in till Frawns he wryttyn hade.
 Wythowtyn dowt wes ay mare fre,
 Than wes that rewme, that than had he.
 He wes nevyr worth, na all his kyn,
 The fredwme fra that rewme to wyn.
 He sawffyd ill kyngis honesté,
 Swa to sclandyre a Kynryk fre.

(Cronykil, VIII, ch. III,
 377-96)

There is repeated stress on the unrighteousness of Edward's claim. Particularly remarkable is the comparison Wyntoun draws between the two kingdoms; Scotland has always been more free than Edward's realm. There is also a good deal of emphasis on the freedom of Scotland in association with patriotic and national feeling. Lines 393-94 might almost have been written as a rejoinder to Peter Langtoft: they certainly come close to the kind of abuse that is a feature of offensive patriotism.⁹⁶ Wyntoun clearly does not conceive of freedom in the way Barbour does, and therefore it is not surprising that he omits the latter's passage on freedom, replacing it with his own, much more political and patriotic, observations.

I have argued that Barbour's passage on the thralldom of Scotland is as much an exposition of his conception of freedom as free will (showing its corruption and negation) as

⁹⁶See Introduction, pp. 13-14.

the apotheosis of freedom. It is therefore significant that not only does Wyntoun omit Barbour's passage on freedom, but that later (VIII, ll. 2675ff) when he reproduces the latter's lines on the English occupation of Scotland (The Bruce, I, 179-216), he omits those lines which I believe reflect Barbour's belief that thralldom above all prevents men from exercising their free will and substitutes a "liking" which is corrupt: 195-96, 203-4, 213-14, 217-74.

It was not without design that Barbour outlined his concept of freedom before he introduced the heroes of his story. He wished his readers to understand that when Douglas (I, 349-52) and Bruce (I, 501-10) resolve to release Scotland from "thryllage" they are to be seen as restorers of the natural moral order. According to John of Ireland:

princis and lordis that studiis and lauboris to knaw his [God's] will and plesaunce, to lere his haly law pertenant to thame and his pepil, puttand thar will, thar plesaunce, thar hope and confidence jn him, sall regne in this Erd with honour.⁹⁷

We have already observed that Bruce and Douglas are prepared to accede in all these respects. Immediately after the discussion of freedom, Douglas is introduced as one of the men peculiarly suited to the role of liberator. He is prepared to accept the will of God, to strive to identify his own will with the divine will and, as indicated earlier in this chapter, his philosophy of life is particularly apt for a man who will have to contend with adversity.

Furthermore, Douglas's chief virtue is his loyalty:

⁹⁷Meroure of Wyssdome, 2:7.

"our all thing [he] luffyt lawte" (I, 364). As Barbour's narrative unfolds, we learn that it is this quality that unites him with Bruce, for by his loyalty he demonstrates his willingness "To tak with him the gud and Ill" (II, 161). By paying homage to Bruce (II, 158-62), he literally subjects his personal will to that of his liege. Indeed, the Douglas-Bruce relationship is an analogue to man's relationship with God. Pertinently, Chaucer describes friendship which is hall-marked by this kind of loyalty as the knitting of two wills⁹⁸

That wole not breke for wele ne woo;
Which long is likly to contune,
Whanne wille and goodis ben in comune;
Grounded by Goddis ordinaunce,
Hool, withoute discordaunce.

(The Romaunt of the Rose, 5204-8)

Loyalty to a person or to a good cause is a worthy direction of one's will, reflecting in its nature the final end of man's will, which is the good and the return to God. "Throuch leavte liffis men rychtwisly" (I, 366). The supreme praise that can be offered of a loyal man is that he is so good "that he / May symply gud man callyt be" (I, 373-74). Doubtless Barbour would have agreed with Haye's views on the kind of world that would exist if there was no loyalty:

For and fayth and leautee war away fra men in this warlde, all wald be nocht but turne agayn as to the begynning of the warld, to that ilke state that thai war at the begynnyng of the warlde, that is to say to the semblaunce of unreasonable bestis.⁹⁹

⁹⁸This definition is apparently Chaucer's own, since there is no counterpart in his source, Jean de Meung's Roman de la Rose.

⁹⁹The Buke of the Governauce of Princis, ed. Stevenson, Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript, 2, ch. xiiij, p. 105.

The steadfastness displayed by the "hardy" man also distinguishes the loyal man as a reliable friend in the face of adverse fortune. As Chaucer says:

. . . na man may be amyable,
But if he be so ferme and stable
That fortune chaunge hym not, ne blynde,
But that his freend allwey hym fynde,
Bothe pore and riche, in oo stat.

(The Romaunt of the Rose, 5225-29)

For, claims Chaucer, "sothfast freendis, what so bitide, / In every fortune wolen abide" (5513-14).

Loyalty is understood by Barbour, as it was throughout this period, as a quality of the soul. It implied fidelity "to an individual because of love or friendship, 'amur' or 'amistie', at a time when love was conventionally phrased in terms of friendship and friendship in terms of love . . . it was ideally held to be irrevocable and of its nature incapable of change".¹⁰⁰ As a result, Barbour defines the Bruce-Douglas relationship as a lasting friendship:

Thusgat maid thai thar aquentance,
That neuir syne, for nakyn chance,
Departyt quhill thai lyffand war.
Thair frendschip woux ay mar & mar:
For he serwyt ay lelely;
And the tothir full wilfully,
That was bath worthy, wycht, & wyss,
Rewardyt him weile his seruice.

(II, 167-74)

Bruce's motive for taking up arms against the English is revealed before Comyn approaches him with the proposal of

¹⁰⁰Gervase Mathew, "Ideals of Knighthood in Late Fourteenth Century England", in Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke (Oxford, 1948), p. 359.

rebellion. He is distressed by the sufferings caused by Edward's rule:

Thys lord the brwyss . . .
Saw all the kynryk swa forfayr;
And swa trowblyt the folk saw he,
That he tharoff had gret pitte.
(I, 477-80)

Gervase Mathew points out that according to medieval belief "pitte" could provide the course or excuse for direct political action:

For "Pitie" seems essentially a compassion for an individual which finds expression in immediate action. . . . The epithet had survived into the late Middle Ages from the primitive conception of the hero of the chanson de geste as a 'Justicier', a punisher of wrong-doers.¹⁰¹

Blind Harry claims that "pitte" first roused the spark of rebellion in his hero:

Willyham Wallace or he was man of armys
Gret pitte thocht that Scotland tuk sic harmys.¹⁰²

For Bruce and Wallace this "pitte" is compassion for their fellow-countrymen who suffer the yoke of "thryllage" and injustice. When Comyn asks Bruce:

. . . "schir, will ye nocht se
How that gouernyt is this countre?
Thai sla our folk but enchesoune,
And haldis this land agayne resoune, . . ."
(I, 485-88)

and suggests that they attempt to remedy this appalling state of affairs, the latter is roused to action. With all the conviction of one committed to a just cause, Bruce resolves to oust the wrong-doers and to re-establish rule by law and

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 360.

¹⁰²Harry's Wallace, I, 181-82.

reason.

However, Barbour cannot condone the murder of Comyn, largely because, in killing Comyn in a church, Bruce is guilty of sacrilege:

He mysdyd thar gretly, but wer,
That gave na gyर्थ to the Awter.
(II, 43-44)

Barbour seems less outraged by the crime of murder--at an earlier point in the narrative he implies that Comyn's death is a judgement on his treachery: "Quharfor syne he tholyt ded" (I, 567)--than by Bruce's disregard of the altar. Sacrilege is a serious sin which must be expiated. Bruce's trials and tribulations are therefore presented as a necessary atonement:

Tharfor sa hard myscheiff him fell,
That Ik herd neur in Romanys tell
Off man sa hard sted as wes he,
That eftirwart com to sic bounte.
(II, 46-48)

Barbour seems to regard Bruce's acceptance of his hardship as his form of repentance. In demonstrating that he is willing to accept the "v're" that God sends, and in putting himself "till assay", he proves that he is a worthy leader of men who, in turn, "thar v're with him vald ta" (VI, 377). His followers are "wilfull to fulfill / His liking, with gud hert and will" (XI, 266-67).

Like the Maccabees, Bruce seeks to restore righteousness and justice (1 Macc. 2:29). Their aim was to re-instate the Old Law, his is to restore justice and freedom to Scotland. The killing of Comyn, like the killing of the Jew on the altar of Modein, is the catalyst that propels him into action. From that point on he is prepared "till the end hys werdis drywe" (III, 390).

CHAPTER 3

James Douglas: The Ideal Knight

Although we have observed that Barbour frequently alludes to the salutary effects of God's grace and the vital part "vne" plays in the turn of events, we have also discovered that The Bruce is not a homiletic romance. Like other romancers, Barbour wished to perpetuate the memory of men whom he believes deserve renown for their great deeds:

And, certis, thai suld weill hawe pryss
That in thar tyme war wucht and wyss,
And led thar lyff in gret trawaill,
And oft in hard stour off bataill
Wan richt gret price off chewalry,
And war woydyt off cowardy.
(I, 21-26)

Such men won glory for their prowess in battle, and since Barbour seems to feel that they may be forgotten, he makes it clear that he intends to celebrate the exploits of such men and to give praise where praise is due. From this general argument he moves on to name the particular men he considers worthy of lasting glory:

As wes king Robert off Scotland,
That hardy wes off hart and hand;
And gud Schyr James off douglas,
That in his tyme sa worthy was,
That off hys price & hys bounte
In fer landis renownyt wes he.
(I, 27-32)

"Price" or "pryss" is evidently of paramount interest to the poet, for it is specifically referred to three times in twelve lines,

and the word is constantly repeated in the course of his narrative. Perhaps because Barbour assumed that his readers would be less surprised at the choice of Robert Bruce as one of his heroes, fewer lines are devoted to him at this stage. He clearly wished to underline that Douglas is also a candidate for abiding praise, and he does this by affording him twice as many lines in this introduction, and by referring to the widespread renown that Douglas enjoyed in his lifetime.

But why should Barbour have chosen Douglas as the joint hero of his romance? In the course of the narrative he dwells on the exploits of other Scottish knights who ought to be "prisyt" or "lovyt": Edward Bruce (XVI, 523-31), Walter Steward (XVII, 924), Thomas Randolph, Earl of Murray (X, 299); and in the closing lines when he speaks of "the lordis deit apou this viss" (XX, 611), Randolph is included amongst those "nobill elderis" whose "gret bounte" (XX, 617) is held up as an example to their descendants. But it is Douglas who is singled out as Bruce's companion in glory. Certainly, Douglas seems to have commanded the respect to which Barbour alludes. Froissart writes of Douglas and Randolph as the two fine captains who led the Scottish army against Edward when Bruce's health was failing. But it is Douglas who is distinguished for his reputation as "le plus hardi, vaillant et entreprenant de tous les aultres".¹ Although he goes on to say that these two lords were renowned as chief in deeds of arms and prowess in all Scotland, in his chapters on the Scottish war the

¹Chroniques, ed. George T. Diller (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972), ch. XXV, p. 128.

deeds of Douglas receive more attention than those of any other Scottish knight.²

We have to conclude that Edward Bruce and Thomas Randolph, although admirable warriors, were less outstanding heroes to Barbour's way of thinking. The choice of Robert Bruce was an obvious one for a Scottish writer, but the singling out of James Douglas indicates that not only Douglas's contemporaries but Barbour writing some forty-five years later, believed that he possessed qualities which these others did not, or to a degree which surpassed theirs. In putting forward this claim one inevitably returns to the question of Barbour's concept of heroism and the clues that are found in his portrait of Douglas.

First and foremost, the poet presents Douglas as the ideal knight. Douglas's career is the only one that is traced from childhood and the intention seems to be to show that this hero was trained for knighthood. He is first mentioned as "a litill page; / Bot syne he wes off gret waslage" (I, 289-90) at the time of his father's death. The son of a nobleman received the title of page at the age of seven years, and with that he entered upon the first stage of his training in the prerequisites of knighthood.³

²Ibid. See especially chapters XXV, XXXVII, and XXXVIII. It is only fair to point out that Froissart deals with the later years of the Scottish War of Independence (1327 onwards), by which time Edward Bruce was dead and Robert Bruce, because of his failing health, was not so actively engaged in military combat. It is however interesting that the author of the Vita Edwardi Secundi makes no mention of Randolph, Edward Bruce, or Walter Steward, but does focus on the exploits of James Douglas, "inimicus noster", pp. 48, 50, 95, 97.

³J. Saunders, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (London: J. M. Dent & Son, 1889; rev. ed., 1894), p. 39.

Barbour suggests this state of preparation when he says that Douglas was later "off gret waslage", that is, not only prowess, but deeds performed in the context of vassalage. His education is interrupted and his prospects of becoming the future Lord of Douglasdale are dashed, for the imprisonment of his father, the seizure of his inherited lands, and the lack of friends to redress this situation, force him to leave Scotland.

However, Barbour presents this sudden change in the young Douglas's circumstances and the consequent interruption of his formal training as an enriching rather than a harmful experience. Douglas goes to Paris to "dre myscheiff quhar nane hym kend" (I, 327) and spends his time in low company in the pursuit of apparently profitless mirth. He presumably wishes to forget his troubles temporarily, and he has the excuse that he is young. But Barbour also regards this period of dissipation as an important part of Douglas's education, for he argues that "knowlage off mony statis / May quhile awailye full mony gatis" (I, 337-38). He cites the example of Robert, Earl of Artois as one who frequently benefited from feigning "rybbaldy" (I, 339-40). He is no doubt⁴ referring to Robert, the third count of Artois (1287-1343) who was

⁴Skeat in his note to these lines (n. 339, p. 546) cites two famous Roberts who were earls of Artois, but suggests that the reference may be to Robert, count of Artois. In fact, the Dictionnaire de Biographie Française vol. 3, refers to all three Roberts as "comptes de" Artois. Robert I (Robert of France) is an unlikely candidate for Barbour's allusion since his fame derives from his passionate commitment to the Crusades. Robert II (1250-1302), his son, is also unlikely, for according to Froissart at the Battle of Courtrai he was responsible for the death of some of the most valiant French nobles "par l'orguel". Chroniques, ch. I, p. 41.

famous for "ses intrigues".⁵ This knight was educated in Paris, and had a long-running battle with his aunt Machaut over his inheritance. He subsequently displeased the French king Philippe and was forced to quit France and his inheritance. He came to England in the disguise of a merchant⁶ and soon became one of Edward III's most valued counsellors, helping him to fight the French king for the throne of France. There are enough points of similarity in the careers of these two men--especially since Douglas will be lauded by Barbour as a master in the use of guile and disguise--for the allusion to be apt. That Douglas's experiences in Paris are regarded by Barbour as a useful, if unconventional, part of his education is communicated by the fact that one of Cato's apothegms suggested itself to the poet at this point: "To fenyhe foly quhile is wyt" (I, 344). The reference is to his Disticha, which was used as a first Latin reader in medieval grammar schools.

When Douglas receives news of his father's death, he returns home, cherishing hopes of regaining his heritage. He joins the household of the Bishop of St. Andrews. J. Saunders informs us that if a family was poor, a knight's son generally entered the house of some other nobleman or gentleman to receive

⁵M. Lancelot, "Mémoires pour servir l'Histoire de Robert D'Artois", Part I, Mémoires de Littérature, Tirez des Registres de L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, tom. 10, p. 573. For two other memoirs of Robert of Artois by the same author see Mémoires de Littérature, tom. 10: 635-64, and 8: 669-81. See also Froissart, Chroniques, XLVII, XLVIII, LVII and passim.

⁶Froissart, Chroniques, LI, p. 209.

the requisite training.⁷ Douglas's circumstances are of course greatly reduced, and since his father is now dead, he enters Bishop Lamberton's household to continue his education. But in any case, manuals on knighthood recommended that a knight's son should receive his training from a professional;

thai suld be techit and doctrynt be a knyght, thay yong lordis sonis that thocht tobe knyghtis, for ryght as it war nocht semand till a yong man that wad lere tobe a man of craft, suld lere at ane othir that war nocht of the craft, sa is it unsemand that lordis sonis that wald be in the maist noble ordre of knyghthede suld sett thame to lere the documentis and proprieteis of the ordre of knyghthede, bot at thame that war expert in the knaulage of virtues and gude thewis honourable that to the said ordre appertenis.⁸

I. M. Davies observes that Douglas "could hardly have been better placed than with Lamberton. Mediaeval bishops exercised in their temporalities all the powers of great lay lords, and the secular training of boys entrusted to them would have matched that to be had in an earl's household".⁹

It can be assumed that he is now fourteen years or older, since that was the age at which a page was raised to the dignity of a squire, and we learn that Douglas is now fulfilling the duties of carving squire to the Bishop; Lamberton "gert him wer / His knyvys, forouch him to scher" (I, 355-56) and when news comes of the murder of Comyn, Douglas, "that ay-quhar / All-wayis befor the byschop schar" (II, 91-92), is carrying out his function as

⁷Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, p. 39.

⁸Gilbert Haye, The Buke of Knyghthede, ch. 2, p. 16.

⁹The Black Douglas (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 10.

squire at the table.¹⁰ Furthermore, he is actually referred to as "This squyer Iames of dowglas" (I, 414). Saunders points out one of the chief benefits of this domestic role:

Thus for a long time the youthful Squire acquired in silence, while present in the quality of carver at repasts and festivals, the art of expressing his ideas with propriety.¹¹

It was customary for a nobleman's son to remain a squire until the age of twenty-one, at which point he was eligible for knighthood. During this period he would have been trained for his future role of knight. We learn something of the aims of such an education from Gilbert Haye's translation of Le livre de l'ordre de chevalerie:

And first and formast a knyght suld lere his sone to be doctryned in vertues, and syne suld he be doctrynyt and techit to ryding in his youthede, or ellis he sall never be gude rydare; and ay as he cummys till elde, that he lere to governe hors and armouris; and that he be servand to sum lord, and use him in armes lang or he tak the ordre, for unworthy war he suld be a lord or a maister that knew never quhat it is to be a servand, for he may never wele tak na knawe the sutenes that it is to be the lord, bot gif he had sum knaulage of the sourness that it is, and payne to a gude hert, to be ane underlout or a servand. And tharfore, war he never sa grete a lordis sone appertenand to be lord, he war the better that in youthede sum lord that he servit,--to kerve before him, to serve in chaumer, till arme a lord, till oursee his hors, that thai war wele governyt and grathit, to haunt armouris, to ryn a spere, to exercise wapnis, and othir habiliteis of honour quhilk appertenis to nobless.¹²

¹⁰Cf. . Chaucer's squire: he "carf biforn his fader at the table", General Prologue, I (A) 100; other references to squires carving at table are found in the Summoner's Tale, III, 2243-44, and in the Merchant's Tale, IV, 1772-73. On the duties and training of a squire see Saunders, pp. 39-49 and F. J. C. Hearnshaw, "Chivalry and its Place in History" in Chivalry: Its Historical Significance and Civilizing Influence, ed. E. Prestage (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928): 22-24.

¹¹Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, p. 43.

¹²The Buke of Knychthede, ch. 2, p. 16.

When exactly Douglas was made a knight is unclear. Although Barbour tells us that he is among those knighted at Bannockburn (XII, 413-18), there is some evidence in the text to support I. M. Davies's theory that in the case of Douglas the ceremony was perhaps that of elevation to the rank of banneret, a higher rank than that of knight, which could only be conferred on the battlefield. He argues that Douglas may well have been a knight bachelor by 1308, since in the Argyll campaign of that year Bruce had placed under Douglas's command several knights who were not his feudal subordinates.¹³ Notwithstanding the fact that Barbour's chronology is sometimes questionable, he refers to an episode in Douglas's career in the years following Bannockburn which can be dated to 1317. This is when Bruce goes to his brother Edward's aid in Ireland, and Douglas is appointed one of the Wardens of Scotland in his absence. Sir Robert Neville issues a challenge to Douglas: "gif I euir his Baneir / May se displayit apon wer" (XV, 419-20), he will engage him in battle. In response Douglas "maid / Men to display his baner braid" (XV, 435-36). Since he clearly has his own banner,¹⁴ and the year is 1317, we can assume that he is a knight-banneret at this time.

By tracing his career from page to knight-banneret, Barbour could promote the idea that his hero was qualified for his

¹³The Black Douglas, p. 78. A banneret was entitled to have a flag bearing his own coat of arms carried before him and his followers when they were summoned to join the royal forces. A bachelor was a knight in the probationary stage of knighthood, who followed the banner of another.

¹⁴Bruce's banner is always clearly identified as his own, XII, 88, XI, 347.

station in life. As a knight he would be required to serve as a vassal to his king with the various duties that entailed, and to govern as a lord his own vassals with the various responsibilities such a rank necessarily incurred. There can be little doubt that Barbour was interested in knighthood in its particular aspect as part of the whole system of feudal relationships. The frequency of terms denoting the various persons, duties, bonds and responsibilities involved in the feudal system may well reflect the strengthening of military feudalism under Robert Bruce. As Barrow points out, "for King Robert knight service was not purely ornamental or honorific but real and desirable"¹⁵ and was the means by which he could attract and maintain the support he needed to oust the English from Scotland.

More particularly, Douglas as a knight binds himself to Bruce in what emerges as the primary feudal relationship in the poem. The fact that it is a relationship based on a feudal contract is underlined in their first meeting. Douglas begins by recognizing Bruce as his superior: he "lowtyt him Full curtasly" (II, 154), that is, he bowed in obeisance to him; he tells him that he has come "to mak homage / Till him as till his rychtwiss king" (158-59); and he announces that "he boune wes, in all thing, / To tak with him the gud and Ill" (161-62). Bruce then receives him as his vassal and confers arms and men on him (164). The relationship is based on Douglas's commitment and loyal service, and Bruce's remunerative recognition of services proffered.

¹⁵Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland, p. 405.

The second most important relationship in the poem is also a feudal one, that between Douglas and his followers. On his first return to Douglasdale after Bruce's insurrection, he assumes, in name only at this stage, his position as his father's heir, that is, as a liege-lord, and the men of Douglasdale become his vassals. Thomas Dickson, a faithful servant, arranges

That all the leill men of the land,
That with his fader wes duelland,
This gud man gert cum ane & ane,
And mak him manrent euir ilkane,
And he him-self first homage maid.
Douglas in hert gret blithnes had,
That the gud men of his cuntre
Wald swa-gat bundin till him be.
(V, 293-300)

The contract is the same as that made between Bruce and Douglas, but the latter is now seen in the role of a lord who will be expected to reward and protect his men in return for their loyal service.

By focussing on Douglas's early education, Barbour was able to convey something of his hero's personal suitability for his destined role. He achieves this by concentrating on his transition from youth to maturity. The young page, on learning of his father's imprisonment and realizing the wretchedness of his friendless and impoverished situation, is at a loss as to what to do or say:

Than wes he wondir will off wane;
And sodanly in hart has tane,
That he wald trawaille our the se,
And A quhile in paryss be,
And dre myscheiff quhar nane hym kend,
Till god succouris till him send.
(I, 323-28)

In this confused state of mind, he impulsively sets off for a foreign country in an attempt to forget his troubles. He is not

constructive, and is prepared to wait for divine intervention to remedy his plight. When he is informed of his father's death, he is once again forced to consider his unfortunate situation, and his reaction resembles that on the earlier occasion of William Douglas's imprisonment: "Then wes he wa and will of red" (I, 348). Once again his thoughts seem to run wild. However, Barbour suggests that Douglas's experiences in Paris have matured him, so that his decision to return to Scotland is of quite a different nature than the one which prompted him to leave. Whereas his earlier move was the result of an impetuous decision (he "sodanly in hart has tane"), that is, he had been guided by his emotions, now he "thocht that he wald hame agayne, / To luk gyff he, throw ony payn, / Mycht wyn agayn his heritage" (349-51, my italics), indicating that his decision follows sober calculation, and that he is governed by his head and not his heart. He has progressed to a state of maturity in which he realizes that he has a goal and that he must find a way of achieving it. Moreover, he begins to accept responsibility for his actions and to collaborate in his own destiny. From this point on, we witness his attempts to further his object by practical means.

But for Douglas knight service means fighting for his king as a soldier and officer, and the actual demonstration of his commitments as a lord and vassal. Hence Barbour's ideal of knightly conduct does not fit, and is not intended to fit, the courtly mould with its emphasis on personal ideals. The ideals of his knight are loyalty and responsibility towards others and reflect the importance not only of prowess but of relationships with their attached obligations. This explains his delineation of

Douglas's education and the importance attached to his hero's realization of the expectations of knighthood. The qualities required of such a knight and the standards of conduct which apply to him are different from those of the knight of the courtly romance who seeks personal glory through individual feats of arms. In fact, Barbour's ideal of knighthood is based on the rules governing the practice of real wars and the standards of conduct set forth in medieval handbooks on the art of war.¹⁶

He takes his first practical step when he resumes his conventional education under Bishop Lamberton, for, if he is to assume the position of Lord of Douglasdale, he must be suitably trained. The next stage is to present himself to Edward I, who has control over the fate of his father's lands. He goes with Bishop Lamberton to Edward's assembly at Stirling in order to pay homage to his liege-lord and to claim his inheritance, for he is now prepared to accept the responsibilities incumbent on him as vassal to Edward and Lord of Douglasdale. But Edward rebuffs him, and in terms which will be significant:

Ga purchas land quhar euir he may;
For tharoff haffys he nane perfay.
(I, 433-34)

His first attempt has failed, but a second way soon presents itself. When news that Bruce has killed Comyn and intends to claim the throne reaches the Bishop's household, Edward's words

¹⁶See for example Honoré Bonet, L'Arbre des Batailles (c. 1387), Christine de Pisan's "Le Livre des Faites d'Armes et de Chevalerie" (1408-9), translated by Caxton as The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye (1489), and Sir Gilbert Haye's translation of Bonet's L'Arbre des Batailles, The Buke of the Law of Armyes (1456).

and Lamberton's favourable reaction to Bruce's letter deeply affect the young Douglas. Barbour suggests that he carefully weighs up the situation in his own mind before approaching the Bishop with the announcement that he intends to join Bruce (II, 93-95). He attaches himself to Bruce in the capacity for which he has been trained, vassal and knight-aspirant, thereby providing himself with the means to attain his rightful station in life: Lord of Douglasdale. It is in the role of simultaneous vassal and liege that Douglas will be presented throughout Barbour's narrative.

Barbour conceives of Douglas, not only as a knight, but as an ideal knight who surpasses all his fellows. The main way in which he ensures that his readers will also see Douglas in this light is that, in addition to characterizing him through his actions, he carefully shapes our view of these actions. He frequently comments on his hero's exploits, both before and after he relates them, in such a way as to underline the qualities therein displayed. He is especially prone to anticipating the illustrious deeds of his hero with the result that these are then viewed by the reader precisely as Barbour intended. For example, he anticipates events in this way when he moves from telling us that Douglas was "A litill knave" at the time of his father's death to:

Bot syne he wes off gret waslage,
Hys fadyr dede he wengyt sua
That in Ingland, I wndirta,
Wes nane off lyve that hym ne dred;
For he sa fele off harnys sched,
That nane that lyvys thaim can tell.
(I, 290-95)

Similarly, he recounts how when Bruce goes north to fight the men

of Buchan, Douglas is left to devise a way of regaining Douglasdale:

He left him in-to gret perill;
Bot eftir, in ane litill quhill,
Throu his gret vorschip sa he vrocht,
That to the kingis pess he brocht
The forest of selcryk all hale,
And alsua did he douglasdale,
And gedword forest alsua.

(VIII, 421-27)

Yet it will be some time before all these achievements are narrated.

A certain amount of prepossession is also inevitable since Barbour selects and presents those actions of his hero which are most conducive to the view of the character he is promoting. For example, although he tells us that in his lifetime Douglas was vanquished eight times and victorious on fifty-seven occasions, he never describes the episodes in which Douglas was defeated.

But of course the most pervasive way in which Barbour characterizes his hero is through the epithets he applies to him, and by studying these we can move closer to an estimation of the poet's own apparatus criticus. Following the medieval convention, Barbour provides a catalogue of Douglas's virtues at a preliminary stage of his narrative. Although Diana T. Leo, who used seventy Middle English metrical romances as the basis of her study of the concept of the hero in verse romances, argues that the rhetorical device whereby the romance hero is introduced at the beginning of the story does not so much characterize the hero (since the qualities attributed to him tend to be stereotyped) as indicate something about the story to be told,¹⁷ I would contend that the

¹⁷"The Concept of the Hero in the Middle English Verse Romances", p. 97.

device can equally well serve both functions. This is certainly the case in Barbour's poem, where the conventional catalogue is made an instrument by which the poet controls our perception of his hero's character and his subsequent actions.

Barbour says of Douglas:

All men lufyt him for his bounte;
For he wes off full fayr effer,
Wyss, curtaiss, and deboner;
Larg and luffand als wes he,
And our all thing luffyt lawte.
(I, 360-64)

He first of all presents Douglas as possessing all the qualities one normally associates with the courtly romance hero. This is not surprising, since the context in which the catalogue appears is straight after the information that Douglas has become a squire in a nobleman's house, so that the list of his attributes is to some extent a comment on the success of his education as a knight. We are told that he is loved, or prized, for his "bounte". This is a difficult word to define, since it can, and in the course of The Bruce does, connote various things. At this point the focus is on the young Douglas, the knight-aspirant, who has yet to be tried and tested on the battlefield. I think, therefore, that the word as used here is intended as a composite summary of character, suggesting something of the disposition of the young man, rather than as a reference to his deeds of valour.¹⁸ The same usage is found in the catalogue of Thomas Randolph's qualities. Barbour enumerates his particular virtues and then adds:

¹⁸DOST, s.v. "Bounte, Bownte"; "a deed or deeds of valour"; also Skeat's glossary to The Bruce: "valour, or a deed of valour".

For gif that I the suth sall say,
He wes fulfillit of all bwnte,
And off all vertwis maid wes he.
(X, 293-95)

While it can be defined as excellence of character,¹⁹ it derives from the French bonté and the Latin bonitas, and has therefore overtones of an essential integrity.²⁰ Above all, it appears to be one of those words which derive much of their meaning from the context in which they are found, and, as we shall see, it is largely coloured by association with other words.

Douglas is described as "off full fayr effer" (361) and this is qualified by the epithets "Wyss, curtaiss, and deboner" (362). These are courtly attributes which convey something of his personal conduct and demeanour in the social world. He is discriminating ("wyss"), but whether this is in his choice of companions is not clear. However, the word may have a wider range of meaning, especially if we consider Barbour's depiction of Douglas as a feudal knight. According to Walter Ullman:

The feudal arrangement, at whatever level it was practised, of necessity presupposed the responsibility of the individual. It was not just a matter of receiving a command or a law, but it was necessary to employ one's own critical faculties. Facts, situations, circumstances, ways of means, and so forth --all had to be weighed and assessed properly if lord and vassal were to co-operate, if in other words, the system were to work at all. Being of so individual a character, the actual working of the feudal compact entailed a good deal of give-and-take. It seems obvious that this arrangement considerably fostered the individual's own judgement; in fact, it

¹⁹DOST.

²⁰Dictionnaire de l'ancien français, jusqu'au milieu du XIV^e siècle; A. Blaise, Corpus Christianorum: Lexicon Latinitas Medii Aevi (1975).

presupposed and demanded it.²¹

Hence the epithet "wyss" may well imply that Douglas has developed a quality which will be essential in his future feudal role.

He is also "curtaiss, and deboner", two words deriving from Old French, and which, at first glance, are conventional social attributes. However, although H. Dupin, in his study of courtoisie in the Middle Ages, based on medieval French literature, writes:

La courtoisie, travaillant dans un sens qui, en même temps que celui de la morale, était, particulièrement à cette époque, celui de l'intérêt social,²²

he goes on to observe that when this word is found in conjunction with bonté it has particular feudal associations; it is "l'éloge que l'on fait de la personne qu'on honore et complimente".²³ So when Douglas pays homage to Bruce, we are told that he "lowtyt him Full curtasly" (II, 154). Furthermore, "deboner", from the French débonnaire, throws some light on "bounte", for débonnaireté was a moral virtue in the original chivalric code by which one could conquer the world "sans félonie".²⁴ It was a virtue of the heart which could be acquired.

²¹The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1966; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967), pp. 65-66.

²²La Courtoisie au Moyen Age (Paris: Picard, 1931), p. 41.

²³Ibid., p. 52.

²⁴Ibid., p. 51. Dupin quotes from Le Livre de Lancelot de Lac to support his argument: "quand l'ordre de chevalerie commença, il fut devisé à celui qui voulait être chevalier . . . qu'il fût piteux sans vilenie, débonnaire sans félonie, piteux envers les malheureux et les souffraites".

"Larg and luffand als wes he" (363). Again, this refers to his disposition in relations with others. Largesse, or liberality, was regarded as one of the chief virtues of a courteous lord. C. B. West has remarked that although largesse is a common accompaniment of courtoisie in Anglo-Norman literature, it is far from being a distinctively courtly characteristic:

There seems to be a fundamental difference between the largesse of the courtly hero, who is conscious of, if not actually aiming at, the popularity which his gesture will bring him, and that of the epic or feudal hero, whose generosity is, as it were, more objective, not springing from the desire of approval, but based on the recognition of his followers' deserts.²⁵

Now, since Douglas at this stage has yet to become Lord of Douglasdale, the attribution of the epithet "larg" does not mean that he is already practising largesse towards his vassals, but rather that he has a generous nature, highlighted by the fact that he is also affectionate or "luffand" towards his fellows in the Bishop's household. The word "bounte" is also illuminated, since one of its meanings is generosity.²⁶ Furthermore, "larg" is a comment on his educational progress, for since he is being trained to undertake the responsibilities of a feudal lord, he must acquire the virtue of largesse. As F. J. C. Hearnshaw points out, to the feudal way of thinking, generosity was one of the three "primary" virtues of chivalry, that is, virtues derived from the original military character of the chivalric code.²⁷

²⁵Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938), pp. 73-74.

²⁶DOST and MED, s.v. "Bounte".

²⁷"Chivalry and its Place in History", p. 32. See also M. P. Whitney, "Queen of Medieval Virtues: Largesse", in Vassar Medieval Studies, ed. J. Fiske (New Haven, 1923): 185-203.

In the Middle Ages, as P. Meyer illustrates, Alexander the Great was renowned as "le type idéal du seigneur féodal", on account of his liberality.²⁸ It is this quality that is stressed in the Old French Roman d'Alexandre, in which there is one passage in particular which associates this virtue with others in a way which is very similar to Barbour's treatment of Douglas in the lines under consideration. I shall quote from the Scottish Buik of Alexander, for the translation is close:

. . . the gude King throw his bounte
. . . and throw his great largite.
He was courtas, sueit and quent,
And wysly spekand at all poynt.
All fallowit him, for all him luffit
And he great lufrent to thame prufit.²⁹

One notes the association of "largite", or generosity, with "bounte". He too is "courtas" and wise in speech. But of particular interest is the linking of "largite" with "luff". All his men love him and he in return shows them not only largesse, but "lufrent", or affection.³⁰ "Lufrent" appears to be the lord's response to his vassals' "manrent". So again, the virtues attributed to Douglas at this early stage in his career are the ones which will benefit him for his future role.

²⁸Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature française du moyen âge, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886), 2:373. Cf. the portrait of Alexander in Chaucer's Monk's Tale: "He was of knyghthod and of fredom flour" (VII, 2642), and his death is mourned as "The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise" (2664).

²⁹Ed. R. L. Graeme-Ritchie, 3:7321-26. See also 2:361-76, for an expression of similar sentiments.

³⁰In the Buik of Alexander the hero is frequently presented as "lufsom" or as speaking to his men "luffsumly": 3:7479, 7591, 7934 and 4:10524.

In short, what seems to be the attribution of conventional epithets suitable for the depiction of the courtly hero, reveals a preoccupation with, and careful selection of, terms which suggest a man in a state of preparation for the fulfilment of the duties of feudal lordship.

But as we have noted, Douglas as a knight will be expected to fulfil two functions when he assumes his place in the feudal hierarchy: that of lord, but also that of vassal. Consequently, Barbour adds: "And our all thing luffyt lawte" (364). Loyalty was of course another of the three "primary" virtues required of a feudal warrior. What is interesting is that Barbour clearly links it with love: all love Douglas; his is a loving or affectionate nature; he loves loyalty. The emphasis is on "luff" and its conjunction with loyalty in the person of Douglas. As noted in the previous chapter, loyalty is understood by Barbour as a quality of the soul, implying fidelity "to an individual because of love or friendship".³¹ The relationship between loyalty and love is apparent when Barbour speaks of the loyalty of Bruce's queen and the wives of his knights:

Ilkane for luff off thar husband;
That for leyle luff, and leawte,
Wald partenerys off thar paynys be.
(II, 515-17)

This "leyle luff" enables one to be

Off swilk strenthis, and swilk mychtis,
That thai may mekill paynis endur,
And forsakis nane auentur
That euyr may fall,
(II, 523-26)

just as when Douglas pays homage to Bruce he binds himself "To tak

³¹Gervase Mathew, "Ideals of Knighthood in Late Fourteenth Century England", p. 359.

with him the gud and Ill" (II, 161), for "Thair wes nane auentur that mocht / Stunay hys hart" (I, 298-99). The association with love stresses that loyalty is the basis of a very personal relationship, and significantly, feudalism operated by forging strong individual ties between lord and vassal, so that this loyalty was not "institutionalized, but was intensely personal".³²

Ms. Leo has discovered that, although the romance hero is "consistently portrayed as loyal to the lord he serves, loyal to his fellow knights, loyal to the lady he loves, and loyal to the promises he makes", loyalty is rarely included in the list of qualities characterizing the hero with which Middle English verse romances frequently begin, whereas chronicles never overlook this virtue when the attributes of the hero are enumerated.³³ Not only does Barbour include "lawte" in the catalogue of Douglas's virtues, he digresses at this point to consider the nature of this attribute:

Leavte to luff is gretumly;
Throuch leavte liffis men rychtwisly;
With A wertu of leavte
A man may yeit sufficyand be;
And but leawte may nane haiff price,
Quhethir he be wycht or he be wyss;
For quhar It faillyeys, na wertu
May be off price, na off valu,
To mak A man sa gud, that he
May symply gud man callyt be.
(I, 365-74)

Now although these lines are a digression from the task in hand--an inventory of his hero's qualities--they are not

³²Walter Ullman, p. 65.

³³"The Concept of the Hero in the Middle English Verse Romances", p. 118.

superfluous. First of all, they have the effect of stressing the virtue of loyalty above all the others ascribed to Douglas. Secondly, since I have argued that the preliminary enumeration of the hero's traits may serve the dual function of characterizing the hero and indicating something about the story to be told, Barbour's emphasis on the value of this virtue implies that this is a vital feature of his hero's make-up, and that this will be an important factor in the events to be narrated. In addition, some light is cast on Barbour's concept of true heroism, and inevitably on his reasons for choosing Douglas as a hero. Earlier I considered Barbour's statements on the function of "aulde storys", and concluded that he regarded them as the means to celebrate great men and their deeds:

And certis, thai suld weill hawe pryss
That in thar tyme war wucht and wyss,

so that when he writes: "And but leawte may nane haiff price, /
Quhethir he be wucht or he be wyss" (369-70), the echo not only reminds the reader of Barbour's initial comments, but forces him to accomodate this qualification of the nature of truly deserved "price". If, without loyalty, no other virtue is of value, it follows that a man who does not possess this quality cannot be truly heroic in Barbour's eyes.

Thirdly, by introducing and then emphasizing loyalty in the list of his hero's attributes, Barbour draws the portrait of Douglas away from romance conventions, and arguably towards those of the chronicles. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that the poet has divorced himself completely from romance conventions. By stressing loyalty he does not intend to diminish Douglas's other

attributes. On the contrary, the meaning of some of the foregoing epithets is sharpened. For instance, "curtaiss" takes on an extra layer of meaning when it is characteristic of a loyal man. H. Dupin has observed that in Old French literature courtois frequently occurs in conjunction with the adjectives fidèle and loyal. He writes: "La courtoisie . . . a mis à cette loyauté et cette fidélité au premier rang. Les mots fidèle et loyal sont fréquemment accouplés, chez nos auteurs, avec celui de courtois, et ce même mot de courtois s'oppose à ceux de traître et de felon".³⁴ That Barbour is following a similar practice becomes clear, for he goes on:

He wes in all his dedis lele;
 For him dedeynreit nocht to dele
 With trechery, na with falset.
 (I, 375-77)

In possessing courtoisie and loyauté Douglas opposes himself to treachery and "felonie". Analogously, when Barbour is writing Douglas's obituary, he dwells on the "souerane pryss of his lawte" and his abhorrence of treachery:

Bot our all thing he luffit Lawte;
 At tresoune growyt he so gretly,
 That na tratour mycht be hym by,
 That he mycht wit, na he suld be
 Weill pwnyst of his Cruelte.
 (XX, 516-20)

It is however interesting that, although throughout The Bruce Douglas is consistently portrayed as loyal to the lord he

³⁴La Courtoisie au Moyen Age, p. 41. Dupin also cites an instance where a troubadour equates courtoisie with fidélité. Barbour's own tendency to associate these two virtues is further emphasized when in comparing Douglas to Hector, he says that he too "wes fullillyt of leawte, / & wes curtaiss and wyss and wycht" (I, 400-401).

serves, to his fellow knights, and to the promises he makes,³⁵ there are actually few occasions on which Barbour focuses on concrete examples of his loyalty. It is rather a stated, and accepted, facet of Douglas's character.³⁶ The two outstanding occasions on which he demonstrates loyalty to his fellow knights are at Bannockburn when he requests Bruce's permission to go to the aid of Randolph, and in Spain when, in attempting to rescue Sir William Sinclair, he loses his own life. Strangely enough, there are no episodes in which Douglas is seen to act on his hatred of treachery by severely punishing the offender. Indeed, on the one occasion on which he might conceivably have acted so--the capture of the renegade Randolph--he actually treats his prisoner well and delivers him up to Bruce.

On the other hand, there are many instances of treachery and felony in the poem, directed particularly against the person of Bruce, so that it seems to me that Barbour implicitly reveals more about the value of Douglas's loyalty by offering so many examples of its opposite. Just as he conveys the nature of freedom through a detailed consideration of "thrildome", so here too he proceeds from the principle that "contrar thingis euir-mar, / Discoweryngis off the tothir ar" (I, 241-42). As we shall see, this procedure is a very important key to an understanding of

³⁵There is of course no lady in Douglas's life.

³⁶And of course an implicit feature of his contract with Bruce. As Ullman points out, such a contract was based on "tacit assumptions", and the concept of loyalty in the context of a feudal relationship "is a somewhat elusive and elastic notion. For the keeping of the contract a good deal of mutual understanding and agreement . . . was a necessary pre-requisite", p. 65.

Barbour's heroic ideal.

But to continue with the catalogue--Barbour says of Douglas, "His hart on hey honour wes set" (378). As Ms. Leo observes, honour for the medieval knight "was not considered to be merely a selfish or narrow goal, but a whole way of life prompted by the stirrings of noble blood, an indomitable courage, and great physical strength".³⁷ The word and its meaning derive from the Latin honor or honestas, signifying reputation, praise, fame. G. F. Jones, in his study of the evolution of this concept, remarks that "in its original or objective sense" it referred especially to military glory.³⁸ The Athenians and Romans accorded the highest honours to those who best served the state, particularly through military service, and considered the most virtuous man to be the one with the greatest desire for fame--gloria cupiditas.³⁹

Honour in this objective sense continued to be admired down through the Middle Ages. However, Jones notes that a new subjective meaning of the word was transmitted to the Middle Ages, largely through Cicero's De Officiis:

From the twelfth century onwards the concept of true honor, at least among the churchmen and didactic writers, had begun to show the influence of the Stoic tradition, in which the word honestum was used to mean not only what is honored but also what should be honored, namely, that which is morally right.⁴⁰

But the new meaning did not displace the basic meaning of the word, and on the whole it was those clerics "excluded from the

³⁷"The Concept of the Hero", p. 93.

³⁸"Lov'd I not Honour More: The Durability of a Literary Motif", in Comparative Literature XI (1959): 132.

³⁹Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 140.

honor code of the ruling classes" who "accepted the Stoic idea that true honor was inner integrity rather than public acclaim".⁴¹

The reason I dwell on these different usages is that Barbour was a churchman and as he also uses the word "honest" to describe Douglas (XX, 566), we have to ascertain whether he is using it to connote an external or a moral value. He employs the word "honeste" when he describes the death of Julius Caesar:

His Eyn with his hand closit he,
For to dey with mar honeste.
(I, 547-48)

It is clearly being used in an objective sense. Skeat glosses it as honour or decorum, suggesting that Caesar is here concerned with what is becoming in outward appearance. Similarly, when Bruce's subjects mourn his death, "his worthy bounte, / His vit, strynth, and his honeste" (XX, 259-60), the sense of honour or glory seems most apposite. So when Barbour describes Douglas as "honest, leill and worthy", I think we can assume that he means either that Douglas was honoured, or sought honour in the sense of reputation.

The various uses of the word "honour" support this reading. Bruce and Douglas "throw thar gret walour, / Come till gret hycht & till honour" (I, 451-52). He is more inclined to use a synonym, "price". Hence Douglas intends to win renown or honour through military deeds:

He thocht weill he wes worth na seyle,
That mycht of nane anoyis feyle;
& als for till escheve gret thingis,
And hard trawalys, and barganyngis,
That suld ger his price dowblyt be.
(I, 303-7)

⁴¹Ibid., p. 141.

It is for this that all men love him (I, 380) and not, as Barbour quickly discloses, for his beauty, since "he wes nocht sa fayr, that we / Suld spek gretly off his beaute" (381-82). This comment also draws the portrait of Douglas away from the romance tradition, in which the hero is usually possessed of beauty apart from strength, towards that of the chanson de geste, in which the hero "is chiefly renowned for his physical strength (with which beauty is taken as practically synonymous)".⁴² In addition, Douglas has black hair (384) whereas the romance hero's hair is usually golden.⁴³ Barbour is presumably following the established tradition that Douglas had black hair,⁴⁴ but it is interesting that in his "romanyis" he refuses to adopt the conventions of the genre. His comment on Douglas's lack of "beaute", which comes down to his grey complexion and dark hair, indicates his awareness of the convention. Of course, by retaining the detail about his hair, he could then make a comparison with Hector of Troy (I, 397).

It is noteworthy in the light of C. B. West's comment, that Barbour goes on to describe Douglas's build and in doing so to suggest more about his physical strength than about his actual appearance:

Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,
With banys gret & schuldrys braid.

⁴²C. B. West, p. 13.

⁴³Leo, p. 67. See also her source, W. C. Curry, The Medieval Ideal of Personal Beauty in Metrical Romances, Legends, Chronicles (Baltimore, 1916).

⁴⁴A tradition based on reality if we are to believe Barbour when he says: "as Ic hard say" (I, 384).

His body wes weyll maid and lenye,
As thai that saw hym said to me.
(I, 385-88)

For all that this description is supposed to be based on eye-witness accounts, we gather very little of what the man actually looked like. Any such realism was alien to medieval portraits, although one can deduce from the details Barbour gives something of his hero's potential strength. The Middle English romance King Horn also employs vague terms to describe the hero, but the intention is clearly to convey something of the hero's beauty:

Fairer ne mighte non beo born,
Ne no rain upon birine,
Ne sunne upon bishine.
Fairer nis non thane he was;
He was bright so the glas;
He was whit so the flur;
Rose-red was his colur.
He was fair and eke bold⁴⁵
And of fiftene winter old.

Barbour dismisses this kind of presentation of Douglas when he writes:

Bot he wes nocht sa fayr, that we
Suld spek gretly off his beaute;
In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,
And had blak har.
(I, 381-83)

While Barbour implies that Douglas was socially adept, since he is "meyk and sweyt in cumpany" (390), the emphasis on his strength inevitably supports the view of him as a warrior, and strikingly points up the contrast intended in: "Bot quha in battaill mycht him se, / All othir contenance had he" (391-92). The characterization of Douglas is therefore steered away from

⁴⁵King Horn, in Middle English Verse Romances, ed. Donald B. Sands (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), ll. 10-18.

that of the courtly hero who was conventionally "wyss, curtaiss, and deboner" towards that of the epic hero possessed of the primary attributes of the military hero--prowess, loyalty and generosity. So although Douglas is socially accomplished, the very particular stress on the military virtues pushes them to the foreground and in turn influences our interpretation of these other epithets.

The epic rather than the courtly presentation of Douglas is further promoted by the comparison with Hector, who was renowned as a valiant warrior and captain. C. B. West observes that the relations of men and women are of predominating interest in the courtly romances, and that the social virtues of the heroes and heroines are therefore extremely important. The outlook of the courtly hero is also very different, for although he is inspired by the prospect of fame and glory, the attainment of this ideal "concerns few beside himself and the lady whose favour he is striving to win".⁴⁶ In other words, there is usually a love interest. While in some romances the love of a lady may inspire the hero to perform illustrious deeds of prowess, there are many instances where the hero must choose between love and military renown. This conflict is perhaps most thoroughly explored by Chrétien de Troyes in his Erec and Yvain, in which love for a wife and the pursuit of military glory have to be reconciled by the hero. For the epic hero no such problem arises, since the winning of glory always takes priority.

I believe that Barbour thought it appropriate that Douglas

⁴⁶Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature, p. 2.

should be likened to Hector, not only because he was one of the most renowned epic heroes, but also because Hector's love for his wife was subordinated to his loyalty to Troy. When Hector's wife Andromache tries to dissuade him from returning to the battlefield because she fears that he will be killed and she will be left a widow, Hector argues that his honour would be besmirched if he failed to defend Troy loyally.⁴⁷

The twofold claims of loyalty to one's comrades with the hope of renown and the duties to one's wife remind us of Barbour's comments on the dilemma of the thrall who is called upon to obey his lord's command and at the same time to fulfil some duty to his wife (I, 251ff). Although the poet says that some "clerkis" make "sic comperying / Betwix the dettis off wedding, / And lordis bidding till his threll" (261-63), and that he will leave the solution "Till thaim that ar off mar renoun" (260), the fact that Barbour cites such an argument suggests that he considers the dilemma of such a man a very serious one. The significant point is that the poet regards marriage as a contract involving obligations as demanding as those required by a feudal compact--it is "the hardest band / That ony man may tak on hand" (267-68). Given this, Hector's choice would have appeared to Barbour as a difficult, but admirable, one. Although the comparison between Douglas and Hector was not intended to extend to any choice Douglas has to make between love for a wife and loyalty to a lord or

⁴⁷The original passage is in Homer's Illiad 6, 405-46, but Barbour was probably more familiar with the Roman de Troie, in which Andromache similarly pleads with Hector (ll. 15300ff). For evidence of Barbour's familiarity with the Roman, see below, pp. 272-80.

country, it underlines the total commitment of such heroes to the ideals of honour and loyalty.

We realize that Barbour is also implying something about Douglas's prowess, for although he says that no one may be compared to Hector for "manheid and mekill mycht" (402), it is relevant that he returns to the idea of "price", of celebrating heroes, when he speaks of valour (405-6). In turn, we are reminded of the poet's intention in writing The Bruce, for just as Hector is praised, so too should Douglas "gretly lovyt be". It is the human qualities and deeds of his heroes that are being celebrated. This theme will be brought to our attention over and over again in the words "walour", "mycht", "prowes", and epithets which connote these qualities when they are applied to men or their deeds: "bald", "dowchty", "wicht",⁴⁸ "stith",⁴⁹ "stalward", "stout", "sture" and "stark".

One other word appears throughout the poem which, while it frequently connotes prowess, seems, as I have already suggested, to approximate some kind of comprehensive summary of character. This is "bounte", a word which is central to Barbour's heroic ideal, since it is closely tied up with "price", and in the catalogue of Douglas's virtues all the other epithets relate to it. The earliest usage at I, 31 may simply refer to Douglas's valour, especially as he is described as "worthy" in the preceding line:

⁴⁸Frequently with "wyss": I, 518, II, 173, 489, X, 531; or "hardy": VII, 263, IX, 391, XII, 422, XIV, 402.

⁴⁹Usually in "bataill", e.g. VIII, 384, and with "stalwart" (V, 458), "stout" (IX, 343), and "sture" (XII, 92).

That in his tyme sa worthy was,
That off hys price & hys bounte
In fer landis renownyt wes he.
(I, 30-32)

Similarly, Bruce's followers rejoice after the victory at Byland and the subsequent ravaging of the English countryside, praising God that they have discomfited the English king in his own land:

Throu vorschip and throu strinth of hand,
And throu thair lordis gret bounte.
(XVIII, 566-67)

However, "bounte" is also used to refer to a quite different quality. For example, Douglas thanks the dying Bruce "Of mony large and gret bounte / That yhe haf done till me feill siss" (XX, 224-25), where the meaning is clearly not that of valour, but of gifts which express the liberality, or largesse, of a lord towards his vassal. Elsewhere, "bounte" and largesse are again associated in connection with a feudal relationship. This time Douglas is distributing spoils to his followers after the encounter with Sir Robert Neville:

The pray soyne emang his menghe,
Eftir thar meritis, delit he,
And held no thing till his behuf.
Sic dedis aucht till ger men luf
Thair lorde, and swa thai did, perfay.
He tretit thame so wissly ay,
And with so mekill luf alsua,
And sic a countenans vald ma
Of thair deid, that the mast coward
Stoutar he maid than a libard;
With cherising thusgat maid he
His men wicht and of gret bounte.
(XV, 515-26)

Once again "luff" and praise are linked to largesse, which in turn produce loyalty and valour. These lines underline the fact that we do not have two completely different usages of the word "bounte", but a concept that stands at the centre of a web of meanings in the

poem. In fact, "bounte" seems to refer as much to the undertaking of great deeds as to the nature of the deeds themselves. Thomas Randolph, who is "of so souerane grete bounte" (X, 274), "hye Enpriss / Set ay apon Souerane bounte" (X, 507-8); James Douglas, who is "prisit of sa grete bounte" (XX, 375), is also "Prisit for his enpriss" (XX, 243) and for "his vorschip and gret empriss" (XVI, 490). The sense of enterprise or undertaking seems most appropriate where a rendering of valour or deeds of valour for "bounte" would result in tautology. For example, Barbour says of Edward and Robert Bruce that "thair gud deid and thar bounte" inspire their men at Loudoun Hill (VIII, 313); in the instance cited above where Douglas's "cherising" makes his men "wicht and of gret bounte" (XV, 526); and in the catalogue of Randolph's qualities:

*He was so curageous a knycht,
 *So wiss, so worthy, and so wycht,
 And of so souerane gret bounte.
 (X, 274)⁵⁰

It is Douglas's "enpriss" that makes him want to "escheve gret thingis" (I, 305), just as we noted in the previous chapter that it is his "hardyment" that enables him to succeed. So "bounte" in the sense of enterprise or undertaking is bolstered by "hardyment". Hence Edward Bruce "Throu hardyment and souerane bounte" vanquishes his foes (XVI, 516). Just as we observed that "hardyment" is associated with setting one's heart on something, so also is "bounte". Sir Aymer of Valence praises Bruce because "his hert fillit Is of bownte" (VII, 372), and Bruce, in the course of

⁵⁰According to Skeat the lines marked with asterisks occur in the Edinburgh MS. but not in Pinkerton's edition (London, 1790), whose numbering he follows, and which I reproduce.

his address to his men at Bannockburn, says of the English: "mony ane hert sall vaverand be / That semyt ere of gret bounte" (XII, 185-86).

The result is that when Bruce's men are described as "off full gret bounte" (II, 228) before the Battle of Methven, and Edward II's men are "of gret bounte" (XI, 88) before the Battle of Bannockburn, or Giles d'Argentine and Sir Aymer de Valence are said to be of "souerane gret bownte" (XI, 178), or even when the poet speaks of Bruce's decision "To do ane owtrageouss bounte" (III, 132), the sense of undertaking as well as that of valour can be detected.

In its association with the seeking of glory and honour through the undertaking of great deeds, and with generosity, "bounte" approaches a conception of nobility of character not unlike that denoted by the word magnanimity at this period. The Latin magnanimus signified a greatness of soul or spirit, or great courage, since animus can refer to either 'soul' or 'courage'. For Aristotle, who gave the original portrait of the magnanimous man, megalopsūchia defined a true nobility of thought or action.⁵¹ The Latin equivalent, magnanimitas, underwent a subtle modification, particularly in the writings of Cicero who uses it in the sense of a great heart rather than greatness of thought.⁵² This meaning was transmitted to the Middle Ages where it became "the starting-point of the secular conception of true nobility".⁵³ As George Cary

⁵¹Ethics IV, iii.

⁵²De Officiis I, 19.

⁵³The Medieval Alexander, p. 196.

points out:

Of such a spirit it is evident that benignitas, feeling for others, must form a component quality, but it is a quality subordinate to magnanimitas, and thus generosity, itself the practical demonstration of benignity, may be called a grandchild of such a magnanimity.⁵⁴

For Aristotle the magnanimous man claimed honour above all as his due.⁵⁵ Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, agrees that magnanimity is about great honours, but he argues that the good deeds rather than the honour that accrues to them should be the goal of the magnanimous man, and for him it is important that magnanimity observe the mode of reason in great honours.⁵⁶ He classifies it as a potential part of the virtue of fortitude, since it moderates and controls an individual's inclination to shy from difficult and excellent works. Chaucer's Parson's Tale is in line with this tradition, for there magnanimity is described as one of the "manye speses" of fortitude:

This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thynges and grevouse thynges, by hir owene wil, wisely and resonably.⁵⁷

Similarly, in the Ayenbite of Inwyrt (1340), magnanimity is one of the six branches of prowess:

Magnanimité is heynesse, gratnesse, and noblesse of wylhede / huerby the man is hardi asse lyon / and of greate nimminge. This vrtue heth tuo delles, greate thinges onworthi. and wel grater to nime on hand / and to chiese.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ethics IV, iii.

⁵⁶Summa Theologica, Q. CXXXIX, articles I, II, III.

⁵⁷The Canterbury Tales, X (I), 732.

⁵⁸Ed. R. Morris (E. E. T. S., O. S. 23, 1866): 164/15-17.

So when Chaucer's monk, describing Alexander the Great, speaks of

His hye entente in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonyn corage

and says "So ful was his corage of heigh emprise",⁵⁹ it is clearly the quality of magnanimity which is being evoked. But here it is magnanimity in a military context--the undertaking of great deeds of arms. M. Greaves notes that during the medieval period:

In popular use the word [magnanimity] becomes associated with a general idea of heroic virtue and thus, by its application to particular heroes, is modified still further. The most famous of all these medieval heroes is Alexander of Macedon . . . he became the theme of a number of romances in which the magnanimous Alexander is extolled especially for his personal courage, his liberality, and his love of women. So to the Aristotelian virtue with its Christian accretions are added the specific virtues of the military hero--his capacity to inspire his followers and his readiness in rewarding them, and (in the great age of amour courtois) his readiness to lay all these gifts at the feet of love.⁶⁰

Alexander was renowned as a world conqueror⁶¹ and the ideal type of the feudal overlord, inspiring his men by his great undertakings, by his own determined and ambitious pursuit of honour, and famous for his liberality in rewarding them for their service. So in The Buik of Alexander, he is eulogized by Marcien:

. . . Alexander, that with sa quhone
Wynnys all the land vnder the mone,
And quhen it all is at his will
And als obeisand him till,
For his persoune haldis na thing,
Bot geuis it hale, as nobill King,
To thame that in his mercy ar.
The honour he hes and askis na mair!
To hald the land is he worthy
That winnys it sa worthely

⁵⁹The Monk's Tale, VII, 2645-46, 2667.

⁶⁰The Blazon of Honour: A Study in Renaissance Magnanimity (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 19.

⁶¹Barbour also regards Alexander as a great conqueror, I, 529-36.

With strenth and vigour and with bounte,
And geuis it agane throw pitie.⁶²

Significantly, the word 'magnanimity' is not used, nor is it anywhere in The Buik of Alexander, nor in the French original. Rather, "bounte", or "bonté" in the French version, appears to have taken the place of magnanimity to describe Alexander's nobility, which consists in courage, enterprise, the pursuit of honour, and liberality.⁶³

For Barbour "bounte" must be tempered by discretion. He believes that "but vit, vorschip may not be" (VI, 358). He follows Aquinas in demanding that the mode of reason be observed in great undertakings. In keeping with this, he criticizes Edward Bruce for the lack of "wit" which results in a tragic loss of life:

For had thair outrageouss bounte
Beyne led with wit and with mesure,
Bot gif the mair misadventure
Befell thame, it suld richt hard thing
Be till leid thame till outraying.
(XVIII, 178-82)

For Barbour "wit" and "mesure" derive from "skill" or practical reason, and in this respect Edward Bruce is deficient. Although he possesses "hardyment and souerane bounte" (XVI, 516), he wants judgement and moderation. He is accused of "succudry" (XVI, 327),

⁶²Ed. Ritchie, 3:6716-27.

⁶³If we are guided by the DOST, "magnanimite" and its adjective "magnanime" are not common in medieval Scottish works. Perhaps this is because its meaning "declined into a nobility which could coexist with other less praiseworthy qualities" till it became almost synonymous with pride and self-seeking ambition (The Medieval Alexander, p. 197). What seems to be a comment on this degeneration is contained in a line from Arbuthnot's "The world is changed": "Pride now is comptit magnanimite", The Maitland Folio Manuscript, ed. W. A. Craigie, 2 vols. (S. T. S., N. S. 7, 20), 2: xxx, 79.

that is, pride or presumption, which for Aquinas, following Aristotle, was a vice opposed to magnanimity by excess.⁶⁴ For Aristotle, magnanimity was the mean in the field of public honour and dishonour; the excess was vanity (chaunotēs) and the deficiency was pusillanimity (mikropsūchia). In addition, courage (andreia) was the mean between foolhardiness (thrasutēs) and cowardice (deilia).⁶⁵ Barbour is clearly aware of these distinctions, and he discusses them with specific reference to the concept of the mean, in a passage which enunciates his ideal of heroic conduct:

Vorschip Extremyteis has twa;
 Fule-hardyment the formast is,
 And the tothir is cowardiss,
 And thai ar bath for to forsak.
 Fule-hardyment will all vndertak,
 Als weill thingis to leiff as ta;
 Bot cowardiss dois na thing sua,
 Bot vterly forsakis all;
 And that war voundir for to fall,
 Na war falt of discrecione.
 For-thi has vorschip sic renoune,
 That it is mene betuix thai twa,
 And takis that is till vndirta,
 And levis that is to leiff.
 (VI, 336-49)

So we can deduce that Edward Bruce is also guilty of foolhardiness which is "falt of discrecione".⁶⁶ His "hardyment" is not "mellit . . . / Vith vit" (VI, 356-57). Even though his rash boldness "ger oft-siss vnlikly thyngis / Cum to richt fair and gud endingis" (IX,

⁶⁴Summa Theologica Q. CXXX, article I; Ethics II, vii.

⁶⁵Ethics II, vii.

⁶⁶In The Book of Vices and Virtues (a fourteenth century translation of the Somme le Roi), pride has seven principal branches, of which the third is presumption, which in turn has seven "twigges", of which the third is "foole empriss", or foolish undertaking. Ed. W. Nelson Francis (E. E. T. S., O. S., 217, 1942), p. 17.

634-35), Barbour feels compelled to qualify this:

Had he had mesur in his deid,
I trow that worthyar than he
Micht nocht in his tyme fundyn be,
Outakyn his brothir anyrly,
To quhom, in-to gude cheuelry,
I dar peir nane, wes in his day.
For he led hym with mesure ay,
And vith gret vit his cheuelry
He gouernit ay.

(IX, 661-69)

It is surely no coincidence that immediately after this passage with its criticism of Edward Bruce, Barbour says of Douglas: "oft throu wit and throu bounte / His purposse to gud end brocht he" (IX, 678-79). Edward is obviously a foil for Douglas, and by pointing up the contrast in their procedures, Barbour provides us with an insight into his concept of true heroism, and we can deduce why Douglas is one of the heroes of the poem and Edward Bruce is not.

Early in the poem we are told that Douglas "thocht ay encrely / To do his deid awysily" (I, 301-2). He is also described as "wycht, wyss, and awerty" (II, 489). "Awerty" in particular is frequently employed to describe Douglas to denote his prudence. It refers to a very practical quality which derives from his "skill" or practical reason. In this respect it is akin to Aristotle's phronesis or practical wisdom which studies particular ways and means, as opposed to sophia, or theoretical knowledge, which applies to universal truths. "It is a true state, reasoned and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for men".⁶⁷ In other words, it is concerned with conduct, and the

⁶⁷Ethics VI, v. Trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1955), rev. trans. H. Tredennick (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976), p. 209.

prudent management of men and things.

Medieval handbooks on the art of war insist on prudence in leaders of men, especially in the king's lieutenant. Christine de Pisan describes this officer as the constable or "the souerayn maystre of the chyualrye", and argues that "it is necessarie that he be wyse of good naturel witte / as he to whome hathe be commysed the knawelege of many thynges".⁶⁸ Honoré de Bonet concurs: "Ainsi appartient à lui d'estre sage et advisé sur les faits des combatements".⁶⁹

For Barbour true valour:

Has so gret varnasyng of vit,
That it all peralis weill can se,
And all avantagis that may be.
(VI, 350-52)

It is in this respect that Douglas excels. On one occasion when Randolph urges that the Scots engage a much larger English host, Douglas, while praising his companion's enterprise, says:

Bot, be saint bryde, It beis nocht swa,
Giff my consaill may trowit be.
For fecht on na maner sall we
Bot it be at our avantage.
For me think It war nane outrage
Till fewar folk aganys ma
Avantage, quhen thai ma, to ta.
(XIX, 300-306)

On another occasion when Randolph counsels open battle with the enemy (XIX, 632-34), Douglas points out the perils; the enemy are growing every day and have food, whereas the Scots are in enemy country without hope of reinforcements and their food supply is

⁶⁸The Book of the Fayttes of Armys and of Chyualrye, trans. Caxton, bk. I, ch. vii, 21/1.

⁶⁹L'Arbre des Batailles, bk. IV, ch. ix.

limited since they cannot forage for food. These are all practical considerations which mark him out as a good captain who is above all concerned to protect his men, and as a worthy delegate for Bruce in his adherence to sound judgement.

Christine describes the "maners and condicions whiche belonge to a good conestable". He should search "alloway thestate & couyne of his adversaires / & be subtyl / pourueyed & wyly to deffende hym fro theym / and wysely to assaille them / wel aduysed vpon their espies & watches".⁷⁰ Douglas fulfils all of these requirements. Before the attack on Thirlwall in Douglas Castle we learn that he:

In douglasdail traualand was,
Or ellis weill neirhand thar-by,
In hiddillis sum-deill preuely,
For he valde se his gouernyng,
That hade the castell in keping.
(VI, 380-84)

Plainly, he is taking the opportunity to assess his enemy's strengths and weaknesses. His assiduousness in this respect is implied when, after the episode with the sleuth hound, Bruce realizes that advantage may be taken of the enemy:

Quharfor, quha knew thair herbery,
And vald cum on thame suddanly,
With few minge mycht soyn thame scath.
(VII, 302-4)

It is Douglas who has noted the location of the enemy camp. We have observed that he is cautious in attacking his enemies; he is also reluctant to take unnecessary risks in defence. He tends to select a site whose superiority counterbalances his paucity of men.

⁷⁰Caxton's translation, I, vii.

For example, in an encounter with Sir Eumond de Calion he takes up his position on a ford which gives his men "avantage" over the enemy (XV, 355-56). He is "wel aduysed" about the English "espies & watches" mainly because he "al tyde / Had spyis out on Ilka syde" (VIII, 25-26). Thus forewarned, he is fore-armed. In Kyle, because he knows the movements of Mowbray's army, he is able to select a site where he and his sixty men have the advantage and the enemy are handicapped (VIII, 32-44).

He fulfils the office of a good captain in which, according to Pisan, "subtylte / wisdom / and long vsage have ofte more grete nede / Than the quantite of peple or ony other strengthe".⁷¹ His practice makes him a useful ally to Bruce, since his training of his men makes them powerful assets on the battlefield, so that at Bannockburn:

. . . the gud lord dowglas alswa
Brocht vith him men, I vndir-ta,
That weill war oysit in fichting;
Thai sall the less haf abaysing,
Giff men betyd in thrang to be;
And avantage sall tytar se
For till stonay thar fayis mycht.
(XI, 220-26)

We have already noted Walter Ullman's remarks on the tendency of the feudal arrangement to foster the individual's own judgement and the exercise of his critical faculties. It also inculcated a sense of responsibility, a factor which would have been of paramount importance in the context of military feudalism. Carefully considered actions were necessary to safeguard the lives of the men in one's charge. Douglas is consistently portrayed as

⁷¹Trans. Caxton, I, vii.

very diligent in this respect. Edward Bruce is not. His men are ambushed by Richard of Clare's army, largely because of a reprehensible oversight on Edward's part: "To the reirward na tent tuk he" (XVI, 98). The situation is only saved by Robert Bruce's perspicacity and prowess. When Edward rages because he has missed the encounter in which his brother performed so gloriously, the king rebukes him:

That it wes in his awn foly,
For he raid sa vnwittandly,
So fer befor, and no avaward
Maid to thame of the reirward.
(XVI, 247-50)

Edward's folly had placed his men at unnecessary risk, and he has failed as a good captain, for, according to Gilbert Haye, it is the duty of a good captain to ensure "that nane pas out of sight of the host in tyme of perile to be tynt".⁷²

Douglas's "wit" is coupled to another, perhaps more imaginative, quality, his resourcefulness. Like his prudence, this quality seems to have been developed during his Paris days, and it too is gradually adapted to the exigencies of military life. In his early career this resourcefulness takes the form of procuring meat for the loyal wives in Bruce's small company after Methven:

. . . worthy Iames off dowglas
Ay trawailand and besy was,
For to purches the ladyis mete;
And It on mony wiss wald get.
(II, 570-73)

The many ways include hunting deer and laying traps for pike, salmon, trout, eels and minnows (II, 574-77). His formal training

⁷²The Buke of the Law of Armyes, Part Four, ix, 115/15-19. There is no parallel in L'Arbre des Batailles, IV, ix, which Haye is translating at this point.

as a squire would have included hunting and fishing, but to these skills he brings an innate resourcefulness which makes him superior to his fellows. Later, at Loch Lomond, he evinces further evidence of this quality. Bruce's men discover that they cannot cross the lake without a boat. A search begins, and it is Douglas who succeeds in finding one (III, 405-16).

In the military situation this resourcefulness is such a valuable asset in confounding the enemy that Douglas becomes renowned for his use of guile and "subtelte". In this we can detect the influence of experience and deference to wise leadership shaping his actions. I. M. Davies has argued that Douglas's reliance on the use of "slicht" and surprise tactics probably derived from his first experience of combat at Methven.⁷³ The Scots were routed because they were tricked by Sir Aymer de Valence and his men into dropping their guard. Sir Ingram de Umphraville "that wes bath wyss and awerty" (II, 213) proposes the ploy that gives the English the advantage of surprising the Scots. Now although this trickery would certainly have been discreditable by the standards of handbooks on chivalry, since a spoken agreement was made to the effect that the battle would not take place until the next day, and the English then attacked the disarrayed Scots on the same day, Douglas may well have learned the advantage of surprise.

However, I think that Douglas learns more from listening to Bruce's advice. After the Battle of Methven and the subsequent encounter with John of Lorne (III, 1-60), Bruce addresses his men:

Tharfor men, that werrayand ar,

⁷³The Black Douglas, p. 21.

Suld set thar etlyng euir-mar
To stand agayne thar fayis mycht,
Wmquhile with strenth, & quhile with slycht.
(III, 259-62)

Later he clarifies his conception of "slycht" by indicating that so long as honour is maintained, one may adopt whatever means possible to confound the enemy. He advises them to "schape all-wayis to that ending / That beris mensk and ek lovyng" (IV, 546-49). Hence, when he plans to attack Carrick through "slycht", he reminds his men that no dishonour is involved so long as faith is not broken:

And thouch we slepand slew thaim all,
Repreif vs tharof na man sall.
For veriour na fors suld ma,
Quhethir he mycht ourcum his fa
Throu strynth, or throu sutelte;
Bot at gud faith ay haldin be.
(V, 83-88)

Bruce's advice is quite in accord with contemporary views on the use of guile in warfare. As M. A. Gist points out:

Moralists who considered the problem of the use of trickery to overcome an enemy had taken the somewhat equivocal position that though it was wrong to deceive an enemy by saying something false or by breaking a promise, it was permissible to deceive him by laying an ambush or by not declaring one's purpose.⁷⁴

Aquinas, for example, argues that, provided that the war is just, it is no concern of justice whether it is carried on openly or by ambushes.⁷⁵ However, Ms. Gist goes on:

By contrast, the handbooks of chivalry condemn trickery and attempt to inculcate the loftier principle of open and plain dealing.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Love and War in the Middle English Romances, p. 170.

⁷⁵Summa Theologica, II (Second Part), Q XL, art. 3.

⁷⁶Love and War, p. 170

She cites Gilbert Haye and Christine de Pisan to support this view. In fact, she misrepresents the opinions of these writers, perhaps because she has not appreciated the scholastic mode of argument they employ. For Haye and Pisan, following the example of their source, Bonet's L'Arbre des Batailles, first present objections to the use of guile in warfare (and it is from these sections that Gist draws her evidence), but then they go on to recommend its use. Haye makes this clear when he writes: "yit, all thir resouns nocht gaynstandand, I hald the contrair".⁷⁷ Christine de Pisan presents herself as deferring to the opinion of her mentor, Bonet, when she advises the use of "barat / cawtelle and engyne" so long as faith is not broken.⁷⁸ Haye actually expands a great deal on his source by arguing that while the breaking of a truce or one's word is reprehensible, other guiles may and should be used--ambushes, spying, taking advantage of an enemy's disarray, taking up one's position so that the sun shines in the enemy's eyes, or forcing one's foe to attack from the worst part of the field where he will be disadvantaged by being lower down or stuck in a mire.⁷⁹

Moreover, both Haye and Bonet believe that a warrior should strive diligently to employ whatever honourable means he can to

⁷⁷Cf. Bonet: "Mais ores nonobstant toutes les raisons dessusdites je dy tout le contraire et certes il n'est doubtance au monde que selon Dieu et selon l'escripture je puis vaincre par engien ou par barat mon ennemy sans faire pechié", IV, xlix.

⁷⁸Trans. Caxton, III, xiii, p. 214.

⁷⁹The Buke of the Law of Armys, IV, xlix, 164.

defeat his enemy. Bonet argues that such methods are valuable and necessary and proceed from good sense and good conduct, and Haye deems it vanity for a man to have "samekle traist in goddis help", for he should help himself to accomplish what he can through his own good governance as well as trusting in God.⁸⁰

Since we have already discovered that Douglas is disposed to exert himself as well as trusting in God, it is fortunate that he is encouraged to channel his resourcefulness by his king. It certainly seems that Douglas takes Bruce's advice to heart, for on his first independent venture he sets about planning to take Douglas Castle by "slycht". Barbour underlines the importance of this first undertaking for the whole of Douglas's subsequent career by pointing out that how he begins will determine how he goes on:

For gude help is in begynnyng.
For gude begynnyng and hardy,
And it be followit vittely,
May ger oftsiss vnlikly thing
Cum to full conabill endyng.
(V, 262-66)

But more pertinently, he presents Douglas's decision to use guile as a direct result of his practical wisdom:

. . . bot he wes viss,
And saw he mycht, on nakyn wiss,
Warray his fais vith evyn mycht;
Tharfor he thocht to virk with slicht.
(V, 267-70)

He intends to begin by using "slicht", for his prudence has led him to assess the situation and his resourcefulness helps form the appropriate decision. This will be the pattern of his subsequent

⁸⁰L'Arbre de Batailles, IV, xlix, 144; The Buke of the Law of Armys, IV, xlix, 165.

conduct, and he has the approval of his king to support him in this, but above all he has Barbour's obvious admiration.

In the attack on Douglas Castle on Palm Sunday another facet of Douglas's resourcefulness is revealed. This is the use of disguise, which enables him to surprise his enemies. Dressed as a thresher, he is able to conceal his intentions until the last possible moment. Again and again he will use disguise for the same purpose (VIII, 440ff, X, 375-76, XVIII, 300-309).

But more than anything else, Douglas is the master of the ambush, and it is in his guerrilla tactics that his "wit" and resourcefulness are fully operative. He takes Brodick Castle (IV, 349ff), Douglas Castle twice (VI, 396ff, VIII, 440ff), defeats Mowbray's army in Kyle (VIII, 32-44), the Earl of Richmond (XVI, 377-92), three hundred of the English host at Melrose (XVIII, 294-99), and a huge English army at Weardale (XX, 341-45), each time redressing the numerical inferiority usual with the Scots by an ambush.

He is fully aware of the countervailing advantages of surprise. This is the factor in his favour on many occasions, notably in the Palm Sunday attack on St. Bride's chapel, the attack on the sleeping English in Weardale (XIX, 531-70), and the taking of Roxburgh Castle (X, 354ff), the latter success being promoted by the use of rope ladders. Douglas's tactics become so well known, that the very cry "Douglas! Douglas!" instils such terror in the enemy that they are virtually disarmed before a sword is raised.

In defence as well as assault Douglas makes use of the unexpected to confuse the enemy. At the end of the Weardale campaign the Scots face a huge English army, and battle seems

inevitable. However, Douglas is not prepared to risk disaster for the Scots. Instead, he triumphs over the enemy in quite a different way. He fools them. By building up the Scottish bonfires, he makes it appear to the English that the Scots are preparing for battle the next day. But in the middle of the night he moves his men off across a morass which the English believed to be impassable. He succeeds in preserving the safety of his men and in bamboozling his foes.

Barbour is obviously captivated by his hero's artfulness, and dwells with some relish on incidents which are designed to display his skill and cunning. Douglas's careful deliberation and pragmatic methods are presented as deriving from his "wit". He is not less chivalric on account of this, but rather the opposite, since for Barbour the truly heroic knight's "bounte" is always moderated by reason. But perhaps more importantly, his prudence is essential in a knight who is a leader of men.

From early in the narrative Barbour endeavours to present Douglas as a fitting captain by shaping our view of his actions. For example, at a preliminary stage in the account of Douglas's career, he describes an ambush undertaken by Douglas and Sir Robert Boyd. It is a joint venture in which Douglas is ostensibly the junior partner, yet Barbour treats the episode in such a way as to convey something primarily about Douglas. Although Boyd suggests the ambush (IV, 352-65), attention is soon shifted to Douglas:

The tym that Iames of douglass,
As I haf tald, enbuschit was.
(IV, 394-95)

An attack is first of all launched on the underwarden of Brodick

Castle and his men as they unload provisions from boats. When the people in the castle hear the hue and cry, they issue forth, and it is Douglas who rallies his men (425-26) to meet them; and it is Douglas's awesome approach that terrifies the remaining men in the boats into attempting an escape.

As though to emphasize that this incident has been cited chiefly to commemorate the deeds of Douglas, Barbour goes on:

On this wiss Iames of douglas,
And his munge, throu goddis grace,
War weill releyit with Armyng,
With vittale als, and with clething.
(IV, 454-57)

Although Boyd shares the congratulations on the success of this enterprise (512-17), Douglas has clearly emerged as the leader of the group, especially at lines 394-95, 425-27, 449-53 and 454-57.

Similarly, when Douglas and the Earl of Murray are harrying the north of England, and encounter the English host at Weardale, the lion's share of the glory goes to Douglas, whose stratagems and circumspection are invaluable. Randolph is supposed to be the captain of the company (XIX, 298), but Douglas is projected as the superior commander. So that when Sir John of Hainault remarks:

Yone folk are gouernyt wittely;
And he that ledis thame war worthy,
For a-viss, worschip, and wisdome,
To gouerne the Empyre of rome
(XIX, 467-70)

it is Douglas he is praising.

Barbour also strives to bring attention to Douglas's qualities as a leader by pointing up the vices of others. Hence Edward Bruce clearly emerges as a foil for Douglas, and the contrast is stressed by the arrangement of the narrative. Frequently passages describing or implying Edward's pride or rashness are

immediately followed by passages alluding to or depicting Douglas's prudence and circumspection. Most notable is the instance referred to above, where Edward's boldness is implicitly criticized in the comparison with his brother who always uses "mesure" and "wit" in his undertakings, and the criticism is further impressed in the following lines in which Douglas's "wit" and "bounte" are discussed. Later, after his very explicit comments on Edward's "succudry" and lack of "mesure" (XVI, 321ff), Barbour proceeds to "spek . . . of the lord douglass" (333) who, even when he is taking a respite, has spies out gathering intelligence about the enemy's movements (XVI, 337-41, 366-67).

Randolph is used by Barbour not so much as a foil in the sense of pointing up Douglas's qualities by contrast, but as an example of one who possesses similar qualities to the hero, but not in the same measure. He is loyal, but not consistently to Bruce, since he joins the English side in exchange for his life. In Barbour's eyes this is a blemish on an otherwise marvellous record. He is wise and bold, but these qualities are not so neatly balanced in him as they are in Douglas. More precisely, he is not so aware of the necessity of prudent and cautious measures in the kind of war Bruce is waging. Initially he wholly disapproves of the tactics employed by Bruce and Douglas:

For sen that yhe warrait the king
Of yngland In-to playn fighting,
Yhe suld press till derenye your richt,
And nocht with woidre na with slicht.
(IX, 744-47)

However, he soon learns to appreciate the value of using "woidre" (stratagems) and "slicht", and indeed he takes his cue from Douglas. He is besieging Edinburgh Castle when news reaches

him of Douglas's success at Roxburgh Castle:

The Erl Thomas, that hie Enpriss
Set ay apon Souerane bounte,
At Edinburgh with his munge
War lyand at the Sege, as I
Tald yow befor all oppynly.
Bot fra he herd how roxburgh was
Tane with a trane, all his purchas,
With wit and besynes, I hicht,
He set to purches him sum slicht,
How he mycht help hym throu victory.
(X, 507-16)

With the help of one William François he enters the castle secretly, and by surprising the enemy he is able to rout them. He also adopts some of the other ploys of Douglas when he is in Ireland, notably ambush (XIV, 401ff) and disguise (XIV, 421-23).

Yet Randolph's concept of true chivalry remains that of "souerane bounte", which seems to constitute a belief that the honourable thing is to meet one's foe openly despite the odds. The dangers inherent in total commitment to such an ideal are expressed in the portrait of Edward Bruce. Randolph very nearly falls into the same kind of error, but he is humble and wise enough to accept advice. What might have resulted in a very rash move at Weardale is prevented by Randolph's submission to Douglas's personal influence (XIX, 300-306). Even then, when Randolph is tempted to conclude that since the Scots "may nocht with Iuperdiss" (XIX, 632) assail their foes, they should "it do in playn battale" (634), Douglas has to point out the folly of this argument (635ff).

So although Edward Bruce and Thomas Randolph are presented as admirable knights who fulfil "bounte", they are not unreservedly heroic in Barbour's view. Edward is "prey to the vanity whose achievements must be recognizably those of personal

proress".⁸¹ Randolph too cannot resist a challenge and is prepared to forego the advantage.

Although Douglas is clearly possessed of the personal prowess essential to a war leader, his conduct is always governed by prudence. This makes him Barbour's ideal knight. Moreover, he is an ideal captain for he is not prepared to hazard the lives of the men in his charge by taking unnecessary risks. His solicitude for them is sedulous, so that even out of combat it extends to their needs. After the "Douglas Larder":

Thame that war voundit gert he ly
In-till hyddillis all preuely,
And gert gud lechis to thame bryng,
Quhill that thai war in-to helyng.⁸²

He rates the confounding of the enemy and concern for his men above his personal reputation. His circumspection is the greatest expression of his loyalty to Bruce. He not only safeguards lives but forges a formidable band of fighting men which is an invaluable asset to Bruce. In contrast, Edward Bruce's ambition conflicts with his loyalty to Bruce; his overriding concern is to win the glory that attaches to deeds of individual valour, and in his single-mindedness, he neglects his responsibility to the men in his charge.

It is significant that the only occasions on which Douglas fails to preserve his judgement are prompted by a friend's danger--

⁸¹I. M. Davies, The Black Douglas, p. 46.

⁸²According to Haye (IV, ix, 115/12-14) and Bonet (IV, ix, 97), it is the duty of a good captain to look after hurt and sick men and to procure medical aid for them.

at Bannockburn and in his final battle in Spain. In each case it is his "wit" and his loyalty that conflict, not his "wit" and his ambition. Since Barbour believes that "but leawte may nane haiff price, / Qhethir he be wucht or he be wyss" (I, 369-70), Douglas cannot be reproached. Throughout the poem he is presented as one who surpasses all his fellows in his commitment to, and practice of, the knightly virtues, so that he emerges as an ideal knight and a fitting hero of The Bruce.

CHAPTER 4

Robert Bruce: Portrait of an Ideal King

For all my emphasis on the fact that The Bruce has two heroes, the figure of Robert Bruce and his goal unite the episodes in a way in which Douglas and his aims do not. The latter as a hero of the romance derives much of his significance from his relationship to, and alliance with, the titular hero. Although the narrative does not move to a close until Douglas's death, it is of some importance that his last campaign is motivated by the desire of his king to fight the Saracens for God. The heart of Bruce, representing the spirit and the virtues of the man, is, in a sense, the man, and Douglas is the means--the body-- which carries it to Spain. Throughout the poem the heart is presented as the driving force, the real accomplisher of deeds. Hence, when Bruce expresses the desire for his heart to be sent on a crusade, he can believe that it can accomplish something that his body cannot:

. . . my hert fyschit fermly wass,
Quhen I wes in prosperite,
Of my synnys till savit be,
To travell apon goddis fayis.
And sen he now me till hym tais,
That the body may on na viss
Fulfill that the hert can deuiss,
I wald the hert war thiddir sent,
Quhar-in consauit wes that entent.
(XX, 178-86)

What he requires is a substitute body. Douglas is chosen to

fulfil this function, and he realizes that he is an agent by proxy when he responds: "For yow, schir, will I blithly mak / This travell" (XX, 232-33). The story closes only when Bruce's heart has been buried at Melrose, that is, when the spirit of the man has been finally laid to rest.

The measure of Bruce's stature in the events which the poem narrates is conveyed in the lament of his subjects after his death. In this complaint, which dwells on what they have lost by his death, we come closer than anywhere else in the poem to a portrait of the hero which crystallizes his virtues:

And fra his folk wist he wes ded,
The sorow raiss fra sted to sted.
Thair mycht men se men rif thar hare,
And cumly knychtis gret full sar,
And thair nevis oft sammyn driff,
And as wode men thair clathes rif,
Regratand his worthy bounte,
His vit, stryngth, and his honeste;
And, our all, the gret Cumpany
That he oft maid thame curtesly.
"All our defens," thai said, "allass!
And he that all our confort was,
Our wit, and all our gouernyng,
Is brocht allass! heir till Ending;
His worschip and his mekill mycht
Maid all that war with him so wicht,
That thai mycht neuir abaysit be,
Quhill forouth thame thai mycht him se.
Allass! quhat sall we do or say!
For in liff quhill he lestit ay,
With all our fais dred war we,
And in-till mony fer Cuntre
Of our worschip ran the renoune;
And that wes all for his persoune!"
(XX, 253-76)

It seems to me that any assessment of Bruce's role in the poem, and indeed any interpretation of the nature of the whole work, must take account of this passage. It sums up what Bruce represents in the poem. Throughout the narrative he is described

as "worthy, wucht & wyss" and he is shown to act accordingly. Finally, towards the end of his poem, Barbour provides a composite summary which holds the solution to the various problems which previous critics have encountered in trying to categorize Bruce, variously as a type of the national leader, freedom fighter, or ideal king, and the poem's theme as the War of Independence, the struggle for freedom, Scottish nationalism and patriotism, or ideal kingship, the last particularly in its relevance as a speculum principis for Robert II. A. M. Kinghorn, for example, believes that in Bruce "Barbour conceived a national hero mirroring the unadorned virtues of Scottish resistance to the English" and argues that loyalty to such a champion

. . . is loyalty to nation, or patriotism. . . . In his personality are summed up popular sentiments associated with success in war and particularly with the struggle against a foreign oppressor. . . . Bruce is one of the last medieval kings, a projection of nationalist feeling, portrayed as an exile who succeeds against overwhelming odds.¹

B. W. Kliman has difficulty in reconciling the idea of chivalry in The Bruce with the goal of freedom which she sees as the moving thrust of the narrative,² and Friedrich Brie discusses the heroes of the poem solely in terms of their patriotic and nationalist significance and regards freedom as the theme of the poem.³ What these critics appear to have done is come to some kind of a conclusion about the themes of the poem and then accorded Bruce a

¹The Chorus of History, pp. 27, 28-29.

²"The Idea of Chivalry in John Barbour's Bruce", pp. 477-508.

³Die Nationale Literatur Schottlands, pp. 45-72.

role into which he does not happily fit. While freedom, patriotism, chivalry, or a combination of these may be the ideals for which the heroes exert themselves, none of them is necessarily Barbour's controlling idea. His stated aim is to celebrate the men and their qualities, and it seems to me that he is most interested in the particular men, with particular virtues, who can achieve the goals to which they aspire. Consequently, when Bruce's subjects mourn his death they dwell on his virtues--his valour, prudence, leadership, soldiership, kingliness--which signify "his persoune".

I argued in the preceding chapter that although Barbour follows medieval convention in providing a catalogue of Douglas's qualities early in the poem, a sort of portrait, we do not really get an impression of what his hero looks like, and this despite the fact that the poet claims to base his description on eye-witness reports. One has to conclude that Barbour was more interested in the inner qualities than in the external features of his hero. With Bruce no such catalogue is offered early in the poem, and furthermore, no attempt is made at any point in the narrative to provide a physical description of him. All the epithets applied to him denote inner qualities, that is, qualities of the heart, mind, or spirit. The fact that there is no description of the external qualities, no effictio, emphasizes the notatio, or presentation of the moral qualities.⁴

⁴I borrow the terms from Matthew of Vendôme's Ars Versificatoria, whose doctrine for the description of persons was very influential in the Middle Ages. It is edited by Edmond Faral in Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Edouard Champion, 1923, 2d ed., 1924).

These qualities are the man as Barbour presents him. The success of the struggle for independence is attributed to him:

For in liff quhill he lestit ay,
With all our fais dred war we,
And in-till mony fer Cuntre
Of our worschip ran the renoune;
And that wes all for his persoune!

It is because of his personal example and leadership that the men of Scotland were inspired to fight:

His worschip and his mekill mycht
Maid all that war with him so wicht,
That thai mycht neuir abaysit be,
Quhill forouth thame thai mycht him se.

The importance of the man who leads the struggle, rather than the struggle itself, is made clear when Bruce lies sick at Inverury, for the concern of his men is deeply personal:

For nane wes in that Cumpany,
That vald haf beyn half so sary
For till haf seyn his brothir ded,
Lyand befor hym in that sted,
As thai war all for his seknes;
For all thair confort in him wes.
(IX, 43-48)

He is not only a good captain, stirring them by his "bounte, / His vit, strynth, and his honeste" (XX, 259-60), but he is also a hero who is mourned after his death "our all" (my italics) for "the gret Cumpany / That he oft maid thame curtesly" (XX, 261-62).

Some indication of this is given earlier in the poem when, after the Battle of Loudoun Hill, his men attribute the victory to the lord who leads them and rejoice that they are led by one who is not only brave but who is also a good companion:

A lord so swet and debonar,
So curtass and of sa fair effer,
So blith als and so veill bowrdand,
And in battale so stith to stand,
So viss, and richt sua avise,
That thai had gret causs blith to be.
(VIII, 381-86)

In so far as Robert Bruce is identified with one particular role in The Bruce it is with that of the ideal king. The colophons of the two surviving MSS. and Hart's 1616 edition provide some evidence of this,⁵ and bring us closer to the medieval, and I believe the more correct, view of the theme of the poem. The Cambridge MS. scribe (1487) writes:

Explicit liber excellentissimi et nobilissimi principis
roberti de broyss scottorum regis illustrissimi qui quidem
liber scriptus fuit . . . per manum I. de R. . . .

The Edinburgh MS. colophon (1489) runs:

Finitur codicellus de virtutibus et actibus bellicosus, viz.
domini Roberti broyss, quondam Scottorum regis illustrissimi,
Raptim scriptus per me Iohannem Ramsay . . .

and that in the Hart edition:

Here endes the booke of the Noblest King,
That euer in Scotland yet did ring,
Called King Robert the Brvce,
That was maist worthy of all ruce;
And of the Noble & good Lord Dowglas,
And mony ma that with them was.-H.

All three describe The Bruce as a poem about an excellent and noble king (the Hart edition more accurately including Douglas as one of the heroes). The emphasis, particularly in the Edinburgh MS. colophon, is on his virtues and deeds, and although he is specifically designated a Scottish king or king of Scots, the emphasis is on the king and his qualities rather than on Scotland.

Andrew Wyntoun also offers a sort of summary of the contents of the poem when he recommends those who wish to know more about Bruce to go to Barbour's work, but he departs from the view found in the colophons. After he relates how Edward I

⁵All three colophons are printed in Skeat's edition of The Bruce, 2:520.

settled the succession dispute in favour of Baliol, he writes:

Quhat that folwyd efftyrwert,
How Robert oure Kyng recoweryd his land
That occupyid wyth his fays he fand,
And it restoryd in all fredwme
Qwhyt till hys ayris off all threldwme,
Quha that lykis that for to wyt,
To that Buke I tham remyt,
Quhare Maystere Jhon Barbere off Abbyrdene
Archeden, as mony has sene,
Hys dedis dytyd mare wertusly,
Than I can thynk in all study,
Haldand in all lele suthfastnes,
Set all he wrat noucht his prowes.⁶

He regards the theme of the poem as the successful struggle for freedom led by Robert Bruce, and it is obvious that when he refers to his deeds (979) he means his efforts to liberate Scotland.⁷ But as I demonstrated earlier, Wyntoun's quotations from Barbour are limited by his own interpretation of the events in Scotland at that time, so it is not surprising that his overall view of the poem is similarly affected by his own patriotic sentiments.

Wyntoun's interpretation is therefore unrepresentative, whereas the view expressed in the colophons indicates a certain consensus and also seems to me to be much closer to Barbour's own as outlined in the poem's introductory lines in which he stresses the importance of commending the deeds of those illustrious men who in times gone by were "wycht and wyss", especially in battle:

⁶The Orygynale Cronykil, bk. VIII, ch. V, 970-82. The reading for line 982 in the Wemyss MS. is "Set all he wrait nocht half his prowess". See the note by Laing in his edition, 3:274.

⁷Significantly, Brie cites this passage from Wyntoun to support his argument that the theme of The Bruce is freedom, p. 65.

As wes king Robert off Scotland,
That hardy wes off hart and hand.
(I, 27-28)

We gather that we are about to hear about a warrior who was a king of Scotland, and who, because of his qualities ("off hart") and deeds ("and hand"), deserves praise.

On the basis of this, the catalogue in the form of a lament in Book XX, and the fact that Barbour himself commends Bruce as the best "gouernour" that might be found in any country (XX, 279), it seems justifiable to examine the figure of Robert Bruce primarily from the point of view of Barbour's presentation of him as the type of an ideal king. For the greater part of the poem Bruce is a warrior-king, occupying the role of general as well as being a king, and this has led me to reject the idea of treating these two roles separately, especially as this would involve much repetition, since the virtues he displays as the one he displays as the other. Besides, Barbour does not separate these functions. At one point he describes Bruce's valiant cover of the retreat of his men after an encounter with the Lord of Lorne and comments:

Sa weille defendyt he his men,
That quha sa euir had seyne him then
Prowe sa worthely wasselage,
And turn sa oft sythis the wisage,
He suld say he awcht weill to be
A king of A Gret Rewate.

(III, 55-60)

The connection between good military conduct and good kingship is not obvious until one recognizes that the link is the man who proves his ability and willingness to protect those in his charge, qualities which make him worthy to be a king. Moreover, medieval authors of handbooks on kingship expected kings to be good

generals as well as good peacetime rulers.⁸

However, before moving on to a consideration of the presentation of the hero, it is necessary to examine in some detail Barbour's handling of the background to his emergence since Bruce is not introduced until this has been outlined, and since the poet's treatment of that period in Scottish history points to the interpretation of his presentation of the hero which I intend to offer. For Barbour not only treats events in Scotland at that time in a particular way, but he also expresses ideas on the nature of Scottish kingship.

After the Prologue he turns to the state of Scotland during the six years after Alexander's death. It is "a kingdom in perplexity", to borrow a phrase from G. W. S. Barrow.⁹ In a few lines we learn that desolation prevails because the land is without a king "to steyr and leid" it as Alexander had done, and we gather from the word "desolat" (I, 40) that a kingdom without a king is a troubled and unhappy place, a wasteland. Torpor seems to follow as the result of the loss of a leader of the realm, for six years pass before the barons finally assemble to rectify the situation by choosing a king.¹⁰

⁸E.g. Aegidius Romanus (i.e. Guido of Colonna), De Regimine Principum translated for Philip the Fair (c. 1287) and edited by S. P. Molenaer, Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois (London & New York: MacMillan Co., 1899), iii, 3, 1-22, provides a fairly elaborate list of guiding precepts based on Vegetius Renatus's De Re Militari; and John of Salisbury expects an ideal ruler to be learned in military science, Policraticus VI, 2.

⁹Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm, p. 3.

¹⁰It should be noted that this is very much Barbour's own representation of this period of Scottish history. He makes no mention of the appointment of the six Guardians who governed the country at this time. See Barrow, pp. 21-22.

Most medieval writers on the art of government agreed that a state must have a leader whose natural and necessary function was to govern the state in order to assure the well-being of its members.¹¹ Almost all favoured hereditary monarchy, but in the absence of an heir would have admitted the elective principle. John of Paris (c. 1240-1306) actually sees it as the function of the nobility of a realm, who exercise a power of expressing the popular will, to establish, and if necessary to depose, a king.¹²

Something of Barbour's conception of the relationship of a king to his realm and of the principle of Scottish kingship is expressed in these lines. The barons are to choose a king

That off awncestry cummyn wer
Off kingis, that aucht that reawte,
And mayst had rycht thair king to be.
(I, 44-46)

This indicates a belief in the hereditary principle of succession, according to which a king's heir has a right to the throne. It also conveys the conviction that a kingdom belongs to its king, which seems to refer to the old belief that a kingdom was a feudal entity, a fief, and therefore, in a sense, the property of its

¹¹Most followed Aristotle, after the rediscovery of the Politics in the mid-thirteenth century, with regard to the common good as the end of all government, but diverged from him in assuming that monarchy was the best form. Only Marsilius of Padua, who advocates a form of republicanism, is indifferent to monarchy, and his definition of regnum applies as well to monarchy, aristocracy and polity. In this respect he is closer to Aristotle who simply classified constitutions according to those which aim to secure the good of all, and their deviations. See Alan Gewirth's Introduction to his translation, Marsilius of Padua: Defender of Peace, 1:117-18.

¹²De Potestate Regia et Papale, trans. Arthur P. Monaghan, John of Paris on Royal and Papal Power (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1974), chs. 12 and 14, ad. 5.

king.¹³

But the barons of Scotland cannot reach agreement over Alexander's successor--some support the claim of John Baliol, whilst others favour Bruce of Annandale--and finally decide to ask Edward of England to arbitrate. We are reminded that Edward's guiding principle should be that of hereditary right (77). At this point the criticism of the Scottish nobles, which had been only implicit in the account of how they had waited six years before making a move to choose a king, becomes more prominent in "bot enwy, that is sa feloune, / Amang thaim maid discencioun" (47-48), and finally quite explicit with "A! blynd folk full off all foly!" (91). It is as if one failing begets others: so inaction leads to indecision and dissent, which finally leads to a wrong decision:

Ye suld, for-owtyn his demyng,
Haiff chosyn yow a king, that mycht
Have haldyn veyle the land in rycht.
(I, 116-18)

They are to blame for not fulfilling their role as electors of a king who would have governed the land well and according to the principle of hereditary right, and for leaving the realm vulnerable to Edward's territorial ambitions. Experience should have taught them that Edward I would not regard Scotland as a sovereign kingdom and that he would not be interested in settling questions of hereditary right, but only in the increase of his own dominions:

. that king
Always, for-owtyn soiournyng,

¹³See Barrow, p. xv.

Trawayllyt for to wyn senyhory,
And throw his mycht till occupy
Landis, that war till him marcheand,
As walis was, and als Ireland;
(I, 95-100)

and what he cannot achieve through "mycht", he will attempt to accomplish through "slycht" or deceit (112).

There is, significantly, no mention of any right on Edward's part, as an overlord or in any other capacity, and no attempt to indicate that he claimed to have a right.¹⁴ He is presented as taking advantage of Scotland's plight and her nobles' faith in his willingness to be a friend and arbitrator:

But he thocht weile, throuch thar debat,
That he suld slely fynd the gate
How that he all the senyhowry,
Throw his gret mycht, suld occupy.
(149-52)

Edward therefore has a very different view of the kingdom of Scotland. His decision as to who will be the next king of Scotland is not based on the claim with the superior hereditary right, but on who is prepared to accept the crown and kingdom of Scotland as a fief from him. He proposes to Bruce the elder:

"Gyff thow will hald in cheyff off me
For euirmar, and thine ofspryng,
I sall do swa thow sall be king."
(153-56)

¹⁴Cf., Wyntoun's Cronykil where part of Edward's alleged letter to the lords of France claims that the king of Scotland:

. . . . in fe and herytage
That kynrik held, and for homage
Of a grettare kyng off mycht,
That wes his oure-lard off rycht rycht.
(VIII, ch. III, 285-88)

The historical Edward I went to great lengths to make a case for his right to the overlordship of Scotland, and even for his claim to the throne.

Edward's machinations and debased view of kingship stand in direct contrast to the view expressed by Bruce of Annandale's reply to his terms. He does not want the kingship unless he has a right to it, and that right is tied to the will of God:

"Schyr," said he, "sa god me save,
The kynryk yharn I nocht to have,
Bot gyff It fall off ryght to me:
And gyff god will that It sa be,
(158-60)

referring to the belief that a kingdom is held immediately from God, and not from any temporal lord, that is, the principle of the Divine Right of Kings.¹⁵ The next lines make this clear:

I sall als frely in all thing
Hald It, as It afferis to king;
(161-62)

and according to the tradition of kingship in Scotland:

Or as myn eldris forouch me
Held It in freyast reawte."
(163-64)

Edward's reaction betrays him:

The tothir wreyth him, and swar
That he suld have It neuir mar:
And turnyt him in wreth away.
(165-67)

There is a strong implication that Baliol's acceptance of Edward's terms is less than honourable and constitutes a denial of the

¹⁵John of Salisbury is especially earnest in the maintenance of the divine origin of temporal power. He believed that a king's ministry was conferred on him by God and not by any earthly authority (Policraticus, IV, ch. 1, and VI, ch. 25). The divine origin of temporal, particularly kingly, authority was preached to a greater or lesser degree by Dante, De Monarchia, III, ch. 16; Aquinas, Commentum in IV Libros Sententiarum (1253-55), trans. E. Lewis, Medieval Political Ideas (New York, 1954), II, dist. 44, ad. 4; John of Paris, De Potestate Regia et Papale, chs. 4-10; John Wyclif, De Officio Regis, ed. A. Pollard and C. Sayle (London: Wyclif Society, 1887), pp. 1-6.

sentiments expressed by Bruce the elder:

Bot schir Ihon the balleoll perfay
Assentyt till him, in all his will;
Quhar-through fell eftir mekill Ill.
(168-70)

Scotland's subsequent troubles are therefore presented as the result of Baliol's action here, an action which goes against the tradition of kingship in Scotland.¹⁶ Barbour makes no comment on who had the best hereditary right to the Scottish throne (whereas Wyntoun makes it quite clear that in his view Bruce had). For him the important question is one's attitude to kingship, and by this criterion Baliol fails. His reign is dismissed by Barbour in a couple of lines: "He was king bot A litill quhile . . ." (171), and even then when he recounts his deposition and arrest, he does not condemn these as acts against the crown:

Quhethir it wes through wrang or rycht,
God wat It, that is maist off mycht!
(177-78)

The thraldom that has been predicted follows, so that Baliol appears culpable because he deviated from the tradition of kingship in Scotland as expressed by Bruce of Annandale. It is notable that Barbour passes over the whole period between Alexander's death in 1286 and the English occupation (1296), which after all covers ten years in Scottish history. The succession of the Maid of Norway is not even mentioned by Barbour. His whole

¹⁶Two centuries later George Buchanan, in his "De Jure Regni apud Scotos", argues for this time-honoured tradition in Scotland. He claims that Baliol was deposed by the leading men of the community because he subjected himself and his kingdom to Edward, and Robert I was installed in his place. Trans. Duncan H. MacNeill, The Art and Science of Government among the Scots (n.p.: William Maclellan, 1964), dial. LVI.

treatment of this period is designed to present his hero Robert Bruce as the legitimate successor of Alexander III in the true tradition of Scottish kingship. He first of all points out the need for a strong king to govern the land as Alexander had done, then outlines the terrible results of a failure to choose such a king. He indicates what the Scottish tradition of kingship is through Bruce the elder, so that when his grandson is introduced it is as one who intends to rectify the situation and who has a right which has been inherited from his grandfather. In a sense, Barbour has only referred to the grandfather in order to present his views, which we can accept as Barbour's own views, on kingship.

Only once this background has been delineated, is Robert Bruce introduced. We learn immediately that he is disposed to help his country (I, 477-80), and with John Comyn's proposal the opportunity arrives of actually doing something about it. Comyn recognizes Bruce as the heir to the Scottish throne (489), and offers, in return for Bruce's lands, to help him to realize his rightful position. Comyn's alternative proposal, that he should assume the kingship (he does not claim to have a hereditary right)¹⁷ and give his lands to Bruce, is rejected by Bruce in terms which indicate his belief in his own hereditary right to the office of king:

I will blythly apon me ta
The state, for I wate that I have rycht.
(I, 507-8)

¹⁷ John Comyn was a nephew of John Baliol, and had no claim to the throne since both Baliol and his son and heir, Edward, were still alive.

As Barrow points out, what the historical Bruce planned and brought about was a revolution--the overthrow of the lawfully constituted sovereign of Scotland, who was still alive and had a full-grown son and heir.¹⁸ But Barbour ignores all this, or more accurately, he gives a very different impression of events. He presents Bruce as having a right, and shortly this right is associated with Divine Right. When Bruce, after the discovery of his arrangement with Comyn, is in danger of losing his life at the hands of Edward I, Barbour comments:

He wes in full gret auentur
To tyne his lyff; bot god of mycht
Preserwyt him till hyer hycht,
That wald nocht that he swa war dede.
(I, 606-9)

This clearly implies divine protection and ratification.¹⁹

Even Barbour's treatment of Comyn's treachery suggests that he regards Bruce as the rightful king of Scotland, although he has yet to be crowned. Comyn's treason is almost identified with *lèse-majesté*, for three out of the four allusions to famous examples of treason which Barbour then cites refer to kings and emperors who died through people they trusted (I, 515-60), and the parallel is underlined when he sums up: "Sa fell off this conand making" (561).

Events thereafter are construed by Barbour in such a way

¹⁸Robert Bruce and the Community, p. 206.

¹⁹This is reiterated a number of times, especially when Bruce survives personal attacks through God's grace (V, 577-79, 583-84, 649-50; VI, 89-90, 309; VII, 203*-4*, 223, 291, 416, 484-87, 488). This special protection implies that his actions have divine approval and that he holds his power from God. See note 15.

as to make the English occupying forces Bruce's foes, and Edward I specifically his rival:

He [Bruce] wüst, or all the land war wonnyn,
He suld fynd full hard barganyng
With him that wes off Ingland king
(II, 190-92)

and later:

The king, the quethir, of yngland
Thought that the kinrik of scotland
Wes to litill to hym and me;
Tharfor I will it all myn be.
(V, 167-70)

The resistance he meets from the Lord of Lorne and his army is not based on that family's maintenance of the Baliol claim or right, although, as Barrow remarks, as a relative of Baliol he would hardly have supported Bruce's bid for the throne,²⁰ but is roused by the murder of Comyn, Lorne's nephew (III, 1-5; VI, 502-6).²¹ Such a representation of events and motives strengthens the impression that Bruce's right to the throne is unquestionable, and that the resistance he encounters comes from the ambitious and unrighteous king of England or from Scots bent on revenge for the murder of Comyn.

Having thus established that Bruce has a right to the throne of Scotland and, through association with his grandfather's

²⁰Robert Bruce and the Community, pp. 219, 254.

²¹Barbour calls him his uncle. Also the person intended at III, 1ff. is probably John of Lorne, Comyn's cousin, son and heir of Alexander Macdougall who was still Lord of Lorne at this time. Barbour seems to mix father and son up, but only in so far as who held the title at this time. Skeat (note to III, 1, p. 555) in his attempt to sort out the confusion is not entirely successful in clarifying the various names and relationships. See Barrow, pp. 219, 227, 254.

views on kingship, that he has the right attitude to kingship, Barbour proceeds in the rest of the narrative to demonstrate his hero's worthiness to hold that office. The murder of Comyn in the church at Dumfries is an ill-start to his career, so Barbour points out that because of his sin of sacrilege, rather than his crime of murder, Bruce will have to endure great sufferings before his position is secure:

He mysdyd thar gretly, but wer,
That gave na gyrth to the Awter,
Tharfor sa hard myscheiff him fell,
That Ik herd neuir in Romanys tell
Off man sa hard sted as wes he,
That eftirwart com to sic bounte.
(II, 43-48)

Bruce's hardships are presented as a form of expiation and his painful progress as a sort of pilgrimage through which he acquires his training in kingship. This theme of personal atonement throws the emphasis back on the person who aspires to such a status.

It is of some interest in this connection that in the political thought of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the central figure about which the whole revolves is that of the prince, emphasizing the personal view of kingship.²² There was a tendency to exalt the person of the ruler who, in his own proper person, was thought of as the wielder of an authority that came to him from within and without.²³ He was frequently expected to possess many virtues, and writers like John of Salisbury, whose Policraticus was very influential throughout the Middle Ages,

²²For my discussion here I am indebted to Lester K. Born, "The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Ideals", Speculum III (1928): 470-504, and Otto Gierke, Political Theories of the Middle Ages, trans. with an Introduction by F. W. Maitland (Cambridge: University Press, 1927).

²³Gierke, pp. 33-34.

make no distinction between public and private virtues or duties.²⁴ Indeed, as Gierke remarks, lordship "was never mere right; primarily it was duty; it was a divine, but for that very reason an all the more onerous calling".²⁵ Moreover, the relationship between the king and his subjects was largely conceived as a personal one which involved reciprocal rights and duties. One can detect the feudal ethic here,²⁶ but even more the patriarchal-ecclesiastical conception of monarchy and government, a conception which continued to influence western political thought until the end of the sixteenth century,²⁷ according to which a king was regarded as the father and husband to his subjects and the image of God on earth.²⁸

Of course Barbour was not writing a speculum principum as such. In so far as he does, it is a literary treatment of the

²⁴See Dickinson's list of the qualities and duties of a good king in his Introduction to the Policraticus, pp. 1-11.

²⁵Political Theories, p. 34. See Dante, De Mon., I, ch. 12 and Aquinas, De Regimine Principum (1265-66) in Opera Omnia (Parma, 1852-71), XVI (1864): I, ch. 14, to this effect. A translation of De Regimine Principum is available: G. B. Phelan, St. Thomas Aquinas: On Kingship (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949).

²⁶See my discussion of this in chapter 3.

²⁷In Scottish political thinking alone one has only to turn to George Buchanan's "De Jure Regni Apud Scotos" (1579) for essentially the same idea of kingship: a king should have the tenderness of a father to the citizens who are entrusted to him, and he should show the care of a shepherd in looking after their interests, dial. XLVI.

²⁸Policraticus, IV, chs. 1 and 3.

theme as it relates to the presentation of a hero. However, he shares with medieval political thinkers the propensity to consider the real in terms of the ideal, and in this respect his portrait of Bruce is based on the pattern of the ideal king.²⁹ But as a poet his presentation of Bruce is to some extent governed by the medieval doctrine for the description of persons as found in such treatises on literary techniques as Matthew of Vendôme's Ars Versificatoria and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Documentum de Arte Versificandi,³⁰ both of which were largely based on Cicero's De Inventione and Horace's Ars Poetica. Edmond Faral has distinguished the modes of description found in these works as l'éloge and le blâme, eulogy and censure, and has noted that in medieval literature the description of people is rarely objective, but rather the opposite: it is dominated by "une intention affective qui oscille entre la louange et la critique".³¹ The methods suggested by such manuals were rigid, and categorized persons as types rather than as individuals. It is fairly easy to detect the influence of these techniques in The Bruce, in the characterization of Douglas and Bruce on the one hand, and Edward Bruce on the other. However, B. W. Kliman, in an article entitled "John Barbour and Rhetorical Tradition", has

²⁹R. Wadsworth has discovered that the portrait of the ideal king in a large number of historical romances can be related not only to literary and biblical antecedents, but also to the portrait of the ideal ruler as found in such works as John of Salisbury's Policraticus. "Historical Romance in England: Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Romances" (D. Phil. dissertation, University of York, 1971), p. 114.

³⁰Both are edited by Edmond Faral in Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle.

³¹Les Arts Poétiques, p. 76.

demonstrated that Barbour departs from the rigid rules of the handbooks, and that particularly in the personification of Bruce he was not confined by such devices as notatio and effictio, but preferred to characterize the king through his speeches and actions, and by showing others' reactions to him.³²

Through these speeches, actions and reactions, Barbour is above all concerned to display Bruce's personal qualities, especially those which make him a good leader. In earlier chapters I discussed in detail Barbour's concept of true heroism as it is revealed in explicit statements like the "vit" and "vorschip" passage (VI, 336-49), his belief in the necessity for a man to exert himself as well as trusting in God's help, and his use of the word "bounte" to connote true nobility of spirit. This concept necessarily governs his presentation of Bruce, but frequently in a much more specific way than in the presentation of Douglas. In the case of Douglas it was necessary to examine the epithets applied to him and assess them in relation to the explicit, but much more often the implicit, comments of the poet on the nature of heroism. With Bruce his comments are almost always quite explicit. For example, the "vit" and "vorschip" passage follows immediately on the account of an episode in which Bruce not only demonstrates both, but Barbour tells us so (VI, 359-72); Bruce is favourably compared to his brother Edward because he possesses both (IX, 661-69); and after the passage on the necessity of a good captain and the qualities he

³²Annuaire Mediaevale XVIII (1977): 106-135. Elsewhere she traces Barbour's reliance on Cicero's Rhetorica ad Herennium and Vegetius' De Re Militari in the shaping of Bruce's speeches connected with battle. "Speech as a Mirror of Sapientia and Fortitudo in Barbour's Bruce", Medium Aevum 44 (1975): 151-61.

displays, Barbour goes on to say: "So did this king that I of reid" (IX, 101).

The same qualities that make Douglas a good leader make Bruce one too; they are both to be measured by the same standard of lordship, which requires personal valour, prudence, concern for the men in one's charge, generosity and good companionship. The one difference is that Douglas is a vassal owing loyalty to his king, as well as being a lord, whereas Bruce owes homage to no-one except God, and his loyalty is to the men who pay homage to him. Furthermore, Bruce is a model for the young Douglas who clearly strives to learn from and emulate his lord in those matters which appertain to his status and conduct.³³ To a large extent, it is the measure of Bruce's excellence that he can command such emulation and loyalty.

To demonstrate how Bruce elicits this kind of dedicated response from Douglas, and from the Scots who fight for the king, was a major part of Barbour's design. While the ideal combination of prudence and prowess is expressed in his portrait of Douglas, the greatest stress is on the practical wisdom which makes this knight a good lieutenant. Bruce is, of course, an epitome of this combination, but in presenting the king Barbour devotes more attention to the personal valour which makes him a charismatic leader.

According to the Secreta Secretorum tradition:

a traist gude faithfull lord schawis in werk als wele as in

³³Hence, for example, Douglas's first attack on Douglasdale (V, 227ff) is inspired by Bruce's first attack on Carrick (V, 75ff), where the motive of revenge and the use of "slicht" are prominent features of both.

word, . . . gude ensample . . . And thus throu gude ensample
in dede, nocht feynyt, otheris ar maid gude, that peraventure
war nocht sa gude, war nocht the gude ensample of the gudelynes
of thair prince or naturale lord.³⁴

In Bruce's first battle at Methven he attempts to encourage his men
by his inspiring words and personal conduct on the battlefield.

Before the engagement he rouses them to action:

Ye ar Ilkan wucht and worthy,
And full of gret chewalry;
And wate rycht weill quhat honour Is.
Wyrk yhe then apon swylk wyss,
That your honour be sawyt ay.
And A thing will I to yow say,
That he that deis for his cuntre
Sall herbryit in-till hewyn be.
(II, 334-41)

As a result, Bruce's small company "full hardely / Schawyt thar
gret chewalry" on the battlefield (366-67). When defeat is at hand,
he strives to bolster their flagging spirits with words allied to
action:

Hys assenyhe gan he cry:
And in the stour sa hardyly
He ruschyt, that all the semble schuk;
He all till-hewyt that he our-tuk;
And dang thaim quhill he mycht drey.
And till his folk he criyt hey:
"On thaim! On thaim! thai feble fast!
This bargane neuir may langar last!"
(II, 378-85)

But in spite of his efforts, he fails to rally them, for:

³⁴Gilbert Haye, The Buke of the Governauce of Princis, ch.
5, pp. 89-90. The Secreta Secretorum is a book of precepts on wise
government recommended by Aristotle to Alexander the Great. It was
attributed in the Middle Ages to Aristotle, probably fictitiously,
since the work in its earliest surviving form dates from the 10th or
11th century. An Arabic version was translated into Latin as the
"Liber de Regimine Principum" in the 13th century by a clerk named
Philip for Guy of Valencia, Bishop of Tripoli. Thereafter, it was
translated into French, English (including a version by Lydgate)
and Scots. Haye's version is a translation of a French version, and
is the only Scottish rendering known to exist. See Stevenson's
introduction, 2:xxxix-lii.

Thar mycht na worschip thar awailye;
For thar small folk begouth to failye,
And fled all skalyt her and thar.
(II, 392-94)

Only those knights who are motivated by a desire to win endless honour remain to stand up to their foes (395-97).

Now although Bruce's small force is undoubtedly outnumbered, a significant element in this defeat is that his common soldiers are not sufficiently inspired or motivated to stand their ground. They "Begyn to faile, for propyr tene" (377), whereas the hardier knights "enchaufyt war / Off Ire" (395-96). Bruce realizes this, for, when a retreat is forced, he is angry that "he his men saw fle him fra" (432). Ideals such as chivalry and pro patria mori have not sufficed to unite his men behind him, and cannot do so until real faith in his leadership has been established. Victory does not come through numbers, as he already knows (330), neither does it come through vague ideals, but rather through the loyalty of one's followers, as will be demonstrated time and time again in The Bruce.³⁵ As yet, Bruce has still to win this loyalty, and to consolidate it, and this has to be elicited off the battlefield before it can become meaningful on it. This recognition on Bruce's part has as much to do with his decision to avoid open battle in future as any tactical or numerical factor.

He engages in only one more open battle before that of Loudoun Hill, and that is when, shortly after Methven, he is attacked by the men of Lorne. He quickly realizes that defeat is imminent and that he is in danger of losing all of his small band of

³⁵For similar sentiments see The Buik of Alexander, III, ll. 6686ff.

followers, so he orders a retreat to preserve his forces. Barbour tells us: .

. . . thai withdrew thaim halely;
Bot that wes nocht full cowartly;
For samyn in-till A sop held thai;
(III, 45-47)

he emphasizes that it is an orderly withdrawal, whereas Methven had witnessed a disorderly and galloping retreat (II, 440).

The main way in which Bruce wins the confidence of his men is by the example he gives them of his personal valour. This theme is taken up immediately after his defeat by the men of Lorne, so that it almost seems to be in conjunction with it. During the retreat from this encounter he gives himself over to the valiant cover of his men (III, 48-60). This is followed by an account of the personal attack on Bruce by the MacIndrossers (93ff). As Skeat notes, this story of how three traitors attempt to kill Bruce is told over again in various forms in books V, VI, and VII.³⁶ B. W. Kliman has called this repetition "motif-rime" which is a poetic device rather like an expanding symbol in which "repetition is balanced by variation, and that variation in progressively deepening disclosure". She remarks:

The motif of the Bruce against a few is a unifying device of the first part of the work, and when Barbour finishes with that motif, a certain phase of the Bruce's career is complete. . . . its main purpose is to contrast Bruce's character to his fortune and to demonstrate his personal qualities: bravery, true valor which is hardihood tempered by wisdom, humanity, wariness, humility, and persuasiveness.³⁷

This is certainly true, but these feats of personal valour have an additional purpose: they are included to show one of the chief ways

³⁶The Bruce, 2:556, 566.

³⁷"John Barbour and Rhetorical Tradition", p. 111.

in which Bruce gradually wins the confidence of his men. Each occasion on which he succeeds represents a small victory. So, for example, his success against the MacIndrossers makes up in some degree for the defeat in the battle against the Lord of Lorne. Indeed, the men of Lorne feel that any victory that they may have achieved on the battlefield has been overshadowed by the personal success of Bruce in the cover of his army's retreat and the victory over the MacIndrossers, so that it is they, and not Bruce's men, who go home "Menand the scaith that they haiff tayn" (III, 186).

Every incident which demonstrates Bruce's personal valour is also a victory over the wavering hearts of his men. Sometimes he has to take calculated risks, but his valour is never tinged with folly or motivated by a desire for personal glory. A striking testimony of this is his decision to fight alone against two hundred men at the ford. The men of Galloway intend to make a surprise attack on Bruce's company, but the king is aware of their plan. He decides that it is better to avoid a confrontation but when this seems impossible he selects a site where his men will have the advantage. He leads his small force to a morass by a stream and instructs his men to bivouac for the night while he keeps guard. He then takes up a position in the narrow pass leading to the ford. As his enemies approach he has time to consider his course of action, and he concludes that if he goes to rouse his men the advantage will be lost for the men of Galloway will cross the ford in his absence. He therefore makes the courageous decision to stand and face the two hundred foes alone. It is an act of "stark outrageous curage" as Barbour points out (III, 126), but his decision is also informed by

"avisment". He reckons three things in his favour: he is well-armed (120); his enemies may only attack him one at a time (124); and he has faith in God (89*, 307). These advantages and his own prowess are responsible for his astounding triumph.

When his men learn of his victorious stand they are stirred:

And said, "thaim byrd on na maner
Dreid thair fais, sen thair chiftane
Wes of sic hert and of sic mane,
That he for thame had vndirtane
With sa feill folk to ficht him ane."
(VI, 316-20)

Moreover, this deed of personal valour has the effect of attracting more men to him:

His men assemblit fast him till,
That in the land war traualande,
Quhen thai of this deid herd tithand.
For thai thar vre with him vald ta,
Gif he war eft assalyheit swa.
(VI, 374-78)

One of Bruce's chief adversaries, Sir Aymer de Valence, soon realizes the significance of the king's personal successes. When he learns how Bruce dispatched the treacherous favourite, MacIndrosser, and his two sons, he says to Sir Ingram de Umphraville:

I dreid that his gret wassalage
And his trawell will bring til end
It that men quhile full litill vend.
(VI, 22-24)

In addition, after Bruce has been attacked by the three men with the wether, and has then managed to rouse his small company to make an unexpected attack on some of the English separated from the host, Sir Aymer recognizes that it is the spirit and perseverance of Robert Bruce which constitute the resistance of the Scots:

. . . "now may we cleirly se,
That nobill hert, quhar-euir it be,
Is hard till ourcum throu mastery;
For quhar a hert is rycht vorthy,
Agane stoutnes It is ay stout;

.
We vend robert the bruce had beyn
Swa discumfit that, be gud skill,
He suld nouthir haff hert no will
Swilk Iuperdy to vndirta;
For he ves put at vndir swa,
That he ves left all hym allane,
And all his folk var fra hym gane.
And he ves sa fortravalit
To put of thame that hym assalit,
That he suld haf yharnit restyng
Mair than fechtynge or travalyng.
Bot his hert fillit Is of bownte,
Swa that it vencust may nocht be."

(VII, 352-73)

The fruits of Bruce's efforts are reaped when he and his men are attacked by Sir Aymer and fifteen hundred men. This time Bruce's rallying cry and personal example have their effect:

Than, but mair baid, the nobill king
Hynt fra his baneour the banar,
And said, "apon thame! for thai ar
Discomfit all!" and vith that vord
He swappit swiftly out his sword,
And on thame ran so hardely,
That all thai of his Cumpany
Tuk hardyment of his gude dede.

(VII, 587-94)

As a result they are successful in putting the superior English army to flight. It is after this victory that Bruce realizes that he has begun to make headway (VIII, 1-8), so that when Sir Aymer taunts him with "scowking" in the woods and mountains, he is confident enough to accept the challenge to open battle (VIII, 136-50). The battle of Loudoun Hill follows in which Bruce and his leading officers encourage their men by their personal prowess:

A! mychty god! quha thair had beyn,
And had the kyngis vorschip seyn,
And his brothir that wes hym by,

That contenit thame so hardely,
That thair gud deid and thar bounte
Gaiff gret confort to thair menghe,
And how dowglas so manfully
Confortit thame that war hym by,
He suld weill say, that thai had will
To vyn honor and cum thair-till!
(VIII, 309-18)

Even after the victory has been won, Bruce remains behind in the battlefield until all his men have withdrawn (372-74). His men attribute the victory to Bruce's leadership and personal example (378-86). After this battle more supporters flock to Bruce's banner, drawn by his personal valour:

For feill that wonnyt thaim about,
Fra thai the king saw help him swa,
Till him thar homage can thai ma,
Than vox his power mair and mair.
(VIII, 388-90)

Finally, at the greatest battle of his career, Bannockburn, Bruce recalls and makes use of the encouraging effect of personal bravery when he goes forward to meet De Bohun's charge in order to dispel any wavering that his host might experience at the appearance of the English in such good array (XII, 11-42).

The importance of setting an example through deeds of individual prowess occupies a prominent place in Barbour's passage on the necessity of a good captain for the success of any military enterprise.

For folk for-uten Capitane,
Bot thai the bettir be a-pane,
Sall nocht be all so gud in deid,
As thai ane lorde had thame to leid,
That dar put him in aventure,
But abasing, to tak the vre
That god will send; for quhen that he
Is of sic will and sic bounte,
That he dar put him till assay,
His folk sall tak ensampill ay
Of his gud deid and his bounte,

That ane of thame sall be vorth thre
Of thame that vikkid chiftane has;
(IX, 63-75)

and the captain who exerts himself in this way will not only set an example, but will also inspire his men to achieve their goal:

Bot he that, throu his gret nobillay,
To perellis him abawndonys ay
For to reconfort his munge,
Gerris thame be of so gret bounte,
That mony tym vnlikly thing
Thai bring richt weill to gud ending.
(95-100)

His personal prowess so encourages them that they do not feel fear when he leads them (101-4). As we have already noted, these sentiments are expressed by Bruce's men in their lament after his death:

His worschip and his mekill mycht
Maid all that war with him so wicht,
That thai mycht neuir abaysit be,
Quhill forouth thame thai mycht him se.
(XX, 267-70)

But Bruce's personal example on the field of battle, which contributes so much to the Scottish victories at Loudoun Hill and Bannockburn, only begins to have an inspiring effect on his followers once they have learned to respect and admire his audacity. Their confidence is gradually won through his various successes in personal attacks during the long period of enforced skulking in the woods and mountains of Scotland, a period which represents the lowest point in Bruce's fortunes. However, such sporadic incidents do not in themselves fully explain the loyalty that Bruce was slowly able to elicit and retain at the time of greatest hardship. For this one has to consider the verbal encouragement he gave them, especially during periods of relative inaction.

It is obvious from his earliest martial encounter, the

Battle of Methven, that Bruce himself possesses the virtue of fortitude. From that experience he learns that his task is to instil it in his men, so that they will acquire not only boldness but perseverance. Thomas Aquinas's definition of this virtue is illuminating here. He argues that fortitude has four quasi-integral parts: magnificence and magnanimity, required for acts of aggression; patience and perseverance, required for acts of endurance.³⁸ The first two are covered by Barbour's word "bounte", which means a true nobility of spirit which conforms to reason, and Barbour leaves us in no doubt that Bruce exhibits this in all his deeds of personal prowess. Aquinas says that fortitude is about curbing fear and moderating daring, especially in battle, but adds that it is more about allaying fear than moderating daring. He argues that it is harder to endure and easier to be confident when attacking:

Endurance is more difficult than aggression, for three reasons. First, because endurance seemingly implies that one is being attacked by a stronger person, whereas aggression denotes that one is attacking as though one were the stronger party; and it is more difficult to contend with a stronger than with a weaker. Secondly, because he that endures already feels the presence of danger, whereas the aggressor looks upon danger as something to come; and it is more difficult to be unmoved by the present than by the future. Thirdly, because endurance implies length of time, whereas aggression is consistent with sudden movements; and it is more difficult to remain unmoved for a long time, than to be moved suddenly to something arduous.³⁹

Barbour is clearly aware of these distinctions, and regards

³⁸Summa Theologica, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Q. CXXIII, art. 6.

³⁹Ibid., Q. CXXIII, art. 6, reply 1.

it as his hero's task to bring his men through the gloomy period that follows Methven. After that battle Bruce and his small band "As wtelaufs went mony day, / Dreand in the month thar pyne" (II, 493-94). He is deserted by the commons (497-505) and success seems further away than ever. The defeat by the men of Lorne is somewhat mitigated by Bruce's personal victory over the MacIndrossers, and as if he realizes the advantage this small success has brought with it, he chooses this point to raise his men's spirits by telling them old stories of men who refused to despair and went on to achieve their aims in the face of adverse fortune. His attempts to encourage them are clearly necessary, for their spirits are at a low ebb and some are prepared to give up. The ladies in the party are the first to weaken, but as Barbour says:

Sa did othir als that war thar.
 The Erle Ihone, wes ane off tha,
 Off athole, that quhen he saw sua
 The king be discumfyt twyss,
 And sa feile folk agayne him ryss;
 And lyff in sic trawail and dout,
 His hart begane to faile all-out.
 (III, 306-12)

Fear of the foes that surround them, the hardship they undergo wandering in the hills, and the prospect of a harsh winter severely try the endurance of his followers:

And the king, and his cumpany,
 That was ij. C., and na ma,
 Fra thai had send thar horss thaim fra,
 Wandryt emang the hey montanys
 Quhar he and his oft tholyt paynys.
 For it wes to the wynter ner;
 And sa feile fayis about him wer,
 That all the countre thaim werrayit.
 Sa hard anoy thaim then assayit,
 Off hungir, cauld, with schowris snell,
 That nane that levys can weill It tell.⁴⁰
 (III, 368-78)

⁴⁰Note the echo from Fordun, p. 48 above.

Bruce is quick to perceive the distress of his men so he sets about allaying their fear and fending off despair. He is not above experiencing these emotions himself, but his responsibility to his men is uppermost in his thoughts, so that he

. . . fenyeit to mak bettir cher,
Then he had matir to, be fer;
For his causs yeid fra ill to wer.
(III, 300-302)

His primary concern is to dispel despair (191-200); powerful words of encouragement are his means. The importance of such words is demonstrated many times in the poem:

For oftsiss of ane vord may riss
Discomfort and tynsall with-all;
And throu a vord, als weill may fall,
Confort may riss and hardiment,
That gerris men cum to thair entent.⁴¹
(XI, 487-91)

He tells them that when a heart is conquered by despair the body is "nocht worth A myt" (III, 198), and men should never despair since there is always the hope of God's help. He then relates the story of Hannibal's siege of Rome, in which Scipio's men were even more harassed than the Scots are now but won the day because they trusted in God and persevered (III, 191-248). The exemplum is basically intended to show how the few survived despite the strength and power of their foes. Perhaps the story's greatest appeal would be to the common soldiers in the company who could identify with the freed

⁴¹E.g. when the English reinforcements in Northumberland are sent to rescue Percy from Turnberry, the men are first of all too afraid to go because Sir Walter de Lisle says that it is too dangerous to venture into Scotland at that time. "His spak discomfort thame sua" (V, 206) that they are almost resigned not to go when another knight, Sir Roger of St. John, "thame confort vith all his mycht; / And sic vordis can till thame say, / That thai all sammyn held thar way" (V, 210-12).

slaves of Rome.⁴²

Bruce's own conclusions from the story underline that the few can succeed against the many as long as they do not lose heart, and for all the references to God's grace, his emphasis is on the efforts of men. Men should always stand against their foes and be confident of achieving their goal. He concludes:

And gif that thaim war set in choss,
To dey, or to leyff cowartly,
Thai suld erar dey chewalrusly.
(III, 264-66)

This represents a fairly remarkable shift from the sentiments expressed at Methven. There is no reference to honour or the glory of dying for one's country, but rather to a chivalry which has been made meaningful to his men in terms of their own courage and resistance to their foes. The same choice remains--to die chivalrously or to live as cowards--but this now relates to real experience and conduct instead of vague ideals.

Having used this exemplum to encourage his small company not to despair, Bruce cites another to show that it is always possible to succeed against adverse fortune if one is sustained by confidence in securing one's goal. The emphasis moves away from the avoidance of despair to the importance of perseverance. They are encouraged to emulate Julius Caesar in his pertinacity, and the king concludes that failure to achieve one's purpose is usually the result of lack of perseverance:

For gif It fall he thar-off failye,
The fawt may be in his trawailye.
(III, 297-98)

⁴²M. P. McDiarmid, "The Early Heroic Poetry of Scotland", p. 42. The source of Barbour's exemplum is discussed in chapter 5 below.

Bruce's exempla are very much to the point. Aware of their many hardships and the recent memory of two routs, he also realizes that their capacity for endurance is low, and attempts to raise their spirits. At the same time, these stories reveal a great deal about Bruce himself. In the first place, Bruce is behaving as a good king should, since

it efferis till a prince till bathe comfourt his men and
geve thame documentis and techingis in thing that to thame
is nedefull and spedefull as cais requiris.⁴³

He recognizes his duty in this respect, and so he preaches to them (III, 299), illustrating his text with examples designed to boost their morale. He also demonstrates that he is a good king through his familiarity with old stories of illustrious men, which, according to the Secreta Secretorum tradition, increased the wisdom of kings. Alexander was advised by Aristotle to read chronicles and histories

in the quhilkis thou sall nocht failye to fynd mony notable
and worthy ensamplis of alde ancient faderis of armes wele
tehit and instruct in the actis of noblesse, to geve the
ensample and instructioun to wysly governe the in mony thingis
that now ar werefull to the. And traist wele thou sall fynd
thare mony thingis that sall the geve mony gude avisementis
bathe of wer and of pes, of tyme bygane, that sall mak the
wysar to eschew perilis and govern the mare wisly in tyme
tocum.⁴⁴

So his evident familiarity with the stories about Scipio, Hannibal and Caesar suggests that he is a wise king, and his attempt to make

⁴³Gilbert Haye, The Buke of the Governauce of Princis,
ch. 6, p. 92.

⁴⁴Ibid., ch. 13, p. 104. This advice is commonplace in the Secreta Secretorum tradition. See the various versions in Secretum Secretorum--Nine English Versions, ed. M. A. Manzalaoui (E. E. T. S., 276, 1977).

practical use of the knowledge thereby acquired indicates his discernment.

In the second place, Barbour implies that Bruce is a good general since Scipio and Caesar are his chosen models. These two, and Hannibal for that matter, were renowned as the greatest military commanders of their time. According to Plutarch the Romans entertained a high opinion of Hannibal as a general, and Scipio, who conquered him, called him the greatest general that ever lived, giving the second rank to Pyrrhus, and placing himself next to these in merits and abilities.⁴⁵ Plutarch has also nothing but praise for Julius Caesar whom he commends as a soldier and commander inferior to none. Among the great military leaders of his time he was superior because of the difficulty of the regions in which he waged wars, the multitude and might of the enemies over whom he was victorious, the mildness he showed towards his captives, and the generosity he bestowed on his soldiers. He created and cultivated spirit and ambition in his men by rewarding them and by undergoing danger willingly and refusing no toil.⁴⁶ The same things that are said of his models, could be said of Bruce himself.

In the third place, we learn something of the basis of Bruce's close relationship with his men, and the loyalty which he inspires. His encouragement, even when he has little reason to be optimistic, indicates that he is a worthy leader of men. He can be identified with the king who is also the father and shepherd of his

⁴⁵ Plutarch's Lives, trans. B. Perrin for the Loeb Classical Library, 11 vols. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1914-26), 10 (1924): XXI, pp. 383-85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7:XV-XVII, pp. 477-85.

people, and with the type of the acute general. He has a personal relationship with his men, and this is graphically conveyed when he meets up with the Earl of Lennox again, and they exchange accounts of their adventures since Methven. Past pains are now forgotten, or rather recited with pleasure. As Barbour says:

For quhen men oucht at liking ar,
To tell off paynys passyt by
Flesys to heryng wonderly;
And to reheress thar auld disese
Dois thaim oft-syss confort and ese;
(III, 560-64)

which explains their pleasure as a certain satisfaction derived from experiences shared and surmounted.

It is also a relationship in which there is room for entertainment as well as preaching. After crossing Loch Lomond, Bruce reads to his men from the romance of *Ferumbras*. Although the story he relates has some relevance since it tells how a small number of brave men withstood the onslaught of powerful enemies until Charlemagne and his army relieved them, its main purpose is to make the time pass more pleasantly (III, 435-37). Kliman remarks on the unusualness of a king reading to his men, since a minstrel would normally have served this function,⁴⁷ but by assuming this task himself Bruce demonstrates his personal involvement with his men.⁴⁸

On this kind of personal involvement Bruce is able to build unity. In the description of the crossing to Kintyre we are given

⁴⁷"Speech as a Mirror of Sapientia and Fortitudo in Barbour's Bruce", p. 155.

⁴⁸According to Vegetius, on the other hand, a leader should keep up close contact with his men so that he always knows their condition. See Kliman, p. 155.

a glimpse of the kind of united effort he will be able to rely on in future:

And newys that stalwart war & squar,
That went to spayn gret speris war,
Swa spaynyt aris, that men mycht Se
Full oft the hyde leve on the tre.
For all war doand, knyght and knawe;
Wes nane that euir disport mycht have
Fra steryng, and fra rowyng,
To furthyr thaim off thar fleting.
(III, 581-88)

Here knight and knave are involved in a concerted effort in a way which was notably absent at Methven, united by a sense of purpose, but more than that by a leader they have learned to love and respect.

Once he has consolidated the little support he has, Bruce has to use it effectively, first of all to compel others to join forces with him, and ultimately to oust the English from Scotland. He has to ensure victory as often as possible, and to do this he relies on his skills as a military commander, skills which derive from innate wisdom augmented by experience. In feats of personal prowess he always combines bravery with prudence, as his performance at the ford demonstrates; he now has to apply this combination to military tactics.

As I noted earlier, medieval handbooks on the art of war insisted on prudence in martial leaders. Medieval writers on kingship were no less insistent that it should be one of the primary virtues of a good king. According to Giraldus Cambrensis (? 1146-1220), prudence prevented justice turning to cruelty, bravery to temerity, and temperance to laxity, and it enabled a

king to make the necessary decisions in emergencies.⁴⁹ William Perrault (d. c. 1275) also conceives the possibility of a king assuming the role of general, so he argues that a prince should be wise in order that he may know how to use his power, for the greatness of power is not in its magnitude but in its laudable application; he should season his bravery with prudence for the same reason.⁵⁰

As in the presentation of Douglas, Bruce's practical wisdom is most obvious in his use of strategy. He soon realizes that the numerical factor alone makes open warfare far too dangerous. He therefore resorts to "slicht" which involves reliance on ambushes and surprise attacks. Methven and Dalry are valuable experiences for they give him the opportunity to learn from his enemy. It is from them that he first acquires an understanding of the value of surprise attacks, the importance of presenting a bold front in open battles, the use of foot soldiers instead of mounted knights, and the importance of axe-men and archers. He first realizes the advantages of "slicht" when the English surprise him at Methven (II, 322-25), and then gradually convinces his men that it is the best policy (III, 259-62; V, 83-88). When open combat is unavoidable he impresses the importance of maintaining a bold front on his men (III, 259-61). He soon decides to dispense with horses and to rely on the advantages of travelling and fighting on foot (III, 352-55). This tactic allows him a high degree of mobility in difficult terrain and remote regions,

⁴⁹De Principis Instructione (c. 1217), ed. G. F. Warner, Giraldi Cambrensis Opera (Rolls Series, 1891), VIII, 1, 11.

⁵⁰De Eruditione Principum, attributed to Thomas Aquinas in Opera Omnia XVI: 1, 2, iii, 4.

and to choose battle sites where the English cavalry can be used to least effect. And the significance he attaches to the use of axes and arrows is demonstrated not only in his arrangement of battalions in open combats, but also by the fact that he himself uses an arrow at the start of the encounter with Sir Aymer and his fifteen hundred men (VII, 579-86) to startle the enemy's vanguard, and an axe in the skirmish with de Bohun at Bannockburn.

In his preparations for battle he is assiduous. At Loudoun Hill and Bannockburn he inspects the sites carefully and makes extensive arrangements for the building of dykes and the digging of pot-holes in order to handicap the English by forcing them to fight on a narrow front. But of course his main strength lies in his men and it is important that he acquaint himself with their psychological condition as well as with the field of battle. I have already discussed the care he takes to assess the mental state of his men and to allay any fears that they might have. When his forces assemble at the Torwood the first thing he does is review his troops, and he finds them ready to face their enemies boldly:

Our all the host than yeid the kyng,
And beheld to thair contynyng,
And saw thame of full fair effer;
Of hardy contynans thai wer,
Be liklynes the mast cowart
Semyt till do richt weill his part.
The kyng has seyn all thair hawyng,
That knew hym weill in-to sic thing,
And saw thame all comonly
Of sekyr contynans and hardy,
Forouten effray or abaysyng.
In hert had he gret liking,
And thoucht that men of sa gret will,
Gif thai vald set thair mycht thair-till,
Suld be full hard till vyn, perfay.
(XI, 240-54)

Their confidence and fortitude are at a peak, and Bruce is responsible. But his task is never finished. He takes nothing for granted, and

perceives the need to maintain the close relationship he has established with his men:

Ay as he met thame in the way,
He welcumyt thame vith gladsum fair,
Spekand gud vordis heir and thair.
And thai, that thar lord so mekly
Saw welcum thame so myldly,
Ioyfull thai war, . . .
(255-60)

He understands the necessity to bolster and sustain their confidence.

Moreover, he conducts himself as a good king should. Haye remarks:

it efferis till a king tobe of gude eloquence and of faire
langage . . . bathe in counsale and perlement generale and
in bataill place . . .⁵¹

The author of The Secrete of Secretes, drawing on the same French source as Haye, writes:

it bicometh to a kyng to be a fayre and a swete spekere with
amyable and gracious wordis, and specially in tyme of warres and
batayles.⁵²

Prudence and good judgement influence all Bruce's actions. From early in his career he has to acquire a sense of discernment so that he can judge who is trustworthy and who is not. After Methven he learns that people are not always trustworthy (II, 326-27) and this makes him more cautious (II, 471-73). Through the various attacks on his person, often attempted by seemingly trusty men, he develops a capacity for insight into character so that when, for example, he meets the three men with the wether he immediately realizes that they are not to be trusted:

Bot the kyng, that wes vitty,
Persauit weill, be thair hawyng

⁵¹The Buke of the Governauce of Princis, ch. 6, p. 92.

⁵²Robert Steele, ed., Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 74, 1898), ch. 13, p. 14.

That thai lufit hym in na thing.
(VII, 134-36)

He also exercises judgement in his choice of confidants. This is not only important to him as a general, but as a king. As William Perrault advises, a good king should exercise care in the selection of his companions, on the basis of reliability, habits and congeniality.⁵³ He should have about him such men as he can trust with secrets, and he should be ready at all times to ask counsel as well as give it, to evaluate such advice and if it is found to be good, to make use of it.⁵⁴ Bruce is frequently described as consulting his "preue menge", and with such men as Douglas, his brother Edward and Walter Steward about him we gather that he exercises sound judgement in his choice of companions and counsellors.

His prudence extends to preventing justice turning to cruelty.⁵⁵ In the attack on Perth he orders that none of the inhabitants are to be slain unless they put up a great struggle, because most of them are Scotsmen (IX, 444-48). We are told that his motive is "pite", but his prescription indicates an astute mind since fewer Scotsmen slain means more recruits. In similar fashion his kind treatment of the renegade Thomas Randolph is both admirable and prudent, since Randolph subsequently becomes one of the king's most reliable and excellent officers.

The victory at Bannockburn is in many ways the climax of the poem, not only because of the defeat of the English, but also

⁵³De Eruditione Principum v, 42-43.

⁵⁴Ibid., iv, 2.

⁵⁵See above pp. 213-14.

because it is the acme of Bruce's career. It represents the fruition and culmination of all his efforts. To begin with, Bruce can only contemplate accepting such a challenge because his men are united behind him. For his followers the man and the cause for whom and which they fight are hardly distinguishable. Loyalty to the one is loyalty to the other. Bruce is aware of this when he says to his brother Edward:

. . . "brothir, sen swa is gane
At this thing thus is vndirtane,
Schap we vs tharfor manfully,
And all that lufis vs tendirly
And the fredome of this cuntre,
Purway thaim at that tym to be
Bowne with all mycht that euir thai may . . ."
(XI, 59-65)

When his men assemble in the Torwood they consider that they are there to defend Bruce's honour:

Ioyfull thai war, and thoucht at thai
Micht weill put thame in-till assay
Of hard fechting in stalwart stour,
For till maynteym weill his honour.
(XI, 260-63)

Bruce in turn realizes that their desire to fight for freedom is closely bound up with their feelings of personal loyalty to him:

The worthy kyng, quhen he has seyn
His host assemblit all bedeyn,
And saw thame wilfull to fulfill
His liking, with gud hert and will;
And to maynteym weill thair franchiss,
He wes reiosit on mony wiss.
(264-69)

His men have their own sense of what it means to fight for their country, so it is unnecessary for Bruce to stir them by such a sentiment in his battle speech. They are ready to desire the glory that attaches to pro patria mori, a sentiment which now has a religious flavour and which is closely bound up with the defence

of their king. They hear mass and shrive themselves:

That thocht till de in that melle,
Or than to mak thar cuntre fre.
To god for thair richt prayit thai.
(XI, 378-80)

Having satisfied himself as to the psychological state of his men (XI, 240-54), Bruce sets about making preparations for the battle. Here we see all the knowledge he has gained by experience being put to good use. He organizes his army into battalions, giving the various commands to his most experienced officers (XI, 305-47), and recommends to his "consell preue" that they all fight on foot (289-301). He then prepares the battlefield so that no matter which way the English approach the Scots will have the advantage (360-91). When all his men are assembled in the New Park he checks their morale, exhorting any who are faint-hearted to leave, and takes comfort from their unanimous assertion that they will stand up to their enemies (405-9). He now has the fortitude he strived to cultivate in them during the gloomy period after Methven:

Qwhen the gud king had herd his men
Sa hardely him ansuer then,
Sayand, that nouthir ded no dreid
Till sic discomfourt suld thame leid,
That thai suld eschew the fechtung,
In hert he had gret reiosyng.
(XI, 410-15)

Nevertheless, he does not forget that one word can easily discourage men, so when Douglas and Sir Robert Keith return from spying on the enemy, he asks them not to give any hint to his men of the awesome appearance the advancing English army presents (477-83), but rather to encourage them by telling them that the enemy are in great disarray (484-86). This tactic has a beneficial effect (493-97).

His prudence is evident in his determination not to "brek purpos" when Douglas requests permission to go to Randolph's aid (641-45), but confronted with Douglas's equally grim determination to go, he gives his leave. The inspiring effect of personal bravery is not forgotten, so when de Bohun charges the king the latter goes forward to meet him, and the result is advantageous since his men take heart and the enemy retreat:

And quhen the kyngis men so stoutly
Saw him, richt at the first metyng,
For-outen dout or abaysing,
Have slayn ane knyght swa at ane strak,
Sic hardyment than can thai tak,
That thai com on richt hardely.
Quhen ynglis men saw thame stoutly
Cum on, thai had gret abaysyng;
And specialy, for that the kyng
So smertly that gud knyght had slayne;
Than thai with-drew thaim euir-ilkane,
And durst nocht than abyde to ficht,
So dred thai than the kyngis mycht.
(XII, 62-74)

Although Bruce's conduct here is more brave than prudent, as his own men soon point out (XII, 87-95), it is still the action of a shrewd commander who realizes that the risk is worth taking for the advantage that can be gained by it; and of course he is proved right.

The success of the first two engagements, that of his own men and Randolph's victorious encounter with Clifford's party, provides Bruce with grounds for further encouragement. He prepares his men for the main battle by addressing them in the longest speech in the poem. As Kliman points out, in "this brilliant rhetorical speech he shows his profound grasp of every issue that can unite and strengthen his men".⁵⁶ He points out

⁵⁶"Speech as a Mirror of Sapientia and Fortitudo", p. 160.

that the English are now at a disadvantage because the two skirmishes, one involving the rebuttal of their vanguard, will cause the rest of the army to take fright (XII, 174-86). He reiterates his own conviction, now familiar to his men, that when the heart is discomfited, the body is powerless and that many an English heart is now wavering (185-88). Aware that their confidence is at a peak, he announces that it is up to them whether they see the battle through to the end or not (191-99), which has the effect of reinforcing their resolve for they reply that they will fight until their country is free (201-6).

He is overjoyed at their response, once again a united one, and he reminds them to maintain a bold and firm front (210-23). He calls on them to seek vengeance for they have cause (224-30), thus ensuring that all are sufficiently "enchaufyt . . . / Off Ire" whereas at Methven only a few were. He then moves on to the three great advantages they have, and it is at this point that Bruce's speech to his men most closely parallels Judas Maccabeus's speeches to his men before the battles against the armies of Seron and Gorgias. The incitement to vengeance echoes 1 Macc. 2:67. Bruce first of all reminds his men that they "haf the richt; / And for the richt ilk man suld ficht" (235-36), while the Maccabees fought for righteousness and justice (1 Macc. 2:29). The second reason for fighting is that their foes have brought so many riches with them that the spoils will be plentiful, although he later warns them not to be greedy for plunder until the battle is over (237-43; 303-11) which echoes 1 Macc. 4:17-18. Thirdly, they are fighting for their lives, their wives and children and the freedom of their land, whereas the English fight for power only (245-52), and this is later equated with wickedness and pride (297-99), which

is a striking echo of 1 Macc. 3:20.

These exhortations form the core of Bruce's speech; the rest of the material involves repetition with slight variation of these arguments. His speech begins and ends with expressions of hope and belief that God is on their side because they are in the right, which is of course one of the chief tenets in the Maccabees' story. Furthermore, although Bruce refers several times to the might of the enemy, based on man-power, in this speech he does not choose to dwell on the numerical inferiority of the Scots, preferring to stir them by as many positive reasons for fighting as possible. For all that, the fundamental intention of his speech is to suggest that a multitude does not mean victory (1 Macc. 3:19). That the story of the Maccabees should also have provided Barbour with the model for his hero's speech in the greatest battle in his career is very fitting, and of course consistent. Throughout the poem we have been reminded that superiority of numbers does not ensure victory, and Bruce's entire campaign has been fought with this belief in mind. Moreover the parallel is made explicit at the beginning of the poem when the Scots are compared to the Maccabees (I, 465-76).

That Barbour conceived of the War of Independence as a type of the struggle of the Maccabees is unquestionable, but as I have indicated earlier, the implications of the analogy have led to some confusion about the theme of the poem. I have maintained that the significance of the comparison lay for Barbour in the valiant struggle of a few against many and his concept of heroism as the extraordinary exertion of particular men. It seems to me that Bruce's speech supports this view, and if we keep in mind that Barbour's model was Judas Maccabeus's advice to his men

before battle, the purely patriotic aspect of Barbour's theme and Bruce's speech can assume a proper perspective. Judas provided Barbour not only with the type of a great national leader, but also with one of the Bible's greatest generals and warriors. But he was not alone in choosing Judas as a model for his hero. An English chronicler described Edward I as another Maccabeus.⁵⁷ The speech of the great imperialist, Alexander the Great, before a major battle in India is modelled on Judas's speeches,⁵⁸ and the Scottish translator of Les Voeux du Paon gives the impression that he was strongly influenced by Barbour in his rendering of the same speech.⁵⁹ If he had read Bruce's speech to his men before Bannockburn, then he clearly did not attach too much patriotic significance to it, since he considered the sentiments expressed in it to be as suitable for Alexander the conqueror and imperialist as for Bruce the patriot and nationalist.

It is also of some interest that Bruce's speech is not only concerned with the immediate task in hand, the battle, but that it shows an optimism about a future after the battle. He reminds them that victory will bring not only honour, but also prosperity, freedom and happiness (272-77), which are the features of a just and equitable government. He also looks to the future

⁵⁷Peter of Langtoft, ed., Wright, 2:286.

⁵⁸Les Voeux du Paon, printed in The Buik of Alexander ed. Ritchie, vol. 3, especially ll. 5297-5300, 5283-85. See Ritchie's Introduction, 1:ccxxxvii-ccxliv.

⁵⁹Ed. Ritchie, 3, ll. 7249-53, 7266-71.

when he promises security of tenure to the descendants and heirs of those who die in the battle (319-22). Appeals to the sentiment of pro patria mori are not made; instead, temporal rewards are offered, reflecting not only his optimism about the outcome of the battle but his confidence that he will soon be the supreme landlord of the country.

After the victory at Bannockburn, we see Bruce assuming his responsibilities as king and setting about the re-establishment of the Scottish machinery for government. In some ways his worthiness for kingship has still to be tested. As Barrow says of the historical Bruce's career up to Bannockburn:

If it were cast in the form of a romance it would possess at least one of romance's essential requirements, incredibility. And if Bruce had done nothing else he would find an enduring place in history as one of its greatest adventurers. But in fact he survived his adventure to become for fourteen years one of the best of medieval kings, prudent, conscientious, vigorous and patriotic.⁶⁰

Of course the point is that Barbour did cast the career of Robert Bruce in the form of a romance, but he was not less concerned to convey that his hero was more than a great warrior and adventurer. The victory at Bannockburn represents only one of his successes; to present him as the type of an ideal king required treatment of subsequent events. Such a treatment allowed Barbour to focus on his other qualities and was also consistent with his artistic purpose. C. M. Bowra's description of heroic tales is interesting in this connection:

The career of a hero needs, at least for artistic completeness, some kind of realisation. The efforts and the preparations

⁶⁰Robert Bruce and the Community, p. 234.

must lead to an impressive end. Such an end is often a triumphant success which shows the hero's worth and wins him his due of glory. . . . Other poets seem to feel that they must provide something more complete and final and that the only right close is the end of the hero's life. . . . In such cases the death comes appropriately without exciting any powerful emotions. In such a hero's life there are no paradoxes; he encounters difficulties and overcomes them until his span is finished. Such a view concentrates on the hero's powers and successes and raises no difficult questions about his calling or his position in the scheme of human action.⁶¹

It seems to me that Barbour's conception of artistic completeness fits the pattern of the second type of tale described by Bowra. The freedom of Scotland and the establishment of his kingship constituted one goal of his hero, and, although English recognition is withheld until near the end of his life, with the victory at Bannockburn he achieves it. Other difficulties have yet to be encountered and overcome before his span is finished, and by devoting some attention to these Barbour was able to complete his portrait of Bruce as an ideal king.

Apart from his journey to Ireland, the pursuit of the English to Byland, and the final defeat of John of Lorne and the conquest of the Isles, Bruce plays an increasingly administrative role after Bannockburn. Since his kingship and Scotland's sovereignty have still to be recognized by England, the war goes on. But Bruce has secured his lordship of Scotland and so can confidently go to his brother's aid in Ireland, leaving the country in the safe hands of Douglas and Walter Steward. His confidence is justified, for Douglas successfully defends the Marches, and Bishop Sinclair defends the country from invasion by

⁶¹Heroic Poetry (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1952), pp. 117-18.

sea. The king can now afford to leave the military defence of his realm to his lieutenants.

Justice and equity are established (XII, 711) and prosperity and happiness return (713-20).⁶² He himself is freer to make decisions about diplomacy, matters of tact (he prevents rivalry between Douglas and Randolph, XVII, 52-60), and he has time to consider questions of broader strategy. He is able to put pressure on the English by opening the war on a second front in Ireland and so divert English resources (XIVff),⁶³ and he sends Douglas and Randolph to harry the north of England in order to weaken and divide the English troops besieging Berwick (XVII, 494ff).

Once the arena of battle switches to England, Scotland enjoys peace (XIX, 1) and parliaments are set up. But this peace and harmony are soon threatened with the discovery of a conspiracy against Bruce, and indeed his handling of this matter really represents a test of the kind of justice that exists in his kingdom. Barbour emphasizes that Sir William de Soules and his fellow-conspirators are tried before a parliament (XIX, 47-50), which points up the kind of rough justice that the Scots underwent at the hands of Edward I, the basis of which was revenge against people he regarded as rebels and conspirators and whom he sent to

⁶²According to Gilbert Haye "a king that regnis in justice, equitee and lautee is proffitable till his peple, for of him cummys plentee and welth, in his realme". The Buke of the Governauce of Princis, ch. 34, p. 145.

⁶³See J. F. Lydon, "The Bruce Invasion of Ireland", in An Historical Atlas of Scotland c. 400-c.1600, ed. P. McNeill and R. Nicholson (St. Andrews: Atlas Committee of the Conference of Scottish Medievalists, 1975), pp. 57-59.

particularly cruel deaths without trial.⁶⁴ Edward II's record is not very impressive either: the beheading of the Earl of Lancaster by Harcla, again without trial, is presented as an act of retribution, sanctioned by the English king, for his withdrawal from the siege of Berwick (XVII, 853ff).

Soules is spared execution because of his open admission of guilt (XIX, 44-52). But the sentence of execution passed on the others is clearly not an act of vengeance, but of justice. Lèse-majesté was considered by all medieval political writers to be one of the most serious offences possible and was severely punished on conviction. It is interesting that although Sir Ingram d'Umphraville requests permission to leave Scotland after David Brechin's execution, and Bruce generously grants it, he at no point questions Bruce's motives or Brechin's guilt in the crime of collusion. Brechin's dissociation from the conspiracy does not make him innocent, for his failure to disclose it amounts to a serious betrayal of his fealty to Bruce (XIX, 64-68).⁶⁵

Peace, justice and equity are therefore the features of Bruce's reign, the establishment and maintenance of which were the responsibility of a good king. When peace is finally restored between Scotland and England, Bruce's first action after the marriage of his son David to the English princess Joan, is to provide for the future peace and security of his country. Memories of the succession crisis which led to so many years of war cause

⁶⁴Edward regarded Bruce's uprising as the action of a conspirator and rebel (I, 596-74).

⁶⁵See the Policraticus VI, 25.

him to appoint his son as his heir and to crown him in his own lifetime. He also makes provision for the government of the realm in the event of David's death by naming his grandson Robert as his son's successor. In an attempt to cover all eventualities, he entrusts the government of the country to Randolph and Douglas until his heirs come of age (XX, 119-48).

Throughout the poem Bruce's ideal combination of leadership qualities is promoted by the contrast Barbour encourages us to see between his conduct and that of the Edwards of England. The two roles which Bruce so successfully combines are to some extent divided between the two English kings.⁶⁶ Edward I is presented as the type of an unjust ruler, while Edward II is the type of a poor general.⁶⁷ Barbour goes to some lengths to blacken the character of Edward I, whereas Edward II, although hardly an admirable figure, is spared harsh criticism. Edward I is morally iniquitous: his reign of terror in Scotland represents the rule of will as opposed to the rule of justice. For Barbour this is the antithesis of good kingship, and at the point at which Bruce is introduced it is clearly Barbour's intention to make the distinction plain.

⁶⁶Although Edward III appears in the poem, he does not play a significant role in the events Barbour describes. He is only eighteen years old at the time. It is his general, Sir John of Hainault, who is the "leder" of the English army at Weardale (XIX, 255-78), and it is his mother and Mortimer who really carry out the peace negotiations with Bruce (XX, 28-32).

⁶⁷Not that the historical Edward II was a successful king. Part of Bruce's success was probably due to Edward II's poor relations with the nobles of his realm. He was finally forced to abdicate and his young son was placed on the throne.

Wyntoun frequently refers to Edward I as a tyrant, and although Barbour does not use the term, according to medieval definitions of tyranny he is one. John of Salisbury defines a tyrant as a king who oppresses people by rulership based on force, and who is not content until he has reduced them to slavery.⁶⁸ Marsilius of Padua describes tyranny as a diseased government wherein a single man rules for his own benefit apart from the will of his subjects; and he argues that diseased governments are usually established by fraud or force, or both.⁶⁹ According to Gilbert Haye, tyranny has its root in covetise, and especially in the desire to acquire "grete dominacioun, or grete lordschippis; for thare is syndry kynde of folk that, had thai all the warld, yit scantly wald thai be content; bot for warldis gude, wald occupy townis, citeis and realmes of othir mennis".⁷⁰ These of course are the effects of Edward's rule in Scotland (I, 179-220) and a fairly accurate summary of his motives as presented by Barbour (I, 95-102; 111-12).

He is presented in a very unbecoming light:

For thar wes nane off lyff sa fell,
Sa pautener, na sa cruell.
(II, 193-94)

On the few occasions on which he is referred to after Bruce's coronation, he invariably speaks in anger, is motivated by a desire for revenge, and all his actions lack justice. When news reaches

⁶⁸Policraticus VIII, ch. 17.

⁶⁹Defensor Pacis I, ch. viii, ch. ix.

⁷⁰The Buke of the Law of Armyis, IV, ch. liv, p. 172.

him that prisoners have been captured at Methven, he "for dispyte bad draw and hing / All the prisoneris, thocht thai war ma" (II, 455-56). He orders the execution of prisoners without a trial, and shows no mercy. So Christopher Seton, Bruce's brother-in-law, is hanged, drawn and quartered "For-owtyn pete, or mercy" (IV, 31), and Sir Neil Bruce, the king's brother, is similarly dispatched (IV, 321-22). The order for the execution of Neil Bruce and the prisoners from Kildrummy is given a particularly gruesome touch. Edward is on his death-bed when the prisoners are brought to him:

Than lukit he awfully thame to,
And said, gyrnand, "hangis & drawis!"

Barbour is moved to comment that a man who is so lacking in mercy on his death-bed can hardly expect mercy of his Maker (323-31), and given that he has just a few lines before suggested that through necromancy Edward communed with evil spirits (219-37), the implication seems to be that he is destined for hell.

Probably Edward II's greatest failing as a king in Barbour's eyes is the favouritism he shows when he inclines towards the arguments of the men from the south of England at the siege of Berwick (XVII, 855-56). As a result, the Earl of Lancaster is angered and withdraws his men. But it is rather more as a general that he cuts a poor figure next to Bruce. At the Battle of Bannockburn he fails to keep control of his army so that the vanguard march on when he calls a halt (XII, 3-14), and we already know from Bruce's reproof to his brother in Ireland that such carelessness indicates neglect of the men in one's charge. He does not have the same kind of personal contact with his men that Bruce strives to establish with his. When his men are dispirited, heralds are sent to encourage them (XII, 367-72), and indeed they have

reason to feel discouraged, not only because of the rebuttal of the vanguard, but because they are not united by the kind of loyalty to their lords which comes with sound leadership and consciousness of a just cause. They regard their leaders as men engaged in an unrighteous quarrel who rely only on their might and consequently tempt God (XII, 361-66).

Barbour's belief that the man who has the qualities for good generalship also has the virtues necessary for good kingship, and that conversely a poor general will make a poor king, is further emphasized by the portrait of Edward Bruce. Barbour overtly invites us to compare Edward to his brother Robert:

Had he had mesur in his deid,
I trow that worthyar than he
Micht nocht in his tyme fundyn be,
Outakyn his brothir anyrly,
To quhom, in-to gude cheuelry,
I dar peir nane, wes in his day.
For he led hym with mesure ay,
And vith gret vit his cheuelry
He gouernit ay so worthely
That he oft full vnlikly thing
Brocht rycht weill to full gud ending.
(IX, 661-71)

As a general he has serious faults. His "gret yaryng . . . / All tyme for till do cheuelry" (IX, 583-84) makes him reckless, and while Bruce admires him on occasion for his great audacity (V, 64-74; XI, 56-58), he criticizes his powers of leadership when he severely rebukes him for the careless neglect of his rearguard in Ireland (XVI, 247-50). He is ambitious for personal glory and Barbour implies that he is a war lover (XIV, 3) and as such he is not suitable for kingship since the establishment and maintenance of peace should be the prime concern of a king.⁷¹ He lacks prudence,

⁷¹The Irish nobility elect Edward Bruce as their king in return for his assistance in driving the English out of Ireland (XIV, 1-15).

an important quality in a good captain, but an essential one in a good king. He never gains the full confidence and co-operation of the Irish chiefs. They disapprove of his rash approach to warfare (XVIII, 72-80) and his reluctance to accept the counsel of his closest advisers (69). Since he fails as a captain, he cannot hope to be a good king. His deeds of prowess are not aimed at providing an inspiring example to his followers, but are motivated by ambition and vanity, serious vices in Barbour's view.

Bruce always surpasses him, not only in feats of valour (XVI, 178-89), and the application of prudence to all his deeds, but ultimately because of his humility. Edward Bruce finally meets his death in an inglorious battle, proud to the very end. Bruce, on the other hand, humbly turns his thoughts to his sins as death approaches. He feels responsible for the blood shed during his lifetime and regards his sickness and pain as a penance (XX, 171-77). He arranges for his heart to be sent on a crusade "Of my synmys till savit be" (180).

He has been presented as an excellent warrior-king and as an admirable peace-time ruler, and finally he is the type of a good Christian king. Barbour feels justified in according him a well-earned place in heaven:

And quhen he had gert till hym do,
All that gud cristin man fell to,
With werray repentans he gaf
The gast, that god till hevin couth haf
Emang his chosyn folk till be,
In Ioy, solace, and angell gle.
(XX, 247-52)

His subjects are aware of a profound loss and give themselves up to a very moving lament (253-76), to which Barbour adds his comment:

And sekirly wonder wes nane,
For bettir gouvernour than he
Micht in na Cuntre fundyn be.
(XX, 278-80)

CHAPTER 5

Literary Debts and Influences

It has been demonstrated that Barbour conceived of his work as an account of the great exploits of men he presents as heroes--heroes in the sense of extraordinary men whose excellence can be measured against the heroic ideal which is enunciated in the poem and is expressed through actions and speeches designed to reveal their heroic qualities. His heroic ideal and the presentation of Bruce and Douglas as embodiments of that ideal are developed in accordance with Barbour's conception of the qualities most necessary in men who are not only warriors but who are also leaders of other men, namely, kings, generals, lords and captains, and therefore hold accountable positions. In order to illuminate his heroic ideal and, by extension, to emphasize his presentation of Bruce and Douglas as epitomes of it, Barbour employed dramatic contrasts. The use of dramatic contrast leads, as Barbour intended, the reader to conclude that Douglas is a better knight and captain than the Earl of Murray or Edward Bruce, and that Bruce is a better king and general than his brother or the kings of England. It is a particular application of his basic assumption that heroes are men who by their qualities surpass their peers.

In order to further promote the view of Bruce and Douglas as illustrious men, Barbour compared them to other heroes with whom his readers would have been familiar. He does this most obviously when

he compares his heroes with the Maccabees (I, 465-76). In the course of the narrative he often compares them to other outstanding historical or pseudo-historical figures whose achievements had been celebrated in literary works. By doing this he encourages the reader to class these Scottish heroes with other renowned individuals, and also draws attention to the magnificence of a particular feat or quality.

In several instances he highlights a certain quality or qualities of one of his heroes by directly comparing him to another hero who possessed them. Hence, when describing Douglas, he writes:

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 wnlispyt alsua as did he,
And wes fullfillyt of leawte,
& wes curtaiss and wyss and wycht.
(I, 395-401)

However, he is aware that to compare anyone to Hector in all respects might strain credulity, so he adds:

Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
Till Ector dar I nane comper
Off all that euir in warldys wer.
(I, 402-4)

For all that, the comparison with Hector has been made. Usually, though, a comparison is made when a specific virtue is attributed to one of his heroes and the poet is reminded of a paragon. In this way Douglas is compared to Fabricius who "Had souerane priss of lawte; / And richt sua had the lord douglass" (XX, 564-65).

On other occasions, particularly admirable conduct leads the poet to compare it with that of some renowned figure, to the greater glory of his hero. For example, when Bruce defeats two hundred men singlehanded by a stream, Barbour comments:

A! deir god! quha had beyn by,
 And seyn how he sa hardely
 Adressit hym agane thame all,
 I wat weill that thai suld him call
 The best that liffit in-till his day;
 And gif that I the suth sall say,
 I hard neuir in na tyme gane
 Ane stynt sa mony hym allane.
 (VI, 171-78)

Having said this, he then relates Tydeus's encounter with fifty men and invites the reader to judge which was the better man, making quite clear that in his opinion Bruce was (VI, 269-84). Elsewhere, he reveals that when a comparison is made, it should always be a fitting ("manerlik") one. So when one of Bruce's enemies expresses admiration for him by comparing him to Coll MacMorna in his courageous cover of his men's retreat, Barbour comments:

He set ensample thus mydlike,
 The quethir he mycht, mar manerlik,
 Lyknyt hym to gaudifer de laryss.
 (III, 71-73)

Edward Bruce's conduct at the Battle of Kilross in which he bravely and successfully engages with a host which outnumbered his army by five to one, provides the poet with an opportunity to draw an analogy:

This gud knyght, that so vorthy was,
 Till Iudas, machabeus that hicht,
 Micht liknyt weill be in that ficht.
 Na multitud he forsuk of men,
 Quhill he hade ane aganis ten.
 (XIV, 312-16)

On other occasions comparisons are drawn in a slightly less direct fashion, when, although we may not be asked to compare one of Barbour's heroes with some renowned figure because of a quality they have in common or similar conduct, nonetheless by allusion to other instances of noteworthy incidents or conduct, a comparison is effected. For example, the Earl of Murray's capture of Edinburgh

Castle is compared to Alexander the Great's assault on Tyre:

I herd neuir quhar in ane land
Wes castell tane so hardely,
Outakyn tyre all anerly.
(X, 703-5)

Ostensibly the point of comparison is the difficulty of the siege, but we are actually led to compare the courage displayed by Randolph, in his willingness to incur personal danger in order to encourage his army, to that of Alexander at Tyre.

The most remarkable instance of this procedure is when John Comyn's betrayal of Bruce leads Barbour to argue that no duke, earl, prince or king, no matter how wise or powerful, can ever completely guard against treason. He gives as examples the betrayal of the Trojans, the poisoning of Alexander in his own house, the murder of Caesar by those closest to him, and the slaying of Arthur by his nephew Modred (I, 521-60). Comyn's action is therefore classed with these other treacheries and consequently made to appear even more heinous. Furthermore, Bruce, as a victim of such treachery, is associated with rather grand company--Alexander, Caesar and Arthur.

Similarly, when Barbour describes the loyalty of the wives of the men in Bruce's company during one of the most wretched stages in his career, he conveys the great value of such loyalty by giving an account of the great help and comfort given by the women of Argos to king Adrastus at the siege of Thebes (II, 528-48).

Finally, there are allusions to the heroic endeavours of other famous warriors in the stories Bruce relates to his men in the course of the narrative. The account of Scipio's defence of Rome when it is besieged by Hannibal's powerful armies, the exhortation to follow the example of Julius Caesar who surmounted his

difficulties through perseverance, and the reading of the romance of Ferumbras, have an immediate purpose in furthering Barbour's theme, for they indicate how Bruce encouraged his men to continue the fight by drawing parallels between their situation and that of former heroes who eventually overcame obstacles and achieved fame. As I argued earlier, these exempla also serve to highlight those themes which Barbour explores--human endeavour and achievement, perseverance and fortitude, and how a few men may succeed against more powerful enemies if they are willing to exert themselves and trust in God's help. Indirectly, therefore, a comparison is made between Bruce and his models.

In this brief survey of the parallels drawn by Barbour, one cannot fail to notice that the majority seem to be classical references: Hector, Fabricius, Tydeus, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hannibal and Scipio, the Trojan war and the siege of Thebes. In his commentary Skeat notes those references which seem to demonstrate Barbour's debt to Lucan, Statius and Plutarch, and his knowledge of Cato (I, 343) and Virgil (II, 520; III, 561, 705; V, 87).¹ M. P. McDiarmid is of the opinion that Barbour's poem "has a base of classical and historical scholarship" and that although

¹The Bruce, 1:lii-liii. Barbour was quite probably familiar with Cato's Disticha, since, as I noted in Chapter 3, it was a popular primer in medieval grammar schools. His knowledge of Lucan (Skeat cites III, 281 as a translation of "Nil actum credens, si quid superesset agendum", Pharsalia ii, 657) and Virgil (II, 520 as a quotation from Eclogues X, 69: "Omnia vincit amor"; III, 561 as an echo of Aeneid I, 203: "olim meminisse juvabit"; III, 706 from Aeneid I, 106: "Hi summo in fluctu pendent, his unda dehiscens / Terram inter fluctus aperit"; and V, 87 from Aeneid II, 390: "dolus, an uirtus, quis in hoste requirat") can be explained, as R. L. Graeme Ritchie remarks, by familiarity with "commonplaces which imply, at the very most, a knowledge of most ancient and threadbare tags", The Buik of Alexander, 1:clxiv, note 1.

Barbour's familiarity with French romances is quite apparent "they are not basic to his thinking and the tradition of republican Rome is".² In fact, most of Barbour's allusions can be traced to the influence of medieval romances. In his study of Barbour's literary borrowings, D. F. C. Coldwell discovered that the poet's interests leaned sharply towards French romances.³ Only three of Barbour's "classical" references cannot be readily explained in this way, namely, his brief account of the career and death of Julius Caesar (I, 537-48), the Scipio-Hannibal episode (III, 207-48) and the lines which describe Fabricius's refusal to employ treachery to rid him of his enemy, Pyrrhus (XX, 521-61). In these cases Barbour's knowledge of classical sources is not as extensive or intimate as the comments of Skeat and McDiarmid would suggest. Indeed, the weight of the evidence would seem to indicate that Barbour was not drawing on classical sources at all, but on medieval chronicles and florilegia.

The predominance of borrowings from romance sources is of some importance. Each reference underlines and clarifies Barbour's heroic ideal, but more than that, the prevalence of romance allusions in itself reveals a good deal about Barbour's aims in writing The Bruce. As noted in Chapter 1, it was through the

²"The Early Heroic Poetry of Scotland", pp. 41-42. McDiarmid's claim that the tradition of republican Rome has a significant place in The Bruce is totally unwarranted by the evidence. His support for this view seems to rest on the alleged quotation from Lucan's Pharsalia at II, 281, but Barbour's knowledge of this work cannot be attested on the basis of one line and as I demonstrate below, his other reference to Julius Caesar (I, 537ff) does not agree either in matter or spirit with that of Lucan's republican epic.

³"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1947).

reading of romances that he came to conceive his own work as a romance, and it is therefore not without significance that throughout the poem he demonstrates a conscious desire to identify his heroes with romance heroes, and concomitantly to identify his work with other romances. When he wishes to impress upon his readers the magnitude of Bruce's achievements, his terms of reference are literary:

. . . Ik herd neuir in Romanys tell
Off man sa hard sted as wes he,
That eftirwart com to sic bounte.
(II, 46-48)

The greatest praise he can accord his heroes takes the form of suggesting that their feats and qualities surpass those of heroes who have been celebrated in song and verse. (In the poem the words are attributed to McNaughton, one of Bruce's adversaries):

Ik hard neuir, in sang na ryme,
Tell off A man that swa smertly
Eschewyt swa gret chewalry.
(III, 178-80)

Furthermore, the romance references are integral to the poem and cannot seriously be regarded, as J. T. T. Brown has argued, as the work of a fifteenth century interpolator "who embellished his original and strove with all the skills at his command to bring it into harmony with his own conception of the higher canons of art".⁴ Of particular relevance in the present context is Brown's argument that the allusions in the first book of The Bruce to the destruction of Troy, the deaths of Alexander, Caesar and Arthur as examples of treason, the reference to Gadifer de Larys in book II, to Ferumbras and Scipio in book III, and to Tydeus in book V, were interpolated

⁴"The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", Bonner Beitrage zur Anglistik 5-8 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1900), 6:155.

by a fifteenth century editor who drew on the Gest Hystoriale (Trojan war), the alliterative Morte Arthure (Arthur), Chaucer's Monk's Tale (Alexander and Caesar), The Sowdone of Babylone (Ferumbras), Wyntoun's Orygynale Cronikyl (Hannibal and Scipio) and Lydgate's Story of Thebes (Tydeus).⁵ Brown also argued that The Buik of Alexander (1438), a translation of two poems which formed part of the second and third branches of the Roman d'Alexandre, was laid under contribution.⁶

George Neilson refuted Brown's theory of interpolated excerpts, but largely in defence of his own rival theory in which Barbour is not only the author of The Bruce but of The Buik of Alexander.⁷ He lists similar or identical lines and phrases found in both works and comes to the conclusion that common authorship is the only possible explanation. Since the date at which Barbour was writing The Bruce is incontestable (1375), he concludes that the date in The Buik of Alexander colophon (1438), must be a scribal or printer's error, or that it must be the date at which the copyist was at work.⁸

⁵Ibid., pp. 92-100, 112-127.

⁶Brown, pp. 100-112. For a full account of the relationship of The Buik of Alexander to the Roman d'Alexandre see R. L. Graeme Ritchie's Introduction to his edition of The Buik, 1:xxx-lvi.

⁷"John Barbour versus John Ramsay", Athenaeum, 17th November and 1st December, 1900. Neilson's theory of common authorship actually preceded Brown's theory of interpolations by a fifteenth century redactor, and was originally presented in a paper entitled "John Barbour: Poet and Translator" addressed to The Philological Society. It is printed in Transactions of The Philological Society (1899-1902): 315-71. A summary of the views of Brown and Neilson is provided by R. L. G. Ritchie in the Introduction to his edition of The Buik of Alexander, 1:lxvi-lxxii.

⁸"John Barbour: Poet and Translator", pp. 359-61.

R. L. Graeme Ritchie, the most recent editor of The Buik of Alexander, finds Neilson's arguments for an erroneous date unconvincing, but he too discovers an "irreducible minimum" of parallel lines which he feels cannot be regarded as fortuitous.⁹ He therefore attributes Barbour with authorship of The Buik, although his own admission that the question of the printed date remains a difficulty which he "does not profess to explain, the possibilities being unlimited" is unsatisfactory.¹⁰

It seems to me that the burden of proof must rest with those critics who believe that the date in the colophon of The Buik of Alexander is erroneous. They also have a confidence in lists of parallel lines and phrases which I cannot share. As Ritchie himself points out, most of the lines and phrases common to the two works "deal more with decorative detail than with essential subject matter" and the occurrence of the same ideas and even the same forms of expression is not necessarily significant since there was a common stock of set phrases for medieval writers to draw upon.¹¹ In view of this lack of sound evidence, it cannot be assumed that Barbour was the author of The Buik of Alexander. In the following pages, therefore, I shall refer only to those arguments of Neilson, Brown and Ritchie which offer a quite different impression of Barbour's literary borrowings from my own.

My main concern will be to trace the influences that shaped The Bruce, Barbour's heroic ideal and the presentation of his heroes.

⁹Vol. 1, pp. lxxiii.

¹⁰Ibid., p. clix.

¹¹Ibid., pp. xcvi, cvi-cvii.

Where possible, sources for Barbour's literary allusions will be cited, and where precise identification is not possible suggestions will be offered of probable sources. It emerges that the poet was particularly conscientious in his introduction of parallels, for he was concerned about the suitability of his analogies in the overall illumination of the themes he explores.

As I have already suggested, Barbour's original source of inspiration may well have been the passage in Fordun's Gesta Annalia in which he almost invites some capable person to write a biography of Robert Bruce based on his personal qualities and individual triumphs. Clearly, that part of the Gesta Annalia which deals with Robert Bruce was completed before 1375 when we know that Barbour was engaged in writing The Bruce, and since Fordun seems to have been a chantry priest at the Cathedral of Aberdeen,¹² in Barbour's diocese, it is highly unlikely that writing after 1375 he could have been unaware of The Bruce.

In the Gesta Annalia Barbour found Bruce presented as the God-appointed saviour and champion of the people of Scotland, as an alter Machabaeus, an idea which he went on to develop in his own work by representing the Scottish War of Independence as a type of the Maccabean struggle. Fordun had also expressed his admiration for the fortitude and perseverance of Bruce when faced with numerous hardships,¹³ an admiration which Barbour undoubtedly shared, for much of his narrative is devoted to description of the many

¹²W. F. Skene, ed., Johannes de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum, 1:xiv.

¹³Gesta Annalia, CXII. See Chapter 1, p. 48.

obstacles which Bruce through tenacity and determination eventually overcomes.

This latter aspect of Bruce's career was one that Barbour chose to develop. When he is depicting that period of his hero's struggle when his fortunes are at their lowest ebb, he has Bruce tell his men a story about men who found themselves in a similar position. We have already noted that Bruce's intention in relating this story was to dispel encroaching despair, but it is also of some importance to realize why Barbour should have regarded the account of how Scipio and his men refused to despair in the face of Hannibal's attack on Rome an appropriate one in terms of his theme. It is an analogous account of how a few men through a display of courage, and with the help of God, ultimately succeeded against mightier foes. As Bruce says:

Be thir quheyne, that sa worthily
Wane sic A king, and sa mychty,
Ye may weill be ensampill se,
That na man suld disparyt be:
Na let his hart be wencusyt all,
For na myscheiff that euir may fall.
(III, 249-54)

Wyntoun also relates this story, citing Martinus Polonus and Orosius as his source (Orygynale Cronykil, IV, ch. XVI), and indeed it seems more than likely that Orosius was also Barbour's source, and not Plutarch as Skeat suggests, for his interpretation of Scipio's stand closely parallels that of Orosius.¹⁴ Wyntoun, on the other hand, overlooks the very point which Barbour deemed most significant. After describing how Scipio forcibly prevented the Romans from fleeing their besieged capital, freed the slaves and

¹⁴The Bruce, 1:111 and the note to these lines in vol. 2, p. 557. Plutarch was not common reading in the Middle Ages.

prisoners, knighted them, and with this motley band defended the city, Wyntoun comments:

Sa Rome before disparyd than
Respyre in to gud hope began.
Bot yhit, as Orosius
In tyll his cornyklys tellis ws,
Quha that in Rome befor had bene,
And had off it the wurschype sene,
He wald have bene all rede for schame,
Fra he had sene thare reale fame
Chawngyd, and thare reawte,
Than turnyd in deformyte,
For nane thare governale than had
To sauff barnys off yhowthad,
Threllys, both bownd or carle,
That oysyd before to bere and harle.

(Cronykil, IV, ch. XVI, 1587-1600)

As J. T. T. Brown demonstrates, Wyntoun here is translating Martinus Polonus and not Orosius.¹⁵ Indeed, even the comment "as Orosius . . . tellis ws" can be traced to Polonus:

Tunc Roma desperata spem habere coepit. Qui tunc (sicut dicit Orosius) Romanam militiam vidisset, rubore perfundi potuisset; quia nisi aut puer, aut seruus, aut sceleratus, aut debitor, erat. Et nec sic quidem numerus idoneus erat.¹⁶

Martinus Polonus reproduced the opinions he found in his source, Orosius's Historia adversus paganos, which were that Scipio's action dispelled despair but that shame attached to Rome because slaves and criminals had to be relied on to defend the city.¹⁷ However, in

¹⁵"The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", pp. 123-26.

¹⁶Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum, quoted by Brown, p. 124, who uses the Opera, ed. Suffredus (Antwerp, 1574). The Chronicon has also been edited by L. Weiland in the Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores xxii (Hanover, 1872).

¹⁷Also quoted by Brown, p. 125, who uses Sweet's edition in the E. E. T. S. series. The Historia adversus paganos is also available in translation by Irving Woodworth Raymond, Seven Books of History Against the Pagans (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936). The relevant passage is contained in bk. IV, ch. 16.

choosing to emphasize Rome's disgrace by concluding his chapter on this note, Martinus Polonus, and Wyntoun following him, actually misrepresented Orosius's attitude. After commenting on the ignominious conduct of the Romans and the shame which Rome incurred because slaves had to defend the city, Orosius went on to say that for all that, a display of courage, bred of desperation, led to an improvement in the fortunes of the Romans, and he concludes that men were braver as a result of their miseries for desperation made them fight, and fighting made them victorious.¹⁸

Martinus Polonus and Wyntoun both omit this observation, whereas Barbour clearly regarded it as the moral of the story. In The Bruce the account of Scipio's courageous stand and the subsequent defeat of Hannibal is related by Bruce in order to relieve his men's despondency and to keep up their morale (III, 191-206; 251-54). It is the story of men who refused to despair despite their grim prospects. As a result, Bruce concludes:

Tharfor men, that werrayand ar,
Suld set thar etlyng euir-mar
To stand agayne thar fayis mycht.
(III, 259-61)

Brown, intent on showing that the Scipio-Hannibal account in The Bruce is not an independent translation of Polonus but a borrowing from Wyntoun, ignores the possibility that Barbour used Orosius. He abridges the relevant chapter from Orosius, leaving out the comment that the Romans finally achieved victory because of a display of courage, and so misses the clue to Barbour's real source.¹⁹

¹⁸Historia adversus paganos IV, ch. 16.

¹⁹"The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", p. 125.

Furthermore, Barbour's collocation of two separate incidents--the freeing of the slaves and the rain storms which prevented Hannibal from seizing Rome--which Brown regards as an "egregious blunder" resulting from a careless summary of Wyntoun,²⁰ is more easily accounted for when one realizes that Orosius and not Polonus or Wyntoun was Barbour's source. Wyntoun follows Polonus in the division of his chapters, so that one deals with Scipio's freeing of the slaves and the next describes Hannibal's abortive siege on Rome.²¹ However, in Orosius's history the two incidents are treated in the same chapter.²² The likelihood that Barbour did have access to Orosius's history receives support from the fact that this work was available to Fordun who quotes from it in his Chronica Gentis Scotorum (II, chs. xvii, xxi, xxix), whereas Polonus's history is not one of Fordun's sources.²³ Barbour simply condensed Orosius's account, picking out the salient features and omitting the comment on Rome's disgrace, which is clearly digressive in form and subjective in nature.

Nevertheless, Barbour's debt to Orosius is limited, which may constitute grounds for suspecting that the poet actually used

²⁰Ibid., p. 127.

²¹Orygynale Cronykil, IV, chs. XVI, XVII. Wyntoun and Polonus can be readily compared in Brown's paper, pp. 121-24.

²²Historia adversus paganos IV, ch. 16.

²³Although Neilson points out that the Cathedral Library at Aberdeen possessed a copy of the Cronica Martini de Papis et Imperatoribus (Athenaeum, 17th November, 1900), there is no reason to suppose that it was available to Barbour, since the inventory in which it is recorded is dated 1436. It was still in the Cathedral Library in 1464 according to an inventory taken in that year, but neither inventory gives the date of acquisition. Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis, 2:130, 156.

a recension of Orosius's history, or perhaps some later medieval chronicle, other than that of Martinus Polonus, which drew on Orosius's work and faithfully reproduced his account of Hannibal's siege of Rome. Orosius's Historia adversus paganos, as the title of the work suggests, was written for a definite purpose: to rebut the pagan complaint that Rome's troubles were due to her abandonment of her gods. The work is an apologia for Christianity, in which pre-Christian history is summarized in prophetic fashion in order to demonstrate the providence that was to lead to the Incarnation. Orosius takes the view that pre-Christian history was a long record of misery and disaster, far worse than anything happening under the barbarian attacks. He adopts the view of history as a succession of four empires, which received authority from the Book of Daniel, and, as I. W. Raymond observes in the Introduction to his translation of the Historia:

The great civilizations of Babylon, Macedon, Carthage, and Rome, stand before a bar where judgement is rendered according to the universal standards of Christian principles. The imperialism of Rome is no longer described in glowing terms of praise.²⁴

There was, therefore, no place in Orosius's work for admiration of great pagan warriors. The only ideal he recognizes is the Christian ideal. An important part of his design was to demonstrate that history was a catalogue of almost incessant wars proving that man without God is driven by vain ambitions for imperialistic domination. His attitude to the great world-conquerors who were destined for celebration in the later Middle Ages is, to say the least, very unfavourable: he denounces them for their vices. The

²⁴Seven Books of History Against the Pagans, pp. 19-20.

career of Julius Caesar, for example, serves to illustrate the evils and troubles of ambitious conquest.²⁵

But Orosius's severest criticism is directed at Alexander of Macedon, whom he depicts as a man of abominable pride.²⁶ He was writing in the theological tradition which interpreted Alexander's character in accordance with the conception of him that was foreshadowed in the first Book of the Maccabees and the prophecies of Daniel. According to this biblical role, Alexander was an instrument of wrath, the foreordained destroyer of Persia, and the ultimate cause of the reign of Antiochus, the accepted type of Antichrist.

As George Cary has amply demonstrated, Alexander's role as conqueror underlay all moral considerations of him.²⁷ Medieval authors who wished to write about Alexander could draw not only on the theological tradition, but also on a classical tradition which, while less virulent in its assessment of the conqueror, adopted a critical moral attitude to him. This owed much to the Aristotelian conception of the truly great man, the magnanimous man, who in the pursuit of honours, avoided the extremities of vanity and pusillanimity.²⁸ Cicero, in the De Officiis, a very influential work in the Middle Ages, took up the Aristotelian concept of greatness of soul, interpreting it as a greatness of spirit or courage (animus)

²⁵Historia adversus paganos V, ch. 18.

²⁶Ibid., III, chs. 7-18. He frequently describes him as "bloodthirsty" and cruel.

²⁷The Medieval Alexander, pp. 196ff.

²⁸See above, pp. 155-58.

particularly applicable to those who sought honour in the military field. The winning of honour through deeds of valour is not condemned by Cicero so long as it serves the public good and accords with justice.²⁹ He carefully distinguishes between the desire for personal glory and true magnanimity. But, says Cicero, it is often the case that "the desire after honour, empire, power and glory, is generally most prevalent in the greatest soul and the most exalted genius".³⁰ Hence, Julius Caesar is accused of pride and presumption, and of violating justice in his ambition for empire, glory and honour,³¹ and Alexander the Great is accused of pride and arrogance.³²

However, in arguing that an undue ambition for power naturally springs from a greatness of spirit,³³ Cicero left the way open for a minimization of the faults of great men. This is most notable in the popular attitude to Alexander. His qualities were accentuated, and because of the extent of his achievements his ambition came to be regarded less as an occasion for reproof and more as the necessary adjunct to his magnanimity. The portrait of Alexander given in Chaucer's Monk's Tale is a good example of this. Chaucer refers to the account of Alexander in the first Book of the Maccabees,³⁴ and is

²⁹De Officiis I, xix.

³⁰Ibid., I, viii, trans. C. R. Edmonds, Cicero's Three Books of Offices and Moral Works for the Bohn Classical Library (London: George Bell & Sons, 1875).

³¹De Officiis I, viii.

³²Ibid., I, xxvi.

³³Ibid., I, xix.

³⁴The Monk's Tale, 2647-57. The reference is to 1 Macc. 1-5, in which Alexander is described as the son of Philip of Macedon, the defeater of Darius and conqueror of many nations, and as one who reigned for twelve years.

obviously aware that the conqueror had been accused of various excesses:

Save wyn and wommen, no thing myghte aswage
His hye entente in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonyn corage.

(The Monk's Tale, VII, 2644-46)

Yet, his overweening ambition is part of his greatness, his magnanimity, and his demise is lamented:

Who shal ne yeven teeris to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise,
That al the world weilded in his demeyne,
And yet hym thoughte it myghte nat suffise?
So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.

(The Monk's Tale, VII, 2663-67)

Although we have discovered that Barbour's own heroic ideal excludes rash or presumptuous conduct, there is no trace of reproof in his attitude to men such as Alexander and Julius Caesar in his references to them. While he does not directly compare Bruce or Douglas to Alexander in terms of qualities or achievements, which may indicate some reservations about Alexander because of the faults that had been attributed to him, when he cites examples of treason to which even the mightiest princes and kings were victims, his résumé of the conqueror's career contains no criticism of the man:

And Alexander the conqueroure,
That conqueryt Babilonys tour,
And all this world off lenth and breid,
In xij yher, throw his douchty deid,
Wes syne destroyit throw pwsoune,
In his awyne howss, throw gret tresoune.
Bot, or he deit, his land delt he:
To se his dede wes gret pite.

(I, 529-36)

Apart from the reference to the length of Alexander's reign and the division of his lands before he died, there is little to suggest that Barbour is drawing on the short biblical account of Alexander's career given in the first Book of the Maccabees, although his

intimate knowledge of this part of the Bible is incontestable.³⁵ The emphasis is on the extent of Alexander's conquests in a short period of time, and the prowess which made these achievements possible. Barbour also expresses regret about the manner of Alexander's death. In fact the allusion to Alexander's death by poison provides a clue to the source of Barbour's account. According to 1 Macc. 5, Alexander fell sick and died, and Plutarch in his "Life" of Alexander records that the conqueror died of a fever, specifically rejecting the false accounts of his death by poison.³⁶

However, it was part of the medieval romance tradition to attribute Alexander's death to poison.³⁷ In the medieval Alexander cycle, the poisoning of Alexander and the distribution of his lands among his most loyal knights before his death formed the subject matter of the fourth branch of the Roman d'Alexandre by Lambert le Tort and Alexandre de Paris.³⁸ The conquest of Babylon, to which Barbour alludes, is described in the third branch of the romance, in that part known as "Li Voeux du Paon", which was largely the work

³⁵Cf., 1 Macc. 5-7.

³⁶Plutarch's Lives, ed. Perrin, 7:LXXVII, pp. 435-36.

³⁷Chaucer also follows this tradition in The Monk's Tale, VII, 2660.

³⁸Li Roman d'Alexandre par Lambert li Tors et Alexandre de Bernay, ed. Heinrich Michelant (Stuttgart: J. Kreuzer, 1846), pp. 506-50. Michelant does not distinguish the work of Lambert from that of Alexandre de Bernay (or Paris). The latter rehandled and incorporated Lambert's account of Alexander in his own romance. His version has been edited by E. C. Armstrong et al., The Medieval French Roman D'Alexandre, Elliott Monographs, no. 37 (Princeton: University Press, 1937). Branch IV is printed on pp. 321-58.

Lambert le Tort (c. 1170).³⁹ Since Barbour provides only a summary, it is impossible to verify his knowledge of the third and fourth branches. The details of his account might be derived from a fourteenth-century poem which, although an offshoot of the third branch, was popular as an independent poem: "Les Voeux du Paon" by Jacques de Longuyon (c. 1310). Longuyon introduced into his work an excursus on the Nine Worthies, in which Alexander's career is thus summarized:

Alixandres aussi, dont je vous voi parlant,
Qui vainqui Nicholas et Daire le Perssant
Et occist la vermine es desiers d'orient
Et saisi Babiloyne la fort cite puissant,
Ou il morut apres par empoisonnement,
En .xij. ans reconquist tres viguereusement⁴⁰
Quanke l'en pot trouver desous le firmament.

Although Barbour's short account resembles these lines, this does not necessarily indicate that he knew Longuyon's poem. The Scottish poet may have been familiar with some ballad or song on the Nine Worthies, derived from "Les Voeux du Paon" for, as R. L. Ritchie observes, this poem was largely responsible for the growth in popularity of the theme of the Nine Worthies in medieval literature and art.⁴¹ According to Israel Gollancz, the subject was particularly popular in Scotland and the North of

³⁹Ed. Michelant, pp. 388-418, in which there are various references to the "tor" of Babylon, besieged and captured by Alexander. Alexandre de Paris incorporated Lambert's account in his version (after 1180). See the edition by Armstrong et al., Branch III, ll. 5149-5968.

⁴⁰"Les Voeux du Paon" is printed opposite the Scottish translation in Ritchie's edition of The Buik of Alexander, 4:7495-7501.

⁴¹The Buik of Alexander, 1:xl-xli.

England.⁴²

Fortunately, less conjecture is required to identify the source of the other references to Alexander in The Bruce. The comparison of Bruce's valiant cover of his army's retreat after an encounter with John of Lorne's forces with Gadifer de Laryss's conduct during a similar retreat from an engagement with Alexander's army (III, 72-92), and the comparison of Randolph's capture of Edinburgh Castle with Alexander's successful siege of Tyre (X, 703-35) reveal Barbour's knowledge of the romance of Alexander. The first allusion takes the form of a summary of the Fuerre de Gadres, which was largely the work of Alexandre de Paris, based on a rehandling of an earlier independent poem and incorporated by him in the Roman D'Alexandre. The foraying expedition and the subsequent retreat of Duke Betys's small band are described at the beginning of Branch II.⁴³ Barbour says that Bruce's conduct resembles that of Gadifer de Laryss

Quhen that the mychty duk betyss
Assallyeit in gadyrris the forrayours.
And quhen the king thaim maid rescours,
Duk betyss tuk on him the flycht,
That wald ne mar abid to fycht.
Bot gud gaudifer the worthi
Abandonyt him so worthyly,
For to reskew all the fleieris,
And for to stonay the chasseris,
That Alysandir to erth he bar;
And alsua did he tholimar,
And gud coneus alsua,

⁴²Preface to his edition of "The Parlement of The Thre Ages", Select Early English Poems, 2 (Oxford: University Press, 1915). Two versions of a "Ballat" of the Nine Worthies have been preserved in two sixteenth century MSS. of Fordun's chronicle in Edinburgh University Library.

⁴³Roman D'Alexandre, ed. Armstrong et al., Branch II, laisses 1-79.

Dauklyne alsua, & othir ma.
But at the last thar slayne he wes:
In that failyeit the liklynes.
(III, 74-88)

The influence of the French text can be detected in the poet's vocabulary: "forrayours" (Bruce, III, 75): li forrier (Roman D'Alexandre, II, 1456); "rescours" (Bruce, III, 76): la rescouse (Roman D'Alexandre, II, 1183).⁴⁴ In the French text Gadifer "Derriere tous s'est mis es estriers afichiés" (II, 1343) and "ses compaignons delivre quant trop les voit charchiés" (II, 1347), which Barbour renders thus:

Bot gud gaudifer the worthi
Abandonyt him so worthyly,
For to reskew all the fleieris,
And for to stonay the chasseris.
(III, 79-82)

Barbour's familiarity with the second branch of the Roman D'Alexandre is confirmed by his reference to the siege and capture of Tyre (X, 705-32).⁴⁵ The fairly detailed account which Barbour provides suggests that the poet had a very thorough knowledge of the French text, or even that he had the relevant passages before him as he wrote. Barbour's version runs:

Quhen alexander the conquerour,
That conquerit babilonys tour,
Lap fra a berfroiss on the wall;
Quhar he emang his fayis al
Defendit him full douchtely,
Quhill that his nobill cheuelry
With ledderis our the wallis yeid,
That nouthir left for ded no dreid;
For fra thai wist weill at the king

⁴⁴The references are to the romance of Alexander by Alexandre de Paris as edited by Armstrong et al.

⁴⁵The "Fuerre de Gadres" is actually an episode which takes place during Alexander's siege of Tyre.

Wes in the toune, ther was no thing
 In-till that tyme that stint thame mocht;
 For all perell thai set at nocht.
 Thai clam the wallis, quhar arestee
 Com first to the gude king, quhar he
 Defendit him with all his mycht,
 That than wes set so hard, I hicht,
 That he wes fellit on a kne.
 He till his bak had set ane tre,
 For dreid thai suld behynd assalyhe.
 Arestee than to the battalyhe
 Sped him in all hye sturdely,
 And dang on thame so douchtely,
 That the kyng weill reskewit was.
 For his men, in-to syndry plas,
 Clam our the wall, and soucht the kyng,
 And him reskewit with hard fichting,
 And wan the toune deliuerly.

(X, 706-32)

The first two lines echo those in Barbour's first reference to
 Alexander (I, 529-30), but the next line clearly derives from the
 French:

Qant du berfroi ou iert, de si haut com il fu,
Est saillis tous armes, a son col son escu,
Sor les murs de la vile si que tuit l'ont veü.⁴⁶

Even the word berfroi (Barbour's berfroiss) is taken over from the
 French. The rest of Barbour's passage closely translates the French:

Qant cil de Tyr le voient entr'aus seul enbatu,
Tost le cuident avoir ou mort ou retenu.
Tres en mi la cite ot un arbre foillu;
Alixandres s'i traist desous un arc volu,
Ilueques se deffent a son branc d'acier nu.
Mais cil de Tyr li sont de toutes pars venu,
Son elme li detrenchent et caupent son escu
Et l'ont par quatre fois a genous abatu;
Se par tans n'a secors mal li est avenu.
Et li Grieu s'escrierent tuit ensamble a un hu:
"Or apres, chevalier, le roi avons perdu."
Sor les murs de la vile sont li pont abatu,
Li mur et les batailles sont de Grigois vestu.
Cil qui dedens saillirent sont as portes couru,
Et cil qui defors ierent en sont dedens venu.
Tout le premerain home que li rois a veü,
Qui vint por lui aidier, c'est Ariste son dru.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Branch II, ll. 1966-68.

⁴⁷Branch II, ll. 1974-90.

Alexander's personal audacity is presented as a vital factor in the successful assault on Tyre. For Barbour he represents the worthy leader who appreciates that a daring demeanour sets an example to one's men and inspires their loyalty. Randolph's valour at the siege of Edinburgh Castle, especially his readiness to incur personal danger, is emphasized by the poet (X, 672-75; 693-96), and comment is made on the effect on his men:

Quhen thai thair doun thair lord swa
Saw clymen vp upon the wall,
As wood men thai clame eftir all.
(X, 647-49)

He is behaving as a good captain should (IX, 63-76), and by this feat demonstrates that he possesses "bounte" (X, 775-87).

A similar argument may be made with regard to Barbour's presentation of Julius Caesar. The poet does not share Orosius's view of him as an over-ambitious power-seeker whose conquests brought great evils. However, because of the lack of details in Barbour's portrait, it is difficult to ascertain his source. There was no medieval equivalent of the Roman D'Alexandre devoted to the life of Julius Caesar. As H. N. MacCracken observes:

The diligence of the encyclopaedists, in gathering the material of Suetonius, Lucan, and the Commentaries, prevented the growth of a cyclical legend of any great importance about this representative of the 'Worthy Nine'.⁴⁸

Skeat refers us to Lucan's Pharsalia for the origin of the comment on Caesar's resolution: "hym thocht he had doyne rycht nocht, / Ay quhill to do him levyt ocht" (III, 281-82).⁴⁹ But there are several

⁴⁸ Preface to his edition of Lydgate's The Serpent of Division (Oxford: University Press, 1911; Yale: University Press, 1911), p. 8. MacCracken's preface contains a detailed discussion of the legend of Julius Caesar in the Middle Ages.

⁴⁹ Nil actum credens, si quid superesset agendum, Pharsalia ii, 657.

reasons for doubting that Lucan was Barbour's source for the depiction of Julius Caesar.

Barbour's first reference to Caesar is early in the narrative when he gives examples of treason, and cites the assassination of the Roman emperor among them. He follows the pattern of giving a short résumé of the life of the man, emphasizing his prowess and the extent of his conquests, as he had done with Alexander in the preceding lines, before describing the manner of his death:

Iulius Cesar als, that wan
Bretane and fraunce, as dowchty man,
Affryk, arrabe, egipt, Surry,
And all evrope halyly;
And for his worschip & valour
Off Rome wes fryst maid Emperour;
Syne in hys capitole wes he,
Throw thaim of his consaill priue,
Slayne with punsounne rycht to the ded.
And quhen he saw thar wes na rede,
Hys Eyn with his hand closit he,
For to dey with mar honeste.
(I, 537-48)

The first four lines may derive from some verses on the Nine Worthies, the original source of which was the excursus in Jacques de Longuyon's poem, for there we are told that:

Cesar prist Engleterre, qui tout communement
Ert nommee Bretaingne, il y a longuement,

as well as:

Aufrique, Arrabe, Egypte, et Surie ensement,
Et les isles de mer jusques en occident.⁵⁰

The order of the conquered territories matches that given by Barbour although perhaps not surprisingly in a work by a French poet, France is omitted.

⁵⁰"Les Voeux du Paon", ll. 7505-6, 7512-13.

There are two obvious reasons for arguing that Lucan was not the source for Barbour's account. First, Barbour's purpose is to describe the manner of Caesar's death, and since the Pharsalia was unfinished Lucan never offered an account of Caesar's death. Furthermore, it is most unlikely that if he had described Caesar's death that he would have considered his assassination to be a treasonable action on the part of the conspirators. The Pharsalia is in fact a record of the Roman civil wars in which Caesar led one side and Pompey the other. This brings me to the second reason for doubting that Lucan was one of Barbour's sources. Barbour does not mention Pompey, whereas he is really Lucan's hero, the defender of the republic against the tyrant Caesar.⁵¹ Lucan's treatment of Julius Caesar is totally unsympathetic, and in fact the whole spirit in which his republican epic is written would have had no place in The Bruce. Barbour's emphasis on the conqueror's prowess, and his claim that Caesar was made emperor of Rome because of his valour and renown are totally at odds with Lucan's view that Caesar became emperor through political machinations and butchery.

It is of course possible that Barbour had other classical sources for his portrait of Caesar. Suetonius was a popular author throughout the Middle Ages, and the influence of his "Life" of Julius Caesar is detectable in Barbour's account. According to Arturo Graf, it was through Suetonius that Julius Caesar was known in the Middle Ages as the first emperor of Rome (Bruce, I, 542),⁵² and Barbour's

⁵¹Most medieval accounts of Caesar's career reflect the influence, if indirectly, of Lucan's epic by dealing with his conflict with Pompey.

⁵²Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del Medio Evo, 2 vols. (Turin, 1882), 1:248.

account of Caesar's assassination closely parallels that of Suetonius.⁵³ However, even the citing of classical authorities in a medieval work does not necessarily mean that these authors were a medieval writer's immediate source. In The Monk's Tale Chaucer gives a rather fuller summary of Caesar's career and death which offers some parallels with that of Barbour, and concludes:

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Swetoun, and to Valerie also,
That of this storie writen word and ende, . . .
(The Monk's Tale, B2* 3909-11)

Critical opinion is divided as to whether Chaucer's account is really based upon Lucan, Suetonius and Valerius, all popular authors in the Middle Ages.⁵⁴ E. F. Shannon has argued that the first three stanzas of 'De Julio Cesare' (The Monk's Tale, VII, 2671-94) are a summary of practically all the important points of Lucan's Pharsalia, especially in the attention Chaucer pays to Pompey and the details of how he died.⁵⁵ The rest of the story of Julius Caesar--the assassination and his dignified conduct while dying--Shannon believes he could have got from Suetonius and Valerius Maximus.⁵⁶

H. N. MacCracken, on the other hand, makes a very good case to the effect that Chaucer's account of Caesar is really drawn from

⁵³In his "Life" of Julius Caesar, #82.

⁵⁴See Robinson's note to these lines, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, p. 750.

⁵⁵Chaucer and The Roman Poets (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), p. 338.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 339. The reference to Valerius Maximus is to his Factorum Dictorumque Memorabilium IV, v, 6.

the Speculum Hystoriale of Vincent de Beauvais.⁵⁷ Vincent cites Suetonius as his source for the death of Caesar, and his account of the conflict between Pompey and Caesar seems to be based on Lucan, although even here we cannot be sure that Vincent actually drew directly on these authors, since B. L. Ullman has discovered that he depended a great deal on medieval florilegia for his knowledge of classical literature.⁵⁸

One thing does seem clear--Barbour, Chaucer and Vincent de Beauvais derived their accounts of Caesar's death from the same ultimate source, Suetonius, who wrote:

utque animadvertit undique se strictis pugionibus peti, toga caput obvolvit, sinus sinistra manu sinum ad ima crura deduxit, quo honestius caderet etiam inferiore corporis parte velata.⁵⁹

Yet there is insufficient evidence to suggest that any of them based his account directly on Suetonius, and there is even less to support the view that Barbour used Chaucer,⁶⁰ or even Vincent de Beauvais as his source. In fact, it is unnecessary to go so far afield. As

⁵⁷Preface to his edition of The Serpent of Division, pp. 42-43. The relevant chapters of the Speculum Hystoriale, XXXV-XLII, are cited by MacCracken on pp. 35-38.

⁵⁸"Classical Authors in Medieval Florilegia", Classical Philology 23 (1928): 128-74 and 27 (1932): 1-11.

⁵⁹Suetonius, ed. J. C. Rolfe with an English translation, 2 vols. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1914), 1:110.

⁶⁰The argument that the lines on Julius Caesar in The Bruce are derived from the stanzas on this worthy in The Monk's Tale is presented by Brown as part of his theory that The Bruce contains fifteenth century interpolations. However, his claim that there is remarkably "significant agreement, as regards the sequence of the narrative" and similarity in diction suggesting the Chaucerian original is not backed up by evidence. See "The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", pp. 97-99. See also below, n. 64.

Coldwell suggests, Barbour could have got his information from Fordun,⁶¹ who in the heading to chapter XVII of book II of the Chronica Gentis Scotorum,⁶² refers to Caesar as "De primo Julii Caesaris imperio", and who, in chapter XIX of the same book ("De morte Julii Caesaris"), acknowledging Suetonius as his source, writes:

Animadvertens Caesar, undique se strictis pugionibus peti, toga caput obvolvitur, simulque sinistra manu ad yma crura deduxit, quo caderet honestius, etiam inferiori parte velata corporis.⁶³

It is quite possible that, as Coldwell suggests, in translating Fordun, Barbour brought the shrouding of the head and the hand adjusting the toga together.⁶⁴ Certainly the verbal parallels ("punsoune", Bruce, I, 545: Latin pugionibus; "For to dey with mar honeste", Bruce, I, 548: Latin quo caderet honestius) point to Suetonius, or a close rendering of Suetonius, such as that of Fordun, as Barbour's source.

⁶¹"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", pp. 162-63.

⁶²Although Skene suggests that the first four books of the Chronica Gentis Scotorum were not compiled until 1385 (1:xxxiii), the date is to a large extent arbitrary, and is reached because it accords with the probable date of Fordun's death. Fordun appears to have travelled in England sometime between 1363-1385, for the purposes of research. It is quite possible that the first four books were written at any time between these dates, perhaps before 1375, and therefore could have been available to Barbour.

⁶³His version is very close to that given by Vincent de Beauvais in his Speculum Hystoriale VI, xlii. Whether Fordun actually used Vincent rather than Suetonius I leave to other scholars to establish. He was certainly familiar with the Speculum Hystoriale for he quotes from it in book III, li and book IV, xxviii of his chronicle.

⁶⁴"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", p. 162. It is worth pointing out that if the version in The Bruce had been drawn from The Monk's Tale, as Brown suggests, this confusion would have been impossible. Although Chaucer draws attention to the "honestee" which characterized Caesar's conduct when he realized he

One fairly important clue indicates that Fordun was indeed Barbour's immediate source. This is the context in which Barbour's account of Caesar occurs, and more specifically, the lines which introduce this whole section of The Bruce. Barbour's purpose is to cite instances of treachery and he announces his intention thus:

Bot off all thing, wa worth tresoun!
For thar is nothir duk ne baroun,
Na Erle, na prynce, na king off mycht,
Thought he be neuir sa wyss na wycht,
For wyt, worschip, price, na renoun,
That euir may wauch hym with tresoune!
(I, 515-20)

In book IV of the Chronica Gentis Scotorum Fordun has a chapter on the vice of treachery entitled "De vitio proditionis, omnium vitiorum vilissimo, ab omnibus execrando et cavendo" (xlii), in which the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar is cited as a notable example of the vice, and which opens:

Neque vero tantae probitatis et excellentiae rex; tantaeque fortitudinis invictae princeps, necnon tantae virtutis et audaciae miles evadere posset, quin sceleratorum occumberet saevitia proditorum.

It seems more than likely that Barbour was influenced by Fordun's excursus on treason, for his lines on the ever-present dangers of this vice closely resemble Fordun's introductory statement.⁶⁵

was dying, this regard for "honestee" is expressed when

"His mantel over his hypes caste he,
For no man sholde seen his privetee."
(VII, 2714-15)

There is no reference to the covering of his head. Chaucer may have overlooked this in his original--either Suetonius or Vincent de Beauvais--or he may indeed be following Valerius Maximus who says:

quin verecundiae obsequeretur, absterreri potuit; siquidem utraque togam manum demiset, ut inferior pars corporis tecta collaberetur. (Factorum Dictorumque Memorabilium IV, v, 6)

⁶⁵Brown, on the other hand, argues that these lines are drawn from The Monk's Tale ("kynges, princes, dukes, erles bolde"), but Chaucer is here referring to Alexander's conquests, whereas Barbour,

Furthermore, the influence of Fordun's chapter on treachery can be traced elsewhere in The Bruce. I have already argued that Barbour's preoccupation with instances of treachery is closely allied to his insistence on the value of loyalty. Early in the poem Douglas's loyalty is defined as a refusal to deal with treachery and falsehood (I, 375-77) and towards the end of the work his commitment to the virtue of loyalty is expressed in terms of his hatred of treachery (XX, 516-20). In each case the influence of Fordun, who seeks to castigate the vice of treachery by condemning it as a betrayal of faith, can be detected in the presentation of ideas. There is also evidence that Barbour's debt to Fordun is more specific. According to Fordun:

Fides, dicit philosophus, firmissimum humani pectoris bonum est, nulla necessitate fallendum cogitur, nullo praemio corrumpitur, qui sine fide est, omni vero bono vacuus est.⁶⁶

It will be remembered that in the course of listing Douglas's virtues, Barbour digresses to consider the nature of loyalty. A closer look at these lines suggests that they are a loose translation of Fordun:

Leavte to luff is gretumly;
 Throuch leavte liffis men rychtwisly:
 With A wertu of leavte
 A man may yeit sufficyand be;
 And but leawte may nane haiff price,
 Quhethir he be wycht or he be wyss;
 For quhar It failyeys, na wertu
 May be off price, na off valu,
 To mak A man sa gud, that he
 May symply gud man callyt be.
 (I, 365-74)

like Fordun, is elaborating on the theme of the threat of treachery to even the mightiest men.

⁶⁶Chronica Gentis Scotorum IV, xlii.

In the second place, when Barbour once again draws attention to Douglas's loyalty (XX, 516-20), he goes on to compare him to Fabricius who "Had souerane priss of his lawte" (564):

I trow, the leill fabricius,
That fra rome to warray pirrus
Wes send with a gret menge,
Hatit tresoune na less than he.
(XX, 521-24)

There follows a fairly detailed account of how Fabricius refused to employ treachery to defeat his foe, Pyrrhus. The example and the details clearly came from Fordun, as can be seen when the two passages are set side by side:

The quethir, quhen this pirrus had,
On him and on his menge, mayd
Ane outrageouss discumfitour,
Quhar he eschakit throu auentour,
And mony of his men war slane,
And he gaderit ane host agane,
A gret mastir of medicyne
That pirrus had in governyne
Profferit to this fabricius
In tresoune for to slay pirrus;
For in his first potacioune
He suld him gif dedly poysoune.
Fabricius than, that wondir had
That he sic proffer till hym maid,
Said, "Certis, rome is wele of mycht,
Throu strynth of Armys in-to ficht,
Till vencuss weill thar fais,
thouch thai
Consent to tresoune be na way.
And for thou wald do sic tresoune,
Thou sall, to get thi warisoune,
Ga till pirrus, and lat hym do
Quhat euir in hert hym lyis the to."
Than till pirrus he sende in hy
This mastir, and gert him oppenly
Fra end till end tell all his tale.
Quhen pirrus had it herd all hale,
He said, "wes neuir man that swa
For laute bar hym till his fa,
As heir fabricius dois till me,
It is als ill to ger hym be
Turnyt fra way of richtwisness,
Or to consent till vikidness,
As at mydday to turne agane
The sone, that rynnys his cours all playn."

Olim vero pro captivis
Romanorum redimendis
Fabricius Epirorum regi
Pirro missus est, quem
cum pauperem cognovisset,
quarta parte regni
promissa sollicitare
voluit, ut ad se dimissa
patria transiret, quod
contemptus est a
Fabricio. Interjecto
quidem anno, idem
Fabricius cum exercitu
pugnandum directus est
contra Pirrum, et cum
ejus et Fabricii castra
vicina fuerant, Pirri
medicus ad eum nocte
venit, promittens veneno
se Pirrum occisurum, si
sibi aliquid polliceretur;
quem Fabricius vinctum
reduci jussit ad dominum.
Pirro dici, quid contra
caput ejus spondisset.
Tunc rex admiratus dixisse
fertur: Iste est
Fabricius, qui difficiliter
ab honestate quam a cursu
suo sol averti potest.
(Fordun, IV, xlii)

Thus said he of fabricius,
That syne vencust this ilk pirrus
In playne battell throu hard fechtung.
(XX, 525-61)

The close resemblance of Barbour's account to that of Fordun has already been noted by Coldwell.⁶⁷ That Fordun was Barbour's source receives confirmation from the evidence which I have presented that the poet was strongly influenced by the former's chapter on treachery, for he reproduces the sentiments expressed there, and he incorporates the examples of treason--the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar--and of loyalty--Fabricius's refusal to employ treachery to kill Pyrrhus--cited there in his own work.

However, Barbour's other reference to Julius Caesar cannot be traced to Fordun's influence. Bruce encourages his men to persevere and follow the example of

. Cesar the worthy,
That traweillyt ay so besyly,
With all his mycht, folowing to mak
To end the purposse that he wald tak,
That hym thoct he had doyne rycht nocht,
Ay quhill to do him levyt ocht:
For-thi gret thingis eschewyt he,
As men may in his story se.
(III, 277-84)

As mentioned above, Skeat suggests that Lucan's Pharsalia contains the source for the comment that Caesar was so energetic that he thought nothing had been accomplished while anything remained to be done. In view of the fact that in the more detailed account of Caesar's career just considered there is nothing to suggest Barbour's familiarity with Lucan's epic, it seems more probable that the poet's source for the comment on Caesar's pertinacity was a Liber

⁶⁷"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", p. 150.

Exemplorum. Barbour presents the Roman conqueror as a model worthy of imitation. Lucan, on the other hand, is actually criticizing Caesar's conduct when he says that he thought nothing done when anything remained to be done. According to Lucan, Caesar was so ambitious that after Rome and control of Italy had fallen to him, instead of consolidating his position, as any other general would have done, he so grudged Pompey the small strip of land that remained to him, that he pursued his rival. The Roman poet describes this as the instinct of a war-lover.⁶⁸

For Barbour, and Bruce who is his spokesman at this point, the Roman emperor is "Cesar the worthy". There is no hint of criticism. Yet it may be that Barbour was aware that in some ways Caesar was not an ideal model. On other occasions when he considers that an example he has cited is not wholly applicable, he tends to qualify it. Hence, when Bruce is compared to Gadifer he says that the likeness fails in the end because Gadifer was slain, whereas Bruce escaped harm (II, 87-92), and after comparing Douglas to Hector of Troy, he admits that he dare not compare anyone to Hector for prowess (I, 403-7). From these comments we can infer that Barbour was fairly conscientious about the suitability of his parallels and models. This may account for the rest of Bruce's speech to his men. After citing the example of Caesar, Bruce concludes his speech on a note which may represent a qualification on Barbour's part:

Men may se be his ythand will,
And It suld als accord to skill,
That quha taiss purpos sekyrly,
And followis It syne ythandly,
For-owt fayntice, or yheit faynding,
With-thi It be conabill thing,

⁶⁸Pharsalia II, 650-60.

Bot he the mar be wnhappy,
He sall eschew It In party.
And haiff he lyff-dayis, weill mai fall
That he sall eschew It all.

(III, 285-94)

The idea of setting oneself a task and then pursuing it resolutely, is identified with exerting one's will, but this is then qualified, as it is throughout Barbour's narrative, by the statement that will should always accord with reason and that providence should not be tempted. Ambition in itself is not a worthy motive: one's goal must always be a fitting one. While there is no overt criticism of Caesar, Barbour evidently thought it necessary to make the example of Caesar's resolution serve his own heroic ideal. Caesar represents the man of great undertaking, possessed of "bounte", but the poet does not miss the opportunity to point out that it is incumbent on such a man to temper his actions with reason.

It is precisely this combination that Barbour stresses when he compares Bruce with Tydeus. Bruce's singlehanded stand against two hundred men at the ford serves to demonstrate that "hardyment, that mellit is / Vith vit, Is vorschip ay, per-de" (VI, 356-57). Bruce's action is not only courageous, but is also the result of forethought or "avisment", and this is underlined by the comparison with Tydeus who, although brave, did not act as he did from choice.

Yhe that this redis, Iugis yhe
Quhethir that mair suld presit be:
The king, that with avisment
Vndirtuk sic hardyment,
As for to stynt, him ane, but fer,
Thai folk that weill twa hundreth wer,
Or thedeus, that suddanly,
Fra thai had rasis on him the cry,
Throu hardyment that he had tane,
Wan fifty men, all him allane.

(VI, 269-78)

Bruce's "vit" leads him to the conclusion that he will have the

advantage if he maintains his position in the narrow pass where his enemies may only attack him one at a time. The comparison with Tydeus is brought in in order to glorify Bruce, but to do this effectively the poet needed a suitable rival. Both men display "hardyment", but ultimately Bruce is superior to Tydeus because of his greater courage: he chooses to expose himself to danger, whereas Tydeus was surprised by his foes. Bruce has had time to consider the situation and to decide whether to flee or face his enemy. In acting as he does, he demonstrates true fortitude, "stark outrageous curage" (VI, 126), which requires endurance as well as aggression, and is particularly admirable since, as I noted earlier, "it is more difficult to remain unmoved for a long time, than to be moved suddenly to something arduous".⁶⁹

The comparison with Tydeus therefore elucidates Barbour's concept of heroic conduct, and it is not without significance that his statement on the nature of true valour immediately follows (VI, 325-58). The appositeness of the comparison is of some importance. It was not Barbour's intention to disparage Tydeus's conduct; on the contrary, the incident is introduced into the narrative as an example of heroic achievement which is not only matched, but surpassed, by Bruce. Tydeus's conduct, as described by Barbour, conforms to a code which makes the comparison meaningful. He is a medieval romance hero. The fairly detailed account given by Barbour makes it possible to identify his source, which was not Statius's Thebaid as Skeat suggests,⁷⁰ but the medieval Roman de Thèbes

⁶⁹Chapter 4, p. 205.

⁷⁰The Bruce, vol. 2, note to VI, 179.

(c. 1150). Although Statius was popular reading in the Middle Ages, and the Thebaid was available in a large number of manuscripts,⁷¹ Barbour, if he had read it, was not influenced by its depiction of Tydeus.

The Roman de Thèbes is in fact a very free translation of the Thebaid, which is to say that, although it closely follows the story of the Thebaid, it is medieval in its attitudes and values. As Guy Raynaud de Lage points out in the introduction to his edition:

La Thebaïde de Stace est une oeuvre classique en ce temps, mais l'auteur français n'aura aucun scrupule servile; il taillera dans ce tissu narratif, à plaisir, et ne gardera rien de ce mode baroque qui avait déjà curieusement altéré l'esprit de la légende hellénique. Il n'a demandé à Stace qu'un point d'appui, et une caution aussi, respectant le point de départ et la conclusion de cette sombre histoire, modifiant profondément . . . sa matière et ses perspectives, substituant les choses, les hommes, l'esprit de son temps au monde étranger d'une épopée classique et savante.⁷²

One of the most significant changes is that the Greek warriors have become medieval knights, whose conduct in martial encounters obeys medieval literary conventions. The presentation of Tydeus is a notable instance of this transformation. In the Thebaid, he is little more than a bloodthirsty warmonger who, when fatally wounded, beheads his assailant and drinks his blood. None of this appears in the Roman; in that work he has become the most resolute and hardy of the Argian chiefs.⁷³ In the Thebaid he is ambushed by the fifty men

⁷¹J. E. Sandys, A Short History of Classical Scholarship (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), pp. 642-43.

⁷²Le Roman de Thèbes, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1966, 1968), 1:xxxii-xxxiii.

⁷³Cf. Thebaid VIII, 751-66 and Roman de Thèbes, 5831-60.

sent by Eteocles for that purpose. In the ensuing battle, soaked in blood and sweat, Tydeus is no longer a man but the spirit of war itself. His adversaries are powerless in the face of his frenzy, and even Tydeus himself realizes that he is in the grip of furor.⁷⁴ As David Vessey has remarked, "the victory belongs not to Tydeus but to the destructive and irrational force of ira".⁷⁵ In the Roman, on the other hand, he is an admirable medieval knight, "preuz et cortois",⁷⁶ who defends himself against fifty of Eteocles's most valiant knights ("Chascun des cinquante par soi / par hardement valoit un roi"),⁷⁷ and whose conduct is worthy of comparison with that of the great Roland.⁷⁸

There can be no doubt that Barbour's source for the Tydeus story was the Roman de Thèbes.⁷⁹ His summary of the events leading up to the ambush reveals the influence of the medieval work. His reference to the decision of the "barnage" of Thebes to the effect that Eteocles should rule one year and Polynices the next (VI, 186-94) closely follows the Roman (v. 555-606) in which the French author describes "Li graindres en quiert jugement" (573) and says that matters were arranged "par jugement et par acorde, / tant com diroient li baron / fust acorde sanz contencon" (580-82). All the

⁷⁴Thebaid VIII, 667.

⁷⁵Statius and the Thebaid (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 147.

⁷⁶Roman de Thèbes, v. 1285.

⁷⁷Ibid., 1495-96.

⁷⁸Ibid., 1712.

⁷⁹Brown believed that Lydgate's Siege of Thebes (c. 1420-22) was the source for the Tydeus story ("The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", pp. 117-20), but he overlooks the obvious source, which was also Lydgate's ultimate source, the Roman de Thèbes.

details of the ambush are clearly derived from the Roman. The time is evening (Bruce, VI, 208-10; Roman, 1515-16); the shining shields in the moonlight make Tydeus aware of the ambush (Bruce, VI, 216-17; Roman, 1525-30); Tydeus is taken aback but soon recovers his self-possession (Bruce, VI, 220-25; Roman, 1532-34, 1537-40).

Barbour's description of the ensuing encounter condenses the original, which mostly takes the form of direct speech (1541-1834), but many of the details of the French work are retained. After slaying some of his enemies, Tydeus makes his way up on to a crag (Bruce, VI, 237-41; Roman: "un haut rochier", 1617) from which he continues fighting until he finds "a gret stane" (Bruce, 251, Roman: "pierre grande", 1639). He rolls this down and kills eight men with it (according to the Roman, nine or ten) and "sua stonait the remanand" (Bruce, 257, Roman: "Li autres vont desconfortant" 1669). Thus encouraged, he leaps from the rock and encounters the rest openly until he has killed forty-nine of the fifty (Bruce, 259-62; Roman, 1681-1816). Only one is left alive, whom he sends to Thebes to tell Eteocles what has happened (Bruce, 263-66; Roman, 1817-34). Barbour says this is the constable, whereas in the Roman he is simply one of the Thebans, the constable's death having occurred at lines 1753-54, but it is obvious that Barbour borrowed the word from the French author. It may well be, as Coldwell suggests, that Barbour's source was not the Roman de Thèbes as we have it, but a later recension.⁸⁰ This would account for the minor discrepancies.

Further evidence that Barbour's source was the Roman de Thèbes is provided by the second allusion he makes to the story of

⁸⁰"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", p. 144.

Thebes. His account of the loyalty of the Argian women to king Adrastus and the active part they played in the siege of Thebes (II, 528-48) not only closely parallels the account given in the Roman (9857-10562), but has no counterpart in the Thebaid.

Barbour's debt is particularly apparent in the following lines:

Then war the wiffys thyrland the wall
With pikkis, quhar the assailyeours all
Entryt, and dystroyit the tour,
(II, 540-42)

which derive from the French:

Les dames sunt de l'autre part,
de ceus dedenz n'ont nul regart;
ne leur chaut gueres de lor vies,
pour ce sunt eles si hardies.
Tant ont au mur de pres feru,
de grant air, de grant vertu,
a mauz d'acier, a pis agus,
que sempres est li murs fendus:
uune grant piece en chai jus.
Atant l'oïrent cil desus;
d'une tour li arbalestier
s'en aperçurent tout premier;
a ceus dedenz crient en haut:
"Ce que vous faites rien ne vaut!
Li murs est frez et despeciez,
a terre en est l'une moitié!
Vaincuz soumes tuit a estros,
cil dehors sont ceanz o nos!"
Li dus en vient a la freture,
dedenz entre grant aleüre.

(Roman de Thèbes, 10455-74)

In addition, Barbour's concluding comment: "In wemen mekill comfort lyis" (II, 548) was obviously inspired by his French source in which "As dames fist rendre les mors / et celeur fist mout granz confors" (10489-90).

Barbour's references to the story of Thebes are borrowed from the world of romance. It is therefore not surprising to discover that his rather briefer allusions to Trojan history can similarly be traced to a French romance, Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troie (c. 1155-60). Early in The Bruce, Douglas is compared to Hector,

the most renowned of the Trojan heroes:

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 wlispyt alsua as did he,
And wes fullfillyt of leawte,
& wes curtaiss and wyss and wucht.
Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
Till Ector dar I nane comper
Off all that euir in warldys wer.
The quethyr In his tyme sa wrocht he,
That he suld gretly lovyt be.

(I, 395-406)

In these lines Barbour depicts Hector as a medieval knight who possesses all the qualities necessary in an ideal romance hero, and this provides an important clue to the source of his portrait. Coldwell argues that this is the description of Hector in the Historia Destructionis Troiae (1287), Guido of Colonna's Latin translation of Benoît's romance,⁸¹ which runs:

His fuit ille qui suo tempore omnes alios in uirtutis potencia superauit. Parum uero erat balbuciens in loquela. Habuit membra durissima, sustinencia pondera magna laborum. Magnus erat in forma. Nunquam tanti uigoris uirum Troya produxit neque magnanimum. multa repletum nube pilorum. Nunquam uerbum iniuriosum aut indecens ab ore eius exiuit.⁸²

Here we have the lisp and the emphasis on Hector's strength and prowess. Coldwell also argues, quite convincingly, that Barbour's claim that Hector had black hair may have come from the description of Telamon which occurs a few lines earlier.⁸³

⁸¹"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", p. 144.

⁸²Guido de Columnis, Historia Destructionis Troiae, ed. Nathaniel Edward Griffin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936), p. 85.

⁸³"The Literary Background of Barbour's Bruce", p. 144.

However, several of the qualities which Barbour ascribes to Hector, notably loyalty and wisdom, are not mentioned in Guido's portrait of the Trojan hero. One explanation, which Ritchie is inclined to favour, may be that Barbour used a later French version of the Historia which has not come down to us.⁸⁴ Alternatively, it is possible that the poet had read some version of the Roman de Troie. There we find the original of Guido's description of Hector, including his lisp.⁸⁵ In many ways Barbour's portrait of Hector is closer to that given by Benoît. "Cors ot bien fait e forniz membres" (Roman de Troie, 5335) may be the source for Barbour's "And stark lymmys and rycht weill maid". His "corteisie" (5353-56), his "mesure" (5357) and his wisdom are stressed by the French author, although his loyalty is not mentioned.⁸⁶ Moreover, the comment in the French text that Hector "De pris toz homes sormontot" (5329) may have suggested Barbour's "Bot off manheid and mekill mycht, / Till Ector dar I nane comper".

Barbour's other reference to the story of the fall of Troy confirms that he was familiar with some version of the Roman de Troie, for he offers a brief summary of it in his excursus on treason:

⁸⁴Introduction to The Buik of Alexander, 1:cxc1 and n. 11.

⁸⁵Le Roman de Troie, ed. Léopold Constans, vol. 1, ll. 5313-80. All references to the Roman de Troie will be to this edition.

⁸⁶There clearly was a tradition which regarded loyalty as one of Hector's chief virtues. In the Middle English alliterative translation of Guido's Historia he is described as "truly in his tyme tristiest of other". Gest Hystoriale, 3880.

Wes nocht all troy with tresoune tane,
 Quhen x yeris of the wer wes gane?
 Then slayn wes mone thowsand
 Off thaim with-owt, throw strenth of hand,
 As Dares in his buk he wrate,
 And Dytis, that knew all thar state.
 Thai mycht nocht haiff beyn tane throw mycht,
 Bot tresoun tuk thaim throw hyr slycht.
 (I, 521-28)

Barbour is of course referring to the twofold treachery employed to defeat the Trojans: the breach of the peace treaty the Greeks had signed with the Trojans, and the collusion of the traitors, Aeneas and Antenor. Two factors favour Guido as Barbour's source. First, the story of the destruction of Troy is attributed by the poet to Dares and Dictys, which in the Middle Ages usually meant Guido's history. Secondly, a copy of the Historia was in the possession of the Cathedral Library at Aberdeen in 1464, although, like the Chronicle of Martinus Polonus, the date of acquisition is unknown.⁸⁷

Certainly Barbour had read some version of the Roman de Troie, but whether he relied on Benoît's work, Guido's Latin translation, or a French derivative, it is now difficult to say. His two passages on spring are clearly influenced by passages in the romance, as a comparison shows:

This wes in were, quhen vyntyry tyde
 With his blastis, hydwiss to byde,
 Wes ourdriffin; and byrdis smale,
 As thristill and the nyctingale,
 Begouth rycht meraly to syng,
 And for to mak in thair synging
 Syndry notis, and soundis sere,
 And melody plesande to here.
 And the treis begouth to ma
 Burgeonys and brycht blwmys alsua,
 To vyn the heling of thar hevede,
 That vikkit vyntir had thame revede;

Quant vint el tens qu'ivers
devise,
Que l'erbe vert pert en
la lise;
Lan que florissent li
ramel,
Que doucement chantent
oisel,
Merle, mauviz e oriol
E estornel e rossignol,
La blanche flor pert en
l'espine

⁸⁷Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis, 2:156.

And all grewis begouth to spryng.

E reverdeie la gaudine;
Quant li tens est douz e
soies,
Lors partirent des porz les
nes.
(Roman de Troie, 2183-
92)

Tempus erat quod sol
maturans sub obliquo
zodiaci circulo cursum suum
sub signo iam intrauerat
arietis, in quo noctium
spatio equato diebus
celebratur equinoctium
primi ueris, tunc cum
dissolutis niuibis molliter
flantes zephiri crispant
aquas, tunc cum fontes in
ampullulas tenues
scaturizant, tunc cum ad
summitates arborum et
ramorum humiditates ex terre
gremio exhalantes
extolluntur in eis, quare
insultant semina, crescunt
segetes, uirent prata
uariorum colorum floribus
illustrata, tunc cum
induuntur renouatis
frondibus arbores
circumquaque, tunc cum
ornatur terra graminibus,
cantant volucres et in
dulcis armonie modulamine
citarizant.

(Guido, lib. IIII)⁸⁸

This wes in the moneth of may,
Quhen byrdis syngis on the spray,
Melland thair notys with syndry
sowne
For softnes of that sweit sesoune;
And lewis on the branchis spredis,
And blomys bricht besyd thame
bredis,
And feldis florist ar with
flowris,
Weill savourit, of seir colowris,

El meis que chantent li
oisel,
Fu la mer queie e li tens
bel.
Les nes furent apareilliees,
E de la terre en mer
veilliees.
Vint e dous furent e non
plus:
Mout lor venta dreit Eurus.
(Roman de Troie,
4167-72)

⁸⁸Ed. Griffin, pp. 34-35.

And all thing worthis blith and gay,
Quhen that . . .
(Bruce, XVI, 63-72)

Tempus erat quod iam sol
inter Iades et Pleiades
perfecerat cursum suum,
qui dum esset in signo
Thauri, mensis ille Maius
diuersis floribus
planicies aruorum
ornauerat et nouis virentes
frondibus arbores in
fecunditate florum fructus
promittebant, . . .
(Guido, lib. VII)⁸⁹

Tempus erat quo iam sol
Thauri signum intrauerat.
Tunc cum prata uirent et
uernant flores in
arboribus redolentes,
rubent rose in uiridibus
rubis earum, et in
dulcibus cantibus philo-
mene dulci modulamine
cytharizant, tunc cum
esset mensis Maius ille,
qui horum ductor est
omnium et blandus
alumpnus ipsorum, . . .
(Guido, XXXIII)⁹⁰

Like the Roman, the passages from The Bruce do not include the preliminary astrological references which must be Guido's invention.

On the other hand, Barbour's descriptions of Spring and May are closer to the fuller versions given by Guido. It is even possible that the Scottish poet was familiar with the alliterative translation of the Historia Destructionis Troiae--the Gest Hystoriale (c. 1350-1400).⁹¹ Certainly there are some notable parallels which suggest a relationship between the texts. In the

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 67.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 253-54.

⁹¹The poem has been attributed to the latter half of the fourteenth century and pronounced to be of Northern provenance by its editors, the Rev. G. A. Panton and David Donaldson, though the sole surviving MS. is written in a West Midland dialect. Gest Hystoriale, pp. xxvi-xxxv and pp. lxi-lxiii.

vernacular work we find the following translations from the Latin original:

Wynter away, wattris were calme;
Stormes were still, the sternes full clere,
Zeforus softe wyndis Soberly blew;
Bowes in bright holtes buriont full faire;
Greuys wex grene and the ground swete;
Swoghyng of swete ayre, Swalyng of briddes;
Medowes & mounteyns myngit with ffloures,
Colord by course as thaire kynd askit.
(Gest Hystoriale, 1056-63)⁹²

In the moneth of May, when medoes bene grene,
And all florisschet with floures the fildes aboute;
Burions of bowes brethit full swete,
fflorishet full faire; frutes were kuyt;
Greuys were grene, & the ground hilde;
(Gest Hystoriale, 2734-38)

Hit was the moneth of May when mirthes begyn;
The Sun turnyt into tauro, taried there vnder;
Medos & mountains mynget with floures;
Greues wex grene, & the ground swete;
Nightgalis with notes newit there songe,
And shene briddes in shawes shrieked full lowde.
(Gest Hystoriale, 12969-74)

(I have underlined those words and alliterative phrases which are also to be found in Barbour's passages.)

It seems quite possible that Barbour followed the example of his source in placing the first passage on Spring where he does. These lines introduce a new section of The Bruce (bk. V in Skeat's edition) and immediately precede the description of a sea-journey undertaken by Bruce and his men. In the Roman de Troie, Guido's Historia and the alliterative translation a passage on Spring also introduces a new section or book and is followed by an account of Paris's preparations for, and embarkation on, his fateful expedition to Troy. Furthermore, the preceding book of The Bruce concludes

⁹²All quotations are from the edition by Panton and Donaldson. I have normalized þ to th.

with a discussion of astrology and necromancy and the prediction of Bruce's future by his hostess, just as the preceding section in the various versions of the story of Troy deals with the prophecies of Cassandra and others of the destruction of the city.

It appears, therefore, that Barbour had a very detailed knowledge of the romance, to the extent that the description of similar events in that work suggested the interpolation of a passage of a similar nature in an analogous position in his own poem. This kind of familiarity with the story might be regarded as a corroboration of the view of several critics that Barbour actually made his own translation of Guido's Historia,⁹³ only fragments of which are extant.⁹⁴ Neilson has argued that Barbour's description of Bruce's voyage to Rathlin (III, 690-720) was inspired by his earlier translation of Guido's work, in which a similar stormy sea passage is described.⁹⁵ However, his attempt to prove that the contrast of "mycht" and "slycht" in The Bruce, especially in book I, 527-28, and in the Troy-Book fragments indicates common

⁹³Neilson, pp. 316-19; Brown, p. 96; Ritchie, p. cxxxi and cxc-cxci; and Coldwell, p. 145.

⁹⁴A MS. of Lydgate's Siege of Troy in the Cambridge University Library (Kk. V. 30) begins with a fragmentary Troy-Book. The scribe, writing around 1420, begins with a Scottish version and near the end of the second book he breaks off with the words: "Here endis barbour and begynnys the monk". Thereafter he follows Lydgate until he reaches the conspiracy of Aeneas and Antenor when he resumes the Scottish version with the words: "Her endis the monk ande bygynnys Barbour". The fragments have been printed by C. Horstmann in Barbour's Legendensammlung, 2 vols, (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881-82), 2:215-307.

⁹⁵Troy-Book, II, 1717-20. Neilson notes that line 1720, which is not in Guido's Latin version, is repeated in The Bruce: "That off the wawys the weltrand hycht / Wald refe thaim off thar sycht" (III, 719-20). "John Barbour: Poet and Translator", pp. 318-19.

authorship,⁹⁶ has been seriously challenged by Brown.⁹⁷ At present, sufficient evidence for Barbour's authorship of the Troy-Book fragments is lacking.⁹⁸

Of more interest than the precise identification of Barbour's source for the various allusions to, and borrowings from, the romance of Troy, is the influence exerted by that work on the shaping and presentation of his own material. By comparing Douglas to the great Trojan hero Hector, he increases his stature in the events he narrates more effectively than any other measure would have made possible. He also glorifies the achievements of his heroes by comparing, if less directly, their situation to that of the Trojans. The Scots are victims of Edward I's "slycht" (I, 111-12)--his breach of good faith (I, 125-26)--just as the final defeat of the Trojans is the result of Greek "slycht" (I, 527-28). Finally, the introduction of the passages on Spring and May, in particular their place in The Bruce, reveals Barbour's conscious desire to emulate not only the conventions of romance, but also the structure of a particular model.

Barbour's examples of treachery are arranged chronologically: he commences with the destruction of Troy and concludes with Modred's slaying of Arthur. This arrangement is particularly apt, since the relationship between the fall of Troy and the reign of

⁹⁶"John Barbour: Poet and Translator", pp. 318-19.

⁹⁷"The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied", pp. 164-65,

⁹⁸Skeat argues against Barbour's authorship of the Troy-Book fragments, citing the arguments of several German scholars who have discovered wide differences in the language of the two works. The Bruce, 1:xlili-1.

King Arthur had been established by Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae (c. 1137), the mainspring of the various narratives which went under the name of Brut in the Middle Ages. Geoffrey had traced the "history" of the Britons from their Trojan origins-- from the arrival of Brutus, the son of that Aeneas who fled Troy after its destruction.

Barbour says of Arthur:

Als Arthur, that throw chevalry
Maid Bretane maistres & lady
Off xij kinrykis that he wan;
And alsua, as A noble man,
He wan throw bataill fraunce all fre;
And lucius yber wencusyt he,
That then of Rome wes emperour:
Bot yeit, for all his gret valour,
Modreyt his Systir Son him slew,
And gud men als, ma then Inew,
Throw tresoune and throw wikkitnes,
The broite beris tharoff wytnes.
(I, 549-60)

The generic nature of the title "Brut", or Barbour's "broite", makes it difficult to identify the precise book cited by the poet. The various details of his account of Arthur's career could have been derived from Geoffrey who lists the twelve kingdoms conquered by the king, his defeat of Lucius Iberius--who was actually the Roman procurator, not emperor as Barbour claims⁹⁹--and his death at the hands of his nephew, Modred. It certainly seems more than likely that he had read Geoffrey's history, or a derivative, since, on the evidence of Wyntoun, he wrote a Genealogy of the Stewarts tracing their descent from Brutus,¹⁰⁰ in which he made use of the Brut.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Ritchie (p. cliii, n. 3) observes that Geoffrey refers to Lucius as "emperor" more often than as "procurator".

¹⁰⁰Orygynale Cronykil, II, 131-36; III, 621-23; VIII, 1445-50.

¹⁰¹Ibid., II, 777-81. Skeat sees this reference as evidence that Barbour made his own translation of the Brut (1:xxxvii-xli), but

However, there are various reasons for believing that Barbour's portrait of Arthur is drawn from Wace's Roman de Brut (1155), a French verse translation of the Historia. In the first place, Barbour refers his readers to the "broite", the title generally applied in the Middle Ages to the works which derived from Geoffrey's history, but not to that work itself. Fordun, for example, never refers to the Historia Regum Britanniae as the "Brut".¹⁰² Secondly, we know that a work entitled Cronica Bruti was available to Barbour at the time he was writing The Bruce. One of the two Bishops of Aberdeen known as Alexander de Kininmund bequeathed this work to the Cathedral Library, where Barbour could have had access to it.¹⁰³ Thirdly, Barbour calls Lucius emperor, and Wace always designates him thus.¹⁰⁴

Whether Geoffrey's Latin history or one of the various very popular vernacular versions which went under the name of Brut was Barbour's source is not an issue of any real importance. Whichever

Brown demonstrates that the line, "Bot be the Brwte yhit Barbere sayis", means simply "But following the Brut, Barbour says" (p. 90).

¹⁰²Inter ceteras tamen historiae Britonum incidentias, ista Pertholomi profectio, pro conquirendis Hiberniae partibus libro 30^o fabulose reperitur sic inscripta. [Galfredus.] Chronica Gentis Scotorum I, xxii. Hunc Cadwallonem Galfredus in Britonum gestis . . . Ibid., III, xli.

¹⁰³"Ex dono domini Alexandrii Kynnymunde episcopi", Reg. Ep. Ab., 2:158. One Alexander de Kininmund held office from 1329-44, and the other was Bishop of Aberdeen (at the same time that Barbour was Archdeacon) from 1355-80.

¹⁰⁴As does Layamon, the author of an early English translation of Wace's Brut (c. 1204), but only Geoffrey and Wace give the second part of Lucius's name, Iberius or Hiberius (cf. Barbour: "lucius yber").

is the case, Barbour's account of Arthur's career is drawn from the world of romanticized history. For the poet, as for Geoffrey and Wace, Arthur is a figure that ranks among the heroes and conquerors of the world. In his attempt to trace Arthur's lineage to its Trojan origins, Geoffrey relates his work to the Romances of Antiquity. The Historia is also related to the medieval romance tradition in that it is the work which gave the Arthurian cycle its inception.

It is possible to be more precise about the kind of works which shaped The Bruce. The poet's interests obviously leaned sharply towards romance, especially towards romances about historical or quasi-historical individuals. His knowledge of these great legendary heroes is based on material which had grown up around figures like Hector, Alexander and Arthur, on what literary historians refer to as "matters". Barbour's familiarity with "The Matter of Rome the Great" and "The Matter of Britain" has been demonstrated. It is therefore not surprising to find that a romance from the third great matter, "The Matter of France", is alluded to in The Bruce--Ferumbrace or Fierabras.

Barbour relates how Bruce comforted his men on the banks of Loch Lomond by reading them the "Romanys off worthi ferambrace":

That worthily our-cummyn was
Throw the rycht douchty olywer;
And how the duk-peris wer
Assegyt In-till egrymor,
Quhar king lawyne lay thaim befor,
With may thowsandis then I can say.
And bot xi within war thai,
And A woman: and war sa stad,
That thai na mete thar-within had,
Bot as thai fra thar fayis wan.
Yheyte sua contenynt thai thaim than,
That thai the tour held manlily,
Till that Rychard off Normandy,
Magre his fayis, warnyt the king,

That wes Ioyfull off this tithing;
 For he wend thai had all bene slayne.
 Tharfor he turnyt in hy agayne,
 And wan mantrybill and passit flagot;
 And syne lawyne and all his flot
 Dispitusly discumfyt he:
 And deliueryt his men all fre,
 And wan the naylis, and the sper,
 And the croune, that Ihesu couth ber;
 And off the croice A gret party
 He wan throw his chewalry.

(III, 437-62)

The romance of Ferambrace, or Ferumbras, was originally a French work (Fierabras) which was one of the most popular of all the Charlemagne romances, judging from the numerous versions and reproductions dating from the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁵ The story seems to have been well-known in Scotland.¹⁰⁶ Two Middle English versions survive, both dating from the fourteenth century: Sir Ferumbras¹⁰⁷ and The Sowdone of Babylone.¹⁰⁸ Sir Ferumbras is a close translation of the French Fierabras, although the author seems to have used a different version from that printed by Kroeber and Servois. In fact the French version which has come down to us is a thirteenth century re-handling of a lost original. (Gaston Paris refers to the original Fierabras as Balan to distinguish it from the extant version.)¹⁰⁹ Sir Ferumbras, like the extant

¹⁰⁵ See Preface to the French Fierabras, ed. A. Kroeber and G. Servois, Les Anciens Poetes de La France, IV (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1860).

¹⁰⁶ Emil Hausknecht cites references to the story in The Bruce, Lyndsay's The Historie of Squyer William Meldrum and The Complaint of Scotland. Introduction to his edition of The Sowdone of Babylone (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 38,39, 1881; reprint ed., 1891, 1898), pp. viii-ix.

¹⁰⁷ Ed. Sidney J. Herrtage, The Charlemagne Romances, Part I (E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., 34, 1879).

¹⁰⁸ Ed. E. Hausknecht.

¹⁰⁹ Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne (Paris, 1865), p. 251.

Fierabras, represents only a portion, that is, the second part of the original Fierabras (or Balan). The Sowdone of Babylone, on the other hand, approaches the original more closely in that it contains the first part, the material dealing with the destruction of Rome.

As a result, Hausknecht believes that Barbour's account of Ferumbras is drawn from the French Fierabras or the English Sir Ferumbras, but not from The Sowdone of Babylone, as there is no mention of the combat before Rome, or any trace of what makes up the first part of The Sowdone.¹¹⁰ Barbour calls the hero "ferambrace" which is closer to the English form "Ferumbras" than to the French "Fierabras", or "Ferabras" and "Fierenbras" as he is sometimes called, which may indicate a knowledge of an English translation. However, there are a few obstacles in the way. Barbour calls Ferumbras's father "Lawyne" which is closer to the form in The Sowdone in which he is generally called "Labin" or "Lavane", whereas in Sir Ferumbras and the French text he is always called "Balan". Yet it seems unlikely that Barbour could have had access to The Sowdone, since the work appears to have been composed at the end of the fourteenth century, perhaps at the beginning of the fifteenth. Hausknecht argues convincingly for a post-Chaucerian date for the work, tracing allusions in it to The Knight's Tale and similarities to the language of Chaucer.¹¹¹

Moreover, the relics which Charlemagne rescues from

¹¹⁰Introduction to The Sowdone of Babylone, p. ix, n. 1.

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. xlvi-xlvii.

the sultan in Barbour's account are different from those in any of the available versions, including The Sowdone. Given that all the details in Barbour's version do not agree with those in any one romance, one is led to the conclusion that the poet had access to a manuscript which has not survived. On the other hand, it is quite possible, as Ritchie suggests, that Barbour is an independent authority on the relics: the Archdeacon had a safe-conduct to go on a pilgrimage to St. Denis in 1365, and may have seen them for himself.¹¹² He may also have heard the romance there, since it was written to be sung by minstrels at the shrine.

Barbour's synopsis is detailed, specifying the names of persons, places, and the numbers involved. Obviously, he knew the story well, and it is interesting to discover why he should have alluded to this particular romance. He does not represent it as a direct analogy--Bruce is said to recount the story to his men to make the time pass more pleasantly (III, 465)--although as I have already indicated, parallels can be drawn with the themes of Barbour's own poem. Certainly, a closer look at Barbour's summary reveals how the poet interpreted the story of Ferumbras, and also explains why he introduced a reference to it into his own work. It incorporates the themes which occupy a prominent place in his romance: deeds of personal prowess in Oliver's defeat of Ferumbras in single combat (437-38), the few outnumbered by the many (439-44), the hardships and deprivations they suffer (444-46) yet the spirit of endurance which demonstrates true fortitude (447-48), the

¹¹²The Buik of Alexander, 1:clxx, n. 8 and cxcv, n. 5.

magnanimity of Charlemagne (450-56), that king's concern for his men and his devotion to relieving them (457), and "chewalry" which is directed towards a truly admirable goal: the recovery of the sacred relics which Lawyne had seized (458-62).

It has emerged that most of Barbour's literary allusions can be traced to romance sources. The poet was obviously familiar enough with such works to be able to provide detailed summaries of, and extracts from, some of the most popular romances of the time. He owes his concept of heroic qualities and conduct, and indeed his inspiration for the treatment of his material, to these narratives. All of his allusions evidence a keen interest in works about historical or quasi-historical figures, and his intention was to demonstrate that his heroes challenge comparison with the renowned heroes of medieval tradition. The fact that no less than six of the Nine Worthies (Judas Maccabeus, Hector, Caesar, Alexander, Arthur and Charlemagne) are mentioned in the poem reveals something of Barbour's design: to present Bruce as a tenth, and perhaps Douglas as an eleventh, worthy. He appears to have met with some success. As early as 1380, Bruce was accorded a place with the other worthies:

Ector, Alexander, Julius, Josue, David, Machabeus, Arthurus, Carulus, et postremus Godofrydus--Robertus rex Scotorum demus est in numero meliorum.¹¹³

¹¹³R. S. Loomis prints these lines in an article entitled "Verses on the Nine Worthies", Modern Philology XV (1917):19-27. The lines are found in a MS. of the Vulgate which belongs to the fifteenth century, prepared for Sweetheart Abbey in Kirkcudbright, but they are written in a hand of about 1380 (Loomis, p. 19). See also the "Ballat of the Nine Nobles" printed by I. Gollancz in the appendix to his edition of The Parlement of The Thre Ages, number X, which shows the same Scottish tradition of Robert Bruce as the tenth Worthy.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to demonstrate that The Bruce is a work that repays close study. The argument I have presented is that by focussing on Barbour's heroic ideal and, in particular, by examining the vocabulary in which it is couched, it is possible to assess the nature of his poem and to come nearer to an understanding of the author's intention.

Barbour describes his work as both a "suthfast story" and a romance. By "suthfastnes" he meant historical truth in the sense that his heroes were real historical personages, that the events he narrates really took place, and that much of his information was derived from eye-witness accounts. At the same time, he felt free to present and interpret characters, actions and events according to his own judgement; and yet, if he had confined himself to the role of historiographer, one would have to say that he was simply putting into practice the accepted theories of his time.

But The Bruce is rather more than a commentary on events, a chronicle or a history. It is a literary work and its matter is adjusted to a literary design. Barbour chose to cast his work in the form of a romance because he wished to present a thematically conceived and developed narrative about heroic deeds. In this he was undoubtedly influenced by what he had read. As I have demonstrated, it is possible to identify the particular romances that affected his work, for references to some of the most popular medieval romances are liberally sprinkled throughout his narrative in a way that not only indicates

the poet's own knowledge of these works but which also assumes a familiarity with them on the part of his readers.

Romances extoll the virtues of chivalry and set forth ideals of conduct, particularly knightly conduct. They commend certain virtues and values to their audiences, especially those of courtoisie, prowess and mesure. In some works these attributes are little more than tags, or stock descriptive phrases. But in the case of Barbour one discovers that his language and vocabulary repay analysis. The words he uses denote concepts, an understanding of which is essential for an appreciation of his work. In accordance with his memorial and didactic purpose, the epithets applied to his heroes are carefully chosen to convey heroic qualities and his use of abstracts and reliance on simile elucidate the dominant values of the world in which his heroes operate. Moreover, while his concept of true valour--his heroic ideal--which consists in a proper combination of prowess and prudence, is clearly enunciated in the poem, it is not confined to digressive statements, but pervades his characterization of the heroes and his presentation of events through the language he employs.

His insistence on prudence is fundamental to his depiction of his heroes as leaders of other men and can be specifically related to portraits of the ideal king and ideal knight in contemporary literature. At the same time, it is founded in a conviction of the reality of human free will and the need to exercise the faculty of reason in all human undertakings. I have attempted to show that his ideas are consistent not only with the contemporary orthodox theological doctrines and with philosophical concepts dating back to Aristotle and transmitted to the Middle Ages by Cicero and Aquinas, but also with the precepts of chivalric conduct as they are presented

in the handbooks of knighthood.

This co-ordinated system of ideas on the nature of man, on his relationship to God and to other men, on human goals and aspirations, which an examination of the work reveals and to which I have devoted so much attention, permeates Barbour's narrative. The poet interprets incidents and actions and characterizes his heroes in terms of an integrated code of conduct and values. Yet it is important to remember in the final analysis that Barbour's declared purpose was to tell a good story. As Frederick Pickering has argued, one cannot assume that determining the "economy of ideas" present in a given work will provide a complete gloss on everything said or done by the chief characters:

. . . for no medieval writer is to that extent master of the story he tells. It is the hero with his story who is master . . . and the author is his spokesman merely, commending according to his lights the right decisions of his hero and glossing over his wrong decisions as he makes them, or offering little or no comment.¹

In the case of a writer such as Barbour there are particular difficulties in this respect. He chose to interpret "given story" and to offer his readers a "suthfast story" based on real events and persons. Inevitably, there were occasions on which the facts, or at least the transmitted version of them, could not easily be made to fit his code of values or ideal of conduct. One such instance is when Bruce finally consents to Douglas's repeated request for permission to go to Randolph's aid at Bannockburn when the Scottish vanguard is severely pressed by Clifford's men. Bruce first refuses Douglas permission to leave his post, and then, without any comment or explanation by Barbour, we are told that Bruce gives his consent

¹"Historical Thought and Moral Codes in Medieval Epic", p. 3.

Bruce's initial response to Douglas's request is the correct one in the circumstances: the king has arranged his battalions and he does not wish to "brek purpos" (645). His inexplicable change of mind could be interpreted as a sign of his lack of resolution and as a potentially dangerous military move.² Since the poet cannot make Bruce's action here illustrative of his qualities as a general, he withholds comment. Yet, while his hero's action theoretically conflicts with the code of conduct for an ideal general, it does not detract in any serious way from the portrait of Bruce as an epitome of the military virtues since the Scots do not suffer as a result; Randolph in fact triumphs over his foes and Douglas's aid is unnecessary.

A rather more striking example of conduct that deserves criticism, but which Barbour forbears to offer, is the aptly named "Douglas Larder". This incident is described in some detail and was almost certainly a received part of the Douglas story, and one with which Barbour's readers were probably familiar so that the poet could not, in all conscience, omit it. He relates how, in his first attack on Douglasdale, Douglas and a few of his vassals plan and carry out an assault on the English garrison stationed at Douglas Castle. The enemy are surprised and many of them are slain while they attend a Palm Sunday service at St. Bride's chapel. Barbour does not indicate that Douglas and his men are guilty of sacrilege, although he had earlier censured Bruce for his part in the murder of Comyn in the

²Good military tactics demanded that a general should never attempt to alter his dispositions or break his order of battle during the time of action, Vegetius, De Re Militari III, xii.

kirk at Dumfries. He goes on to narrate how the survivors were taken as prisoners to the castle where Douglas proceeded to destroy the garrison's provisions by mixing all the wheat, flour and wine and, having beheaded the captives, he added their mutilated bodies to these to make a bloody mess. Douglas then spoiled the water supply by dumping dead horses and salt in the well, and razed the castle (V, 335-428).

The poet confines his remarks on this incident to Douglas's destruction of the stronghold, and draws attention to his hero's pragmatism. He argues that Douglas had no hope of maintaining the castle in the event of a siege (420-25). No comment is passed on Douglas's rather barbarous treatment of the prisoners, although the hero's conduct clearly transgresses the code of chivalry and the laws of warfare.³

Both incidents deviate--the "Douglas Larder" in a fairly outstanding way--from the standards of conduct which the work proclaims. But there are not many instances of this. On the whole, Barbour succeeded in adapting history to his heroic ideal. Even in their non-conformity to this ideal these episodes reveal the effectiveness of his attempt to make historical incident serve his purposes in the majority of cases. They indicate that there were occasions on which "suthfastnes" conflicted with his heroic ideal, and that his commitment to telling the truth was such that he was prepared to include episodes which indicate the humanity of his heroes in their capacity to make mistakes. But the fact that they stand out only serves to highlight the presence of that ideal.

In the case of The Bruce a study of the author's heroic ideal

³See, for example, The Buke of the Law of Armys, IV, xlvi, p. 157.

is not only appropriate but necessary since the work has often been misunderstood because the ideas in it have not received adequate attention. By examining the ideas in the poem it is possible to obtain a clearer impression about the kind of work it is, to conclude that it is a romance and, as a result of this, to accord Barbour his rightful place in Scottish literature. It seems to me that if such an examination leads us, on the one hand, to revise our opinions about the nature of the work, then it must, on the other hand, suggest a revision of our views on the Scottish literary tradition once The Bruce is seen to have a place in that tradition.

The Bruce may be the first substantial work in Scottish literature to come down to us, but it did not spring from nowhere. Barbour's own treatment is a constant reminder of the relationship between his work and existing romances. Moreover, The Bruce is written in the vernacular which, as Kinghorn points out, emphasizes its popular literary character.⁴ For all that, the work has remained curiously isolated from any continuous tradition in Scottish literature, or so it would seem from those literary histories which have attempted to argue for the existence of such a tradition but which have had to make Henryson its real starting-point. Yet a romance tradition flourished in Scotland before Barbour's time, he contributed to it, and it continued for several centuries after him. There can be no doubt that Barbour influenced his successors. Blind Harry borrowed from The Bruce and other medieval romances in his own attempt to commemorate the great deeds of another Scottish hero, William Wallace. Sir David Lindsay's The Historie of Squyer Meldrum (c. 1550-55) is also clearly influenced by The Bruce. It is a chivalric romance

⁴The Chorus of History, p. 25.

describing the life and adventures of a man Lindsay knew well and written shortly after the hero's death (c. 1550). Like Barbour, Lindsay regarded the romance form as the most fitting vehicle for the celebration of heroic deeds, just as suitable for the commemoration of heroic warriors of the recent past as for those of more remote, even legendary, times.⁵ Rather than see these works as evidence of a separate and peculiar interest in a hybrid combination of historical matter and literary form, it seems more logical to accept that they are part of a wider and more varied romance tradition in Scotland than has hitherto been acknowledged--and one that embraces these works.

Indeed the apparent isolation of Barbour's work can be explained to a large extent by the fact that many of the romances of the time have not survived, and those that have date, on the whole, from the fifteenth century. Apart from The Wallace (c. 1460), these are the Buik of Alexander (1438), another version of the Alexander legend usually referred to as the Taymouth Alexander (? 1460), Lancelot of the Laik (c. 1490-1500), Rauf Collyear (late fifteenth century), Colagros and Gawain (c. 1475) and Clariodus (late fifteenth century). From The Bruce we know that the Roman de Troie, the Roman de Thèbes, the Roman D'Alexandre, the Roman de Brut and Fierabras or Ferumbrace were known in Scotland. From Wyntoun we learn that one Huchoune of the Awle Ryale, possibly a contemporary

⁵Lindsay also compares his hero to a number of renowned romance heroes including Tydeus, Roland, Oliver, Gawain or "onie Knicht of the round Tabill". The Historie of Squyer Meldrum, ed. J. Kinsley (London & Edinburgh: Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1959), ll. 1-6, 48-64, 1309-30.

of Barbour, composed several romantic narratives:

He made the gret Gest off Arthure,
And the Awntyre off Gawane,
The Pystyll als off Swete Swsane.
(Orygynale Cronykil, V, XII, 4324-26)

He also wrote a "Gest off Broyttys auld story" (V, XII, 4366).

Furthermore, the existence of a rich and varied romance tradition is attested by a list of popular works given by the author of The Complaynt of Scotland (c. 1550). This includes extant works such as The Bruce and The Wallace, Rauf Coilyear, Golagros and Gawain, Lancelot of the Laik and Florimond of Albany,⁶ and other works which have either not come down to us or are available only in Middle English versions: "the taill of the brig of the mantribil" (probably Ferumbrace), "the tail of syr euan arthours knyght" (presumably a version of Chrétien de Troyes' Yvain or the Middle English Ywayn and Gawayn), "claryades and maliades", "Arthour of/litil bertanye", "syr egeir and syr gryme" and "beuis of southamtonn".⁷

In time a study of the recently discovered fragment of the Florimond romance may increase our knowledge of the romance in fourteenth-century Scotland and help to relate The Bruce more closely to the Scottish romance tradition. The date and possible author of Florimond have yet to be ascertained, but like The Bruce it is written in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, there is alliteration on key words and phrases, and it resembles the language of The Bruce in many ways, which would suggest that the author was a near contemporary of Barbour.

⁶Only a fragment of the Florimond romance, amounting to 504 lines, survives and this has been printed by Derrick McClure in the Scottish Literary Journal, Supplement No. 10 (Summer 1979): 1-10.

⁷The Complaynt of Scotland, ed. A. M. Stewart (S. T. S., 4th Series, 11, 1979), p. 48.

Striking similarities can also be detected in the author's approach to his material and his theme. The resemblance is most pronounced in the introductory lines:

Quha yarnis to win wit and wirschip
Till eldren deidis suld tak keip,
For in ald storyis men may leir
Worschip and wit on greit maneir.
Quha blythlie will of elderris reid
And tak example of thair gude deid,
He may greitlie avansit be,
Give he will follou thair bounte.
And, lordis, for to gar you meine
Off thame that in thair tymeis hes beine
That menteinit honour and manhead
And worthe war in word and deid,
I will translait ane ald storie
Off Florimound of Almanie,
That wes the best knyght levit than,
And syne wes king, and mekle wan.
Honour, knyghthead and lawtie,
In all his tyme menteinit he.⁸

But even in the absence of any strictly contemporary extant Scottish romances, a comparative study of The Bruce and any of the romances mentioned above would indicate that the similarities in themes, values and conventions outweigh the differences. Although this study has been confined to The Bruce itself, I hope that by demonstrating that it is a literary work of some complexity, that it will be possible to reconcile it to the mainstream of the romance tradition and so rescue it from that rather unsatisfactory category, "mixture of forms".

⁸The Florimond fragment, lines 1-18. I have normalized ȝ to y and f to th.

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