Trickery, Mockery and the Scottish Way of War

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This article seeks to examine two prominent themes, those of trickery and mockery, in how warfare against England was represented in Scottish historical narratives of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Careful analysis of these specific themes allows a variety of insights to be presented. It will show some of the rich uses to which such texts can be put by exploring them in a historically informed context. One aspect of this is the endeavour to illuminate ways in which these sources, although treacherous in relation to specifics, can provide accurate, and previously unnoticed, more general insights into the cultures of war embraced by the Scots. Analysis of the texts also demonstrates the complex and changing ways in which perceptions about the practice of war have shaped Scottish senses of identity. It becomes clear that ideas about their mode of war were vital in how the Scots saw themselves. And such ideas were also fundamental in shaping the much more hostile view of them developed by their regular enemies, the English. The main sources given consideration are the *Gesta Annalia* II, once attributed to John of Fordun (composed *c*1363) (*Chron Fordun*)[1], John Barbour's *The Bruce* (*c*1376) (Barbour, *Bruce*), the 'Anonymous Chronicle' (probably early 1390s)[2], Andrew of Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle* (completed *c*1424) (*Chron Wyntoun*), Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon* (completed 1447) (*Chron Bower*) and Blind Hary's *The Wallace* (*c*1476-8) (Hary, *Wallace*).

The themes at issue in the present article have been largely neglected. Indeed, a general examination of how warfare has been presented within the later-medieval Scottish narrative corpus has not been attempted. There are a few notable exceptions to this broad pattern. There is an extensive literature on Barbour's *Bruce*, much of which has sought to investigate various aspects of how war is presented in the text (Kliman 1973a; Goldstein 1993; Cameron 1998; Hall 2006; Foran 2006; Foran 2010; Mainer 2010). In particular close attention has been paid to the ethos of chivalry in the work. One core aspect in this sense is how Barbour treats trickery and cunning in war (*slycht* in the author's terminology) and the extent to which this is regarded as acceptable within a chivalric value system. Consideration has also been given to the role Barbour allots to non-knightly combatants in his account of Scotland's wars. The issue of social class and military participation has some bearing, as we will see, on how mockery in war can be understood. Aspects of how war is presented in Hary's *Wallace* have also received some scholarly attention, in particular in relation to the extreme violence depicted in the poem and what this might imply for critical evaluation of the text and the poet's sensibilities (Goldstein 1993: 220-32; McKim 2003).[3] None of this, of course, amounts to a systematic attempt to analyse how warfare was presented in relation to trickery and mockery. There has been even less endeavour in this regard in relation to the other narrative sources chosen for consideration here. Historians have mined *Gesta Annalia* II and the works of Wyntoun and Bower for what these sources can reveal about the course and nature of the wars between England and Scotland. There has been no detailed scholarly attempt, however, to consider how these texts, taken together, consider war as a topic.[4] In non-Scottish historiography there has been some effort to examine the treatment of war as a theme in certain later medieval texts, such as Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, and even some attempts at a general examination of the medieval reporting of war (Allmand 2000; Given-Wilson 2004: chapter 5; King 2008). In these works, however, the topics of trickery and mockery have not received dedicated scrutiny as particularly

noteworthy categories. The themes of interest here have remained, at best, on the margins of traditional military history.[5]

In the Scottish context in particular the neglect of close examination of trickery and mockery seems surprising given the striking way these themes are highlighted in narrative sources. To start with trickery and the chronologically earliest of the sources there is initially little to report. In *Gesta Annalia* II, admittedly a terse set of annals in which extended description of military events is only occasional, there is no particular stress on trickery as a trait of the Scottish way of war. Indeed, such behaviour in war is attributed more often to English forces and their leaders, such as in the accounts of the storming of Berwick (1296) and the Anglo-French battle of Poitiers (1356) (*Chron Fordun*: annals xc and clxxvii). In the account of the former there is overt disapproval of the use of trickery in war, a judgement very uncharacteristic of narrative sources that were produced later. The only detailed account of trickery in war practiced by the Scots relates to their victory at the battle of Nesbit in 1355 (*Chron Fordun*: annal clxxii). Otherwise, there are brief allusions to trickery at times in the annals, but no particular attempt to emphasise this trait as a major feature of Scottish warfare. Episodes of trickery could hardly be said to amount to a notable overall feature of the treatment of war in this chronicle. There is a radical departure, though, when we reach the presentation of Robert I's wars by John Barbour. *The Bruce* is in many ways an extended discourse on the use of trickery by the Scots to triumph in war against England. The work begins with a ruse, the future King Robert escaping by stealth from the hands of Edward I, and continues in that vein (Barbour, *Bruce*: 1.569-630, 2.1-24). The use of cunning by the Scots is an ever-present theme thereafter, perhaps most famously represented by the taking of numerous English-held strongholds using a variety of ingenious techniques. The poem's climactic heart, meanwhile, the battle of Bannockburn (1314), represents in detail what has been identified as one overarching theme of the work as a whole: military triumph 'not by force but by ingenuity and pluck' (Summerfield 2004: 109). Scarcely any victory in arms in a work devoted to that topic comes without some form of unconventionality, Robert I winning out in varied personal tussles by, for instance, rolling a boulder on assailants, and setting his dog on would-be assassins (Barbour, *Bruce*: 6.253-60, 7.458-78). After Barbour the writers of Scottish chronicles continued to place enormous stress on trickery as a virtue in war. The so-called 'Anonymous Chronicle', relied on by Wyntoun for the narrative of events from 1324 to 1390, and independently used by Bower, regularly highlights Scottish triumphs through trickery. One example of this is the treatment of the Scottish defence of Dunbar Castle, besieged by an English force in 1338. This event is alluded to without mention of trickery in *Gesta Annalia* II but by contrast much is made of the ingenuity of the resistance led by 'Black Agnes', countess of March, in the 'Anonymous Chronicle'. The countess arranges, for instance, for an attempt to take the castle by stealth to be denied by the sudden lowering of a portcullis, trapping one of the English assailants (*Chron Fordun*: annal clvii; *Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 86-7; *Chron Bower*: vii, 130-1).[6]

That this mode of portraying war had developed by the 1440s, when Bower wrote, into a fully fledged tradition in the Scottish imagination of the historical past is obvious in the *Scotichronicon*. This work details a huge range of military triumphs over the English explicitly depicted as being the result of trickery, deception and cunning over and above the examples taken from the 'Anonymous Chronicle'. Bower rarely indicates his sources for these tales, but he seems to draw on both oral tradition

and a variety of written materials. The triumphs of the Scots in Anglo-Scottish warfare are habitually accounted for by cleverness and guile of various types. But this is also the case in accounts of seemingly minor and trivial incidents of conflict. To take one example, Bower relates the story (allegedly occurring in the 1330s) of some bullying and arrogant English soldiers who force a Scottish seaman to take them across the Forth. They are duly disembarked on what they think is the shore, but is in fact a tidal sandbank where they are overwhelmed by the rising waters and drowned (*Chron Bower*: vii, 134-7). This tale may well derive from oral tradition. There is no reason to believe that it is 'true', and it is placed with a clear didactic intention alongside another related tale, again prominently featuring Scottish guile leading to triumph over the occupying enemy (*Chron Bower*: vii, 132-5, 233).[7] There are many other instances of such military themes being explored with trickery at the heart of the depictions.

The motif of trickery and deception is perhaps particularly telling where it is deployed in the context of Scottish defeats in arms. Against a more powerful enemy failures will come, but by their cleverness the Scots are shown sending a broader message: even in defeat they score victories that show their ultimate indomitability as a nation. One example in Barbour's *Bruce* relates to the resounding defeat at the battle of Faughart in 1318 that ended Scottish hopes of lasting conquest in Ireland (Sayles 2002). The Anglo-Irish triumph was crucially incomplete, however: the severed head of the Scottish leader, Edward Bruce, was meant to be sent to Edward II, a gruesome symbol of triumph. The English king, however, unknowingly received instead the head of the Scottish herald Gib Harper, who had been fighting in Edward Bruce's heraldic surcoat and whose corpse was mistaken for that of the Scottish commander (Barbour, *Bruce*: 18.90-228). Bower finds solace in the great English victory over the French at Poitiers in 1356 by recounting a tale of Archibald 'the Grim', future third earl of Douglas, one of a sizeable group of Scots fighting on the French side. Captured in the battle, he is saved from incurring a substantial ransom by the ruse of Sir William Ramsay of Colluthie who convinces his English captors that Douglas is a menial who is attired in fine armour only because he has managed to loot his master's harness in the confusion of battle (*Chron Bower*: vii, 300-1).[8] These small triumphs of deception are placed alongside the great events of international war and invested with meaning, consistently subverting English military triumphs in the Scottish narrative coverage.

So by the late fourteenth century a mode of representation had developed in which the Scots at war were depicted using trickery to defeat – in a variety of ways – a stronger national foe. This seems to amount to a much greater privileging of this aspect of warfare than is normal in works of historical narrative outwith Scotland, where a more straightforward articulation of martial virtue lays more stress on courage and prowess (Given-Wilson 2004: 99-104). There may have been a large role for John Barbour in initially articulating this vision, which is very obvious only in those works that can be dated to after Barbour's composition of *The Bruce*. The writer has recently been credited with a formative role in the related development of a tradition of Scottish romance writing which stresses national considerations at the expense of the personal quest which has more prominence in the genre outside of Scotland (Mainer 2010: 157-75, 257-63). Many of the stories featuring trickery were clearly in circulation in oral form, however, long before Barbour wrote, and his personal responsibility for the advent of this motif should not be overstated (Nicolaisen 1989). A role in literary

developments may also have been played by the new Stewart dynasty from 1371, notably in the policies and patronage of Robert II who sponsored a more overtly anti-English cultural environment than had been the case under his predecessor David II (Boardman 2008: 73-4, 79-80, 88-91). The purpose of the deployment of trickery in Scottish narrative accounts in any case seems clear enough. It was designed to emphasise Scotland's resilience in a long struggle with a more powerful neighbour. This conceit finds echoes in Scottish diplomatic documents also, such as the so-called Declaration of Arbroath of 1320 with its explicit deployment of a theme of a small, embattled Scotland oppressed by a tyrannous neighbour (Cowan 2003: 146; Ditchburn 2000: 272-80). In the narrative sources, too, this motif is powerfully present even when trickery is not being deployed as the means to highlight the theme. So when Robert I is depicted in *The Bruce* encouraging his men by evoking the classical example of the struggle of Rome and Carthage, his point could hardly be more explicit: the smaller power, with determination and guile, can defeat a more mighty opponent (Barbour, *Bruce*: 3.207-66; Nicolaisen 1989: 61-3).

A more challenging question than identifying the trait of privileging trickery in the narrative sources is to establish to what extent this corresponds to the reality of Scottish military activity against England. There is, of course, no possibility of capturing absolute and accepted 'truth' in the historical past. This can be an especially troubling quest where the sources, like the narrative ones of interest here, are in varying measure works of literary artifice, drawing on complex and varied source materials and seeking to advance political or moral agendas above and beyond merely accurate representation of the past (Goldstein 1993: 3, 19-21). It is also arguably a particularly difficult endeavour in relation to war. The attempt to capture the essence of the experience of war in written sources through the ages has proved a troubling and difficult quest (McLaughlin 2011: 6-7 and passim). But these points notwithstanding the Scots really *did* wage frequent war against England in the later middle ages and historians are obliged to make what they can of all the sources available to them to understand how. Even if uncontested truths will not emerge from narrative sources, actions were taken in war and we must do our best as historians to characterise them.

At the most obvious level we must avoid an overly literal treatment of the available sources, no matter how appealing relevant stories might be. So the countess of Dunbar's mockery of the English force besieging her castle in 1338 (to be discussed more fully below) cannot be viewed literally, as a masterstroke of psychological warfare in action (Brown 2002: 105). This is far too credulous a response to what seem to have been oral tales attaching to the siege and which were apparently only recorded in chronicle form soon after 1390 and in some cases even later. The mocking anecdotes are loaded with meaning – but in terms of the actual events of 1338 and the conduct of participants they cannot be said to have taken place as recorded in our sources with any confidence at all.[9] At the other extreme, however, we should not go so far as to reject our sources as absolutely lacking in veracity. One recent study of Barbour's *Bruce* comes close to this stance, viewing the work as a literary text, composed to adhere to an Aristotelian structure and little concerned with the 'truth' of the Scottish military struggle of the early fourteenth century (Jack 2007).[10] Yet clearly Barbour's work is not pure literary artifice. He certainly drew on other sources and acknowledges this. He had patrons to keep happy, but he also wrote for a broader elite Scottish audience which had its own knowledge of the events – located within living

memory – he described. Barbour does not deal with legendary material, and while his audiences no doubt appreciated a good story he was not in a position entirely to fabricate. So when we read of the severed head of Gib Harper being dispatched to Edward II it is tempting to dismiss the story as pure invention, not least given the anachronistic depiction, firmly rooted in the circumstances of the author's time, of Harper as herald.[11] But Barbour is here re-telling an oral tale relayed by a participant in the battle (a John Thomasson) and recorded before Barbour's time. We also know that after the battle of Faughart a severed Scottish head purporting to be that of Edward Bruce was indeed sent to the English king (Barbour, *Bruce*: 18.147-8 and 672-6).

There are often, then, kernels of truth, and linkages back, of varying authority, to strictly contemporary witnesses, in the stories that we are left with in their later manifestations. The problems in treating this sort of material historically are certainly challenging. One aspect of this is the folkloric element to tales of trickery. As Nicolaisen has noted: 'the repeated use of secret stratagems, ruses and deceptions, is directly related to an important folktale feature central to the telling of *The Bruce*' (Nicolaisen 1989: 61).[12] One episode of folktale trickery in *The Bruce* is in the account of the taking of Linlithgow Castle in 1313 where a bogus supply cart is used to block the gates allowing the Scots to rush into the interior and seize the strongpoint. According to the 'Anoymous Chronicle' Edinburgh Castle was taken by the Scots in similar fashion in 1341, with assailants gaining entry by posing as merchants and wedging open the castle gate (Barbour, *Bruce*: 10.150-257; *Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 138-45; *Chron Bower*: vii, 144-7). The immediate temptation is to treat these tales with deep suspicion, especially as the name of one of the leaders of the 1341 assault, William Bullock (who really existed), seems to have been transposed to apply to Barbour's hero of 1313, 'Wilyame Bunnok'. Yet things might not be so simple: there really were numerous Scottish seizures of powerful English-controlled fortifications in the first half of the fourteenth century, castles did need to be supplied, and stopping a gate was one obvious means of getting attackers inside. Just because an event had folkloric resonances does not necessarily mean it did not occur (McGavin 2007: 71-2).

Another illustration of the difficulty is evident in a further piece of trickery, the taking of Roxburgh Castle in 1314. Barbour describes the Scots covered in sheeting creeping up to the walls on a dark night to launch their attack and suggests that the advancing soldiers were mistaken, when movement was seen by the defenders, for oxen and cattle in the gloom (Barbour, *Bruce*: 10.380-995). It all sounds too good a story to be true, and one commentator has poured scorn on the attempt to boost this tale's veracity by noting that livestock will have been smaller in the fourteenth century making men more convincing as counterfeits.[13] Yet the mighty castle of Roxburgh was indeed taken by surprise by the Scots in a night attack on 19 February 1314. Perhaps the attackers were not mistaken for four-legged beasts – but the kernel of truth that they did creep unnoticed to the walls must surely be allowed (see also Cornell 2008: especially 242-3). We must, then, not discount these sources out of hand when trying to recreate the events of war. Barbour remains an important source for the wars of independence. Sometimes he is mistaken, and sometimes he has reason deliberately to falsify. He seems to have fabricated the existence of a fourth Scottish division in his account of the battle of Bannockburn, but after suitably

weighing the evidence we can reject this detail (Cameron 1999).[14] *The Bruce* remains a vital source for the battle regardless.

Images of Scottish trickery in the narrative sources cannot, then, be dismissed routinely as fabrications. Cumulatively they amount to powerful evidence that trickery was indeed an unusually pronounced characteristic of the Scottish method of waging war against the English enemy. One source of powerful confirmation of this impression can be found by turning to the viewpoint of that same enemy in surveying their Scottish foe. It is very persuasive of some sort of military reality that the traits being applied by the Scots to themselves are mirrored precisely – although presented in a far more negative way – by their great later medieval foes. The view of the Scots as sneaky and treacherous, in particular in relation to war, became a dominant vision of the national enemies. The evidence is abundant. This image of the Scots was, for instance, firmly established in literary works by the 1330s. So in Laurence Minot's poem celebrating recent English military successes, known as 'Bannockburn Avenged', each stanza has a cautionary refrain highlighting the habitual guile of the now humbled Scots (Minot, *Poems*: no 2). They are still to be watched. In the romance *Sir Beves*, composed in the same decade, a treacherous Scotswoman is depicted in her malice as worse than the Saracens – enemies of the Christian faith – who also feature in the work. This depiction (and others of the same period) has been convincingly linked to contemporary English political attitudes and concerns (Calkin 2005: 93-5). Many other examples could be added. The perception of incorrigibly devious Scots was expressed well beyond the literary sphere and was also a frequent theme of English governmental rhetoric. The treacherous Scots were regularly alluded to, for instance, in parliamentary gatherings throughout the later middle ages (for example *PROME*: 1348, item 9, 1378, item 7, 1402, item 16). This was of course a lasting image and can famously be found in Shakespeare's description in *Henry V* of the 'weasel Scot', always ready deceitfully to attack when English kings – and their armies – were absent, engaged in the war with France (*King Henry V*: 1.2.169-73). The emphasis on duplicity was to an extent a stock way of recording national enmity, but the French were less disparaged for this particular trait in a military sense in English sources (although very fulsomely in terms of diplomatic activity) and were lambasted more for cowardice and pride (Barnie 1974: 45-9).

The conclusion has to be that the Scots not only developed a tradition of depicting themselves using trickery in war, but that this was indeed an unusually pronounced characteristic of their mode of fighting. There may well have been more than a purely mimetic relationship between representations of trickery and military practice. Once a tradition had developed of prizing trickery highly in war it may have acted to mould the behaviour of future military leaders, presented with an image of trickery as perfectly valid and indeed laudable in war. Beyond the purely military sphere, guile and deception were key traits of Scottish diplomatic practice as well. There was a continuing determination to make war on England even after the threat of foreign conquest had greatly diminished from 1337 when what would prove to be lasting Anglo-French conflict broke out. Yet there was also (usually) a realisation that this entailed attacking a more powerful enemy. So the Scots attacked under cover of truces, they attacked when the English crown was distracted elsewhere, they protested about their peaceful intent when danger threatened. It was a foreign policy founded, at heart, on trickery and prevarication.[15] Just as with military activity it is obvious why trickery should be cherished in terms of wider foreign 'policy': it offered the potential

for success against a more powerful foe. In strictly military terms, meanwhile, there is little sign that a prizing of trickery in war diminished throughout the later middle ages. In 1547 the Scots were at it again: in a failed ruse they displayed a banner of St George onshore to tempt an English fleet into an ill-advised landing (*Tudor Tracts*: 95).

None of this is to say that the Scots were the only ones to use trickery in late medieval warfare. In various manifestations it was a key part of military practice in the Latin west and has been given recent scholarly attention as such (Harari 2007). Scottish particularity remains a matter of degree rather than fundamental departure from agreed norms of war. Honoré Bouvet's celebrated fourteenth-century discourse on martial behaviour, *L'Arbre des batailles*, does in places suggest disapproval of deceit and trickery, but his tract is a work of theory, often equivocal and distant from the real experience of soldiering. It was in no sense an accepted contemporary guide to the law of arms (Wright 1976: 22-3, 30-1).[16] Depending on their national stance commentators might approve or disapprove of the trickery they reported. So when the English chronicler Thomas Walsingham recounts the brief seizure of the castle of Marke by the French in 1377 the incident is roundly condemned as resulting from the treacherous duplicity of Picard mercenaries who are deservedly killed for their actions. By contrast the ruses in war practised at precisely the same time and in the same sphere of operations by Sir Hugh Calveley, English captain of Calais, for instance when he comprehensively outwits the French keeper of Ardres in 1378, are celebrated with enthusiasm (*St Albans Chronicle*: 172-3, 228-31). It should be stressed, though, that the representation of trickery in Walsingham's works is not nearly so pronounced a feature of his war reportage as in the Scottish tradition. We see a similar scene when we glance at other texts. Chandos Herald's *La Vie du Prince Noir* features some trickery, such as deployment of ambushes, and does not condemn it – but it is hardly a notable feature of the waging of war in the text. The same applies to Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, where trickery is not condemned, but cannot be said to be celebrated either (*Life of the Black Prince*; Gray, *Scalacronica*).[17] It is simply a fact of war.

As the foregoing should suggest, shades of difference, maybe even striking traits, can be seen in the ways of war adopted in different locations in the later middle ages. But this should certainly not be taken to imply that the Scots engaged in a 'guerrilla' war that was somehow beyond the tenets of chivalry. The idea that there were 'two kinds of war' – a conventional chivalric version featuring open battle, knightly prowess and courtesy and a dirty guerrilla war that came to be practiced by the Scots – has enjoyed wide currency in Scottish historiography.[18] This way of thinking places trickery (alongside other traits such as avoidance of battle and a greater level of brutality) on the anti-chivalric side of military practice. Despite the widespread belief in there being two types of war, however, there is no evidence of contemporaries viewing things in such a simple way. Different modes of behaviour were evident in war, and these might be condemned or praised according to varied authorial prejudices. But there was nothing so straightforward as acceptance of distinct and neatly demarcated categories of military conduct. Battle, for instance, far from being a 'chivalric' norm, is widely accepted as having been quite rare everywhere in the Latin west (Morillo 2002; Rogers 2002b; Gillingham 2004). Things were pretty brutal everywhere as well: it has been firmly established that the accepted, omnipresent mode of waging war was the ravaging of enemy territories to the ruin of local communities (Rogers

2002a). Every flower of chivalry, of whatever nationality, was involved not in a game with set rules, but complex and shifting reactions to myriad challenges in which individual ethics or sense of honour was only one determinant of behaviour. There could hardly be a more 'chivalric' war than the Anglo-French encounters of the mid-fourteenth century, and hardly one that was more brutal.[19] The Scots may have used trickery more than others, but it was only a matter of degree in a world where warfare was everywhere vicious and desperate. There was no single 'code' of chivalry dictating acceptable rules of combat. Martial value systems were flexible, complex and untidy – and there was no neat demarcation between two different kinds of war, in Scotland or anywhere else.

Like trickery, mockery is a striking trait of the Scottish representation of war and it has had even less scholarly attention. As with trickery there is nothing particularly prominent about incidences of mockery in *Gesta Annalia* II. When Perth is surrendered in 1339 the occupying English are allowed to depart with their goods and are depicted being jeered at by the Scots, but this is the only example (*Chron Fordun*: annal clix). Barbour's *Bruce* also offers little in the way of overt mockery. That said, there is significant overlap between trickery, abundantly represented in this source as we have seen, and mockery: being fooled to defeat does bring shame. It is, instead, with the 'Anonynmous Chronicle' that a flowering of depictions of war-related mockery occurs and it reaches its apex, again, in Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*. It should be noted that mockery and abuse of one's enemies is a feature in the depiction of war in other settings. So when, in 1346, the Yorkshire knight Sir Thomas Colville spurred his horse across a river to assail a Frenchman this is depicted in some narrative sources as a response to a shouted insult (Given-Wilson 2004: 105-7). This sort of thing is commonplace in war, and in reporting of it. In the case of the Scottish narrative sources, however, there appear to be traits in the depiction of mockery that are telling and distinctive.

One of these traits is that mockery (and the related military activity) is often depicted as being conducted by sections of society that would normally be excluded from, or at least not participants normally noted by commentators in, the business of war. Depictions of the siege of Dunbar already alluded to are a case in point. The countess of March is shown not only leading a spirited and clever defence, but engaging in mockery as well. Taunts are shouted at the English commander, William Montagu, earl of Salisbury, from the battlements. Visual mockery occurs as well: a serving girl is sent out to wipe with a cloth the marks made by the missiles hurled against the walls by the attackers. When Salisbury is forced to withdraw from the siege in failure he does so '*cum dedecore*', 'dishonourably' (*Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 80-91; *Chron Bower*: vii, 126-31).[20] There is shame in a great aristocrat being defeated in war, and mocked, by women and girls. According to Bower another shameful departure from Scotland is enacted by Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland. Invading Scotland in 1377 the English army encamps at Duns but is forced to stand at arms overnight because local commoners make such a fearful racket with rattle-like instruments of wood, skin and pebbles that no rest can be obtained. The din also frightens the horses of the invading host, who break free and flee back to England. Deprived of their mounts the invaders, the knightly class included, must find their way back across the border on foot the next day (*Chron Bower*: vii, 370-3).[21] This is a good example of a depiction of a victory via a ruse that is at the same time an example of mockery: for a

proud army to be made to flee by rustics creating a hubbub is a deeply shameful way to be vanquished.

These examples of mockery of the enemy clearly tie in to the issue of the breadth of involvement in the Scottish war effort. Indeed, a large part of the impact of these tales (and others) is the very fact of the gender and/or social status of those delivering the insult. The issue of unusual elements of society depicted in a martial setting in Barbour's *Bruce* has been discussed in great detail, although not notably in relation to the theme of mockery. This trait of wide representation by Barbour of involvement in the Scottish war effort has been convincingly shown to be well beyond the norms of the romance genre (Kliman 1973b; Goldstein 1993: 191-2; Mainer 2010: 166-72).[22] Women are depicted as helpful to Robert I with regularity and in a variety of circumstances and 'ordinary' people of both country and town are explicitly highlighted contributing in vital ways to the great victories achieved by the Scots.[23] Barbour, it seems, was at pains to represent a wide communal participation of Scottish society in the struggle for independence. Indeed, the tenor of most of the studies making this point is actually to understate just how radical Barbour's vision of communal involvement in the war effort was. This is because these works tend to adopt a simplified view of fourteenth-century Scottish society and the social classes that made up armed forces. A basic categorisation is adopted featuring the knightly classes on the one hand and undifferentiated 'commoners' on the other.[24] There were, however, huge gradations in social class and wealth below the knightly level. Barbour credits the camp followers with making a decisive contribution at Bannockburn, flocking into the fray and causing the hard-pressed English, who think this is a fresh body of troops arriving to reinforce the Scots, to flee. This has been taken as Barbour allowing the 'commoners' a prominent role in the great victory (Barbour, *Bruce*: 13.225-64; Mainer 2010: 168). It is not: commoners were already the vast bulk of the four (as Barbour had it) Scottish divisions which had fought the mighty English host to a standstill, as the poet's contemporary audience would have been quite aware.[25] Instead, Barbour is allotting a crucial role here to the very lowest elements of Scottish society – his 'yomen and swanys and pitaill', 'laddis, swanys and rangaill' (Barbour, *Bruce*, 13.229, 341). There are 'respectable' camp followers here, servants and grooms, laundresses and so on – but also the very dregs of Scottish society, marginal figures hanging around the war zone in hope of pickings. Barbour's vision is quite explicit in affording a role in the war effort to absolutely all of society. The same is true of Bower, despite his otherwise elitist social views. He offers the tale of a lame coal-mining serf from Tranent gaining his freedom in 1322 from the ransom of an English knight whom he managed to snare with his hooked stick (presumably a recognised accoutrement of the medieval Scottish miner) (*Chron Bower*: vii, 10-11). The message is quite clear: the very most humble, even most pitiable, in society have a vital role in resistance to the English.

This image of wide involvement in war ties in to a particular and very meaningful category of mockery of the English, a *genre* that might be termed chivalric subversion. In these examples the enemy is ridiculed precisely because of its adherence to what might be regarded as stock elements of aristocratic martial culture. One example is the tale in the 'Anonymous Chronicle' attached to the capture of Ralph, Baron Greystoke in 1380 as he ventured into Scotland to take up his post as the English keeper of Roxburgh Castle. He, along with his baggage train, was captured by George Dunbar, earl of March who is shown laying on a lavish feast for

his prisoner served on Greystoke's captured gold and silver plate and drinking vessels in a hall decorated with the English noble's fine tapestries (*Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 290-3; *Chron Bower*: vii, 396-7).[26] The honouring of a vanquished but worthy enemy is a regular feature of chivalric set pieces.[27] Here, though, the honouring is in fact mockery, focused on the misplaced pride, grandeur and wealth of the English nobleman. Even sharper subversion of chivalric pretension is presented in Bower's rendition of a number of anecdotes relating to the Scottish knight William Dalzell. He is shown triumphing in mocking repartee as well as physical challenges against English adversaries while in London *circa* 1390-1391 (*Chron Bower*: viii, 14-19). The best-known example of Dalzell's success in wit is his response to an English knight who suggests that current Scottish valour can be explained by the likelihood of such Scots having been fathered by noble Englishmen during periods when Scotland was under English occupation. The retort is that this may be true, but that the current feebleness of English manhood can be equally explained by a debased lineage: noble Englishwomen consorted with commoners and clerics while their aristocratic husbands were away attempting to conquer Scotland (*Chron Bower*: viii, 14-17).[28] The power of this abuse is not that a Scottish audience will really have believed in this story of debasement, but that the slur is felt to be genuinely harmful to those (English aristocrats) who might have felt that in their elevated view of status a taint of unworthy blood was particularly damaging.[29]

Even more telling, though, is the presentation of Dalzell's verbal and physical clash with the English knight Peter Courtney at around the same time. The two come into conflict because Dalzell offers a mocking knightly challenge to Courtney. The English knight, confident of his prowess, is in the habit of publicly displaying the image of a falcon sewn on his sleeve expressing the motto 'I bear a falcon fairest in flight; whoever claws at her, his death is ordained straightaway'. Dalzel's riposte is to have an image of a magpie sewn into his clothing with the motto 'I bear a magpie pecking at a pea; I shall surely peck the nose off him who pecks at her' (*Chron Bower*: viii, 16-18).[30] This is a representation of extremely sharp and public mockery, the target of which is quite clear: it is to highlight the chivalric bombast of the English knight, whose lofty self-image cannot be matched by actual prowess when Dalzel (inevitably) triumphs in the contest of arms that ensues between the two rivals (*Chron Bower*: viii, 18-19).

Something deeply subversive is evident in this trait of Scottish narrative writing. Alongside the socially inclusive image of the Scottish war effort are hints here of a distinctive approach to chivalry that seems to run counter to conceptions of martial culture that stress social exclusivity and celebrate aristocratic prowess. Indications of what might be termed an earthier approach to chivalry are replete in the Scottish narrative sources. When Robert I kills Henry de Bohun in single combat on the first day of the battle of Bannockburn (23 June 1314) it is represented by Barbour as a defeat of straightforward knightly might, the splendidly armoured de Bohun charging with lance tilted, overcome by the dexterity of the Scottish king, who is by contrast poorly arrayed and on a lighter horse (Barbour, *Bruce*: 12.25-59).[31] The camp followers at Bannockburn, meanwhile, are shown electing a captain and sallying out under a makeshift banner made from sheeting. This aping of social betters in war has been read as demonstrating that the camp followers cannot escape an oppressive social structure (Barbour, *Bruce*: 13.225-52; Goldstein 1993: 190). This may be so from a modern perspective but the primary purpose of this motif as intended by

Barbour seems to have had quite a clear and very different intent. It is designed to show that even the lowest of Scots can be empowered by co-opting the symbolism of war, and that such trappings need not be exclusive to the aristocracy. It is telling that Jean de Venette uses similar motifs when representing the valiant resistance of ordinary French country dwellers to the aristocratic war bands who plague them in the 1350s: a captain is elected, and a war banner is co-opted by the peasants (Venette, *Chronicle*: 90-3).[32] As in Scotland so in France (at least in the most desperate of circumstances) ordinary people might be empowered in war and part of this empowerment lay in the symbols of war normally monopolised by the aristocracy being adopted by the lower orders to great effect. An earthier Scottish take on chivalry may have another dimension that can again be illustrated by mockery of the English. It has recently been suggested that a hostility to the French language may have developed in Scotland in the fourteenth century. Of limited usage among Scottish aristocrats, the language was associated instead with an English elite seen as tyrannous oppressors of the kingdom (Boardman 2008: 79-84; Boardman 2009). French, of course, was the classic language of chivalry as well as the English aristocracy. In Bower's account of the siege of Dunbar Black Agnes is depicted verbally mocking the earl of Salisbury in French for one of his failed assaults: she shouts from the ramparts 'Adieu, Monsieur Montague!' (*Chron Bower*: vii, 130-1).[33] The countess is represented otherwise as speaking in English and it is tempting to see an extra sharpness here in her purported use of French to convey mockery: this usage takes the language of (English) aristocratic power and grandeur and uses it subversively against the enemy.

The deployment of mockery in Scottish narrative sources chimes with a less refined, more inclusive chivalry, a conception that works to project an image of a small, embattled kingdom facing a mighty power which seeks to dominate through force, but which can be defeated by communal action and cleverness. There has certainly been a lasting power to this image of Scotland at war, even if its medieval roots have been largely neglected in scholarly work. So we find that an unproblematised image persists into modern times, in both written accounts and works of art, of Robert I's killing of de Bohun being a triumph of lightly-armed dexterity over brute force (Barrow 2005: 284-5).[34] Similarly, there has been enormous persistence of an image of the Scots in war as undeferential, engaging in coarse mockery of their military foes. The longevity of this vision is evident in the 1995 film *Braveheart* where the Scots bare their buttocks at the English enemy prior to battle. It remains a feature of the Scottish martial environment, admittedly in a clearly fantastical setting, in the Disney animation *Brave* in 2012 (*Braveheart*; *Brave*). Bawdy mockery has lasted the centuries as an appropriate, even an obvious, way to depict the Scots in war.

Whether, or to what extent, there is medieval reality to this image of the Scots being especially prone to mockery of their English foes is hard to tell. There clearly really was Scottish mockery of their foes, and indeed evidence of it over and above the carefully crafted examples in the narrative sources so far mentioned is easy to find. Right at the start of the long Anglo-Scottish wars we find that one justification offered for Edward I's sack of Berwick in 1296 was that the Scots exposed themselves and abused the king and his men from the town walls (*Chron Lanercost*: 173). In the following year the hurling of abuse preceded an engagement in Annandale in which the local Scottish defensive force met an English incursion with taunts of 'Tailed dogs!'. This was an early manifestation of a piece of mockery that would be directed

regularly by the Scots (and admittedly others) at their English enemies throughout the later middle ages and even beyond (*Chron Guisborough*: 307; Neilson 1896; Barbé 1924). Tellingly, as with the issue of trickery the English themselves accepted that the Scots were particularly prone to mockery. This representation was naturally couched in negative terms and associated with the related obnoxious traits of boastfulness and bombast; it fitted also with the staple English representations of their Scottish enemies as base and uncouth, as well as treacherous. Their crude mockery of their betters demonstrated that the Scots deserved their fate of defeat in war.[35] This characterisation chimes with views of the Scots further afield. There was plenty of international recognition that the Scots were habitually opposed to England. The impression of Pope Pius II, drawing on first-hand experience of a journey to Scotland in 1435, was that a notable trait of this antipathy was relish in abuse directed at the English (Pius II, *Memoirs*: 33).

By one argument all of this could, though, be accounted for by the fact that the English and the Scots became regular enemies from 1296. What could be more natural than to abuse, or to mock, one's habitual enemy? There was certainly also English mockery of the Scots, seen for instance in the humiliations attendant upon many of the executions enacted by Edward I towards the end of his reign, such as the laurels placed on the head of William Wallace in 1305 and the similar mockery directed at Sir Simon Fraser in the following year (Strickland 2008: 97). Merely a relative imbalance of sources in an Anglo-Scottish context could, in this argument, be taken to explain why there seems less evidence of English mockery of the Scots than the other way round. But it remains attractive to read more into Scottish mockery than simply a level of abuse we might expect any people to show towards their long-term rivals. It has been maintained here that there was a wider than normal social spread in Scottish participation in war. There was also, as a result, a tendency to celebrate a more inclusive version of chivalry, and one that was earthier and might be subversive of some conventional aristocratic martial values. In this context we should not be surprised if there was not only a particular edge to Scottish mockery, and hence a greater emphasis on this trait in our sources, but also – the reason English sources reflect such concern with Scottish mockery – an uneasiness with the nature of Scottish mockery and the challenge to comfortable assumptions of superiority and status that this posed.

In other words, the unusualness of patterns of Scottish mockery explains why this feature is given particular prominence in sources constructed by both friend and foe. And this unusualness in turn is a reflection of the particular contexts shaping the Scottish way of war. So when the Scots capture Robert Baston, the English poet who was intended to record Edward II's triumphs on the Bannockburn campaign, they turn his skills to subversive and mocking ends: courtly bombast and self-confidence is overturned as he is forced to compose verse commemorating the great English defeat instead (*Chron Bower*: vi, 366-75, 458-9). The brutality of much Scottish mockery is again redolent of a martial culture – wider, more socially diverse, perhaps coarser – not in thrall to accepted patterns of aristocratic politeness. The detail in contemporary sources varies, but the corpse of the hated English treasurer of Scotland, Robert Cressingham, killed at Stirling Bridge in 1297, was certainly flayed and his preserved skin used to symbolic and mocking effect (*Chron Guisborough*: 303; *Chron Lanercost*: 190). William Wallace is depicted as the perpetrator of this act – a man, of course, who was the very symbol to English eyes of inappropriate military leadership:

low status, a brigand, a 'bloody man' (*Chron Lanercost*: 190).[36] Even greater brutality in mockery is evident later, notably enacted by Sir James Douglas, another symbol of the unconventional breadth of the Scottish war effort. A merely middle-ranking baron, his military abilities raised him to the status of the greatest of magnates. To the English it was no doubt unsurprising that such a man would display the dead body of the English captain Elias the Clerk in 1317 with his severed head inserted in his anus (*Historia Aurea*: 208).[37] Douglas was, after all, also responsible for punitive treatment of English prisoners, some of whom suffered hand amputation, others blinding in one eye (Macdonald 2013: 199). There is, of course, mockery in the visible nature of these atrocities as well as the attempt to use terror for concrete military ends.

Terror and brutality are perhaps appropriate motifs on which to end given the context of the long, bitter years of Anglo-Scottish war and the final text to be considered, that most vicious treatment of the theme: Hary's *Wallace*. It has been argued in the present article that there were distinctive modes of representing war in Scotland, in particular an emphasis upon trickery and mockery. Both of these motifs are reflective of real behaviour of the Scots in war. In the case of trickery there was a genuine focus on and privileging of this trait in a desperate struggle against a more powerful enemy. Similarly, Scottish representations of mockery reflect real behaviour related to wide social involvement in war, amply attested by the disapproving, even horrified, reactions of contemporary English witnesses. But domestic and international political circumstances change over time; and so do the cultural patterns that relate to such factors.

There is trickery and mockery in *The Wallace*, but it is different in scale and character from the presentation of these themes in earlier historical narratives. There is plenty of mockery of the English, including in gruesomely violent terms. When an English heraldic party is found to contain a nobleman in disguise Wallace has him decapitated as punishment for his falsehood. His two herald companions are also punished, one by having his tongue removed, while the other has his eyes gouged out. The element of mockery is evident in the public and visual nature of these punishments with the maimed heralds forced to carry the severed head back to Edward I (Hary, *Wallace*: 6.349-416). This mockery, though, has a different flavour than in the earlier works of historical narrative considered here. No undermining of chivalric norms is intended in this depiction, but rather a brutal upholding of them. The English are punished in this incident specifically because of their lack of knightly integrity. They display such traits throughout the work and constantly suffer for it at Wallace's righteous hands. The mockery on offer in the poem is repeatedly vicious, as in the similar incident where the wife of Fitzhugh is made to bear his severed head back to Edward I, or when a humorous introduction is given to the burning to death of English soldiers at Ayr, whose suffering is then described in loving and pitiless detail (Hary, *Wallace*: 8.1067-70, xvii, 7.440-70). Mockery needs to have this chilling edge in the poem because the author's intention is not, as previously, to ridicule and expose the emptiness of the enemy's bombastic and aristocratic pretensions. Instead the author seeks to demonstrate the corruption of the English as a people. They are mocked in *The Wallace* not to undermine their chivalric pride, but because they are a depraved race, at all social levels, whose flaws must be laid bare in raw detail.

Similarly, in relation to trickery there is much less need for the Scots in *The Wallace* to make use of ruses to triumph in war. Instead, their heroic leader and their valiant

collective conduct repeatedly see them through against the heavy odds stacked against them. It is in fact, contrary to the tradition that I have sought to sketch, the English who are depicted as needing to use cunning and deceit to defeat their impressive foes. The poem both starts and ends this way: on the outbreak of war Berwick is taken by the English only through treachery; and this is of course the only way they can ultimately capture Wallace (Hary, *Wallace*: 1.81-96, 12.945-1078). In both of these cases rogue Scots are the means for English duplicity to triumph. But there is no doubt who is responsible for the evil that these incidents express. Edward I is a figure of unremitting malice and his people are deserving of such a king, as regular throwaway asides on the duplicity and falsehood of the English make clear (eg Hary, *Wallace*: 1.273, 8.143). The Scots led by Wallace, meanwhile, are depicted as fundamentally a knightly group, with less stress on the role of a wide social body in opposing the English than in previous accounts. The hero himself is a chivalric paragon, depicted with conventional traits of prowess and connected warlike capabilities, but also with virtues of courtesy and gentility. Much greater emphasis than in the older tradition is placed on Wallace as a courtly figure as well as a warrior (Mainer 2010: 175-86). There is much less sense in *The Wallace* than in previous works of the Scots being underdogs, needing remarkable methods to combat a more powerful enemy. Instead there is a tone of confident triumphalism, despite the Scottish numerical disadvantage in relation to their foes. This is prominently reflected in a shift from previous patterns in the treatment of trickery and mockery.

It is very tempting to see in all of this in turn a reflection of changed circumstances in Anglo-Scottish relations and attendant attitudes. At the time of composition of *The Wallace*, the 1470s, the threat of English conquest of Scotland was seemingly in abeyance and the last episodes in war between the kingdoms had seen the Scots take advantage militarily of an English polity deeply troubled by civil conflict in the 1450s and 1460s (Macrae 1939). If memories of English military potency had faded Hary's work is testimony to this shift. The author's aim was also to present the virtues of a policy of war with England (McDiarmid 1968: xvi-xxvi; Macdougall 2009: 159-60), a purpose unsuited to modes of depiction stressing the fundamental weakness (even if there were ways to overcome this) of Scottish military resources relative to England. The Scottish way of war had not in reality changed much – but there had been a significant shift in ways of thinking about the nature of Anglo-Scottish relations and the relative military strengths of the two kingdoms. This was reflected, as such changes always are, in altered cultural patterns. In a new (and it has to be said misguided) spirit of Scottish military optimism mockery and trickery were felt, for a time anyway, to be no longer important weapons in the quest to defeat the great enemy.

Alastair J. Macdonald, University of Aberdeen

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ENDNOTES

1 For a discussion of *Gesta Annalia* II see Broun, 1999.

2 For the 'Anonymous Chronicle' see Boardman, 1997.

3 For the contention, which the present writer does not share, that Wallace is presented in Hary's work as troubled and uneasy about the business of war see McDiarmid, 1991.

4 There is an attempt to consider how knighthood and chivalry are presented in medieval Scottish sources, but no coverage of mockery and trickery in Stevenson 2006, chapter 6.

5 See, however, the recent attempt to deal with medieval 'special operations': Harari 2007.

6 For the relationship of Wyntoun's work with the 'Anonymus Chronicle' see Boardman 2008: 75, 82-3.

7 The other story is of the Scot Alan Prendergest who is depicted assassinating the English marshal of Edinburgh Castle. The two tales are discussed in McGavin 2007: 41-59. The handling of these tales here is aimed at examining the theatricality of the depicted events rather than the motif of trickery itself.

8 Wyntoun's account of the incident is briefer and lacks some of the details offered in Bower (*Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 231). The source for the story is unknown but may derive from oral traditions (*Chron Bower*: vii, 483).

9 For a discussion of the sources for the tales relating to this siege see the editorial notes at *Chron Bower*: vii, 230-3. Some of the cluster of anecdotes may have had no relation to the real event.

10 It is suggested in Jack's article (2007) that the lengthy episodes located in Ireland and Spain in the later sections of *The Bruce* are included merely to conform to an Aristotelian plan. This rather underrates the other reason this matter might be included: real events happened in these locations and were significant in the stories of the Bruce brothers and Sir James Douglas. A slavish adherence by Barbour to theoretical models is also used to explain selected mistakes and omissions in Barbour's *Bruce*, but there are many other mistakes, repetitions and confusions in the work which fit better with an attempt, admittedly also with rhetorical purposes in mind, to grapple with the messiness of the past and the varied sources available to the author rather than close adherence to a strict and overarching plan.

11 See for instance Michael Prestwich's opinion (2012: 146) that the tale is too fanciful for proper analysis. Perhaps this dismissal goes too far, for even if the tale (as is probable) has no basis in truth the symbolic resonances of such stories still provide fruitful ways of exploring medieval people's strategies for understanding the past.

12 The folkloric element in *The Bruce* has attracted considerable attention (Mainster 1987; Wood 1998).

13 The point about cattle – a perfectly valid one in this writer's view – is in McDiarmid and Stevenson's edition of Barbour's *Bruce* (1985: 87). The disparagement is in Hall (2006: 83).

14 Note, however, the downbeat ending to Cameron's article (1999: 71), suggesting that the power of Barbour's mythology will continue to trump the 'truth'. In this case, however, although Geoffrey Barrow has not revised his account of Bannockburn, first produced in 1965, in the light of this research (2005: 274) other scholars have accepted that there were three Scottish divisions at the battle (Brown 2008: 118-19; Cornell 2009: 161-2). Duncan arrived at the same conclusion (Barbour, *Bruce*: p 420)

and generally the notes to his edition of Barbour's text are a model of how the source can be sensitively used to great effect.

15 For detailed demonstration of this in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries see Macdonald 2000: 50-1, 74, 146-7, 151-2.

16 For the equivocal nature of Bouvet's work see, for instance, the discussion of whether, and under what circumstances, flight might be acceptable (Bouvet, *Tree of Battles*: 121-2).

17 Trickery is not one of the particular martial virtues highlighted by Chandos Herald and applied to the Black Prince (Ferris 1980). For Gray's approach to war see: King 2000; King 2008.

18 This conception is very explicit in Barrow's *Robert Bruce* (2005), where chapter 5 is entitled 'Two Kinds of War'. See also: Kliman 1973a: 490-2; Goldstein 1991: 276; Goldstein 1993: 48; Cameron 1998. In contrast to these works Susan Foran argues, rightly in this author's opinion, that the methods of war favoured by the Scots in Barbour's *Bruce* do not run counter to accepted chivalric ethics of war (Foran 2010: 18-24).

19 This is the war memorably depicted by the great 'chronicler of chivalry', Jean Froissart (Fowler 1986). A sense of the brutality of the Anglo-French struggle can be gained from the detailed narrative treatment of the war by Jonathan Sumption (1990-2009).

20 Bower provides considerably more detail of mockery than Wyntoun and only in Bower's version is a withdrawal with dishonour specified (*Chron Bower*: vii, 130-1).

21 Responsibility for this ploy is credited variously to *verletis*, *garcionibus* and *vernaculis*. Grooms and servants might suggest the lower status members of a Scottish army mustered to oppose the invasion, and the nocturnal fear shown by the invaders would support this, although crediting local rustics might also be what is intended. Either way, the initiative in seeing off an English invasion is accorded to commoners. Wyntoun mentions the impact of nocturnal noise but does not specify its nature or who was responsible (*Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 272-5). The instrument used by the Scots is given the name *Clochbolg* in the *Pluscarden Chronicle* (*Chron Pluscarden*: ii, 237). The English are repelled in similar fashion in a poem composed in the late fourteenth century featuring a Scottish trumpeter routing a fearful English invading party with a blast on his instrument. Whatever kernel of truth there is here relates to conflict in around 1350 (McDiarmid, M P & Stevenson J A C 1985: 24-6).

22 Even beyond the romance *genre* the dominant way of reporting war remained 'anthropocentric': war was a tale of the great deeds of aristocratic individuals until more sense of valuing an army as a whole emerged in the fifteenth century (Allmand 2000: 20-3, 28). Barbour's *Bruce* stands as a significant exception. Even leaving aside the role allotted to unusual groups in society the story is one of a collective struggle of Robert I and his companions rather than an exclusively individualised depiction.

23 For examples of the roles of respectively a woman, a countryman and a town dweller in *The Bruce* see Barbour, *Bruce*: 5.123-80, 9.311-24, 17.22-100. Even children are depicted aiding in the Scottish defence of Berwick in 1319 (Barbour, *Bruce*: 17.820-6).

24 For instance Goldstein 1993: 196. See also the review of this work by Dauvit Broun (Broun 1995).

25 It is presented as a matter of simple fact (remarkable only to the English king Edward II in his courtly environment) that the bulk of Robert I's armies were 'bot simple yumanry' (Barbour, *Bruce*: 19.171). Nothing had changed in this regard by the

late fourteenth century as Barbour's audience, itself featuring much military experience, knew well.

26 The anecdote is possibly derived from an oral tale (*Chron Bower*: vii, 516). A celebratory banquet as mockery is a folklore motif, featuring for instance in the Robin Hood corpus (*Rymes of Robin Hood*: 93).

27 A classic example is the feast at which the Black Prince honours the captured king of France after the battle of Poitiers as depicted by Froissart (Froissart, *Chronicles*: 143-4).

28 Dalzell's encounters are recounted in Wood 1998: 125-6, but are here stripped of much of their meaning by a mistaking of Richard II for Robert III.

29 There is evidence of genuine cause for anxiety about domestic sexual conduct while Scottish campaigns were being waged, Robert Martyn of Yeovilton complaining in 1336 that his wife ran off with his steward while he was fighting the Scots (Seabourne 2011: 134).

30 Both mottos are given in the vernacular in the source. The quotes offered here are the rendering into modern English by the editors.

31 I take Robert I being depicted as 'horsyt…ill' (Barbour, *Bruce*: 12.48) to indicate him having generally poorer equipment than his opponent as well as a lighter mount. For a different contemporary depiction of the incident less favourable to Robert I see *Vita Edwardi Secundi*: 88-9.

32 It should be noted that the 1350s were troubled times and Venette an unusual source. More generally in the French narrative sources on war there seems, unlike in Scottish writing, to be no notably subversive rendering of chivalry.

33 Wyntoun has a different verbal exchange in the vernacular (*Chron Wyntoun*: vi, 86).

34 Artistic depictions adhering to Barbour's account include those by Eric Robertson (1887-1941) and John Duncan (1866-1945).

35 The Scots shouted 'foully and hideously' (*vilement et horriblement*) from the walls at the English besiegers of Berwick in 1319 (*Anonimalle Chron*: 96-7). Two centuries later Scottish taunting could still enrage English invaders (prior to the battle of Pinkie, 1547) (*Grey of Wilton*: 10-11).

36 This chimes with the stock English representation of the Scots as uncouth adversaries, from the royal level (Robert I) downwards, lurking in woods and bogs. For some examples see Summerfield 2004: 107, 119. Doubt has been expressed about the flaying story in some quarters (for discussion see Cowan 2007: 22-3) but there is surely a shared kernel of truth behind the various English chronicle accounts.

37 I differ from King (King 2002: 256) who thinks this tale implausible. To me it seems an unlikely circumstance for a chronicler simply to invent. There is no need to imagine as King does that 'desecto capite Helie et facie ad anum inhumane locata' indicates that the head was fully inserted, and there would indeed be little point to this: the intention was surely one of display so the insertion would only have been partial. Elsewhere (King 2003: 118) King seems to accept the veracity of the tale.

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