Southern Scotland’s Fourteenth Century Wartime Experience:

Chivalry and Violence

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This assessment is entirely my own work, and all sources that I have used have been fully acknowledged and attributed. I understand that this document will be subject to a plagiarism check through submission to Turnitin.

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Abstract

The intended purpose of this research is to examine the extent to which chivalry influenced the actions of Bruce-Scots, Anglo-Scots and the English forces on campaign in the Scottish marches, throughout the fourteenth century. As chivalry was a social construct designed for the martial elite, by the martial elite, it is often pre-supposed that these were self-interested rules concerning social and military conduct of the country’s knighthood. As the chivalric code was uncodified, there was and remains fluidity in the interpretation of the values. Set primarily against the historical background of conflict concerning the sovereignty of Scotland, the discussion develops over three chapters. This research studies the Scots use of ambushes, skirmishing and ransoms, before going onto the various stages of siege warfare and the tactics of ravaging the land. By highlighting the key actions within these arenas, the application of chivalric values shall be analysed in order to determine the extent to which chivalry influenced the conduct and behaviour within the Scottish marches.
Figure 1: Map of Southern Scotland c. 14th Century

Abbreviations

Cal. Close Rolls  Calendar of Close Rolls
Cal. Doc. Scot  Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland
Chron. Baker  The Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker
Chron. Le Bel  The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel
Eng. Hist. Docs  English Historical Documents
SHR  Scottish Historical Review
TDGNHAS  Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway
  Natural History and Antiquarian Society
Vita  Vita Edwardi Secundi: The Life of Edward the Second
Introduction

The overall aim of this research is to add weight to, albeit in a miniscule way, the quantity of academic work that addresses chivalry within the realm of Scotland. Many academic works concerning chivalric behaviour throughout the Middle Ages have been predominately focussed on the English and French ‘flowers of chivalry’. The knighthood of smaller countries, such as Scotland and Wales generally tend to be grouped together within these texts rather than given the complete consideration of which they are duly worth. As such, the focussed aim of this dissertation is to determine the extent to which the Scottish marches were influenced by chivalry throughout the fourteenth century. It shall also attempt to distinguish if the Bruce, Anglo-Scots and English parties’ concerned, applied different chivalric values on the Scottish March compared to their wartime experiences elsewhere. However, although this research will consider the whole of the fourteenth century, it must be noted that from the1370s onwards the majority of the conflict fought by the Scots was to be on territory out with Scotland. Therefore, these incidences are outside the main consideration of this research.

The parameters of southern Scotland examined within this research can be visually examined on a map of fourteenth century Scotland. As found at figure 1 (on page four), southern Scotland stretches westwards from the town of Berwick on the east coast, and comprises of ‘the Forest’, Teviotdale, Liddesdale, Annandale, Eskdale, Nithsdale, Galloway, the lower half of Carrick and Douglasdale. In order to investigate the events within these sheriffdoms required access to both English and

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Scots narrative sources, and administration records. A personal limitation concerning an understanding of written French, Latin and to a degree the written Scots language has determined that the narrative chronicles used within this research were academically trusted translations. The ‘popular’ narrative chronicles however, also have limitations of their own that requires some consideration. The reliability of their content is perhaps questionable considering that the intended audience had often personally commissioned the work. However, through these chronicles historians can gauge, to some extent, those values considered chivalric.

Significantly, prowess was often synonymously accepted as the embodiment of chivalric culture within the narrative primary sources. The chronicles in the first half of the fourteenth century have been known to praise the opposition for courage in battle. Although, it has been argued that by inflating an enemy’s defensive strategies, chroniclers’ sought to over inflate the offensive tactics and chivalric bravery of the attacking force. Texts such as John Barbour’s The Bruce provide both idealised and exaggerated examples, whereas the The Scalacronica, written by Sir Thomas Gray, a captured English knight held in Edinburgh castle, holds more authenticity as Gray had been captured in battle and therefore provided a first-hand military perspective.

It has often been noted throughout chivalric historiography that the concept of chivalry has proved difficult for historians to define. Even within the fourteenth century, chivalry was considered an uncodified martial and social code of conduct,

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6 Maurice Keen, Chivalry, (Yale, 2005), p.2.
which was open to interpretation and change, depending on the social conventions of the time. Perhaps it could be argued that not much has changed. Maurice Keen has contested Malcom Vales theory that chivalry was an aspiration rather than a social guide. Keen argues that it was a cultural phenomenon precisely because it was relevant to the period. The contested ethos of chivalry has been re-evaluated more recently through the varying research avenues of warfare, religion and literature amongst others that, as mentioned earlier, focus predominantly on the English and French knighthoods. Matthew Strickland’s contemporary research into chivalry has focussed more on the secular avenue, differentiating from previous historians who had sought to separate war from chivalry. Within his book, War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy 1066-1217, Strickland maintains that the virtues of chivalry were loyalty, honour, valour and largesse. The chivalric code was embodied within the laws of war, which entwined natural law with divine laws. Chivalry developed in order to keep the number of fatalities as low as possible. Although deaths within the Scottish nobility apparently rose after Robert Bruce seized the Scottish throne in 1306. However, there has been debate from historians’ as to the motivation towards an adherence to these rules. Maurice Keen posed the question as to whether or not knights’ would adhere to chivalric law had they not been financially incentivised through ransom payments. Others, such

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10 Strickland, War and Chivalry, pp.34-40.
as Richard Barber, argued that chivalry “[owed]…more to the pen than the sword.” essentially hiding the violence of everyday knighthood. These older interpretations of historical events still hold some significance, yet contemporary historians are starting to take a different approach. Alastair MacDonald (2013) and John Gillingham (2014), in regards to Scottish and French chivalry respectively, have indicated that historians previously were evaluating chivalry from an idealised perspective, when instead it is vital to utilise medieval societal and knighthood criteria for a truer indication of chivalric values. The historical background to the fourteenth century stems from the Scottish succession crisis after the death of Alexander III in March 1286. The impact of Alexander III’s death without a secure successor, following the death of his granddaughter, Margaret the ‘maid of Norway’, threatened to throw Scotland’s nobles into a civil war. Following the seizure of the Scottish crown in 1306 by Robert Bruce the seventh lord of Annandale and earl of Carrick, Scotland underwent several years of warfare in order to establish a rightful king of the Scots. In the wake of the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the statute of Cambuskenneth (1314) decreed that neither allegiances nor land could be held on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border. The border was no longer fluid, and those landowners that chose alignment with King Edward II found themselves disinherited from their Scottish lands. With the death of Robert I on 7th June 1329, the Anglo-Scots Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton (1328) only secured five years of peace before the

disinherited lords found sufficient support to challenge the status quo.\textsuperscript{17} It has also been suggested that the return of Edward Balliol and the Disinherited Anglo-Scots to Scotland in 1332 reignited a previous resentment of the Bruce family’s claim to the Scottish crown.\textsuperscript{18} However, recognising the fourteenth century’s turbulent historical background the research within the first chapter, \textit{Ambushed and Ransomed}, looks at incidences concerning ambush, skirmish and ransoming within the Scottish marches. The ambush section deals with how the Bruce tactics of hit and run guerrilla tactics were received by opposing sources, whilst the focus for skirmishes concerns Sir James Douglas and how the effect of his tenacity and prowess, emboldened both his chivalric and knightly status. Moving onto the captured knight and the customary traditions concerning ransoming which are argued, to some extent, that financial gain was the primary motivating factor towards the implementation of these customs. Following on, \textit{Besieged and Stormed}, differentiates between the large traditional sieges undertaken and commonly associated with the larger English forces of Edward I, II, and III, and the ‘surprise’ siege warfare utilising the cover of darkness, employed by the smaller and tactically more mobile Scottish forces. As such, it will examine the behaviour and conduct throughout the commencement of the siege, the offer to surrender, behaviour under rule of storm, and the treatment of the besieged after surrender or storm. To conclude the trilogy, \textit{Raided and Ravaged}, will investigate the chivalric nature of those employed in undertaking the destruction of the land as a form of medieval warfare. Occasionally set with the backdrop of famine and pestilence depriving a poverty-stricken community of further resources,

chivalric behaviour struggles to be ratified. As to inflict further harm, through the removal of agrarian means of production, could be argued as being negatively demonstrative of good lordship practices. A consideration, will be undertaken, as to whether or not the raid was perceived as theft or survival, whilst looking at the motives of plunder and the securing of allegiances, in order to will determine how chivalric those actions were considered to be.
Chapter One

Ambushed and Ransomed

The chivalric actions of medieval Scottish knights are often outshone in contemporary sources by their more readily known English counterparts, such as William Marshal, Richard the Lionheart or Edward, the Black Prince of Wales. Knights in general, sought to extend their chivalric reputation and image through any means possible. Chivalric prowess was most highly valued when gained through military means and, according to Katie Stevenson; military prowess gained abroad held even more gravitas. Chivalry, it could be argued, evolved from the concept of the Preudhomme, whose high upstanding status could only be established through combat against religious enemies. The Preudhomme was an idealised form of knighthood. A model of societal and military conduct, it offered an elevated social status that was centred on the recognition of a knight’s military prowess by their peers. The Preudhomme also required qualities including vigour, discretion, loyalty and honour. Conflict in the fourteenth century Scottish Marches arguably stemmed from the Scottish succession crisis’ conclusion in 1292 and English claims of overlordship. Diverging from religious towards secular ideals, the fighting for beliefs was extended to inheritable rights. Fourteenth century warfare in the Scottish Marches consisted primarily of siege warfare, (discussed in chapter two), alongside ambuses and skirmishes. Large-scale set piece battles were the exception rather than the rule, but were nonetheless consistent with standard practice elsewhere in the

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19 Gray, Scala cronica. The author gives little acknowledgement to events such as tournaments, with detail significantly focusing on military events; Stevenson, Chivalry and Knighthood, pp.27; 192.
20 Keen, Chivalry, p.98.
Latin West, where direct confrontation through pitched battle was avoided whenever possible. For example, Robert Bruce refused to meet the earl of Cornwall in an open field near Berwick in 1311. The event, or lack of, has been calendared as detailing the English forces “doing their best on the [Scots] enemy”, until spring arrives. The military tactics of skirmishing often resulted through accidental engagements, as well as the pre-planned ambush. Differing formats depended on both the geographical and military circumstances concerned. Historians have noted that the Scots’ record of victories within smaller conflicts, for example those with fewer than one thousand participants, denotes four out of five conflicts were won between 1296 and 1547. However, victories in larger battles rendered fewer than 50 per cent in terms of success, even though the narrative chronicles concerning the period are said to have inflated the number of Scots triumphs. However using these sources, consideration will be taken of the chivalric values concerning the tactics of ambush, skirmishing and the incidences of ransoming employed during fourteenth century border warfare.

Ambush

Ambush, by definition, consisted of a “surprise attack by people lying in wait in a concealed position.” Predominantly employed by the Bruce supporters, the tactics of guerrilla warfare often used throughout fourteenth century Scotland emulated the hit and run strategies of Robert Bruce. Tactics such as these were employed

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victoriously in Galloway at the Battle of Glentrool (1307), where Bruce both “harassed and outran his pursuers.”27 Using smaller groups, and therefore presumably with more agility, Bruce’s strategies consisted of harassing the occupying forces into exhaustion through a series of ambushes conducted by “lurking in the woods or by the roads.”28 Bruce had managed to repel an English raid, whilst inflicting significant losses to the English force.29 Tactics such as these worked best when combined with a passive resistance from the population.

Indifference displayed to the occupying forces by the population, whilst not actively helping, did not providing any support for the enemy either.30 While these ambush tactics often proved successful by keeping the initiative in the Bruce party’s favour, Scottish Guardian Andrew Moray’s ambush attempt at Roxburgh Bridge resulted in his own capture, after becoming separated from his men whilst attempting to rescue a captured fellow soldier.31 Balliol forces were alerted to the bridges deliberate destruction as Moray attempted to isolate the Anglo-Scots using the rising River Tweed.32 It could be argued that the surprise tactics of the Bruce Scots defied traditional chivalric conventions, as traditional ‘set piece’ battles usually designated beforehand, any battle restrictions or limitations, using signals such as flags. For example, English forces carried a dragon banner that, when flown, indicated the


intent to wage war with no quarter given. Such customs were also applied abroad, with the French equivalent known as the Oriflamme banner. However, such an indication of warning would be both unpractical for the Scots, and likely to ensure defeat, especially concerning the smaller numbers within the Scots party.\textsuperscript{33} Another consideration, perhaps, as to the reason the Scots worked so hard to avoid largescale confrontations.

English perspectives differ in opinion as to the ingenuity of Bruce tactics with the Lanercost chronicle and the Vita Edwardi Secundi suggesting cowardice and creativity respectively. The utilisation of the Southern Upland’s topography and the forests of Selkirk and Ettrick for concealment,\textsuperscript{34} rather than being perceived as underhand, were perhaps in-fact acceptable tactics within chivalric terms. Yet information leaked regarding details of an intended ambush of Andrew Moray in Galloway, resulted in the trial and death of several co-conspirators.\textsuperscript{35} However, within the sources, all follow Barbour’s lead in accepting The Bruce’s acceptance of trickery, as a virtue of war.\textsuperscript{36} Whilst this may indicate a discrepancy between a soldier’s perspective and those analysing post-conflict, MacDonald argues that these tactics must be incorporated within the chivalric ethos, as there was no singular code of chivalry. If accepted then, the Scots chivalric values had perhaps not diverged too far from traditional standards. This would appear to contradict the dominant image of an unchivalric and violent border society, which has often been accepted as the

\textsuperscript{34} The Chronicle of Lanercost 1272-1346, tr. H. Maxwell, (Glasgow, 1913), pp.169; 190-1; Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.27. The Southern Uplands terrain made it difficult to traverse in large numbers across “trackless boggy mountain places” (Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.27).
\textsuperscript{35} Bower, Scotichronicon vii, pp.57-9.
\textsuperscript{36} MacDonald, Trickery Mockery, p.2.
The accepted norm likely derives from perspectives originating from medieval warfare evaluations emanating from an idealised, recently accepted standard rather than those of the era.\(^{38}\)

**Skirmishing with James Douglas**

By definition, skirmishing consisted of “irregular or unpremeditated fighting between small outlying parts of the army.”\(^{39}\) The chivalric knight’s concern with social and military reputation in both life and the afterlife, through honour, virtue and valour, often walked a fine line between honour and dishonour.\(^{40}\) Whilst chivalric prowess gained knights honour, it has been argued as predominantly endorsing violence.\(^{41}\) James Douglas is portrayed, by Barbour’s *Bruce*, as the heroic knight, obsessively concerned with prowess and military skill. However, Douglas was not one dimensional by any means, as he demonstrated significant administrative competence, often through times of peace, including negotiating the Anglo-Scots peace Treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton (1328).\(^{42}\) The confidence gained through Douglas’s success irritated Sir Robert Neville to such a degree that through a hatred and jealousy of Douglas’s reputation Neville had threatened “if ever I can see his banner displayed for war, I will attack him, be assured, however bold

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you think he is.” What is perhaps interesting is that upon hearing the news
Douglas purposely set out to provoke a response from Neville by burning several
villages close to the town of Berwick. Neville assembled his forces to observe
Douglas from the nearest hill. Douglas, tired of waiting for an offensive response,
decided to take the battle closer and force Neville onto the defensive. A fierce battle
ensued in which Neville was slain. Douglas’s confidence was further emboldened
through his victory and the largesse he displayed by distributing the spoils of war
between his men. His notorious reputation also grew through Neville’s demise, as
his reputation was often used, by mothers, to scare children within the English
marches. Folklore provides the nursery rhyme, “Hush ye! Hush ye! Dinna fret ye!
The Black Douglas wilna get ye!” Alternatively, the threatening behaviour of
Neville and Douglas could perhaps be argued to be unchivalric. Direct confrontation
between the chivalric elite was often deliberately avoided, as to accept the challenge
of battle was also to accept the judgement of God. It is notable that major sources,
such as the Scotichronicon and the Vita Edwardi Secundi, make no mention of
Neville’s threat, or the destruction that Barbour professed Douglas had wreaked on
the hinterlands of Berwick following this incident. Only the Scalacronica offers a
similar account, offering Richard Fitz-Marmaduke as having been slain by Neville.
This omission from other chronicles casts doubt as to the authenticity and reliability
of Barbour’s story in regards to Douglas’s participation. This could perhaps be
argued to indicate the biased perspective of Barbour, who was commissioned in

43 Barbour, The Bruce, p.572.
44 Barbour, The Bruce, pp.574-8; Chris Tabraham, Clan and Castle: The Lives and Lands of
45 Keen, Laws of War, p.123.
Bruce, p.576.
47 Gray, Scalacronica, p.58.
1375 by the Douglas and Stewart families in order to record events for posterity.\textsuperscript{48} The chivalric portrayal of Douglas as having won fifty-seven of his seventy conflicts fighting for recognition of Bruce’s sovereignty is perhaps highlighted to offset the arrogance of Douglas’s response. However, a similar account regarding Douglas occurs at Lintalee in Jedburgh, against Sir Thomas Richmond. This time however, the use of archers and Douglas’s towering over Richmond before killing him with a knife is provided in the detail.\textsuperscript{49} It is intriguing that Richmond had not been taken for ransom. James Douglas’s behaviour is seemingly accepted as chivalric as Barbour ultimately credits Douglas with the restoration of peace within the forests of Selkirk and Jedburgh.\textsuperscript{50} His actions were possibly perceived for the greater good. However, recent research has noted that Douglas was careful in his campaigns, always scouting for potential conflicts. In contrast to Barbour, Sonja Väthjunker suggests that Douglas’s caution indicated he was fighting for success, rather than honour alone.\textsuperscript{51}

This perhaps was to become a family trait. A thousand of Archibald Douglas’s men arrived from Moffat to engage in a skirmish at Annan (1332), which resulted in King Edward Balliol taking flight, half-dressed, across the border. With the king having absconded, Henry Balliol’s bravery and martial skill were tested to the full, and later received chivalric commendation within Walter Bower’s \textit{Scotichronicon}.\textsuperscript{52} Michael Brown has argued that the incident at Annan marked Archibald Douglas as the first guardian to gain political advancement (replacing Moray after his capture at

\begin{thebibliography}
\bibitem{Penman} Michael Penman, \textit{The Scottish Civil War: The Bruces and the Balliols and the War for Control of Scotland}, (Gloucester, 2002), p.148.
\bibitem{Barbour} Barbour, \textit{The Bruce}, pp.600-604.
\bibitem{Barbour} Barbour, \textit{The Bruce}, p.312.
\end{thebibliography}
Roxburgh bridge), through military orchestration rather than solely enhancing a chivalric reputation through physical action. Väthjunker’s PhD thesis, offers an alternative perspective of James Douglas within Barbour’s *Bruce*. Interestingly, Väthjunker suggests that Barbour actually rejects the “original form” of chivalry by refusing to afford Robert’s brother, Edward Bruce the chivalric recognition within the poem his behaviour deserved. Barbour stands accused of redefining the terms to suit the behaviour of both James Douglas, and even more so Robert Bruce. This again, highlights the contested ethos and problems concerning a definitive chivalric code, through subjectively written sources.

**Ransom**

The etiquette and eligibility concerning surrender and ransom, distinguished the elite caste of knighthood from the lower levels of society. It has been argued that, to some extent, these privileges were essentially a self-preservation insurance policy. For instance the sheriff of Cumberland, Andrew Harcla, was held for a 1,000 mark ransom, having been captured by John Soules in Eskdale (1316). A prisoner was held “as a pledge for the price of his ransom,” and unfortunately, peasants held no legal claim towards such rewards. With no incentive for the lower classes to preserve the opposition’s life, the treatment of prisoners was therefore unpredictable and unrestricted by the chivalric code. As such, knights endeavoured to surrender to their opposing counterparts, such as witnessed with Andrew Moray’s refusal to

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surrender to anyone at Roxburgh (1333) other than to the English king. Once surrendered, hostages undertook a non-combatant status that helped ensure their safe conduct.\textsuperscript{58} Consequences of capture in the Scottish Marches were unlikely to be different from traditional practices. Guardian Archibald Douglas implemented a legal ruling which stated that by killing another man’s prisoner the executioner then became responsible for paying the deceased’s ransom.\textsuperscript{59} It may be argued that the laws of chivalry including ransom, especially through private agreements, were predominantly rooted in financial self-interest.\textsuperscript{60} The Battle of Dornock in 1333 occurred when a retaliatory raiding party in Annandale, returning south, skirmished against troops from Lochmaben garrison. This resulted in the deaths of twenty-six Scots, two Englishmen, and the capture of the Scottish knights William Baird and William Douglas of Liddesdale. Douglas and Baird’s captors are recorded as receiving confirmation that the ransom payment would be received by them personally, rather than paid to Edward III.\textsuperscript{61} This confirmation may have been given in reply to petitions addressed to Edward III, enquiring if the king had perhaps claimed the prisoners for the Crown. It was not until late 1346 that Edward III revoked the licences of masters to ransom their prisoners. According to Ambühl, the masters themselves then had to petition the king, in lieu of ransoms, for compensation. This therefore suggests that the petition, had there been one, may have been more concerned with showing loyalty, service and trying to increase familiarity with their monarch.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} Chron. Baker, p.76; Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.89; Keen, Laws of War, p.160.
\textsuperscript{62} Ambühl, Ransom Culture, pp.56; 226.
warfare, ransom figure requests were often the perceived accumulative sum of the hostages own personal wealth, through yearly income and land revenue.\textsuperscript{63} The perceived level of nobility, concerning their closest social and political connections, in conjunction with their perceived wealth gained through ransoms, also inflated the asking price.\textsuperscript{64} As such, ransoms were often miscalculated resulting in exorbitant and often unrealistic figures, which caused help to be sought elsewhere. Ralph Neville petitioned Edward II in 1316 for financial support in lieu of service against the Scots, claiming destitution by trying to raise the required funds to release both his brothers, and pay his own 2000 mark ransom from which he was on parole, in order to gather funds.\textsuperscript{65} However, Michael Prestwich believes that direct contributions to ransoms were reserved only for nobles and Edward II’s own household. This trend would change under Edward II’s great grandson Richard II, later on in the century.\textsuperscript{66} Similarly, Hugh Gray’s petition, in 1316, notes that he had needed to ransom his wife and children who had been captured at Berwick. Apportioning a loss of land revenue in his failure to pay the ransom fee, Gray also cites his service against the Scots when requesting recompense from the Crown.\textsuperscript{67} Occasionally however, practicality triumphed over fiscal arrangements when prisoners from either side were exchanged. Such an example is provided by the case of Elizabeth de Burgh, Robert Bruce’s second wife, and his daughter Marjorie. Alongside other hostages, Bruce’s family were considered political currency, exchangeable for the earl of Hereford once Hereford’s estate was found to be lacking...
in funds. Prominent or important captives did not always qualify for ransom. David Bruce has been recorded in the sources as ineligible for ransom under the conditions of a ‘just war’, for having no legitimate claim to the English crown in order to justify his wide scale destruction of Northumberland, prior to his capture at the Battle of Neville’s Cross (1346). Whilst this may be English propaganda, David II’s ransoming was not necessarily Edward III’s ultimate aim. David II’s usefulness was in attempting to secure some form of peace, albeit after twelve years and a number of rejected proposals. When eventually agreed, the Treaty of Berwick (1357) stipulated the conditions of David II’s 100,000 mark ransom. Along with payment through a ten-year instalment plan, Edward III demanded twenty hostages together with three high status nobles from a list of nine. These nobles were to be indentured on a rota basis, until full payment was received. This treaty was essentially a law of contract that enabled the ransoming process to become more efficient. According Ambühl, it updated the law of honour from its uncodified position, but reduced the significance of honour found through the implementation of parole oaths.

The trust implied by the acceptance of an oath especially concerning loyalty, was perhaps the greatest weapon chivalry held. To break an oath could be shameful, dishonourable or in some instances such as a change of allegiance, considered treasonous. Allegiances on the Marches changed primarily to provide short-term solutions most preferable to the individual. David II has been recorded as having

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68 Vita Edvardi Secundi, p.101; Chron. Lanercost, p.211.
69 Chron. Baker, p.84.
70 Ambühl, Ransom Culture, p.56.
72 Ambühl, Ransom Culture, pp.39; 51.
73 Keen, Laws of War, pp.54; 174; Ambühl, Ransom Culture, p.92.
74 MacInnes, ‘Big Bad Bruce’, p.142; Lanercost, p.287.
executed Sir Walter Selby in 1346, along with both his sons who, having been captured at Liddel, had requested to be ransomed. However, Selby’s loyalties had fluctuated from the Scots, to the English, and as such, his actions amounted to treason.\textsuperscript{75} It was often perceived that a king, chosen of divine right, should be of the highest chivalric order, a condition cultivated through Arthurian literature.\textsuperscript{76} However, Edward II’s oath is noted on occasion, by the \textit{Vita’s} author as unreliable. The breaking of oaths sworn to his own barons, concerning the welfare of England, was allegedly commented on by Robert Bruce in 1312. Bruce stated, “How shall the king of England keep faith with me, since he does not keep the sworn promises made to his liege men, whose homage and fealty he has received…his promise will not deceive me.”\textsuperscript{77} The English king had requested a safe haven and respite from baronial persecution, for his favourite Piers Gaveston. As a negotiation tool, Edward II had offered “the kingdom of Scotland itself … to Lord Robert freely and forever.”\textsuperscript{78} Bruce’s statement, if taken as true, perhaps shows the magnitude placed on knighthood’s statement of oath concerning his chivalric reputation. Bruce himself, according to the \textit{Scotichronicon}, was only thought to have had five truly faithful followers.\textsuperscript{79} However, it could be argued that the \textit{Vita’s} chronicler was portraying the ‘enemy’ in a positive light in order to indicate the level of animosity and irritation borne against the English king by his own subjects.

\textbf{Conclusion}

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Chron. Baker}, p.76, n.1.  
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Chron. Baker}, p.65.  
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Vita Edwardi Secundi}, pp.13-15; 41.  
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Vita Edwardi Secundi}, p.41.  
\textsuperscript{79} Bower, \textit{Scotichronicon vii}, p.55.
The Scots guerrilla styled warfare’s categorisation outside of the chivalric ethos has almost become the accepted norm within recent history’s books. As such, Alastair MacDonald has challenged the accepted norm and counter-argued by championing the idea that Scots warfare should also be situated comfortably within the realms of fourteenth century chivalric behaviour. The pursuit of the idealised chivalric image within the Scottish Marches seems to be the predominant theme running through both the English and Scottish narrative sources examined. Chivalry has been argued as a driver towards a more violent society. As such, the quest for prowess and recognition of valour treads a fine line with dishonour as politically motivated deeds, perhaps performed for the benefit of the realm, could be construed as self-interested, as well as having crossed the chivalric line of acceptance. Skirmishing tactics employed by the Bruce Scots relied on smaller, quicker moving bands of warriors, in comparison to the larger paid forces representing the three English monarchs. Primarily determined by the resources available and the geography of the land, it was deemed both ingenious and chivalric by their contemporary’s chronicles. The cavalier attitude exhibited through James Douglas’s actions; whilst perhaps not ‘traditional’ by Norman French standards, are seemingly acceptable due to his military acumen, inventiveness and tenacity. His portrayal as the epitomised chivalric knight, who has succeeded by bringing peace to the Southern Upland forests, seemingly offsets the arrogance that can come from over confidence. The argument of the chivalric code serving as an insurance policy, in terms of both survival and finance, is a hard argument to refute within the Scottish Marches. The ransoming of prominent figures that were essentially priceless, only really served to be politically advantageous. However, with the introduction of Archibald Douglas’s ordinance, and Edward III revoking the masters’ licence to ransom, it could be
argued that the guarantee of financial gain was only significantly reduced south of the border.
Chapter Two  Siege and Storm

The medieval siege constituted a “military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building, with the aim of compelling those inside to surrender.”\(^{80}\) With such a specific military objective, a separate set of siege warfare laws developed. These laws offered guidance towards chivalric customs and conventions, thus separating them somewhat from the traditional laws of war. Prior to there being an indication of the commencement of the siege, formal protocol dictated that the defending garrison should be offered a summons of surrender. This was the defender’s chance to surrender peacefully. There were two conditions under which a town or building could be taken. These include (a) by assault having had the defences breached or, (b) surrendered after negotiations to ensure the security of those within the walls.\(^{81}\) These different conditions determined the actions undertaken by the assaulting force. The traditional siege was essentially a war of attrition, heavy on both resources and time, sometimes extending to months on end.\(^{82}\) Scotland has witnessed traditional sieges beset by English forces. However traditional sieges undertaken by the Scots as the besiegers in southern Scotland were not particularly common or successful.\(^{83}\) Arguably, an extension of Robert Bruce’s ambush guerrilla tactics mentioned in the previous chapter, those sieges initiated by the Scots were not traditional, but were smaller in scale, and covertly undertaken at night. This meant they were rather unconventional in their manner. The Scots raised

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\(^{81}\) Keen, *Laws of War*, pp.119-120.


\(^{83}\) Brown, *The Black Douglases*, p.139.
most of the castles that they took in southern Scotland, with the exception of strongholds like Berwick. Alternatively, the English Crown usually strengthened those of strategic importance, such as found in Lochmaben.\textsuperscript{84} According to historian Fiona Watson, most Scottish nobles were content with their hereditary rights and did not require a castle to signify their social status.\textsuperscript{85} Alternatively, Colm McNamee argues that the rebuilding of castles also offered nobles the chance to hide behind their walls in times of strife,\textsuperscript{86} suggesting a lack of chivalric courage and action through a self-preservation policy. As such, an examination of English and Scottish interpretations of siege protocol is required, in an attempt to analyse the extent that those sieges undertaken in southern Scotland could be considered chivalric in their actions.

**The Commencement of Siege warfare**

The commencement of the siege was, by traditional standards, formally indicated by the firing of stones or other projectiles launched from a siege engine. Even the smaller castles such as Lochmaben held stores of some 400 iron stones, indicating the importance placed on the use of siege engines by the English forces.\textsuperscript{87} The fourteenth century Plantagenet kings, Edward I, II and III, had access to a significantly larger feudal host than was available to the Scots.\textsuperscript{88} Superior military numbers within the English camp meant that large traditional sieges, such as those witnessed at Caerlaverock, Berwick and Roxburgh could be undertaken. Greater

\textsuperscript{84} Bower, *Scotichronicon* vi, p.351; *Chron. Baker*, p.106.
\textsuperscript{87} Keen, *The Laws of War*, p.120; *Cal. Doc. Scot* v, p.199, no.472.
\textsuperscript{88} Barbour, *The Bruce*, p.678, n.235.
numbers meant that there would have been a greater need for military organisation and co-ordination. In comparison, the Scots attacks comprised of surprise siege warfare, primarily derived from their significant lack of numbers, a lack of siege engines, and a shortage of supplies often required for a prolonged siege. The Scots failed attack on Berwick in December 1312 is, according to Geoffrey Barrow, the first recorded use of scaling ladders with grappling hooks attached, used under the cover of darkness. Similar tactics were successfully employed in the February of 1314 against Roxburgh Castle and its garrison by James Douglas, upon which the great hall was taken by surprise and with little mercy. Renowned for their use of the dark and deception when implementing their own sieges, the Scots gave no courteous advanced warning of attack to the English held garrisons, which they often sought to recover and dismantle. Within the chronicles there is very little evidence of initial warning shots being recorded for posterity and indicating the commencement of the traditional siege. The Roll of Caerlaverock poem consistently applauds any chivalric action or person present at the English siege of Caerlaverock in 1300; and yet this significant siege warfare rule gains no real recognition within the prose. With little use of cavalry, the knight’s most expensive and symbolic asset perhaps only second to the sword, the horse, was effectively rendered useless. The chivalric focus of the chroniclers’ is primarily on the actions of the knights throughout the various stages of the siege, and that to some extent, the possession of

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89 MacInnes, ‘Scotland at War’, pp.99; 122; MacDonald, ‘Triumph and Disaster’, p.268.
90 Chron. Lanercost, p.201; Barrow, Community of the Realm, p.253.
91 Barbour, The Bruce, pp.378-84; Barrow, Community of the Realm, p.256.
92 Chron. Lanercost, p.204; Barbour, The Bruce, p.317; Barrow, Community of the Realm, pp.221; 251.
94 Prestwich, Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages, p.284.
siege engines, often allowed a chivalric display of prowess to be exhibited.\textsuperscript{95} It was thought that Edward I had refused to raise the siege of Stirling (1304) until his siege engine ‘Warwolf’ had been utilised.\textsuperscript{96} This perhaps indicates that there was a prestige associated with owning military technology. The actions of the Scots and the begrudged admiration, from English sources,\textsuperscript{97} concerning their military resourcefulness adds strength to the argument that the signal of commencement was perhaps more for the co-ordination of the besiegers, rather than for those within the walls, therefore making this non-chivalric in its action.

**Offer to Surrender**

The offer to surrender was a critical point within siege warfare. Those persons of authority within the town or castle were often custodians rather than the liege lord, and as such did not have the authority to surrender their charge.\textsuperscript{98} According to Maurice Keen refusal to surrender would offend those besieging, but to surrender without any attempt at defence would contravene the feudal bond with the custodian’s liege lord, and castles situated within the southwest of Scotland were expected to hold out until the English crown lost control of the Solway Firth.\textsuperscript{99} When custodians were involved, negotiations often resulted in agreements of surrender, including conditional respite where, if relief should not arrive by an agreed designated date, the castle would offer no further resistance.\textsuperscript{100} This,

\textsuperscript{96} Michael Prestwich, Edward I, (Yale, 2008), p.502.
\textsuperscript{97} Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.25.
\textsuperscript{99} Keen, Laws of War, p.124; Barrow, Community of the Realm, p.250.
\textsuperscript{100} Strickland, War and Chivalry, pp.208-209.
according to Strickland offered the besieging commander a chance to “enhance his military reputation by a display of franchise – the greatness of spirit…expected of a knight.”\(^{101}\) This also benefitted the besieged by allowing them to seek help. Under siege in 1384, the English garrison of Lochmaben, situated in Annandale, had deigned itself free to surrender, rather than defend itself as instructed, should relief not be forthcoming within an eight day agreement.\(^ {102}\) Berwick by contrast was, in 1352, under orders to hold out for at least three months before negotiating terms of surrender.\(^ {103}\) Control of the castles determined local allegiances, and good lordship demanded relief be forthcoming quickly in order to preserve those loyalties.\(^ {104}\) Whilst Berwick was an important economic trading port that allowed access to the Low Countries, it was of value to both the English and the Scots alike, the English garrison of Lochmaben had been guarding the western march’s routes between England and Scotland, for over fifty years.\(^ {105}\) The chronicles suggest both a lack of support, and a lethargic approach towards the self-defence of Lochmaben.

Considering the strategical importance of Lochmaben, this perhaps suggests that chivalric responsibility was considered negligible by the lords of the English march. However, “chivalry taught the gentleman… to place honour at the centre of his mental and social world, as the treasure dearer to him than life.”\(^ {106}\) By surrendering as per the agreement Lochmaben’s custodian, Sir Alexander Featherstonehaugh, may have argued that he had upheld his personal chivalric code through the honouring of

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\(^ {101}\) Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp.210-211.
\(^ {103}\) Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, p.302.
\(^ {106}\) Keen, *Chivalry*, p.250.
his word. However, by failing to defend substantially, (by Walter Bower’s account); Featherstonehaugh may have suffered some dishonour or possibly the charge of treason, depending on the specifics of his orders. If correctly interpreted as permission to capitulate, then those orders legitimised Featherstonehaugh’s actions, and preserved his chivalric honour.107

**By Rule of Storm**

After the summons of surrender had been formally declined, the terms and conduct concerning the forthcoming siege, now operating under the rules of storm, lay in the hands of the besiegers, and was both understood and expected by both parties. Storm essentially tolerated any act of barbarity under licence (by permission of the king), including theft, rape and murder within the realms of legality, where mercy was not a consideration.108 Edward I, in 1296, had been refused surrender by the town of Berwick. As such, he had enforced his right to storm. By siege law, Berwick town’s refusal to capitulate would have been “[considered] an insult to his [Edward I] majesty and punishable as such.”109 Recorded figures within the *Scotichronicon* attribute 8,000 deaths as a result, within the town. These actions, however, prompted the castle garrison to negotiate surrender under peaceable terms.110 The *Lanercost chronicle* suggests that the massacre at Berwick (1296), was in fact a retaliatory act by Edward I in response to a two day attack where the Scots had “violently assaulted the city of Carlisle.”111 Matthew Strickland has argued that it was Edward I’s recognition of the Scots knightly status that tilted the garrison’s

outcome favourably and that, prior to Edward I’s demise, the only recorded execution of a garrison was at the siege of Caerlaverock (1300). However, sources such as the Roll of Caerlaverock and the Lanercost chronicle differ in opinion concerning Caerlaverock castle’s actual outcome.112

Acts of storm also included pillaging. Whist surrender offered the chance for the besiegers to pillage; taking the town or castle by storm would guarantee the right.113 Under the laws of storm, the spoils of war were deemed both forfeit and property of the king as this act was considered one of justice served, rather than of war.114 It has been suggested recently that Edward I had attacked Caerlaverock, after the castle tried to surrender under the condition of safe life and limb. However, the besieged inadvertently insulted Edward I by asking to keep all of their own possessions.115 The spoils of war were often distributed either equally, or in accordance with rank. This part of the siege would be of especial importance to the Scots who were usually honouring service due, rather than accepting a paid wage.116 Perhaps an extension or a pre-empting of storming, Edward I often gave land and titles in Scotland away as an incentive, including those in Annandale, before they had actually succumbed to the English war effort.117 This adds some weight to Keen and Richard Barber’s argument, that chivalric convention was motivated on a daily basis primarily by the financial gain available.118 Through the various examples highlighted this perhaps could be argued to be the case. However, for some of the knightly class the means of establishing a chivalric reputation was reward enough. James Douglas’s lack of

112 Roll of Caerlaverock, pp.34-5; Chron. Lanercost, p.170; Strickland, ‘A Law of Arms or a Law of Treason?’, pp.64; 69.
113 Bradbury, The Medieval Siege, p.323.
114 Keen, Laws of War, pp.121-3.
117 Honeywell, ‘Chivalry as Community and Culture’, p.59.
118 Barber, The Knight and Chivalry, pp.205; 210; Keen, Laws of War, pp.243-4.
concern when threatened, alongside Robert Bruce at Berwick in 1318, by Papal interdicts and with excommunication, stated that he would “enter Berwick more cheerfully than even paradise.”\footnote{Barbour, \textit{The Bruce}, p.620, n.107b; Chron. Lanercost, pp.224-5; \textit{Vita Edwardi Secundi}, p.155; Brown, \textit{Wars of Scotland}, p.216.} This carefree attitude aids to highlight the rise of secular values over that of religious within the Scottish Marches, as was noted elsewhere in Europe. Richard Kaeuper and Sean McGlynn have argued that chivalry was a negative attribute that used piety to offset the consequences of warfare, and only utilised as and when deemed personally necessary. McGlynn equates chivalry to a spiritual contract, which seemingly sanctioned bad behaviour.\footnote{Crouch, \textit{The Birth of Nobility}, p.21; McGlynn, \textit{By Sword and Fire}, p.72.}

**Treatment of Besieged after Surrender or Storm**

The chronicles often record differing views and outcomes, of the treatment of those surrendering, depending on the intended audience. The \textit{Lanercost chronicle}’s account of those surrendering Caerlaverock castle in 1300 as being hanged, differs considerably to that of the \textit{Roll of Caerlaverock} poem. The poem states:

\begin{quote}
The companions begged for peace,

And put out a pennon.

But he who displayed it

Was shot by an arrow, by some archer,

Through the hand into the face.

[Following surrender] …

they were kept and guarded

Till the king disposed of them,

Who gave them life and limb,
\end{quote}
It has been suggested that the poem’s author was a herald of Edward I.\textsuperscript{122} Therefore, given the likelihood of Edward I commissioning the poem; it could be argued that in describing the chivalric attributes of all those present, Edward I as king, expected to be portrayed as the knight with ultimate chivalric status.

James Douglas is also often portrayed as a force to be reckoned with in terms of military courage and chivalric status, within both English and Scottish sources. In the aftermath of the siege of Roxburgh castle (1314), the besieged warden having sustained an injury, managed to negotiate with Douglas terms of surrender including a secure passage to England for both himself and those in his custody.\textsuperscript{123} Berwick town was also taken by Douglas, through the treachery of an English soldier. However, the castle endured an eleven-week siege in 1318, after which relief failed to appear and therefore ownership defaulted.\textsuperscript{124} Yet again, Douglas provided a chivalric command, especially concerning the conduct of the Scots entering Berwick. When the castle finally capitulated, the Scots were said to have “expelled all the English, almost naked and despoiled of all of their property…killed few or none, except those who resisted them.”\textsuperscript{125} By leaving Berwick in this way, the inhabitants were signifying that they had surrendered unconditionally at Douglas’s mercy. The rule of storm generally allowed no quarter, and clemency was completely at the besieging commander’s discretion.\textsuperscript{126} Therefore, to allow those surrendering to live could perhaps be argued as a form of \textit{largesse}, an original virtue of chivalric

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knighthood. However, Douglas attacked his family seat and St. Bride’s Kirk in Douglas upon the religious feast of Palm Sunday in 1308, whilst it was under enemy occupation by Sir Clifford. Douglas’s attack resulted in several beheadings alongside the heavy ransoming of prisoners. Barbour recants the events as heroic, and as an act of good lordship, liberating those faithful to the Douglas family, and emphasising that Douglas had also provided convalescent medicinal aid for those injured. Although Douglas fails again, to acknowledge the religious chivalric values prohibiting the use of armaments on a religious feast day, it could be argued that Douglas family’s authority had been insulted. Akin to disobeying majesty, the social status of the Douglas name was disrespected by those occupying Douglas castle. As such, perhaps James Douglas was attempting to rectify his chivalric and social status within his ancestral lands. Perhaps more so as the castle was to be slighted, denying any use to invading forces, as was the Scots wartime protocol.

The siege laws also differed to conventional laws of war concerning treatment of prisoners. After the battle of Halidon Hill 1333, Edward III is noted to have returned to the siege of Berwick and “carried out his will on the men and the town and castle.” Outside of Berwick castle walls Edward had demanded the keys, a symbol of submission, a day prior to the agreed relief arrangement. The agreement negotiated had arranged surrender terms under relief, between the Scots and the Balliol-English besiegers, the Anglo-Scots. However there was a dispute as to

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127 Keen, Chivalry, p.2.
130 Chron. Baker, p.46.
whether relief had been forthcoming, the Scots believed so, Edward III believed not. To assert his authority Edward III had gallows erected and hanged Thomas Seton, the son of Berwick’s captain of the guard, who had been given in chivalric good faith as a hostage. It has been argued, by Bradbury in *The Medieval Siege* that chronicler’s reports of events, such as Thomas Seton’s death, were outraged primarily because of a lack of justification rather than the actual brutality incurred. Upon receiving Thomas Seton as a captive, Edward III if following everyday chivalric protocol, should have assumed the role of protector. However, the siege laws stood alone from everyday warfare, as according to Keen, “at sieges… no quarter was given.”, and as such if agreements were broken then prisoners could, by siege law be “put to death without impunity.” However, an English source states that historical grudges, dating back to Edward I, were being dealt with in 1333, rather than the official line which stated support for Edward Balliol. Years later at the siege of Berwick, in January 1356, Edward III is recorded in Geoffrey Baker’s chronicle, as having given “life and liberty…to all found within the town,” suggesting more clemency than Edward III had been previously renowned. This perhaps suggests that Edward III was looking to enhance his chivalric status as he had stamped his authority as king in 1333, after having been subjected to the rule of his mother Queen Isabella, since the deposition of Edward II (1327).

**Conclusion**

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132 MacInnes, ‘Scotland at War’, p.19.
133 Bower, *Scotichronicon vii*, p.91.
Little use for cavalry within a siege could be considered limiting in allowing the knights to demonstrate their individual chivalric prowess, through martial display. However, it would seem that chivalry was still an achievable attainment, although perhaps more limited to the commanders of the opposing forces, including those in command of technology such as the siege engine. It perhaps could be argued that attempts trying to regulate behaviour during storming were politically motivated if not designed to preserve a chivalric reputation. However, for those being besieged, the only real chance of chivalric enhancement was attained with a sufficient length of defence, as to surrender too quickly or without the correct authority was to run the risk of treasonous accusations. With the siege laws allowing no quarter, chivalric discretion was almost entirely dependent on the besieging commanders. By allowing conditional respite, those commanders perhaps gained a chivalric franchise, and through the exhibition of clemency, once entering a surrendered town or castle, the values of largesse and a sense of honour were often enhanced.
Chapter Three  Raiding and Ravaging

Raiding and ravaging the enemy’s lands was common medieval practice. When used within siege warfare, ravaging often destroyed the hinterlands of a castle through a scorched earth policy, in order to control the food supplies and therefore effectively starving the enemy out.\(^\text{139}\) However, ravaging was also employed as a separate form of warfare. It was essentially a rapid surprise attack by enemy armed forces, where those undertaking the campaign burned crops, stole livestock and terrorised the population.\(^\text{140}\) Southern Scotland endured this treatment from both Scots and English forces alike. The main objective was to deprive the opposition of food resources.\(^\text{141}\) It also served to secure allegiances whilst maximising the raiders own wealth, through booty taken from an opponent’s land. The practice inflicted a considerable amount of physical and economical damage against an enemy’s agricultural infrastructure and income.\(^\text{142}\) Demonstrative of an apparent lack of protection, provided by the nobles and monarch of the abused land, it also served to avoid direct confrontation between those of the knightly elite. This physical warfare was primarily directed at the lower class of the peasantry.\(^\text{143}\) However, one man’s theft could also be judged another’s survival technique. In addition to enemy raids, the land itself was traversed by its own military forces. An army on the move carried limited supplies, and as such, foraging was duly undertaken. Consequently, depending on the size of the armed force, the destruction could be considerable.\(^\text{144}\)

\(^{139}\) Strickland, War and Chivalry, p.266.
\(^{142}\) Strickland, War and Chivalry, p.261.
\(^{143}\) MacInnes, ‘‘Shock and Awe’, pp.40-1; Brown, Wars of Scotland, p.303.
\(^{144}\) Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.131.
The consequences encountered and endured by the affected populations were further compounded, in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, by the “ecological and biological crises...of the Great European Famine of 1315-17 and the Great Bovine Pestilence of 1319-20” respectively. Considering the effect of these natural disasters throws into question the chivalric nature of those attempting to manipulate allegiances through the implementation of this physical and psychological warfare.

**Theft or survival?**

Depending on various perspectives, raiding could be viewed as theft or as a means for survival. It has been argued that an army marches, and therefore survives, on its stomach. It was marvelled at within *The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel* that the Scots only carried with them a flat stone and a small bag of flour for supplies on campaign. As it would have proven difficult to keep items, such as meat, fresh, the rugged geography of the Southern Uplands and northern England often dictated the Scots travel necessities, and fresh meat and water could often be found by foraging along the way. However, not only enemy forces raided livestock in order to facilitate their requirements. English sources castigate Edward II for traversing throughout England without giving full recompense for victuals taken or used from his own subjects. This was seemingly, a recurrent problem, as it had also been encountered in 1104, during Henry Is reign. The *Vita* stated that in 1316

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...our king, passing through the country, takes men’s goods and pays little or nothing or badly...Formerly, indeed, the inhabitants rejoiced to see the face of the king when he came, but now, because the people are injured by the king’s arrival, they look forward greatly to his departure...they pray that he may never return.\textsuperscript{149}

However, Edward II’s failure to display ‘appropriate’ behaviour was also mirrored in his representatives’ behaviour. In 1319, northern England complained that

...the oppression of the [March] wardens harmed the people more than the persecution of their [Scottish] enemies. The Scots used to spare the inhabitants of Northumbria...in return for a moderate tribute, but these who were supposed to be set over them for their protection were free all the time to make exactions every day.\textsuperscript{150}

Whilst this citation shows a lack of discipline and disappointment within the marches, it also serves to indicate that the Scots exercised some level of discipline concerning their implementation of extortion. However, Edward II’s practice of not carrying victuals was well known to the Scots, as in the August of 1322 Edward II entered Scotland “in search of a quarrel and fight with the said king of Scotland.”\textsuperscript{151}

Astutely aware, of Edward II’s twenty thousand strong force, Robert I removed “all

\textsuperscript{149} Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.131.
\textsuperscript{150} Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.171.
\textsuperscript{151} Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.11.
the cattle and foodstuffs which they [the English] may have consumed.”

The English forces were further hindered by bad weather and privateers that had disallowed their supply ships to reach port. Due to ineffective planning, the English knights starved for over fifteen days before retreating back across the border. By implementing a scorched earth policy to deny the enemy crops, Bruce most likely denied the supply to the Scots population too. Matthew Strickland argues that the utilisation of ravaging was still classified as chivalric in nature, if lacking some honour, as the chivalric code was not designed applicable to the lower classes. However, Bruce had demonstrated protectiveness through good lordship by removing his people before Edward II arrived in force, thus offsetting any hardship endured, and perhaps reconciling chivalry with the destruction of livelihoods.

**Plunder**

Burning and plundering through raids, were the mainstays of medieval warfare. In 1316, Sir Henry Percy and Sir Robert Clifford were appointed March wardens. Drafted to enforce the border laws that supplemented common law, in regards to the “artificial political boundary” imposed, they “[conducted] a ’chevauche[e]’ in Galloway”. These raids were not the first attacks Galloway sustained. In 1308, Sweetheart Abbey petitioned for recompense concerning £400 worth of damage sustained by way of Welsh forces. Petitions were also submitted for the “burning of their granges and destruction of their goods, estimated at £5,000…Also the value of

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152 Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.11; Brown, Wars of Scotland, pp.220-1.
153 Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.11.
8½ sacks of good teased wool … [that] Holcoltram [had] stored for fear of the Scots in 1302.”

This type of loss also meant that taxes were unable to be paid to the relevant authorities. Agricultural implements were often stolen alongside livestock, as the Scottish forces very rarely received paid wages. Just as the spoils gained from siege warfare could be very lucrative, so too could the practice of raiding. Scottish raids south of the border had sometimes secured sums of £40,000 in tribute. Galloway had been subjected to raids from the Bruce party in 1307 that had entailed “burning and plundering, and inciting and compelling the inhabitants to rebel.” Repetitive behaviour had instilled such a fear, that the people of Galloway had formally requested a royal refuge in order to hide and graze their cattle within Inglewood forest, Cumberland. Subsequently Edward II issued orders for the offending Bruce party to be “put down.” Through the destruction of the agricultural classes, enemy lords lost both a workforce and financial income, and the continual use of ravaging did not give the land sufficient time to recover. Annandale from Lochmaben to Carlisle was noted as being wasted to such an extent in 1317, that there was “neither man nor beast left.” The level of devastation encountered was to such an extent that the severities of the after effects were only ever evident in Britain. First-hand experience stimulated Andrew Harcla of Carlisle into entering peace negotiations, on behalf of his county, with those in the Scottish Marches, as help from Edward II, having been requested, was significantly lacking. Sources record Harcla as acknowledging Bruce’s status as king of Scotland, and promising to

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159 Vita Edwardi Secundi, p.83.
163 Strickland, War and Chivalry, p.276.
aid the defence of the Scottish border.\footnote{Cal. Doc. Scot iii, pp.148-9, no.803.} As such, Edward II convicted Harcla of treason and stripped him of his chivalric status through the removal of his spurs, the breaking of his sword, ultimately committing Harcla to be hung, drawn and quartered in 1323.\footnote{Chron. Lanercost, p.245; Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.13.} Tribute arrangements agreed and financed by the population of towns, were not held accountable to the same extent. Durham regularly paid tribute fines and as such secured peace with the raiding Scots.\footnote{Chron. Lanercost, p.210.} It could be argued that Harcla, in chivalric terms, was exercising good lordship, the act of protecting his wards rather than betraying his king. Ultimately, peace along the Marches should have fallen, and been up taken, as Edward II’s responsibility rather than that of the northern lords.

**Allegiances**

With disputes over Scottish sovereignty, ravaging was employed as a means of intimidation in order to coerce and secure allegiances. As such, changes of allegiance significantly increasing after episodes of sustained warfare.\footnote{Brown, ‘War, Allegiance and Teviotdale’, p.229.} Such was the extent of this intimidation that the Scotichronicon voiced concern that Scotland’s Andrew Moray had by 1338

\[\ldots\text{reduced all the regions through which he passed during his expeditions to such desolation and scarcity that more perished through hunger and extreme poverty than the sword destroyed from the time of the outbreak of war.}\footnote{Bower, Scotichronicon vii, p.137.} \]
Knighthood had constructed its own regulations, and those actions taken against the peasants that were considered non-chivalric were judged inappropriate by agencies such as the church rather than the martial elite. Scotland was said to have held little notion of national allegiance as regional loyalties often took precedence, in this the marches were no different. Moray’s ravaging had been attempting to coerce allegiances from the Balliol held lands. Fourteenth century Scottish turmoil increased most after Edward Balliol ceded the counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Edinburgh, Peebles and Dumfries, alongside the forests of Jedworth, Ettrick and Selkirk to Edward III, in return for maintenance and restoration to the Scottish throne in 1334. Those in the marches are thought to have felt alienated from the rest of the country, as the political dislocation caused by this type of warfare was also thought to have made the various governments unsympathetic to those caught in the crossfire. Areas such as Galloway, traditionally held by the Balliol family, had aligned itself with the Plantagenet kings. Accordingly, Galloway suffered widespread attacks from the Scots, who on occasion could often be fended off through the payment of financial tributes. However, *The Lanercost chronicle* provides details of Edward Bruce, Alexander Lindsey and Robert Boyd ravaging the land and disregarding Galloway’s payment for peace. Perhaps this demonstrates that it was political allegiance, rather than finance, that was sought after. The Balliol adherents, led by Eustace Maxwell of Caerlaverock (in Nithsdale), also suffered for demonstrating their allegiances towards their Anglo-Scottish lord, who was besiege at Perth (1332). Such actions earned Galloway a retaliatory raid in retribution, by

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172 MacDonald, *Border Bloodshed*, p.201.
173 *Chron. Lanercost*, p.188.
Andrew Moray and Archibald Douglas, for their actions. The continued retaliation between the camps was once again demonstrated in 1334, when Sir Duncan MacDowell, constable of Dumfries Castle, reportedly took up arms against other Galloway residents on the opposite side of the River Cree. Chivalric legend suggests that this was supposedly at the behest of his new wife. However, it has been suggested that the conflict was the result of continual raiding which successfully facilitated a change from Balliol to Bruce allegiance.

### Conclusion

Ravaging was the accepted form of medieval warfare, which employed a scorched earth policy, the theft of agricultural implements and grain stores, in order to coerce allegiances from the population and economically hurt the opposition. The destruction of the lands within southern Scotland and northern England were said to have been the most damaged within the Western hemisphere. However, considering this, these tactics served to preserve the military elite from confronting each other directly in battle. The chivalric code was considered a construction of the military elite, for the military elite. Therefore, the injury to peasants was often considered collateral damage and acceptable, as the chivalric code was not applicable to the lower classes. Inappropriate behaviour demonstrated by kings who possibly believed they were entitled to take whatever they chose whilst travelling on campaign, filtered down to some of the lesser ranked knights in positions of authority. The devastation encountered stimulated those, perhaps with a conscience,

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176 MacInnes, ‘Scotland at War’, p.23, n.49; Chron. Lanercost, p.287, n.2; Oram, ‘Bruce, Balliol, Galloway’, p.43.
to take matters into their own hands and negotiate truces through financial tributes. However, whilst this may have been acceptable for the peasantry, knights such as Andrew Harcla suffered the charge of treason for the same offence. Individual chivalric action was perhaps not achievable with honour within this sphere of warfare, unless pre-emptive action such as that undertaken by Robert Bruce in the removal of victuals and of the withdrawal of the Scottish population from Edward II’s 1322 invasion.
**Final Conclusions**

A lack of resources pertaining to fourteenth century Scotland presents some significant problems in determining which events are accurately recorded. The influences of intended audiences, and the bias of individual chroniclers, pose problems for the fledgling historian. However, there is the additional problem of having to rely on the translations of other academics, which have often been transcribed from earlier translations or since lost manuscripts. Akin to the children’s game of ‘whispers’, there will always be something lost in the re-telling. The concept of chivalry may have been constructed to limit the atrocities of war for the knightly elite. This interpretation has been classed as an insurance policy and as a veneer that has been designed to hide the harsh reality of actual warfare. The pursuit of chivalry within the Scottish marches was obtained predominantly through the utilisation of ambushes, skirmishes and sieges. Large set piece battles were far and few between as the Scots realised the limitation of both their strength and resources. However, the geography of Scotland leant itself to the guerrilla tactics employed by the Bruce Scots, and contemporary sources of the period highlight the fluidity of the uncodified nature of chivalry. English sources find the Scots cunningness as ingenious and creative, whilst Scottish sources such as *The Bruce*, have almost re-evaluated and rewritten the chivalric code specifically to legitimise the actions being positively recorded. By doing so negative attributes such as James Douglas’s arrogance are glossed over, regarded a necessity, if the achievement of military prowess, the ultimate and original chivalric virtue is to be obtained. However, James Douglas’s reputation for dare and do is offset within the chronicles by his displays of largesse and the bonds of trust held between himself and his men.
The etiquette observed through the process of ransoming, seems to have been maintained by those of the knightly elite within southern Scotland. Through repeated usage, customs such as these enhanced the honour gained by a knight. However, the introduction of an ordinance concerning the payment of ransoms should a prisoner be killed by another knight whilst in custody, suggests that the safety of a hostage was not either easy or enforceable, as perhaps presumed. Archibald Douglas’s ordinance ensured that the taking of hostages secured some form of payment, adding some strength to the motivation of the financial self-interest argument. By the mid-fourteenth century, Edward III had revoked the licences issued to English masters as a way of contractually standardising the agreements. This had the unintended consequence of reducing the significance of honour found through oath keeping.

Within siege warfare, it is often perceived that there was very little opportunity for the attainment of individual chivalric prowess. With little use for heavy cavalry, the knights’ horse, perhaps an extension of knighthood’s egoism was rendered impractical and technology such as the siege engine became somewhat of a status symbol of prowess instead. However, the real opportunity for the knights’ to display their chivalric worth came by following their commander’s behavioural lead. By letting people surrender and survive, even though the rules of storm offered no quarter, chivalric discretion could demonstrate the true chivalric values of largesse and honour. Through acts of clemency, including conditional respite, commanders’ also demonstrated chivalric franchise. For those under siege, the demonstration of chivalry essentially amounted to the length of time attributed to the defence of the castle and or town. To surrender too quickly or without authority often resulted in charges of treason being levelled at the custodians. Yet, execution after surrender
was relatively infrequent. However, chivalric custom concerning warfare was often open to abuse, especially if it presented an enhanced opportunity towards gaining a victory. To wage war on a religious feast day was considered unacceptable by the clergy, but the martial class essentially only adhered to their own laws rather than those imposed from outside agencies. As such, the sources hold many examples where English occupying forces were taken unawares through their observance of the religious calendar. Whilst this unchivalric behaviour was denigrated, it could be argued that the chivalric code of conduct was once again subject to individual interpretation, as it remained uncodified. Throughout the fourteenth century, the raid was both prevalent and an accepted mode of warfare. To hit an opposing lord financially was considered more chivalric than direct physical contact. As well as destroying the economic income, plunder gained through livestock was exceptionally valuable also. The collateral damage affecting the peasantry’s livelihood, however, was of secondary concern, if at all, as due to their social status they failed to be eligible for the privileges brought about by chivalric custom. The lower classes were also subjected to similar treatment from their own nobility as foraging undertaken by the king’s host often rendered considerable damage, without financial recompense. However, for the majority of the fourteenth century the raids were undertaken to coerce the various regions into an alliance with those dominating the area. By demonstrating both military guile and strength, both the Scots and English forces tried to undermine the authority of each other. From the evidence submitted it appears that chivalric custom was prevalent within the Scottish marches, and whilst the tactics of the Scots may seem underhand by today’s standards of fair play, they were admired and as such accepted as ‘just’ within fourteenth century southern Scotland.

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