All The King’s Men: Chivalry and Knighthood in England, 1327-77

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By
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The reign of Edward III oversaw something of a formative period in the history of England. In the early years of the reign, the military community was engaged in the Scottish wars, and from 1337 England embarked on her greatest military endeavour to date, a conflict we have come to know as the Hundred Years War against France, the greatest military power in Europe. It was Edward’s reign that saw the first ravages of the great plague, the rise of the English language, and what has been termed a medieval military revolution that changed the way wars were fought forever.

Chivalry is a complex subject, yet for many, it is central to the way in which knights interacted with one another and conducted themselves in war and peace. It is the aim of this thesis to gain an understanding of what chivalry meant to English knights in this most tumultuous, glorious and tragic of times, where knights were simultaneously at the height of their powers, and critically under threat as a dominant class socially and militarily. Thorough an examination of a sample of the military community, the focus will fall upon on what can be learned of their motivations and attitudes, in an attempt to evaluate how these observable characteristics relate to chivalry as described in didactic and romantic works.

Methodologically, the approach adopted is influenced by the work of historians such as Andrew Ayton, examining the characteristics and relationships of the military community. Yet chivalry is a cultural phenomenon, and cannot be understood through an empirical approach alone. A socio-cultural position must also be adopted if we are to understand what chivalry meant in England in the reign of Edward III, encompassing many aspects of knightly culture and identity. This blend in approach will provide a fresh perspective on some old issues, and enable us to get closer to the chivalry of the English.
Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Introduction

I. A Beginning
Towards an Understanding of the Meaning of Chivalry 15

II. ‘Mani noble ich haue yseiýe / þat no Freynsche couþe seye’
Chivalry and the English 42

III. Brothers in Arms: The Military Community of Edward’s England 68

IV. England, Chivalry and Warfare: Prowess and Practicality 95

V. ‘Put all to sword, and make the spoil your own’.
Beneath the Iron Mask: Knighthood, Chivalry and Criminality 126

VI. The Many-Coloured Host: Heraldry, Affiliation and Lineage 153

VII. ‘So shall the valiant gain renown’
Ritual, Spectacle and the Chivalric Arcane 184

Conclusion 215

Appendix

I. On Dragons 221

II. The Variants of the Arms of England 225

Bibliography 226
Introduction

‘Some say that the age of chivalry is past, that the spirit of romance is dead. The age of chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth’.1


From the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, there was something of a revival of interest in the medieval period, and in particular, in medieval chivalry. The above quotation from a sermon by Christian Socialist reformer Charles Kingsley, given in St George’s chapel, Windsor, in the presence of Queen Victoria in 1865, is symptomatic of this revival that permeated popular culture and was influential in the subsequent understanding of chivalry and its tenets. It was a movement helped along in no small part, as is the way of such things, by literature. No lesser man than Lord Byron caused something of a furore in his pragmatic portrayal of noble conduct in the narrative poem *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Seemingly, it was thought by his critics that the protagonist, whilst being the son of a nobleman, displayed distinctly un-knightly characteristics, ranging from ‘riot most uncouth’ and blasphemy to enthusiastic whoring and a dedication to inactivity. Byron’s response was to say that the times when knighthood flourished were:

the most profligate of all possible centuries…the vows of chivalry were no better kept than any other vows. Whatever other objection may be urged to that most unamiable personage, Childe Harold, he was so far perfectly knightly in his attributes.2

Whilst Byron may have seen through the veil of romanticism and struck closer to the mark with regards to chivalric reality than his critics, the reaction to his poem is indicative of the high esteem in which romantic chivalry was held by the contemporary literary establishment: Byron’s voice was discordant with the current trend of chivalric enthusiasm. Amongst his voluminous repertoire of historical fiction, Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820) was followed by *Quentin Durward* (1823) and the two part *Tales of the Crusaders* (1825), all set in the period from the late twelfth to the late fifteenth centuries. Scott’s work is reminiscent of the world of medieval romance literature, and many of the episodes he describes call to mind the work of the great chronicler of chivalry, Jean Froissart, whose work had been published in translation by Thomas

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Johnes between 1803 and 1805. Arthur Conan-Doyle took Froissart’s chivalric subject, the Hundred Years War, as the setting for *The White Company* (1890) and *Sir Nigel* (1906), and it was these novels by which he wished to be remembered, rather than for his famous gentleman detective. Additionally, Thomas Malory’s magisterial *Morte d’Arthur*, slumbering since its last printing in 1634, was revisited in three different editions between 1816 and 1817. The availability of such rich Arthurian fare prompted a raft of writing with knighthood as its theme. From 1822, Kenelm Digby drew on Malory’s work in the various editions of his *Broad Stone of Honour*. Tennyson included *The Lady of Shallot* in his 1832 volume of poems, and went on to pen his *Idylls of the King* (1859-1873). In 1837, Charlotte Guest took Arthur back to his Celtic roots with her translation of *The Mabinogion*.

An image of medieval romantic revival and courtly love, ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’, inspired by the poetry of John Keates, by Sir Frank Dicksee (1853-1928).

The romance and popularity of chivalry was not lost on the contemporary academic world. Charles Mills followed his successful *The History of the Crusades* (1820) with the endurably popular *History of Chivalry* (1825). Mills’s ideal knight could be adequately encapsulated in the lovestruck warrior depicted above. Mills was in no doubt

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that the ‘golden age’ of chivalry in England lay in the fourteenth century, doubtless telling of his fondness for Froissart and the manner in which the medieval revival had affected the Victorian consciousness.\(^7\)

Bearing the above in mind, it is interesting to note that alongside this romantic medieval revival and a renewed interest in all things chivalric, Edward III, king during Mills’s ‘golden age’ and arguably the most ‘chivalric’ of English monarchs, was receiving rough treatment. The nadir of this is perhaps to be found in William Longman’s biographical work, *The History of the Life and Times of Edward III*, published in 1869. In this somewhat acerbic summary of Edward’s reign, Longman speaks of Edward’s ‘illegal tyranny’, and his ‘foreign wars, which he carried on with an extravagance that was as reckless as the wars themselves were selfish and abortive’.

Whilst attributing Edward with ‘manly courage and personal energy’, he was also ‘unscrupulously despotic….cruel and revengeful’, the anticlimactic end to his reign being the ‘natural sequel to a licentious life’. Longman does highlight the commercial prosperity England enjoyed under Edward, but gives the king little credit for this happy occurrence, preferring to attribute progress to increased foreign intercourse and the concessions that Edward was forced to make in order to satisfy his bellicosity and live in splendour. For Longman, Edward was a vain, warmongering barbarian who oversaw chivalric decline, which was a fact not to be mourned as ‘its general characteristic was a total disregard of all but the vanity and pride of its own order’.\(^8\) Similarly, the hugely influential William Stubbs surmises that:

Edward III was by no means a popular king, or the king of a contented people...even the name of honour loses its charm when we know it to be a synonym for a pseudo-chivalrous selfishness, untinged with pity, love or true devotion.\(^9\)

For Stubbs, Edward’s reign was characterised by the exploitation of the people of England leading to national impoverishment. The king saw his realm as a source of supplies for his wars and was primarily a warrior, ‘ambitious, unscrupulous, selfish, arrogant and ostentatious’, whose obligations sat lightly upon him. Stubbs is particularly damning about the significance of the reign to England, believing that when compared to the point of growth the kingdom had reached under his father and grandfather, ‘the

interest of the reign of Edward III is scarcely proportional to its length’. These are two voices amongst a great many in the nineteenth century, commenting on a medieval monarch encumbered by the standards of their own times and associating him with that which was reprehensible to contemporary sensibilities. His achievements in the handling of the nobility, on the battlefield and as a cultural patron pale into insignificance when one approaches an assessment of his reign in search of a guiding political or constitutional principle, and when, with hindsight, his wars appear unwinnable.

This nineteenth-century view is a remarkable volte face when one considers Edward’s reputation in the years after his reign came to an end. Following his death in 1377, his stock could not have been higher. His eulogy in the Brut chronicle states that he was ‘full gracious among all the worthy men of the world; for he passed and shone by the virtue and grace given to him from God, above all his predecessors that were noble men and worthy’. Henry Knighton, a canon of the Augustinian abbey of St Mary in Leicester (d.1396), restrains himself for fear of obscuring the truth of his words with ‘a veil of adulation’, but does say that Edward was:

the flower of the world’s knighthood, for whom to do battle was to reign, for whom to contend was to triumph…whilst he was terrible amongst his enemies, [he] was most mild and gracious to his subjects, excelling almost all his predecessors in goodness and mercy.

It seems that Knighton and the Brut chronicler were singing from the same hymn sheet, and they were not alone in their view. Jean Froissart, the writer who, to many, is responsible for the gloss of romantic chivalry applied to the reign, is uncharacteristically brief, covering the Edward’s death, his funeral and the crowning of Richard II in a little over two pages, though the late king is compared with Arthur. At least one poet in the fifteenth century viewed Edward’s reign as a golden age, where the king was the rudder of the great ship that was the chivalry of England, with his son the helmsman.

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10 W. Stubbs, Constitutional History, 2 vols, II, 393.
15 For the death of EIII see Jean Froissart, Oeuvres de Froissart, ed. K. de Lettenhove, 25 vols (Brussels, 1867-77), 8, 389-90.
Bemoaning the rapidity with which the achievements of his reign have been forgotten, he writes:

So may your thoughts, good sirs, be one
With our doughty king who died when old,
And with Prince Edward too, his son,
True fountain of the spirit bold.
I know not when we shall behold
Two lords of such a lofty kind.
Yet now their fame is hardly told:
It’s out of sight and out of mind.\(^{16}\)

A pessimistic view of the consciousness of England this may be, perhaps telling us more of a country that had suffered under Edward’s successors than it does about the true nature of Edward’s memory; and perhaps it is not the view of the majority. Subsequent centuries found in Edward’s reign a praiseworthy example for almost every political condition.\(^{17}\)

Modern scholarship has done much to redress the balance since the nineteenth century, though it was some time in coming. In 1959, May McKisack gave a lecture which concluded by saying that though Edward had his faults, being inferior to Henry III as a patron of the arts, to his grandfather as a lawgiver, as a man of business to Henry VII and as a soldier (debatably) to Henry V:

he retrieved the dignity of the monarchy without forfeiting the affections of his people, who had to thank him for over thirty years of internal peace, for the restoration of their self respect and for the winning of a military reputation in Europe which has seldom been equalled…for all his failings, it remains hard to deny an element of greatness in him, a courage and magnanimity which go far to sustain the verdict of one of the older writers that he was “a Prince who knew his work and did it”\(^{18}\).

Scholarly interest in his reign has undergone something of a renaissance since McKisack’s work: most recently in 2012 with Mark Ormrod’s major biography and in 2013 with Richard Barber’s work focussing on the Company of the Garter.\(^{19}\) Opinions of a king whose achievements, for some, lit up an epoch and provided a benchmark for all subsequent monarchs of England have thus varied significantly over time, and his abilities as a ruler still, to a degree, divide opinion. However, this work is not about


Edward III, though it is his reign that provides the stage upon which it will be played out. Neither is this work about the formation and development of a body of ideas that came to be known as chivalry, a set of ideals, values and, eventually, a ‘code’ of normative behaviour appurtenant to a military elite, though in the next chapter this aspect will be discussed. Instead, this work is about a particular group of people, living their lives at a particular time and in a particular place, and will attempt to understand a little better what a particular set of values and beliefs meant to them, and how the modern historian might go about interpreting and understanding that meaning. The time encompasses the reign of Edward III (1327-77). The group of people under discussion are mostly, though not exclusively, English knights, and the values are those related to that intangible and often contradictory ‘code’ of chivalry. The definition of it alluded to above will suffice for the time being, and will be examined in greater depth throughout this work. The following is more a justification of the why, the where and the who; the what can come later.

The reign of Edward III is ideal for a study of the nature of, and engagement with, ideas about chivalry, and particularly with ideas about chivalry in England. By the time of Edward’s accession to the throne, England and France were nations growing apart. The last significant wave of French immigration was in the troubled times of Simon de Montfort (d.1265). There was already a strong sense of national identity in England: there was protest when Edward II proposed to call his son Louis, after his French uncle. The English had little fondness for foreigners, and the population has been characterised as possessing a ‘crude insularity’.\(^{20}\) Indeed, this character can be seen reflected in anti-alien legislation regarding the wool trade from the start of the reign, and in the persistent policy of removing priories from alien hands on the grounds of ‘bad rule’.\(^{21}\) This xenophobic tendency manifested itself during the first campaign Edward led in person in 1327. Edward’s army was billeted in York, and what began as a dispute over a game of dice between English archers and the contingent of Hainaulters with the army, ended in great violence. The chronicler Jean le Bel, who was amongst the foreign contingent tells us that: ‘for defending our lives as we had done had earned us the hatred of all in the land: indeed, they hated us more than the Scots who were burning their country!’\(^{22}\) That the citizens of York hated anyone more than their perennial Scottish enemies is perhaps a bridge too far, but that the Hainaulters were the

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\(^{21}\) *CPR* 1327-1330, p. 99; *CPR* 1330-1334, p. 161.

recipients of anti-foreign sentiment in York is beyond doubt. When the war with France began in 1337, those individuals and institutions that were beholden to the king of France had their goods and lands confiscated and taken into the hands of the English king. These lands were redistributed by Edward. A Yorkshire manor held by the count of Eu was re-granted to Henry of Lancaster in 1337, and Eu’s lands in Ireland were given in the same manner to Simon Fitz Richard. Individuals began to have to prove that they were English to avoid such harsh treatment. John de Vyenne, a suspiciously French sounding fellow, had his goods confiscated in 1337 and they were only returned to him when it was seen to be the case that he was indeed an Englishman, and that his mother and father had also been English.

What was to become known as the Hundred Years War with France began in 1337 and near constant conflict, coupled with the necessary mobilisation of manpower, thrust chivalry onto centre stage within the consciousness of the population at large. The war was of such a length and scale that few remained unaffected by it, and the conflict in itself can be viewed as a national, formative experience. The fields of France also offered the magnates and knights of England the chance to develop or enhance their martial reputations, and to forge a name for themselves that would live long amongst those of the chivalric classes. Their enthusiasm for such an enterprise should by no means be taken for granted. Upon his accession in 1327, Edward III inherited a somewhat unenthusiastic and war-weary group of magnates. Edward’s early campaigns in Scotland show us a group somewhat reluctant to take up arms and go on campaign. There is an observable aristocratic ‘remilitarisation’ following the start of the war in France, due in part to the aristocracy’s desire to maintain good relations with the Plantagenet following the somewhat harrowing political problems of 1341. Additionally, there is the notion that Edward’s enthusiasm for the practices and values of chivalry contributed towards the development of a strong sense of shared identity amongst the martial classes, making the knightly ideal a dynamic force in the military successes and political stability of Edward’s reign. This was aided, in part, by the preceding half century of intermittent warfare with Scotland, causing an increase in the regularity of martial service by a section of knightly society. There are also the reforms

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23 CPR 1334–1338, pp. 538, 540.
24 CPR 1334–1338, p. 480.
27 M. Ormrod, Edward III, p. 596.
in methods of recruitment to consider. In the mid 1340s, encouraged by Edward III, measures were put in place which pressured the nobility into action by a military assessment based upon landed wealth. Though this was soon abandoned, it forced the secular landholding community to face up to their traditional military responsibilities, involving them in an enterprise which arguably led to the successes of Crécy and Calais in 1346-47. Paid service, letters of protection, pardons, warhorse compensation, regard payments and indentures of war when the king did not lead the host in person, were all part of the package that motivated men to serve, not to mention the prospect of the spoils to be gained from a successful campaign.²⁸ The triumph of English arms at Halidon Hill (1333), Sluys (1340), Crécy and Neville’s Cross (1346), and at Poitiers a decade later, cemented martial activity as the proving ground for a nobleman’s worth. It was not, of course, just the high-born who were engaging in military activity during the decades of Edward III’s wars. The steady demand for manpower, most notably for those with the means to equip themselves with the armour and steed of the man-at-arms, over several decades, fostered martial traditions on a familial level across the realm. This had the effect of transforming an adopted military culture into a more vibrant one, underpinned by collective experience and a shared mentality.²⁹ This enthusiasm and rise in the regularity of mobilisation in turn led to a number of what can be, somewhat anachronistically, called ‘professional’ soldiers-the first step towards long-term standing armies. For the purposes of this work, we are presented with a large and diverse group for study, from varying regions and economic and social backgrounds.

In addition to the rise in frequency of military engagements at this time, a boon for the historian wishing to focus on this group due to the raised profile within the source material, the knightly class as an elite martial group was arguably under pressure, and it is at such times that the characteristics of a group often come to the fore. The heavy horseman, the very symbol of chivalry and an emblem which served to unify knighthood and cement their martial superiority, was no longer quite the potent battlefield force it once had been. Arguments as to whether or not heavy cavalry was ever really as important or effective as many sources seem to imply are beyond the scope of this work. Yet the triumphs of the English under Edward III were invariably accomplished by warriors fighting on foot, supported in no small sense by massed

archery, rather than through the thunder and the glory of the massed cavalry charge. This may be partly due to a shortage of heavy cavalrymen available to Edward. In the middle decades of the thirteenth century, there was a distinct lack of men possessed of the necessary wealth to sustain knightly status, along with the horses, equipment and leisure time to be an effective cavalryman. The situation was partially arrested in the reign of Edward I, whose strong interest in chivalric knighthood prompted something of a revival of its appeal in the counties.\textsuperscript{30} The number of individuals available in the early part of the fourteenth century was relatively small. From data taken from horse inventories, pay rolls, proffer rolls and other sources, a rough figure of around 1,700 knights and 6,000 sub knightly sergeants gained some sort of military experience between Edward I’s accession to the throne and the battle of Bannockburn.\textsuperscript{31} France, the most militarily powerful nation in Europe could boast as many as 28,000 under arms and in the crown’s pay in 1340. 22,500 of these faced Edward’s siege lines at Tournai. This titanic figure throws the remarkable achievement of English arms in this period into stark relief.\textsuperscript{32} England simply could not hope to match the French in the saddle, at least not in the numbers game, and sought to arrive at a solution utilising effective infantry tactics. Yet horses were still a vital part of the military machine; in fact, the majority of the retinues accompanying the men at the heart of this study were, from the middle of the century onwards, composed entirely of mounted men, archers and men at arms. It was the very mobility and tactical flexibility of such units, upon which much of the English success was built. In spite of the above, it is valuable for our purposes to attempt to understand the effect that the decline in the tactical effectiveness of the mounted warrior and the heavy cavalry charge had on ideas about chivalry. When one of the primary arenas for chivalric expression and assertion of elite status is denied them, in what ways do the chivalric classes respond? What fills the void and how do they adapt? It is also valid to explore whether warfare and chivalry are even related in any real sense. Whilst it is undeniable that prowess was one of the great qualities expected of the knight, this does not necessarily translate to him being a good soldier. Perhaps chivalry was a set of ideas for the bedchamber and the tournament field, to be discarded when there was an enemy at hand and guile and trickery were required to win

\textsuperscript{30} P. Coss, \textit{The Knight in Medieval England 1000-1400} (Stroud, 1996), p. 70.
\textsuperscript{31} D. Simpkin, \textit{The English Aristocracy at War from the Welsh Wars of Edward I to the Battle of Bannockburn} (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 68.
victory.\(^{33}\) Perhaps it was a distraction from the gritty realities of the medieval campaign, providing a veneer of gentlemanly conduct and arcane ceremonial trappings to mud and steel and blood. Perhaps it was the wellspring of bravado and courage, providing the *esprit de corps* of the wealthier contingents of Edward’s armies. Perhaps chivalry was the framework within which such men conducted their lives, regulating their interactions, relationships and decisions: having a deep impact on their identity, in both war and peace.

In addition to the dual pressures of increased military mobilisation and uncertainty over the knight’s place in the engine room of the Edwardian military machine, the middle years of the fourteenth century were beset by one of the most significant events in the history of the Middle Ages, where society at large was placed under tremendous strain: the onset of the pestilence, which reached the shores of England in the summer of 1348. Ostensibly, for those that had been engaged in military operations on the continent and in Scotland for the last decade and a half, this was a time of celebration. The armies of France had been defeated, humiliated, and the stock of the English warrior was higher than it had been since the time of Athelstan. Many had made themselves rich on the plunder and ransoms gained during their continental adventures. To some, it may well have seemed that the plague was God’s response to their hubris. Indeed, according to chroniclers Henry Knighton and Geoffrey le Baker, this was the belief of the Scots, who rejoiced in England’s misery.\(^{34}\) The death toll for the first pestilential visitation, from 1348 to 1350, was between 30% and 40% of the population of England and Wales. In some places mortality reached 80%. By 1377, the year of the first poll tax in England, the population had fallen from what is likely to have been between 5 and 6.5 million at the end of the thirteenth century to as few as 2.5 to 3 million.\(^{35}\) Such figures are mind blowing, but what does it mean for our purposes? Amongst the most prosperous groups, mortality was certainly lower than amongst the peasantry. The nobility and the gentry of county and parish, those who served as knights and captains in Edward’s wars, were relatively well nourished and healthy (though this was no protection against bubonic or pneumonic plague) and had the chance to move away from areas where the contagion was at its most virulent. Amongst those


summoned to Parliament as lords in 1348, 4.5% died, with the figure increasing to 13% the following year.\textsuperscript{36} The next rung of the social ladder fared worse. Measured by reference to Inquisitions Post Mortem, those that held land ‘in chief’ of the crown, a group including peers, suffered a 27% mortality rate in 1348-49.\textsuperscript{37} The figures are significantly higher for the outbreak in the early 1360’s but still fairly low when compared to the effect of the plague on the lower rungs of society; under a fifth compared to the traditional figure of between a third and a half for the population at large.\textsuperscript{38} It is the societal changes that sprang from the advent of the plague, the changes in class relations and social and political mobility, which should be seen as a background to our subject matter. There are many other themes at work in this period, such as the beginnings of capitalism, the appearance of the modern family and the weakening and eventual collapse of the old feudal order. But for the following work, to assess the character of chivalry in England, among the more important wider issues to emerge from the pestilence is its role as an exogenous factor in the changing ‘dynamics of recruitment’, influencing the character and structure of Edwardian hosts.\textsuperscript{39} Widen the lens further and one will encounter the slow and steady emergence of the nation state, and the flowering of literature in the vernacular: factors which contributed to a greater sense of ‘Englishness’ which can perhaps be identified within chivalric culture.

It was when the pestilence was at its height that one of the more ‘chivalric’ events of the reign took place. Whilst it is probable that a great many of the knights of England attempted to weather the storm as best they could, shut away in rural manors and isolated retreats, 1348-49 was a great year for the chivalric life of Edward’s court and is indicative of the effect Edward III had on chivalry in England. There were at least seven tournaments between 1348 and 1349, six of them definitely attended by the king.\textsuperscript{40} In 1349, Edward founded the most famous chivalric fraternity in the world, the Order of the Garter, which endures to this day, and officially harnessed St George to the national cause. The Garter was an institution that incorporated the ties and allegiances


\textsuperscript{37} M. Keen, \textit{English Society in the Later Middle Ages 1348-1500}, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{38} K. McFarlane, \textit{The Nobility of Later Medieval England}, p. 170; This outbreak is particularly pertinent for our purposes. It was this period that saw the deaths of both William Bohun and Henry of Grosmont, along with a number of other prominent members of the military community of England, Barber, \textit{Edward III and the Triumph of England}, p. 300.


\textsuperscript{40} R. Barber, ‘The Early Years of Edward III’, in \textit{Edward III’s Round Table at Windsor: The House of the Round Table and the Windsor Festival of 1344}, ed. J. Munby, R. Barber and R. Brown (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 35; Barber has subsequently provided a revised list, giving as many as nine tournaments over these two years, Barber, \textit{Edward III and the Triumph of England}, p. 523.
which traditionally bound a tournament fraternity together. The twenty six members could conceivably been divided into two opposing teams, whilst subsuming them in a greater loyalty to Edward himself and the Prince of Wales.\textsuperscript{41} It was also a tool of the crown to enable the manipulation of the social and political elite, characteristic of Edward’s influence over this traditionally problematic group. In the wake of the deposition of his father and the political crisis of 1341, it can be read as an ambitious attempt to rebuild and re-assert monarchical authority, whilst commemorating Edward’s claim to the French throne with the motto, \textit{Honi soit qui mal y pense}.\textsuperscript{42}

Under Edward, English arms underwent a significant rehabilitation. Jean le Bel states that when Edward first became king, the English were of little account and ‘no one spoke of their prowess and courage’. In le Bel’s words, they were to become ‘the finest and most superbly presented fighters known’.\textsuperscript{43} The period is important to England’s military, social and cultural development. It was also the period of the rise of the English language; Geoffrey Chaucer was an esquire in the household of Edward’s son Lionel (of whom more later) and the beautifully written, yet anonymous, \textit{Gawain and the Green Knight} was produced in the Midlands in the mid to late part of the century. It was a reign of great highs and great lows, arguably nurturing the genesis of the English nation. England was a small, predominantly rural, somewhat insular, politically unified and homogenous country, different in character to France.\textsuperscript{44} There are grounds to posit that elements of knightly culture, or chivalry, were similarly divergent.

While this work aims to examine the practical manifestations of chivalry amongst knights in fourteenth-century England, there is an inherent difficulty in the process of compiling the sample group for such an enterprise. An in-depth study of English knighthood as a whole is obviously impossible: the group is too vast, too diverse, even for a work significantly more voluminous than this. Instead, it is perhaps best to concentrate upon a sample group which will give us an adequate ‘sense’ of the knighthood of England in its entirety. A sample of individuals is required which will provide us with a springboard for a study of wider English martial society, whilst at the same time restricting the sample group to a manageable size. The overall aim is to arrive at a representative group which will provide a demonstration of the extent to which

\textsuperscript{41} J. Vale, \textit{Edward III and Chivalry} (Woodbridge, 1982), p. 91. Richard Barber casts doubt upon this reading by pointing out that the first occasion that the Garter can be linked to tournament activity is at the Smithfield jousts of May 1390. R. Barber, \textit{Edward III and the Triumph of England}, p. 469.


\textsuperscript{43} Le Bel, p. 78.

\textsuperscript{44} Sumption, \textit{Trial by Battle}, p. 53.
knights in Edward’s England engaged with chivalric ideas and assimilated and projected chivalric identities. The chivalric world was something of a closed system, in which there existed ritualised ‘chivalric space,’ adapted forms of morality and ethics and a specific set of values through which individuals were defined and methods through which they accrued cultural capital, honour and shame. Each of the individuals proposed here sat at the centre of a web of affinities and relationships which acted as the audience to whom chivalry was projected and as the arbiters of honourable practice. Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales, earl of Chester and heir to the throne provides the overtly royal element to the sample. His vast network of affiliates encompasses some of the stellar names that loom large in the chronicle accounts of the period that would, and indeed has, justifiably been examined in its own right. The next tier is represented by the militarily prodigious cousins of Edward III, Henry of Grosmont, earl of Derby and later duke of Lancaster, and William Bohun, earl of Northampton. Bohun was grandson in the maternal line to Edward I, whilst Grosmont shared a great grandfather with Edward III in the shape of Henry III. Both men were stalwarts in the campaigns of the 1330’s against the Scots and were instrumental in the successes in France in the first phase of the Hundred Years War. The family of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, was an established part of the nobility, and his inclusion allows access to established networks of recruitment and service from a large geographical area. Lastly, Robert Ufford, raised to the earldom of Suffolk in 1337 and Ralph Stafford, likewise elevated to the earldom of his home county through loyal service and fortuitous marriage in 1351, provide examples of two ‘new men’, owing their advancement to the hand of the king. They, like the others in this sample were regular participants in Edward’s wars, yet perhaps provide balance to the national appeal and reach of the Black Prince and Lancaster in demonstrating a more regional emphasis in their affiliations. Any sample such as this will leave men out, and it could be argued that this particular sample is skewed toward the more bellicose of the individuals available. This bias is entirely deliberate. In order to better appreciate and understand the military community, it is a pre-requisite that the focus falls upon those who participated militarily. If we are to take chivalry as a set of ideas related to martial activity and its associated attitudes, it is necessary to have a military focus. This sample provides a cross section of the military community of England under Edward III, from the blue blooded to the regional bigwigs. The individuals named above are akin to lily pads in

the English pond, points around which lesser organisms circulate. It is the relationships and mechanisms within said pond, that are the subject of this work. In many cases, the focus will fall upon men who are not among those whose deeds are dutifully recorded in the chronicle accounts of the time; whose names do not spring to mind when one mentions chivalry in the reign of Edward III. Yet they are the men who fought and were victorious on the fields of France and Scotland, the men to whom the magnates turned to fulfil their indentures with the crown. In short, these men were *the* chivalry of England, and their service records and what we know of their lives may speak to us of their involvement in and engagement with the martial culture we have come to call chivalry.
I

A Beginning:
Towards an Understanding of the Meaning of Chivalry

The origins of chivalry, in a similar manner to an all encompassing definition of the term, are hard to pin down. It should be noted that ‘chivalry’ as a term could carry significantly different meanings historically than it does in modern parlance. The word was most commonly used, not in reference to any kind of code or set of values by which knights conducted themselves, but with a more general connotation as a collective noun. The term was often used to refer to knighthood as a group: the nobility in arms and the mounted warriors that constituted the military elite. In this sense, chevalerie is inextricably bound to the chevalier, the knight, and thus refers to the class which developed and was partly defined in a political and cultural sense by that expertise. The term could also be used to refer to the deeds of this elite group, and their method of making war, the practical skills involved. In this sense chivalry is what knights do. The third possible meaning, and the one which most concerns us here, are the codes of behaviour developed by this diverse group from the later twelfth century onwards, the norms and values which defined them and regulated their conduct.¹

The Emergence of a Chivalric Class

One of the defining images of the European Middle Ages is that of the knight, the mounted and armoured warrior. Lords of war on the battlefield and of the land in times of peace, their importance cannot be over-stated, and they are in many senses the heralds of Europe crawling from beneath the smog surrounding the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. For Maurice Keen, their emergence, the code of chivalry to which they subscribed and their rise to dominance can be attributed to a specific set of circumstances in the development of military technology. Their prominence is indicative of a degree of societal evolution, resulting in a class of individuals united by specific symbols of status and by a shared ideology. Keen places the time of their ascendance to the eleventh century: a time when the cavalryman was on the rise in Western Europe, partly due to a number of changes in the design of the horseman’s

equipment. It was at this point that an observable tactical shift in the use of horsemen can be noted: that of a concentrated charge by massed heavy cavalry. ²

Foremost amongst these innovations was the stirrup, first appearing in its current form amongst the Chinese in the fifth century and being introduced to Europe as early as the eighth.³ Stirrups gave the rider greater control over his mount and more security in the saddle, allowing more advanced and complex manoeuvres. Further developments in the length and weight of the lance, coupled with improvements in the design of the saddle to provide greater stability, prevented the rider being thrown from his seat upon contact with the enemy and provided the technological potential for the medieval horsemanship to attempt new and effective cavalry tactics.⁴ A heavily armoured warrior, mounted on a destrier, which was later provided with its own armour, carrying a heavy lance and used en masse became the mailed fist capable of a decisive punch through the ranks of the enemy. Horse, rider and armour had an incredible weight. The horses were chosen for their size, and coupled with the rider and his equipment, amounted to an armoured projectile with near irresistible momentum.⁵ This fact was noted by contemporaries, with one Byzantine commentator during the first crusade noting that: ‘a Frank on horseback is invincible, and would even make a hole in the walls of Babylon’.⁶ This colourful perspective, whilst obviously an exaggeration, highlights the potential effectiveness and impact of western cavalry tactics and is born of the experience of witnessing heavy horse engaging the lightly-armed troops typical of the East. This was hardly a level playing field.⁷ By the late thirteenth century, when developments in armour for both horse and rider had improved their resistance to missiles, ‘a fully equipped knight was like a moving castle’.⁸

Whilst moving castles that could drive holes through walls were undoubtedly useful, such views are perhaps a little too confident of the abilities of such warriors. Their tactical application was somewhat one-dimensional, in that if the initial charge

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⁴ M. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 23.
⁵ Michael Prestwich adds a necessary caveat in stating that the medieval warhorse was probably not especially large stating that ‘neither long legged animals of modern type bred for high speed, nor heavy shire horses, would have been suitable for military use’. M. Prestwich, ‘Miles in Armis Strenuus: The Knight at War’, *TRHS* sixth series, vol. 5 (1995), p. 210. Whilst this is fair, the medieval warhorse would have been larger than contemporary beasts used for transport or hunting.
proved unsuccessful, it took a great captain and iron discipline to wheel, reform and try again. Indeed, Matthew Bennett advances a persuasive argument that the supremacy of ‘knightly cavalry’ was a ‘myth’. Questioning the very validity of the historical concept of the military primacy of the mounted warrior, Bennett suggests that instead of viewing medieval knights as armoured centaurs, ‘wedded to their horses’, emphasis should be placed on their versatility in diverse tactical situations, and having always fought mounted and dismounted, dependant on the scenario. Although mounted knights were often deployed in medieval armies, their prominence and effectiveness is usually somewhat overstated by chroniclers with an aristocratic focus. Pitched battle was relatively rare until the later Middle Ages, and even then it can hardly be described as common, with most engagements informal and fairly small in scale. Though warfare was endemic, it became largely characterised by sieges and skirmishes. The great twelfth century paragon of chivalry, William Marshal, despite being a formidable warrior commonly engaged in conflict, never fought in the kind of battle beloved of chivalric romance, with knights galloping gleefully into the fray. Instead, his experience of war is better characterised as raiding, ravaging and plundering, with the occasional attack on strongholds. Even the pitched battles in which he was involved were more like street fights.

Regardless of the regularity of employment, the military, and subsequently the social, status of cavalrymen was irrevocably changed by the technological developments mentioned above. Yet they were accompanied by a host of other changes which were fundamental in the formation of anything which can be termed an elite military class, or at the very least a group which engaged with common ideas and shared experiences which was to later evolve into an elite military class. New levels of skill and training were required if tactics such as the heavy cavalry charge were to be successful. The charge had to be coherent and make a unified impact. Standing armies were not yet in existence in the west and military training was an individual pursuit, part of a young man’s education. For some, it is this apprenticeship leading to knighthood which is the most pertinent factor in the organisation of feudal society. The superior status of knights, if indeed they viewed themselves in this way or were seen as such by the military community at large, probably owed as much to the fact that the application

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of heavy cavalry tactics demanded such an exceptional level of training and expertise as it did to their potential effectiveness. The road to knighthood and the wealth needed to sustain such status ‘welded together a self-conscious, cosmopolitan military caste, aware of its solidarity and proud of its traditions, an essential part of which was great rivalry among knights in feats of arms’. It has been argued that it is for the purpose of honing these skills, and performing such deeds, that the rise to the perceived military supremacy of the knight coincided with the appearance of the tournament as an important part of the social and military world of mounted warriors. These events were at once the arena in which heavy cavalry tactics could be practiced and social gatherings where like-minded individuals mixed. The huge expense of equipping for such enterprises, with the necessary armour, weapons and mounts, meant that the tournament circuit was necessarily exclusive to those of sufficient means. For those with lighter purses, patronage and largesse became all the more important, fostering a series of interrelationships and social networks within the upper strata of martial society.

This image from the Bayeux tapestry depicts a mounted knight in full body armour in a couched lance charge, making use of stirrups, during the battle of Hastings in 1066. The tapestry also shows mounted warriors using spears over-arm, suggesting that the couched charge was not the only method of horseborne attack in Norman armies.

The elite nature of the heavy cavalryman, through wealth, skill and patronage, began a slow process of coalescence into a group with shared ideologies, a class apart, and this contributed significantly to the creation and assumption of shared values and social consciousness. Reinforcement of this is found in the fact that knighthood, or chevalerie, began to be referred to as an ‘order’: a group into which one must be ordained in the same sense as the priesthood. Around the middle of the twelfth century this resulted in the outright proclamation of knighthood in these terms in the Ordene de

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Chevalerie of around 1220. This sense of class consciousness and elitism is clearly manifested in the art and literature of the European Middle Ages.

The Antiquity of Chivalric Values

This technologically determinist view has been given much credence over the last half century or so. However, the appearance of the heavy cavalryman in the west was nothing new. The use of such tactics in Europe is significantly pre-dated by the use of heavily armoured horsemen in the east. As early as 530 BC, the forces of Cyrus the Great encountered cavalry used in this way by the Massagetae of modern day Turkistan. Heavy horsemen protected by suits of scale armour and helmets, armed with lances, were decisive in battle. The campaigns of Alexander the Great against the Achaemenid Empire of Darius III involved significant cavalry actions where the Macedonian hetairoi, upper class warriors, relatively heavily armoured in bronze with a cornel wood spear, were arguably the first Europeans to make use of ‘shock’ tactics with mounted warriors. The use of horsemen in this way was by no means an isolated case in the east. Centuries later, the Romans encountered similarly armed warriors, using similar tactics, during their campaigns against the Parthian and Sassanian empires, rapidly incorporating such horsemen, known as cataphracti or clibanarii, into their own forces during the military reforms of Diocletian in the early fourth century. Whilst the limited use of heavy cavalry was certainly nothing new, it was the improvement of aspects of the equipment and technology used by such horsemen which led to their rise to prominence in Western Europe in the High Middle Ages. This is better viewed not as an insular European development, but a technologically advanced revival of the tactics which began with the peoples of the east in antiquity and was utilised by cavalry forces of the Western Roman Empire and the Germanic inheritors of their territories.

If a mounted warrior elite can be identified which pre-dates the medieval period, can the values associated with such warriors be endowed with similar antiquity? David Crouch, in The Birth of Nobility (2005) argues that prior to the setting out of ‘rules’ for noble conduct by writers such as Geoffrey de Charny in the fourteenth century, and

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16 The battles at the Granicus river (334BC), Issus (333BC) and Gaugamela (331BC) all involved Alexander’s cavalry, usually in a ‘wedge formation’ being devastatingly effective against Persian horse and foot. Arrian, The Campaigns of Alexander, trans. A. de Selincourt (London, 1971), pp. 73, 119, 169.
Ramon Lull and Philip of Novara in the thirteenth, there existed a corpus of writing in which ideal types were portrayed and inappropriate knighthly behaviour was stigmatised: an ‘uncodified code’ transmitted through cautionary tales and anti-heroes in opposition to romantic protagonists. This is explained by what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu termed the *habitus*, a ‘structured and structuring structure’, consisting of a ‘system of schemes of perception and appreciation’. In other words, the subjective ways in which different classes understand and perceive the world, and the sorts of tastes and preferences they have. As Bourdieu would have it, the *habitus* develops from the economic position of the classes involved, and it is through this that individuals learn what to expect out of life: how likely they are to succeed in different projects and how others will respond to them if they behave in particular ways. Individuals internalise these values, developing an understanding of it through early socialisation and subsequent social interaction; thus, it shapes their future actions. Crucially for us here, the *habitus* has no individual reinforcement but is ‘objectively regulated and regular; without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they [the elements of the *habitus*] can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organising action of a conductor’. It is only clearly perceived when an individual acts contrary to its laws and in the sense of the medieval military elite, contravening this controlling yet intangible system could have dire consequences for the career of an aspirant knight. For Crouch, the fundamental constituents of what was to become chivalry, the qualities of loyalty, largesse, prowess, forbearance, honour and the protection of the weak and defence of the Church, were all embedded within the *habitus*, which can be traced back to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. This was reinforced through ideal types encapsulated in the *preudhomme*, such rare individuals found in the real world and in literature, against whom all men must measure themselves to be considered noble. These virtues are a part of the ideal ‘type’ exhibited in romance and didactic literature; indeed, they are precisely the attributes that Ramon Llull, writing on chivalry in the thirteenth century, gave to the very first knights. They were the best of every thousand men on earth, chosen for their loyalty, strength, and courage. They were given horses, for the horse was the noblest beast.

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Crouch’s model is necessarily restricted by the identifiable exemplars of noble conduct. If we suspend for a moment the notion that such ideologies are conjoined with and reliant upon nobility and the aspiration toward nobility, then the root of such ideas can be taken much further into the past. Many of the more practical attributes that existed in the pre-chivalric habitus can be traced back to antiquity in much the same way as the tactics employed by mounted warriors. It should be noted here that chivalry can be viewed, and indeed will be for the purposes of the following discussion, as at root a set of beliefs and ideals deep seated in the ethos of a martial elite, and it is primarily amongst those elites that our sources show ideas about chivalry to be important. This notion stands throughout history, and is not restricted to the Middle Ages; there are attributes and ideas that have always been both desirable and important to warriors. It is thus the martial society of antiquity in which embryonic aspects of medieval chivalry and chivalric practice can be observed: a kind of ‘proto-chivalry’, Crouch’s preudhomme with the connotations of nobility removed, associated with warrior societies. With this in mind, it may be that aspects of classical histories have a use in illustrating the immutable, deep-rooted foundations of the value system which came to be incorporated into the medieval ‘code’ of chivalry. In *The Knight and Chivalry*, Richard Barber draws attention to the notion that, though there are similarities on a basic level between Medieval knighthood and the tribes encountered by the Romans, ‘the knight was not merely the warrior of an earlier age in a new guise; if he had been nothing more than that, he would have formed a much larger class’. Whilst this is fair, it could be argued that the ideals of the medieval knight, the core ideals of chivalry, owe much to the warrior ethos of the tribes.

Cornelius Tacitus, one-time Consul of Rome and political and historical commentator of his age, produced his *Germania* at the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century AD. It was written ostensibly as a commentary on the customs, geography and people of that land which the Roman state was to find so problematic and redoubtable over the following centuries. However, ever the politician, Tacitus uses this work to contrast the qualities of the Germans that sit at odds with the decadence and corruption of the Empire during the Principate. The Germans loved freedom; freedmen knew their place and the people thought little of the precious metals so beloved of the Romans. Women were chaste and home life was pure, with no lascivious banquets, bawdy shows or pompous funerals.


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bemoaned by the author as all too prominent in his city.\textsuperscript{23} In spite of these traits the Germans are also portrayed as bestial and idle, with the commentary shifting focus to emphasise the ‘otherness’ of these people.

Tacitus’s description of the ceremonial arming of young warriors of the tribes has numerous parallels, both conceptually and literally, with the dubbing of a knight in the Middle Ages. Tacitus describes the arming thus:

\begin{quote}

either one of the chiefs or the young man’s father or some other relative presents him [the initiate] with a shield and a spear...the first distinction publicly conferred on a youth, who ceases now to rank merely as a member of the household, and becomes a citizen.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

Despite Tacitus’s Roman veneer, from this description it is clear that the arming of a young warrior is conducted by one in authority and of superior status to the initiate. Once initiated, the young warrior’s state of being is altered fundamentally; he has been elevated to a higher plain. The similarities with the symbolic actions of the medieval knighting ceremony are obvious: the bestowal of weaponry by one in authority, and the immediate elevation in status of the initiated. This similarity can be noted in contemporary descriptions of the knighting ceremony from the literature of the Middle Ages. One key difference is that the Germanic ceremony represents a ‘coming of age’, a rite of passage common amongst all free men. If the initiate is not ready, the event is merely deferred until he is.\textsuperscript{25} Whilst the core of this is present in the ceremony of knighting, knighthood was a status restricted to a small proportion of free society, and the ceremony permitted entry into an elite group. The shield and spear had, by the Middle Ages, been replaced by the sword as the symbol of the warrior, and it was this weapon with which a knight was presented. In addition to the refinement of the weapons involved, the ceremonial aspect of knighting in the Middle Ages had become incredibly complex, laden with religious and cultural symbolism.

There are further similarities with medieval knights which can be observed in the Germans of antiquity:

They are attached to others of more mature strength who have been approved some years before, and none of them blushes to be seen in a chief’s retinue of followers. There are grades of rank, even in these retinues, determined

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{25}R. Barber, \textit{The Knight and Chivalry}, p. 38.
by the discretion of the chief whom they follow; and there is great rivalry, both among the followers to obtain the highest place in their leader’s estimation and among the chiefs for the honour of having the biggest and most valiant retinue. Both prestige and power depend on being continually attended by a large train of picked young warriors, which is a distinction in peace and a protection in war. Neighbouring states honour them also, courting them with embassies and complimenting them with presents. Very often the mere reputation of such men will virtually decide the issue of a war.26

The passage above is worthy of quotation. It could easily be found in a description of the attitudes of knights of the fourteenth century. These warriors are not hired by the state; they are the ruling class by virtue of their association with the retinue of their chieftain. The start of the passage reveals a system whereby the more experienced men oversee the nurturing and training of young warriors, a similar concept to the notion of a squire or valletus attached to a more mature knight to learn the trade through service. The afore-mentioned William Marshal, perhaps the greatest exemplar of the ideal knight or *preux chevalier* of the twelfth century, was raised in the household of his father’s cousin, William de Tancarville, where he was provided with the education and training which was vital to those aspiring to martial careers in the twelfth century. It was Tancarville who knighted the young Marshal prior to his first campaign in 1166, and it was in Tancarville’s military *familia* that he distinguished himself in a skirmish against the Flemings at Neufchâtel.27 Thus did the young Marshal ‘win his spurs’.

Tacitus describes a warrior society and, in spite of their ‘barbarism,’ finds traits worthy of admiration. In the Germanic warrior ethos, qualities such as prowess, valour, largesse and loyalty are all observed as fundamental, and they are also shown as valued traits in the sources for the military elites of England in the fourteenth century. Thus rather than being a constituent part of society prior to the advent of chivalry, as Barber would have it, Germanic warrior culture could be seen as remaining fundamental to later ‘chivalric’ ideology. Notably, courage is a defining factor in status, and whilst Germanic kings are chosen for their noble birth, the military commanders are chosen for their valour, choosing to ‘rely on example rather than the authority of their rank’.28 It was this courage which Ramon Llull posited as the prime virtue of knighthood: ‘aussy force de courage deffent chavalier de tous vices et enforce les vertus et les bonnes coustoumes par lesquelles chevaliers maintiennent l’ordre de chevalerie ou hault honneur

27 D. Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 35.
qui luy est deu et qui luy appartient’. It stands to reason that things should be this way. Under the Roman state, advancement and elite status in the secular world was reliant upon learning and the ability to be a bureaucratic functionary; political or military office was the measure of a nobleman. This class was maintained as an elite because the cost of such an education was so high. Following the removal of the Imperial system post 476AD, these political constructs began to change. A man’s worth was now gauged by his association with chieftains or war leaders, military service to one’s king now being the main road to secular success. In short, the Germanic inheritors of the Roman west valued qualities such as loyalty and prowess above education, which was reserved for the ecclesiastical sphere. As we shall see, the concept of advancement through valour and ability has many parallels with the military community in fourteenth-century England, a direct continuation of the situation in the late fifth century. Whilst it was accepted that one of the primary roles of the high born was to be a leader of men, and while men such as Henry of Lancaster and Thomas Beauchamp were major military commanders and active campaigners, there are others who rose to rank through their ability and effectiveness as soldiers. Notable amongst the Edwardian military community for rising in this way are five of the six men elevated to earldoms by Edward III in 1337, a group including such accomplished commanders as William Bohun and Robert Ufford. Though these men were from wealthy families, Bohun was a younger son and the Uffords were not yet lords on a national scale. Yet it was their abilities and their usefulness in the reactivation of dormant networks of recruitment, coupled with their loyalty and valour, which prompted Edward III to raise them into the upper echelons of the aristocracy and the highest positions of military command. It was not only in those raised to high office that this factor can be observed. In an impressive military career which included military service under both the second and third Edwards, Thomas Ughtred, though remaining resolutely a banneret of the second rank, rose from relative obscurity in the Yorkshire gentry to one of the King’s most trusted and tested captains.

29 ‘So force and strength of courage defends a knight from all vices, enforcing virtue and good customs by which knights maintain the order of chivalry in the honour which it is due and which pertains to it.’ Ramon Llull, p. 147.
The Heart of the Matter

The most obviously martial of the virtues present in this immutable basis for the chivalric code is prowess: the ability of a knight to outclass others in skill at arms and primal masculine ferocity. This attribute is of obvious benefit to warriors, and is regularly attached to martial men in literary examples. In the Saxon epic, *Beowulf*, when his sword proves useless in the battle against Grendel’s mother, Beowulf discards it and sets about her unarmed. The narrator praises his actions: ‘so must a man do who intends to gain enduring glory in a combat. Life doesn’t cost him a thought’. Prowess was, and arguably always had been, the primary way for a man to win and maintain a reputation amongst other warriors. To forsake it, was to risk dishonour. Security in one’s own prowess bred the courage to do what was right and the confidence to assert one’s will. The lead protagonist of the *Chanson de Roland*, written around 1100, is famed for his skill as a warrior. Though set in the Carolingian era, the *Chanson*, and other such twelfth century poems reflect the society and issues of their time rather than the eighth and ninth century contexts of their setting. Above all, Roland is anxious to show himself as a worthy vassal of the Emperor through his undisputed loyalty and prowess. Works such as the *Chanson de Roland* revelled in the prowess of their heroes, depicting them as great fighters whose deeds were worthy of emulation. These men were often capable of near-superhuman feats; a blow which Roland deals his enemy, Aelroth, splits his shield and hauberk and shatters his bones, severing his spine. Some go further still, not only cleaving the hostile knight in two, but also cutting deep into the spine of his mount. Having said that, prowess for the sake of prowess is espoused as rash and foolish: a dangerous road to take. Roland is chastised by his companion, Oliver, for his desire to engage the enemy against the odds: ‘caution is better than great zeal. Franks are dead because of your recklessness; Charles will never again receive our service. If you had heeded me, my lord would now be here; we should have fought this battle and won it. King Marsile would have been captured or killed. Roland, we can only rue your prowess’.

Above all the knight was a warrior and skill at arms was one of the primary ways in which young men measured themselves against one another. The knight’s

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36 *The Song of Roland*, 1725-1731, p. 84.
world was therefore a competitive one, and a reputation for the demonstration of prowess and the successful use of violence gained the aspirant knight prestige, status and honour. Philip de Remy’s *La Manekine* c.1241 describes a fictional tournament in which the king of Scotland distinguished himself, ‘He gives and takes many blows and strikes out to left and right. Anyone who wants to take him on is likely to end up flat on the ground. After that there is no point in their going to seek their horses, for they are no longer their concern’. His performance causes those watching to exclaim, ‘all knights must love him well, praise him and value him’. The king’s prowess served him well, and he took many prizes, including the tournament victor’s prize. It is important to note here that the Scottish king fights not to maim or to kill, but for the reputation and praise his prowess earns him.

Prowess was praised, both on the battlefield and in the tournament, but could also be turned to a tactical or a political purpose in the public offer of single combat. Such formal challenges were an assertion of an individual’s power and aggressive intent, being used both to swell personal reputation and intimidate an enemy, and they could go on to influence the conclusion of large-scale engagements. As far as warrior culture is concerned, prowess has the greatest pedigree. There exists a common theme within the genre for knights taking on exceptional odds and coming out on top. Lancelot, in his many and varied guises, does so often. When he gives his oath to fight for King Bademagu in a tournament against Arthur’s knights, he is as deadly as he has ever been. In the guise of the Red Knight, Lancelot single-handedly turns the tide: ‘then were the great marvels of his prowess, which had been testified to in so many places, shown to be true, for he split knights and horses and heads and arms and lances and shields, and beat down knights to the right and left…so much did he do that all that saw him feared him, for never before to their knowledge had they seen a knight of such valour’. In this instance, the anonymous Lancelot exceeds even his own fearsome reputation as a warrior. It should be noted, however, that the knight’s ideal of great prowess does not include being a good soldier. This is an especially cogent point when taking into account the prosecution of the Hundred Years War, where there was potentially conflict between the requirements of military service in war and the desire

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for individual achievement. It is this aspect of knighthood and chivalric culture that was emphasised by Richard Kaeuper in *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (1999). In a similar vein to the examples above, Kaeuper makes extensive use of literary material, from the *chansons de geste*, Arthurian and other romance literature, as well as chivalric biographies and manuals, to foreground the primacy of prowess, more specifically of violence, to the chivalric creed. His arguments are persuasive, and his views blend well with the notion outlined above of the centrality of immutable warrior ideology to the ‘code’ of chivalry in the Middle Ages. Kaeuper’s attempt to micro-analyse the key values of chivalry have much in common with the following work. In contrast to the work of other writers such as Maurice Keen, he does not attempt an overview of the components of the chivalric ideal, but cuts to the quick and the underpinning conceptual basis of what can seem a complex set of values. However, his use of evidence is in many senses problematic in that, almost exclusively, he deploys as testament to prowess’s dominance examples from imaginative literature. Whilst he sees literature as an essential component to the understanding of chivalry, used alone it will present an idealised picture of chivalry and knighthood. It is surely only by looking at knights themselves, their actions and their behaviour, that we can attempt to gain a window into the chivalric mind.

If knighthood is characterised by masculine explosions of prowess, then loyalty acts as a control mechanism. If the buttress of loyalty is removed, knightly prowess and skill at arms simply degrade into undirected and uncontrolled violence.40 There are obvious benefits to a lord of men having loyal vassals, a group of warriors bound to him, and the importance of loyalty is again espoused in the literature of the period. When battle is looming against the Saracen, Roland remarks: ‘Ben devuns ci estre pur nostre rei; Pur sun seignor deit hom susfrir destriez, E endurer e granz chalz e granz friez, Sin deit hom perdre e del quir e del peil’.41 Loyalty, the strength of a man’s word, was the cornerstone upon which relationships were built. Arguably, the entire honour system of the knightly world was underpinned by loyalty, through the service a knight owed to his lord and the loyalty a lord showed in the protection of his servants, the trust held between warriors and the strength of their oaths to one another. Just as Roland, the hero, is loyal, Ganelon, the anti-hero, is vilified for breaking that trust when he informs the Saracens of how to defeat Roland and thus prevent Charlemagne waging war. As far

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40 R. W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, p. 185.
41 ‘It is our duty to be here for our king: For his lord a vassal must suffer hardships and endure great heat and great cold; and he must lose both hair and hide’. *Song of Roland*, 79, 109-112, p. 61.
as the text is concerned, Ganelon is a traitor and a perjurer, his cunning a defining characteristic.\textsuperscript{42} Loyalty’s centrality harks back to an earlier age of oaths and warrior fealty which had always been a prominent feature of martial societies.

Associated with the warrior virtues mentioned above, generosity, or largesse, was an effective method of promoting loyalty amongst one’s followers. Chretien placed largesse on a pedestal above other virtues:

> Largesse is the queen and lady who brightens all virtues, and this is not difficult to prove. Where could one find a man who, no matter how powerful or rich, would not be reproached if he were miserly? What man has so many other good qualities—excepting only God’s grace—that largesse would not increase his fame? Largesse alone makes a worthy man, not high birth, courtesy, wisdom, gentility, riches, strength, chivalry, boldness, power, beauty or any other gift.\textsuperscript{43}

The exercise of largesse forged powerful bonds between men. A lord was made more powerful by those bound to and dependent upon him for their welfare and upkeep. A large military retinue was an obvious demonstration of wealth and power; a valuable boost to one’s reputation and a discouragement to rivals. Largesse was seen by some as a virtue directly opposed to the mortal sins of avarice and envy, making it much more than a social necessity and endowing the exercise of largesse with a spiritual dimension.\textsuperscript{44} This sentiment is a Christian one, and speaks of the modification of aspects of earlier ‘proto-chivalry’ in the Christian era. Yet largesse has its roots embedded much deeper within the martial consciousness, and was an important aspect of warrior culture long before moralising religious thinkers or the writers of romance put pen to parchment. Epic poetry is littered with references to the ‘ring givers’, leaders who lavished wealth upon the members of their retinues, and it is a time-honoured fact that military strongmen attract a following partly through their ability to enrich those that serve them. In the Romance of Alexander, Aristotle tells his pupil that he should win the loyal service to aid him in his conquering of the world by giving generously.\textsuperscript{45} The romance genre is littered with examples where largesse brings honour to both the receiver and the giver. Arthur, the model king, is famously generous and in Chretien’s Cliges, following the capture by a young Greek prince of a band of traitorous knights in a time of war, and in reward for his skill at arms, Arthur tells him:

\textsuperscript{42} Song of Roland, 674-5, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{44} D. Crouch, The Birth of Nobility, pp. 68-9.
\textsuperscript{45} Li Romans d’Alixandre, ed. H. Michelant (Stuttgart, 1846), p. 17.
I hereby increase your battalion by five hundred Welsh knights and a thousand foot soldiers from my lands. Once my war is ended, in addition to what I have just given you I shall crown you king of the best kingdom in Wales. There I shall give you towns and castles, citadels and halls, while you await the lands held by your father, over which you are to rule as emperor.\textsuperscript{46}

At the close of the \textit{Ordene de Chevalerie}, interesting for its views of the ‘other’ and the universal relationship between martial culture and chivalry, Saladin, on learning from Hugh, count of Tiberias, what it is to be a knight, releases Hugh and sends him on his way with a ransom of gold in his pocket: a gracious captor indeed.\textsuperscript{47} Such generosity is a quality that is seemingly developed early in the greatest of knights. The Vulgate’s Lancelot is selfless as a boy. After a hunting trip, he comes across a man dressed in rags in the forest, leading a wounded horse. Lancelot gives him his own horse in exchange for the wounded animal. He then meets another man, to whom he gives the roebuck he has shot, receiving a greyhound in exchange. This generosity is somewhat tempered by the status of those involved for, though the first man appeared poor, he was of noble birth. The second man, who received Lancelot’s roebuck, was a knight out hunting for his daughter’s wedding feast and the only reason he gave Lancelot the greyhound in exchange, was because the boy so resembled Ban of Benoic, his father.\textsuperscript{48} Largesse is not charity, but gift exchange within a particular class. The nobility is in the giving.

\textit{The Development of Chivalric Virtues}

The warrior code at the root of medieval chivalry was modified and augmented by later additions in the process of its crystallisation into what we can term chivalry. This didactic process began to set out the guidelines for the conduct of knights, so that alongside the development of the concept of knighthood, there flowered a rich literary world in which heroes not only required the brute strength and skills of a successful soldier, but an altogether more refined and rounded set of attributes and virtues that can be categorised under the umbrella-term, ‘courtliness’. Additionally, direct participation in the Crusades allowed the \textit{miles Christi} overtones of knighthood to influence aristocratic society, and Peter Coss has identified this Crusading tradition within families, coupled with the participation in tournaments, as playing a part in the development of a more exclusive attitude toward knighthood in the late twelfth and

\textsuperscript{46} Chretien de Troyes, ‘Cliges’, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ordene de Chevalerie}, in Keen, \textit{Chivalry}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Lancelot-Grail}, III, 35-7.
thirteenth centuries. The consequent focus on the retinue brought the values of the higher nobility and lesser knights into alignment, causing universal chivalric ideas to be understood and engaged with across a diverse group. It is this multifaceted view of chivalry, martial, religious and courtly that underpinned Sidney Painter’s perspective on the subject. In French Chivalry (1940), Painter traces three different strands that constituted chivalry in France between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries. Under what he terms ‘Feudal Chivalry’, Painter details the core virtues identified above, the ancient constituents of the warrior code. Largesse and prowess were essential if one were to be considered a good knight, and were as important to Teutonic barbarians as they were to Frankish noblemen. Alongside these core values, Feudal Chivalry was also characterised by courtly behaviour, in the sense that a knight or a nobleman should behave in a certain manner towards those of his own class. The second strand of chivalry in France, Painter termed ‘Religious Chivalry’, and this can be characterised by the attempted modification of the conduct of warriors by the Church and ecclesiastic ideals. He surmises that the efforts of the Church had little effect on knightly behaviour, and that chivalry exhibits significant independence from religious regulation. The third strand was termed ‘Courtly Love’, and stemmed from the romanticisation of knighthood through literature, though the actual effect of this ‘strand’ is problematic to observe due to the difficulty in retrospective understanding of the private lives of knights. Painter concludes that ‘Medieval France knew neither a single ideal of knighthood nor a universally accepted code of chivalry’ and that the three types of chivalry were mutually exclusive. Yet the suggestion that these ‘chivalries’ are mutually exclusive is qualified by the assertion that knights could easily choose elements of each to form a ‘consistent composite ideal’. Knights were in many cases men for all seasons, and, dependant on their station and circumstances, found themselves in varying situations and environments where the different aspects of chivalry would be beneficial.

In spite of the potential problems in placing chivalric ideologies into a number of boxes, there is much to like in Painter’s notion. As is often the case with writings on chivalry, the most obvious and compelling examples are to be found in literature. The heroes of the romances were larger than life, capable of impossible deeds of prowess, but also principled, emotional actors in a fantastical imagined world. It is through such

51 Painter, French Chivalry, p. 94.  
53 Ibid, p. 149.
works that the term ‘knight’ came to be endowed with an ethical meaning to accompany
the social, martial and economic connotations it already possessed. With the evolution
of static court society, the view of noble conduct put forward in literature took on
aspects and attributes far removed from the clamour of the battlefield and the military
sphere. Whilst young men were being educated in noble houses and honing the skill at
arms which would enable them to be effective warriors, as William Marshal did in the
household of William de Tancarville, they were also absorbing the didactic fictions of
the romances, and learning how to conduct themselves in the rarefied and sexually
charged air of the noble court. As Painter justifiably points out, any study of the social
impact of chivalry, or indeed any attempt at definition, would be incomplete without
reference to the courtly aspect of knighthood. It is at this point that ‘knightly’ and
‘noble’ begin to truly merge, and the noble habitus proposed by David Crouch comes
into its own. In the literary world, knights had one foot on the battlefield and the other
in the bedchamber; prowess faced off against gentility and every knight in shining
armour had to have his damsel. If mastered, the art of the courtier would make a knight
attractive to women, and though much is made in the literature of male powerlessness in
the face of love and the beguiling power of femininity, it is arguable that women were
another aspect of knightly competition, and that which made a knight attractive to them
was as much used to impress other men as to secure female attention.

With this theme in mind, Le Roman de la Rose of c.1230 provides advice to
aspiring lovers. Following a plea to abandon villainy, ‘Love’ compares Kay and
Gawain, two of Arthur’s knights, to illustrate the difference between the behaviour of a
good knight and his less desirable counterpart:

slandering is not a good characteristic. Take, for example, the seneschal Kay: in
former days, he was hated on account of his jeers, and he had a bad reputation. Just as
men praised Gawain, who was well trained, on account of his courtesy, so they blamed
Kay because he was wicked and cruel, insolent and evil-tongued above all other
knights.

It was in this manner that the audiences of such works were taught about the ideals of
behaviour that was fitting for their station, that if they behaved in a certain manner it
would be to their benefit. Courtesy was the way to get ahead at court and to be a

34R. Karras, From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe (Philadelphia,
55Karras, From Boys to Men, p. 25.
56The Romance of the Rose, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, ed. C. Dahlberg (Hanover, 1983) I,
2087-2099.
courtier was to be skilled in the ways of the lover. This is not necessarily sordid, or even physical, but to be an adept lover was, for some, a full-time occupation.

Cautionary tales abound of the distractions love can have on the knightly consciousness. In the voluminous fourteenth-century romance *Perceforest*, Sir Lyonnel is entranced by a maiden he sees bathing in a pool. She vanishes without a trace and Lyonnel vows to find her so that he can gaze upon her again. This event begins an enterprise which will see the knight travel great distances and fight against a giant, some lions and even a dragon in the single-minded pursuit of his goal. His long-suffering squire seems to understand the futility of the task, saying: ‘I tell you sir, I have seen more wise men turn fools than fools turn wise at the sight of a woman’s beauty’. Paradoxically, the same love that can drive men to greatness can land them in to deepest peril. In *The Knight of the Cart*, Lancelot is so preoccupied with thoughts of love that he inadvertently ignores the warning of a knight guarding a river crossing and ends up being somewhat unceremoniously knocked from his horse and dumped into the cold water. He is described as ‘a man with no strength or defence against love, which torments him. His thoughts were so deep that he forgot who he was; he was uncertain whether or not he truly existed; he was unable to recall his own name; he did not know whether he was armed or not, where he was going or whence he came.’ For a knight as accomplished as Lancelot, who is usually so in control of himself and his emotions, this is a dire warning of how love can unseat even the most worthy of knights. The woman who is the object of Lancelot’s all-consuming musings is none other than Guinevere. Such extra-marital longing and the placing of women onto pedestals to be idolised by men who find themselves rendered helpless in the face of beauty, has been classified as a somewhat unrealistic ‘courtly love.’ This courtly love is ‘totally incompatible with both Christian and feudal attitudes towards sexuality, in which the male was the dominant party and sex was permitted solely within marriage’, making such notions purely a trope of romantic literature rather than a way of life.

Yet it is such ideas which prompted the composition of a late twelfth-century treatise on love by Andreas Capellanus of the court of Champagne. Whilst the title is a matter of some dispute, what has come to be known as the *De amore* is an instructional work offering advice to aspiring lovers. Tracts such as this begin to approach the self-

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conscious ‘codes’ of desirable noble conduct embodied by writers such as Llull and Charny. *De amore* lays out the ways in which a lover could be successful, including a list of guidelines espousing the avoidance of foul language, obedience to the wishes of one’s lover, chastity, the importance of generosity, honesty and the necessity to appear civilised, ‘in omnibus urbanum te constituas et curialem’.\(^\text{60}\) ‘Rules’ for the successful lover are also laid down in the slightly later allegorical romance, the aforementioned *Le Roman de la Rose*, composed by Guillaume Lorris around 1237, where the God of Love describes to a lover the ‘ordinances of love’, stating ‘whoso desires to love, let him attend’. The God of Love goes on to provide similar advice to the ‘rules’ of Andreas Capellanus, such as polite speech, honesty, largesse and the avoidance of vanity, but goes yet further in its advice. Dressing as well as one can afford is essential, as is remaining clean, with no dirt under one’s fingernails. A cheery disposition is vital, ‘for love cares nothing for a gloomy man’; a good singing voice will also be advantageous, coupled with skill at games, playing instruments and dancing. However, there is also advice regarding matters martial: ‘if you are a good horseman, you should spur your mount over hill and dale; if you know how to break lances, you can gain great esteem from doing so; and if you are graceful at arms, you will be ten times loved for that quality’.\(^\text{61}\) It seems the martial world remains inextricable from knighthood, even when the more courtly aspects of the ideal type come to the fore. What the romance literature bears out is that an individual would have to work rather hard in order to meet the criteria for success in love. Examples such as this are symptomatic of the idealisation and modification of knightly or noble practice in the High Middle Ages. This could be viewed as a direct result of political developments leading to the advent of static court society and the process of refining such ideals that began in the time of Charlemagne, ultimately leading to the sanitisation of the practices of the warrior classes due to the increasingly powerful influence of Christian doctrine.

Other members of Arthur’s Round Table are also given overt Christian qualities. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a true masterpiece of Middle English poetry, contains descriptions of architecture, costume and armour precise enough for it to have been written between 1360 and 1400. It also shows a familiarity with the landscape of North Wales, Anglesey and the Wirral, and the dialect of the author, incorporating


\(^{61}\) *The Romance of the Rose*, I, 2077-2265.
words of Scandinavian origin, implies that it was written in the North West Midlands. The work exhibits links with contemporary chivalry, specifically the Order of the Garter. The Order’s motto, *hon y soit qui mal y pense*, appears at the end of the poem, perhaps implying the work was commissioned by one of its members. Gawain is singled out as hero and engages in a quest which is to test his chivalric virtue. The portrayal of Gawain has much to tell us about the poet’s notions of what it meant to be a knight, and his perspective as the hero allows us a window on the idealistic courtly world of Arthur and his questing knights. Rather than place emphasis on the martial aspects of chivalry, the Gawain poet chooses to focus on the traits of his hero which make him a paragon of Christian knighthood with its associated virtues of purity and honesty. To serve one’s Lord and uphold what was right were integral to chivalric ideology. It is through symbolism that many of Gawain’s virtues are alluded to, and nowhere is this more prominent than the section of the poem where he is arming himself for his quest. Gawain’s panoply is undeniably that of a high status warrior, ‘When he was hasped in armes, his harnays was ryche; The lest lachet other loupe lemed of golde.’ The use of gold here is significant, and not merely to demonstrate Gawain’s nobility. It has a biblical significance, being the colour of the inner city of New Jerusalem or of the sanctum sanctorum in Solomon’s temple. Gold is linked with the Christian Heaven and divine glory, and Gawain’s portrayal here makes him a blazing beacon of Christian knighthood. This is reinforced further by the poet’s description of his hero: ‘Gawan was for gode knawen and, as golde pured, Voyded of uche vylany, with virtues ennourned in mote.’ Gawain’s shield is also important in his presentation as a Christian exemplar of the chivalric ideal. St Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians speaks of ‘the shield of faith wherewith [they] shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked’ (6:10-17). This spiritual association is further reinforced by the picture of the Virgin on the inside of the shield. Gawain, whilst being totally loyal to King Arthur, is also a warrior of God.

Understandably, there were numerous attempts by the church to control and sanitise knighthood, turning the warrior elite into the strong right arm of Christendom.

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65 GGK 633-35.
66 P. Sadowski, *The Knight and His Quest*, p. 112.
67 GGK, 647-9.
The full ceremony of dubbing a knight was, in itself, heavily Christianised. The sword and other knightly accoutrements were to be blessed, and a vigil during which the initiate spent the night prior to the ceremony alone in prayer and then attended Mass immediately afterward, were theoretically part of the ritual. Much of the knight’s dress was laden with religious symbolism; white linen clothing represented purity and a red tunic, the blood a knight was to shed. Black hose symbolised remembrance of death, a white belt denoted chastity and a cloak of red, humility. The sword, the primary weapon of the knight with which he was girded, is cruciform and was used to imply the dual effectiveness of faith and steel. These aspects of the ceremony were not always part of knighting and do not date back to its beginnings. Many knights were made in haste and without great ceremonial prior to campaigns, such as those made by Edward III at La Hogue prior to the 1346 Crécy campaign. There were also dubbings prior to battle, as at Crécy, and if such things occurred on this campaign, they certainly occurred in others. Yet the religious aspects of knighthood are indicative of ecclesiastical attempts to quell knightly violence and increase the social utility of knighthood. It can be argued that it was the crusading ideal of the late eleventh century which slowly began to bring the traditionally difficult and fractious relationship between the Church and knighthood into some sort of accord, a reconciliation which perhaps has great repercussions for what was to become chivalry. This in turn would go on to influence the values of the warrior aristocracy in fourteenth-century England. Knighthood was endowed with a Christian mission in the preaching of the First Crusade. There are, however, risks associated with linking the ideas associated with the Crusade and the concept of Christian knighthood. It was but one channel for the martial energies of knights; war against the Seljuk Turks and Fatimid Egyptians in aid of eastern Christians and for the liberation of the Holy Land did not encompass all manner of knightly activity. It was a new, yet narrow, path to salvation. For the purposes of this work, the debate about the specifics of ecclesiastic manipulation of the second estate, and the appearance and development of Christian morality inherent within the chivalric ideal, though not to be disregarded, can be placed in the background. It suffices to say that the protection of the weak and the opposition to injustice was a part of the noble habitus prior to the

68 M. Karras, From Boys to Men, p. 42.
Edward III knighted his son on landing in France, along with William Montague, Roger Mortimer, William Ros, Roger de la Warre, Richard de la Bere and others.
70 Fifty men were knighted at the battle, Eulogium historiarum sive temporis, ed. F. S. Haydon, Rolls series, 3 vols (London, 1858-63), III, 211.
71 M. Keen, Chivalry, p. 49.
codification of chivalry, and this duty was retained as the moral root of many of the ideals that subsequently became part of that code.

The problem remains as to how one goes about reconciling the obvious contradictions inherent in chivalric ideology. The difficulty is aptly demonstrated in the influential and popular romance *Lancelot do Lac*, with a description of the ideal knight by the Lady of the Lake to the young Lancelot, one of the most ‘chivalric’ of chivalric heroes:

> he [the knight] should be courteous without baseness, gracious without cruelty, compassionate toward the needy, generous and prepared to help those in need, and ready and prepared to confound robbers and killers; he should be a fair judge, without love or hate, without love to help wrong against right, without hate to hinder right in order to further wrong. A knight should not, for fear of death, do anything which can be seen as shameful: rather, he should be more afraid of shame than of suffering death.\(^{72}\)

How does one reconcile this courtly and Christian perspective on knighthood with the actions and attitudes of knights beyond the pages of romance? John Barnie goes some way to addressing this problem, and views chivalry as a fairly fluidic body of ideas, a practical code where certain values such as honour, pride and loyalty were held to be immutable, yet others were open to reform and the dictates of fashion.\(^{73}\) Maurice Keen, the author of perhaps the most influential work on chivalry in recent times, sees chivalry as being composed of similar elements to the model offered by Sidney Painter. Keen also sees chivalry as comprising of three strands: military, noble and religious, yet, like Barnie, stresses the organic nature of such a way of life, subject to modification and evolution.\(^{74}\) Keen, whilst shying away from a concrete definition of chivalry, attempts to bring together the aspects of chivalric ideology from 1100 to 1500, beginning with its origin in secular martial society and tracing its development through time and space, the impact of religious ideals and the development of its ‘historical mythology’. Such a broad base is useful in providing an understanding of the development of chivalry, and Keen’s work is indispensible as a basis for further investigation. Keen’s understanding of chivalry is underpinned by its secular development, and it is this view, combined with the organic nature of chivalry, which provides the springboard for this work.

\(^{73}\) J. Barnie, *War in Medieval English Society: Social Values in the Hundred Years War 1337-99* (Ithaca, 1974), p. 58
\(^{74}\) M. Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 17.
**Chivalry in England**

Our focus here, however, is on England and the English. What follows must be viewed in this context. In the manner of Keen’s work, many writers on chivalry have chosen to adopt a pan-European approach to the study of chivalry, and this perhaps muddies the waters somewhat. The fact that Painter focuses upon French chivalry is in itself as tacit nod to the notion that national chivalries, varying in character from polity to polity are plausible, but what of chivalry in England? In a wide ranging study of the relationship between war and chivalry in eleventh and twelfth century England and Normandy, Matthew Strickland highlights the tensions between pragmatism and ideology in the conduct of war. In an attempt to better understand the attitude of knights in relation to warfare, Strickland’s focus falls upon the relations that knights had with one another, underpinned by the notion that ‘rules’ regulating conduct were adhered to due to a shared sense of identity and a concern for honour and reputation that transcended social boundaries between knights. For Strickland, ‘chivalry’ is to be understood through these exclusive class conventions rather than through values such as bravery, loyalty and prowess found in wider warrior culture.\(^75\) John Gillingham is slightly more specific, arguing that whilst the core aspects of the warrior code detailed above can be identified in England as early as the days of Bede, it is the compassionate treatment of defeated high-status enemies that is a defining characteristic of chivalry. Gillingham sees chivalry as a secular code of values serving to limit brutality in war and links its appearance in England firmly with events in 1066.\(^76\) Nigel Saul’s *For Honour and Fame* (2011) aims to place chivalry centre stage in a wide ranging account of English aristocratic society in the Middle Ages, though he is perhaps too quick to link ‘aristocratic’ with ‘knightly’. Saul follows Strickland and Gillingham in his explanation of chivalry’s arrival in England with the Normans, yet this perhaps rests on somewhat boggy ground. He cites the tactical differences between the mounted Norman forces and the Saxon army that fought on foot at Hastings, as separating the chivalrous invader from the non-chivalrous English. He compares the Conqueror’s lenient treatment of rebels at Exeter in 1068 with Harold Godwinson’s wholesale slaughter of Norsemen following the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066, and surmises that chivalry had tempered the conduct of the former, whilst the latter was a result of savagery inherent in

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pre-chivalric systems. This is problematic. Godwinson’s actions in 1066 were those of a defending monarch evicting an invader from his land, the savagery justified as a deterrent to future incursion after a fractious and bloody history of violence between England and Scandinavia. In contrast, William’s actions at Exeter two years later were those of an invading power in a potentially hostile situation, exhibiting magnanimity to pacify a local population. To act otherwise was to risk a spark that would set the country ablaze in rebellion. The Normans were not above acts of barbarity, and the Conquerors actions in 1068 were a matter of political sense, just as Godwinson’s were in 1066, albeit with different outcomes. To credit chivalry with altering the actions of the Normans in this case is surely unwise.\textsuperscript{77} It is perhaps better to take the view espoused by Malcolm Vale, that ‘chivalry’ was ‘honour’ in its medieval guise, that it is an ethical construct that is universal, and perhaps eternal, in martial societies.\textsuperscript{78} The English term for the mounted Norman soldiers depicted in the Bayeux tapestry above was cniht, a general term meaning attendant or servant, which suggests that in the first instance, such men were viewed as having no great status. However, William of Malmesbury, in his \textit{Gesta Regum Anglorum} of c.1125 hints that ‘knights’ may have been a distinct status group in England as early as the time of Alfred (AD871-899). Malmesbury writes that Alfred made his grandson, Athelstan, a knight unusually early, giving him a scarlet cloak, a belt studded with diamonds and a Saxon sword in a golden scabbard.\textsuperscript{79} Anachronism this may be, yet it raises the interesting possibility that the concept of ‘knighthood’ had its own, English roots. At the very least Malmesbury did not seem to believe that the concept of the dubbing of knights and the ceremonial garb associated with it was alien to pre-conquest England. With this perspective, ‘chivalry’ ceases to be viewed as an imported set of values and becomes merely an imported term for values of greater antiquity. Whilst this point is conceded in Saul’s work, he maintains that chivalry had a sanitising effect on the conduct of warfare and the behaviour of knights, a point which would be contested by Richard Kaeuper, and indeed will be by what follows. Saul goes on to chart the development of chivalry in England, with a specific chapter on the chivalric kingship of Edward III.

It is chivalry at Edward’s court that is the focus of the work most obviously pertinent to a study of English chivalry in the fourteenth century, Juliet Vale’s \textit{Edward}

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{77} N. Saul, \textit{For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500} (London, 2011), pp.7-9.
  \item\textsuperscript{78} M. Vale, \textit{War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages} (Gloucester, 1981), p.1.
  \item\textsuperscript{79} \textit{William of Malmesbury’s Chronicle}, ed. J. A. Giles (London, 1847), p. 130.
\end{itemize}
III and Chivalry (1982). Vale attempts to provide a window into chivalric court culture, and draws attention to the similarities with modes of behaviour and chivalric ceremonial practice found in France and the Low Countries, whilst emphasising the political power that Edward wielded through his engagement with chivalric ideology, spectacle and crucially, the Order of the Garter.\(^{80}\) Yet in placing emphasis on the English court, Vale’s lens has a narrow focus, engaging with chivalry at the very top table, and in peacetime. Edward III’s appropriation of chivalric ideals for political purposes, and the environment that this created, is a very particular kind of chivalry: chivalry with a royal focus and a political motivation.\(^{81}\) More recently, Richard Barber has contributed to our understanding of this aspect of chivalry in England. Barber’s focus falls upon the high points of Edward’s reign, notably victory at Crécy and the Garter foundation. Barber touches on the reality of warfare in relation to the Laws of War, but always does so with the agenda of telling the story of the more glorious aspects of Edward’s reign and with the spotlight squarely on the Garter knights.\(^{82}\) Though chivalry is not the focus, this is a valuable contribution to the field of study, but knights were much more than players on the stage of court ceremonial, and only a small number were invested as Garter companions. We must look further to understand English chivalry more comprehensively. The court was but one arena for chivalric expression, and a highly public one at that. It is plausible that chivalry appeared different to different individuals in different contexts, and from this it follows that there are multi-layered ‘chivalries’ that vary between individuals, status groups, locations and situations. Some exhibit a civilising influence, some are courtly, some are overtly martial, some aspects are cohesive and some are divisive; all of them can perhaps be observed to varying degrees in the military community of fourteenth century England.

It has been repeatedly emphasised by many modern works on the subject that chivalry was alive and well in the realms of romance literature, with the heroes as caricatures of reality. Such characters demonstrate the extremes of idealism, often to their detriment, and anti-heroes are vilified for their single-minded pursuit of vengeance, their rapaciousness and dishonourable behaviour which serves to further emphasise the virtues of the paragons against whom they are set. But if such ideas were to be more than romantic concepts, striving to modify and regulate the individuals that

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\(^{80}\) Aspects of Vale’s work have been expanded upon, specifically in relation to the Garter, recently with Richard Barber’s Edward III and the Triumph of England (London, 2013), pp. 415-525.

\(^{81}\) J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric society and its Context, 1270-1350 (Woodbridge, 1982).

digested them through exemplification and somewhat hollow and unrealistic didacticism, then it is to reality that we must turn. Can chivalry be found outside the well-thumbed pages of romance literature? In order to ascertain whether chivalry was a purely literary phenomenon, a way of putting a posthumous gloss upon a group of essentially hard living and hard fighting individuals, we must look to the individuals themselves. What can we discover about the nature of chivalry as transposed into romance literature? Did the military aristocracy of the fourteenth century engage with such works at all? For, just as romance literature did not accurately reflect the chivalric life of the period; neither does reality reflect the romance. The literary examples in no sense tell us how knights behaved. However many observable markers they may give us in terms of shared chivalric culture, they are artificial. The following work will attempt to remove the romantic gloss in a microscopic study of chivalry in England during the reign of Edward III. How the warriors in the upper strata of English military society conduct themselves in reality, both in the actions they take and the ways in which they project their identities to the world, should help us cleave fact from fiction. An understanding of the audience of these projections, the military community, may reveal answers to key questions: what credence was given to chivalry and how embedded was it within English martial culture? If chivalry is to be more than a trope, it must be clearly observable as a tangible force influencing the conduct of individuals in reality. It can be said that by the fourteenth century, chivalry had become a body of ideas influenced by clerical and romantic ideals, but at heart, it remained the code of the military caste based on inherited values and ideas independent of romanticism and ecclesiastic regulation. It could also be argued that the advent of the Hundred Years War caused something of a blossoming of chivalric interest. Large-scale conflict of this kind made being a knight a matter of matching word with deed, bringing with it the risk of life and limb. These new possibilities captured the attention of the knights themselves, and the imagination of society at large. It can be argued that aspects of chivalry, a self conscious and codified set of guidelines for the conduct of knights and nobles, underpinned the conduct of the military elite of England in the fourteenth century. Its ideal qualities of honour, loyalty, courage, prowess and generosity, fulfilled a fundamental human need, most keenly felt amongst the members of the warrior class whose primary social function had been the prosecution of war and the defence of the Church.\textsuperscript{83} The other, more courtly and ecclesiastically influenced, moral qualities add a

\textsuperscript{83} M. Vale, \textit{War and Chivalry}, p. 1.
specifically medieval aspect to a set of values of great pedigree. From the Germans of antiquity, via the Goths and Franks, the Danes, the Saxons and the Normans, the threads that eventually constituted the social values and practices of English knights were formed. What follows is an investigation into the engagement with and practice of these ideals, which together have been termed chivalry, and the effect they had on the assumption and projection of identity amongst the knights of Edward III’s England.
Any attempt to understand chivalry in England in the fourteenth century; the way that contemporaries understood it, engaged with it, and identified themselves as being ‘chivalrous’, hinges upon the assumption that the concept was understood and engaged with at all. The issues here are underlined by the fact that Chevalerie, in the sense of any sort of formalised code or set of beliefs and norms to which the aristocracy and knighthood paid heed, has its ideological roots in France, only arriving in England via the Norman Conquest. Of course, the Normans themselves cannot realistically be termed ‘French’ in 1066, and were adapting and altering the kernel of chivalric practice to fit with their own martial and cultural ideals. It is natural to question whether the knights of England, many of whom shared Norman heritage, were equipped with an understanding of martial culture prevalent in France.

On the other hand, the kings of England were also vassals of the crown of France, with the duchy of Aquitaine as part of their inheritance. Indeed, Henry II had held more land in France than in England and his subjects could not converse with him without the aid of an interpreter. The status of English kings as peers of France was taken most seriously by Henry III and Edward I. In short, the pan-European nature of knighthood, coming together at tournaments and in war, at court ceremonial and through diplomacy, perhaps means that similar outlooks regarding martial practice; norms, values and codes of conduct would be found amongst the knighthood of both England and France during the first phase of the Hundred Years War. If this is the case, then it follows that texts such as Geoffroi de Charny’s Livre de Chevalerie, in spite of being specifically composed as a guide to the conduct of the French Order of the Star, would to an extent reflect the values of English knighthood as much as that of France. It is, of course, sensible and proper to bring this into question. What value, if any, does such a text and others like it that were composed in France and other parts of continental Europe, have to an English knight? Is it justifiable to ascribe views espoused by a

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2 Sumption, Trial by Battle, p. 72.
3 The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, p. 21.
French knight about French chivalry to, what were at this point, his enemies across the Channel?

In the first instance it is vital to the answering of the above question to establish whether such texts ever even made it over the Channel, and if they did, whether they were accepted and read in England. Additionally, were didactic works on chivalry, as exemplified by texts produced on the Continent, also produced in England during our period? As far as one of our major sources for the behaviour of our sample is concerned, the chivalric chronicle, questions must also be asked. There can be no doubt that the vast majority of such works were not produced in England, or by Englishmen, but were written on the continent. The only comparable English works to those of the undeniably chivalrous chronicler, Jean Froissart of Hainault, during our period are Thomas Gray’s *Scalacronica*—of which more later—and the verse biography of the Black Prince from Chandos Herald, who was not necessarily English. This is in stark contrast with works on a similar theme produced during the same period in France and on the Continent in general. Jean Le Bel, a Hainaulter, who provides the basis of the first part of Froissart’s work, springs to mind, along with a host of others such as Enguerrand de Monstrelet, Gilles de Bouvier, Guillaume Gruel, Jean Cabaret d’Orville and Perceval de Cagny. There are also the chivalric biographies of personalities such as Bertrand de Guesclin, Jean, Duc of Brittany, Jean Boucicaut and Jaques de Lalaing. Additionally, treatises on the laws of war as produced in France by Honore Bovet and Christine de Pisan find no equivalents in English until the middle of the fifteenth century with works such as Upton’s *De Studio Militari* and William Worcester’s *Boke of Noblesse* presented to Edward IV in 1475.

Evidence is scarce for a tradition in England comparable to that producing didactic works on chivalry in the vein of Ramon Llull’s *Libre del Orde de Cavalleria*, translated into French in the fourteenth century: a tradition continued by Charny. In fact Llull’s book, proposed by some to be the standard instructional text on chivalry, was arguably little-known in England. It is true that it was translated into French, Castilian, and probably Latin, and though translated into Middle Scots by Sir Gilbert of the Haye in the middle of the fifteenth century, the text does not appear in English until Caxton’s

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5 Ibid, p. 69.
version printed between 1483 and 1485.\textsuperscript{6} Whilst it is undeniable that there was a great deal of such material being produced in France of a didactic nature on the practice of chivalry and the laws of war, and whilst there is a discernible English market for French imports of chivalric romances and narratives, there is remarkably little evidence suggesting that the French treatises on chivalry and warfare circulated on this side of the Channel prior to the end of the Hundred Years war.\textsuperscript{7}

The aforementioned translation of Llull used by Caxton survives in only two manuscripts that predate the end of the war with France, and there is no evidence that any of Charny’s works on chivalry were known in England during our period. Moreover, they may not even have had a particularly wide readership in France itself. Charny’s \textit{Livre de Chevalerie} was produced for a very specific audience, though it goes to great lengths to be as inclusive as possible to all social ranks within the Order of the Star. Its aim was to facilitate chivalric reform, yet despite Charny’s intentions, the Order was ultimately a failure. The exclusive nature of his intended audience is reinforced by the fact that just two manuscripts are extant, one from the fourteenth and one from the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{8} Of course, it is impossible to have any real certainty in the assertion that the \textit{Livre} was unknown in England. There was certainly an awareness of Charny’s reputation and there is a real lack of formal inventories of English royal and aristocratic book collections which makes it very difficult to have confidence in such a claim, but the available evidence does seem to suggest that England remained relatively ignorant of contemporary French writing on chivalry in the mid to late fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{9} Such claims are somewhat reinforced when one turns to the surviving wills of the period. The will of Edward, The Black Prince, who was lauded by Froissart and others as a paragon of chivalry, and doubtless a man of courtesy, honour and great prowess in both the tournament and on the battlefield, shows a dearth of works of chivalric literature of any kind in the possessions he left behind. Perhaps this implies that his library—it is assumed that he possessed one—was redistributed prior to his death, or was not deemed of sufficient value to be included in his will along with objects of undeniable and conspicuous opulence and significance, such as his table centred with a cross made from

\textsuperscript{7}C. Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare during the Hundred Years War’, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{8}The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, pp. 34, 74.
\textsuperscript{9}C. Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare during the Hundred Years War’, pp. 72-3.
the wood of the Holy Cross and adorned with pearls, rubies, emeralds and sapphires.\textsuperscript{10} The texts available to the young Edward III fell into three broad categories: liturgical texts for private use, a stock of romance literature, mostly in Anglo-Norman, and chronicles such as the prose \textit{Brut}, detailing the history of the realm. To this list can be added texts on statecraft, such as Walter Milmete’s commentary on the \textit{Secreta Secretorum}.\textsuperscript{11} Seemingly, the education of this most ‘chivalric’ of kings did not include the reading of instructional works on a subject that would be so important throughout his life. Similarly, Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, militarily prodigious and active at tournaments, well-acquainted to leading men in war and well-versed in diplomacy, leaves no evidence in his will that he owned any books relating to the art he so perfected. Amongst the jewels, armour, relics, trinkets and horses he left to his family and friends, not a single book is mentioned.\textsuperscript{12}

Of course, this does not mean that the great men of England did not possess books on chivalry, though the surviving evidence does point us toward this conclusion. Most inventories that survive are those of traitors whose possessions were forfeit, such as Simon Burley, Thomas of Woodstock and Henry Scrope.\textsuperscript{13} The inventory of Woodstock’s possessions includes 82 books, demonstrating an interest in romance and heroes of ‘chivalry’. Many luminaries of the medieval literary world are to be found in the list: Arthur, William Marshal, Alexander, Godfroi de Bouillon, Bevis of Hampton and Lancelot, to name but a few. There are also a large number of religious works, such as a ‘life’ of Thomas of Canterbury, works on divinity, St Augustine and the \textit{Meditacons de St Bernard}. Of the 82 volumes, just one, \textit{Vagesse de Chivalerie}, seems to have direct relevance to our subject.\textsuperscript{14} Similar works are found in the inventory of Simon Burley, intimate of the Black Prince and favourite of Richard II, who was impeached for treason in 1388. The listed books in his collection are not fully described, but include nine French romances, a copy of the \textit{Brut} and the \textit{Prophecies of Merlin}. More serious volumes include books on governance, philosophy, the Ten

\textsuperscript{14} Viscount Dillon and W. H. St John Hope, ‘Inventory of the goods and chattels Belonging to Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, and Seized at his Castle at Pleshy, 21 Richard II (1397); With their Values, as shown in the Escheator’s Accounts’, \textit{Archaeological Journal}, 54 (London, 1897), pp. 300-303.
Commandments and a Bible. All of these books were in French, with the exception of one romance in English, the unknown romance of The Forester and the Wild Boar.\textsuperscript{15}

A Continental concern with the way in which knights behaved and the manner in which war was prosecuted, along with which aspects of such matters were right and wrong, perhaps should not surprise us. The war was fought in the main upon the soil of France and it was the population of the countryside and the towns who bore the brunt of both the cost of the war in damage to hearth and home and in the burden of tax. It is understandable in such a climate, having witnessed the darker side of knighthood unleashed, that moralising upon knighthood and war by clerics, the lay community and even knights themselves should bear fruit. This contrasts with the situation in England, which with the exception of the raids over the border by the Scots, and the occasional coastal attack by French forces in the south of England, did not suffer the privations of prolonged conflict to anywhere near the same degree. The main concern of writing in England during this period was thus the justification of a prolonged war overseas from legal, moral and spiritual standpoints, and the legitimacy of the taxes imposed upon England to fuel Edward’s war machine. The great successes of that machine in the opening phase of the conflict, up to 1370 when the tide began to turn against the English, meant that there was little criticism aimed at the martial classes for perceived failure. Thus, the seed for didactic writings on knightly reform and conduct never germinated in England in the same way it did in France.\textsuperscript{16}

There are, of course, some factors which support the notion that France and England were culturally in tune. The most immediately obvious of these is language. If French was the medium through which chivalry was transmitted, then one could perhaps find support for its more romantic elements taking root in England. Although neither the prose Brut or the Anonimalle Chronicle are strictly related directly to chivalry, they are concerned in part with the wars in Scotland and France and were composed in Anglo-Norman French.\textsuperscript{17} The Scalacronica of Thomas Gray is written in Anglo-Norman, as is the Livre de Seyntz Medicines of Henry of Lancaster, despite his protestations that, being English, he is uncomfortable with that language.\textsuperscript{18} French was certainly the first language of the rulers of England until at least the middle of the

\textsuperscript{15} M. V. Clarke, Fourteenth Century Studies (Oxford, 1937), pp. 120-121.
\textsuperscript{16} C. Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare during the Hundred Years War’, p. 75.
fourteenth century. Edward III was raised in a distinctly multi-lingual and perhaps even multi-cultural environment. His mother’s Capetian lineage, coupled with that of his godfathers, Aymer de Valence and John of Brittany, provided direct cultural links to France, whilst his paternal grandmother, Eleanor of Castile, had brought Iberian influences to the English court in years gone by. English, however, had always been a part of the linguistic identity of the aristocracy. Intermarriage between Norman and English families and the employment of nurses and servants from amongst the English, as well as the adoption of French by upwardly mobile Englishmen following the conquest, served to blend the languages so it was possible to recognise ‘bad French’ in England as early as the end of the twelfth century. Anglo-Norman French long endured and remained the language of the aristocracy and a link to the conquest, providing a linguistic affiliation with Western Christendom in spite of developing an insular character of its own. It was, and remained throughout the fourteenth century, the medium of romantic literature, religious treatises and administrative and legal records.

That being said, one can view the reign of Edward III as a time in which the English language gained greater standing amongst the nobility of the realm. An example of this can perhaps be found in the mid fourteenth-century translation of William of Palerne, commissioned by Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford (d.1361). The text is in Middle English and we are told by the poet that Humphrey was motivated in his patronage by a desire to make the book known for those that knew no French. Such actions by an earl could be read as an altruistic desire to enrich the cultural lives of his inferiors who were less educated than himself, but also tell us that familiarity with the French language was by no means universal amongst the upper echelons of English society, specifically in Bohun’s household. Additionally, Geoffrey Chaucer, an esquire in the household of Edward III’s son, Lionel of Antwerp, and very much a product of the period in question, opted to write his Canterbury Tales in the vernacular. Though this was, of course, to expose his work to the widest possible audience, it is also indicative of the rise of the significance of English amongst groups other than the lower rungs of society. Although in the main his subject was the common man, Chaucer was a

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19 J. Sumption, Trial by Battle, p. 72.  
20 M. Ormrod, Edward III, p. 12.  
court poet writing with a courtly audience in mind. His choice of English reveals that it is a language with which his intended audience would be familiar.

Edward III himself made use of English for mottoes, which he displayed at various times throughout his reign. Examples include ‘hat hay the wythe swan by goddes soule I am thy man’, borne on a shield at the tournament at Otford in 1348, and ‘it is as it is’, similarly borne at the Dunstable tournament in 1342 to celebrate the betrothal of his son, Lionel. English was being used at the very top of society amongst an exclusive group which had always been bi-lingual, yet primarily wrote, (or perhaps in many cases dictated) and read in the Anglo-Norman French they had mastered through their education. That education, too, was in a state of linguistic change. According to John Trevisa, writing in 1387, the primacy of French in schools was subsumed by English from the 1350s onwards. This meant that the learned clerics who went on to serve the aristocracy had little knowledge of French, and that the aristocratic youth of the period also began to lose their grounding in that language. A continuation of this trend was seen at the Parliament of 1362, when legislation was passed stating that it was to be English, rather than French, that would henceforth be used in oral communication in all royal and seignorial courts in England. With the above in mind, Henry of Lancaster’s statement at the end of his devotional treatise that he struggled with writing in French, though undoubtedly tongue in cheek, may have a hint of truth to it.

This evolution in linguistic trends in England is significant in that the language was no longer merely used by the commons, but increasingly by the great men of the realm and the royal family. Amongst those who used the language, this would naturally contribute to the sense of national identity, placing emphasis on their ‘Englishness’ in contrast to the ‘Frenchness’ of their enemies; we speak English, they speak French. This sense of ‘them and us’ draws attention to the differences between the two groups, from the clothes they wear to the food they eat. Such differences begin to permeate the cultural outlooks of the groups concerned. For example, architecture in England had traditionally mirrored that of France, but English perpendicular architecture of the fifteenth century is independent of the flamboyant French Style. The emergence of this distinctive style can be traced to Gloucester cathedral in the mid fourteenth century.

24 N. Orme, From Childhood to Chivalry, p. 125.
The south transept at the Abbey church here is considered the earliest example of the perpendicular style, and dates to 1337. As the final resting place of his father, it is likely that the artistic tastes of Edward III had a role to play in the development of the architecture at Gloucester, and it is interesting to note that the great east window, the so-called Crécy window is also located here: England’s first war memorial, situated at the birthplace of English perpendicular architecture; watching over the eternal slumber of Edward II.  

Differences can also be observed in literary and artistic tastes, which were becoming increasingly insular from the mid thirteenth century. There is also the difference of the relative successes of France and England on the battlefield to consider and perhaps, their approach to chivalry. The latter was somewhat reinforced by the self-conscious superiority of English arms following the great victories over the French in the first phase of the Hundred Years War. Indeed, it was likely that the war added impetus to the patriotic feeling in England. It was to this kernel of patriotism that Edward III was to appeal at the Westminster parliament of 1344. In an attempt to gain further subsidies for the French war the king claimed that Philip of France was resolved to destroy the English language and to occupy the land of England. Of course, the rise of the use of English did not mean that French ceased to be used in England; indeed it retained a significant role in the jargon of the law until the eighteenth century, as well as remaining a common medium for works of literature. Regardless, Edward’s choice of words is perhaps indicative of a trend towards a specific, national identity expressed through language and an appreciation of ‘the other’. This can be viewed as a continuation of a sense of nationhood that began during the reign of Edward I, when wars in Wales, Scotland and France fostered ‘proto-nationalistic sentiment’.

The battlefield was another arena in which language played a central role. Whilst it is true that the great men of the realm spoke Anglo-Norman French, they were in a significant minority in terms of the population at large in doing so. The vast majority of troops raised for the armies of the period would have communicated verbally in the vernacular. The peasantry and yeomanry, responsible for providing foot

archers and a significant proportion of mounted archers would, of course, have spoken nothing but English. Those beneath the high nobility, such as the gentry (granted, a somewhat clumsy term encompassing small-scale landholders of £5-10 per annum at the lower end, up to families flirting with noble status), had been largely Anglophone from the end of the thirteenth century. For these groups, a pragmatic knowledge of French was all that was required for the understanding of documents related to administration and accounting, and the occasional dealings with the enemy when abroad.  

The question must therefore be asked as to whether English was adopted as the common language in which commands were communicated in war. This would make sense, in that it would be awkward for an order given in French to be translated in its journey down the chain of command. The evidence available to us would appear to support this. It seems that Edward III was in the habit of personally engaging with his troops prior to an engagement. The pre-battle speech is of course an historian’s convention stretching back to antiquity, and the words put into the king’s mouth by the chroniclers are unreliable. However, the fact that such speeches occurred has to be a real possibility, and there is evidence of Edward addressing the host and ‘chatting’ with his men prior to the battle of Halidon Hill in 1333, and Crécy in 1346. Though the first known army ordinances, from 1385 are in French, this may simply be a reflection of archival policy. When such ordinances were published before the host, such as in 1346, they must have been read out in English in order to be understood. Lastly, when the Court of Chivalry’s findings in the Burnell v. Morley case (1346-7) were read out in St Peter’s church in the siege lines outside Calais, the language used was English. One of witnesses in the Lovel v. Morley case of the mid 1380s explicitly states that the judgment had been given by Henry of Lancaster ‘en Engleis’. The use of English in certain instances was clearly a necessity. It could be argued that conceptually, chivalry had two languages. The practical side, the martial side, the deeds of derring-do beloved of the chroniclers, was conducted in English, largely for functional reasons. The more private and exclusive practices of the chivalrous: aspects of court ceremonial,

33 The fact that the 1346 ordinances were generally ignored and poorly enforced should perhaps not be taken as evidence that they were read in a language the host did not understand.
engagement with many types of literature and elements of tournament gatherings, were conducted in French. This perhaps reflects a direct line of demarcation between what was valued in chivalry by the majority of English knights, and those aspects of the ideal reserved for the leisure time of the more multi-cultural, and invariably wealthier, members of the chivalric community.

Apart from the chivalric chronicle and the manual of chivalry, the other great didactic medium at the knight’s disposal was the often fantastical yet vibrant medium of pseudo-historical literature and romance. The cultural merging set in motion by the Norman Conquest meant that England inherited aspects of the French tradition, yet the way in which this tradition was treated was not merely derivative. The writers, translators and redactors of England demonstrated their independence in the selection of their source material and the freedom with which their work was cast into the melting pot of folklore, producing a corpus of works rooted in the French tradition, yet possessed of their own particular identity. It is undeniable that those at the pinnacle of court society in England read such works, as shown by the inventories previously discussed, and that they found their way into most levels of knightly society in some form can perhaps be assumed, if not confirmed. By the fourteenth century Thomas Gray, in his Scalacronica, describing the deeds of Edward Bruce in Ireland says that he, ‘performed there marvellous feats of arms through great hardship, and captured supplies and other materials and much land; it would take a great romance to recount it all’. However, Andy King has noted that the same comparison appears in the work of Barbour, and that the two chroniclers were drawing upon the same Scottish source; Gray merely transposed it. In spite of this, Gray was obviously confident that the sense of the comparison would not be lost on his readers. That the reading of romance prevailed at court in our period is shown by the fact that under the Mortimer regime, the English Privy Wardrobe issued works of romance, twenty three of such works being borrowed by Mortimer himself. In this case they were issued to both men and women, and were doubtless written to be read by both sexes. Many of the works consumed at court would have been of the courtly type found on the Continent. A list of books and panel paintings in the possession of Queen Isabella on her death in 1352 contains a number of devotional and liturgical works and a number under the heading ‘Libri

37 Scalacronica, xlviii.
38 R. W. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence, pp. 31-2.
romanizati,’ including *Tristram and Isolde, Perceval and Gawain* and a romance on the Trojan War.\(^{39}\)

The characters of romance carried weight amongst people in the fourteenth century, as well-loved heroes, villains, lovers and exemplars for how life should be lived and how to get what you want. The writers and composers of such tales had to create a believable character which would be recognised and empathised with by the audience, set within a context that is both familiar and unreal to the reader. Thus, the knights of romance and ‘popular fiction’ of the day are larger than life, yet in essence they remain a depiction of what the author believed knighthood to be, or at least what he believed it should be. The dialogue between ‘author’ and audience means that to a degree, the knights of romance are also what real knights wanted to be. The fantastical realm of romance valorised knighthood, enabling its exemplars to fight all day astride their steed against endless foes and mythical beasts, whilst retaining the energy to indulge in the pleasures of the flesh afterwards. Such works are a vital insight into chivalric *mentalité*, and can be used directly as an historical resource.\(^{40}\) It should be emphasised here that this should be conducted with caution; romance, in the main, remained a fiction and was treated as such by its audience. Reading aspects of romance as a reflection of the real world inhabited by its contemporary audience, and attributing individuals with the desire to emulate the heroes of such tales is perhaps not giving them enough credit. Contemporaries were doubtless under no misapprehension of what knighthood was and could be and romance should be viewed as exactly what it was: didactic entertainment, escapism, yet fiction.

If we are to read romance as having a partly didactic purpose, then the lessons espoused in the English tradition, and in the English redactions of French originals, were earthier, more violent and less refined than those circulating in France, perhaps reflecting a slightly different approach to knighthood and the formulation and understanding of the knightly ideal. The heroes seek to fulfil codes that differ from those found in the *roman courtois* of France, and offer sympathetic figures for self-identification on the part of readers and listeners more socially diverse than the courtly audiences of French Romance.\(^{41}\) The afore-mentioned English translation of *William of Palerne* commissioned by Humphrey de Bohun, reduces the 10,000 lines of the French original to 6,000 in English, over 1,000 of which are dedicated to the protagonist’s skill

as a warrior, discarding the elaborate courtly style of its predecessor in favour of an enhanced stylistic and thematic accessibility in its exploration of what constitutes ‘true’ nobility. It is perhaps valuable here to distinguish between ‘popular’ romance in English and romance consumed in England. In general it is true that the works of romance read by the higher aristocracy were in French as the language of the court, politics and diplomacy. The most observable difference from the French tradition appear in the vast and diverse corpus of ‘popular’ romance in the vernacular, composed and copied for the enjoyment and edification of the newly literate groups in society; a significant proportion of the aristocracy; the gentry and the prosperous middle classes. It is from these groups that the bulk of English knighthood in our period came: thus the ways in which such works portray knighthood and chivalry is of value to our understanding of these groups. It should be noted that what is revealed about such folk from the examination of romance literature is likely to be subtle, and must be applied carefully. The aspirations of the individuals concerned would not have been universal; a martial career was by no means the only end to which men strove. Yet for those that did aspire to knighthood, the models proposed in popular literature may provide some useful insight.

Of all the colourful and vibrant tales to come down to us from the Middle Ages, some of the most enduring and popular are those of Arthur and his court. The initial setting down of the tale of Arthur and his knights in narrative form comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s pseudo-historical History of the Kings of Britain, written in Latin c.1136. He drew upon earlier sources for the story of Arthur, seemingly the ninth-century Historia Brittonum and the Annales Cambriae, along with medieval Welsh king-lists and genealogies, and added subsequently well-known aspects of the tale such as the characters of Merlin and Guinevere. Wace expanded on Geoffrey’s work in Anglo-Norman with his Roman de Brut shortly afterwards, adding the first mention of the famous Round Table. It is here that Chretien de Troyes takes up the torch, providing the ideal form from which subsequent writings on the subject in France took their inspiration. Chretien’s work represents a shift from the heroic world to a more courtly

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44 The sources used by Geoffrey of Monmouth for his work are contentious, the author himself claiming that he translated into Latin the text from an ancient book of uncertain provenance. He plausibly drew on information found in contemporarily available texts such as MS. Harl. 3859, and possibly the oral tradition. It is also possible that he that he adapted the work from a similar text by an individual who has become known as pseudo-Geoffrey, and that this was the ‘ancient book’ to which he refers. Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain, trans. L. Thorpe (London, 1966), pp. 14-19.
and religious focus, adding the grail quest, Camelot and Lancelot as the paragon of the knight errant: a supreme warrior, yet a courtly lover. Chretien’s work reflects the interests of his patrons Marie de Champagne and her cousin Philippe of Alsace, count of Flanders, and so a distinct, continental approach to the genre emerged. Arthurian romances maintained great appeal in England throughout the Middle Ages; indeed, the English took up Arthur as a way of explaining their own origins. Though Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Arthur was associated with the British: the Welsh, Cornish and Breton remnants of a time before the Saxons, Arthur was appropriated as an Englishman. In the spurious ‘discovery’ of his tomb at Glastonbury Abbey, he was provided with an English final resting place. In Tintagel was found Camelot, and his great sword, Excalibur, ended up in the hand of Richard, Coeur de Lion. His image and ideals were seized upon by Edward I and Edward III in order to portray themselves as champions of English chivalric kingship.

The pseudo-historical tradition continues from Wace’s Anglo-Norman work to the Middle English Brut of Layamon, an English cleric writing in Worcestershire no later than the opening decades of the thirteenth century. More than twice as long as Wace’s work, yet undeniably based upon it, as well as other sources and elements of the Celtic tradition, Layamon’s Brut is coloured with the spirit, atmosphere and some of the expressive means of Old English epic. Central to Layamon’s work are the values of the older heroic tradition: martial skill, loyalty, companionship in arms and the concern with performing great deeds; values also at the very heart of medieval chivalry. His vehicle for this is the story of the origins of the Britons, penned in the language of their erstwhile conquerors, its somewhat archaic form standing as evidence of the endurance of English values re-emerging from the conquest as a fusion of native tradition and continental influences. Layamon exhibits a somewhat brutal streak in his work, seeming to belong in a milieu where the softening influences of courtly love and courtesy were unknown, or at least unappreciated and unpopular. Above all else Arthur is a conqueror, the head of a bellicose court, yet he and his knights still exhibit the virtues readily associated with chivalry. The women of high birth had pledged not to take a husband unless he had fought three times in battle to prove his valour and worth.

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45 Chretien de Troyes-Arthurian Romances, ed. W. Kibler, pp. 4-5.
making the knights of England valiant and the women virtuous - at least to a point. This demonstrates a preoccupation with prowess, and also the class stability and purity craved by the nobility. Prowess is rewarded with great gifts; Arthur bestows silver, gold, horses, land, castles and robes upon those who excelled in the three days of games prior to the arrival of the Roman emissaries at his court.⁴⁹ There are many instances where knights revel in slaughter, split helms and shatter shields, yet when battle is done, the fallen enemy are honoured. The body of the Emperor Lucius is retrieved from the field and laid in a tent for three days whilst a great golden coffin is built for him on Arthur’s command: a scene reminiscent of the way Edward III deals with the body of the king of Bohemia in the aftermath of the battle of Crécy.⁵⁰ As the Roman dead are buried in splendour, the fallen Emperor is carried back to Rome.⁵¹ Thus, the stories of Arthur and his court were well known in England, yet are treated by English writers in a less abstract manner than their continental counterparts. In England, Arthur was not viewed as simply an imagined of fictionalised creation, but as a man with a real and tangible position in the distant past.

The period in question here: the reign of Edward III, provided the backdrop for a great outpouring of Arthurian material in England. The alliterative Morte Arthure is, at heart, the story of Arthur’s life as told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, Layamon and other chroniclers such as Peter of Langtoft, Robert of Gloucester and Robert Mannyng, yet contains many French words which may imply a lost French version as its source.⁵² The story focuses on the Roman war, ultimately leading to Arthur’s death in the civil war with Mordred. In a similar vein to Layamon, the tone is less romantic than heroic, placing emphasis on the largesse of Arthur and the loyalty shown by his knights. Courtly love is absent, as for the most part is the errantry of the romance genre, with deeds of prowess being largely confined to the battlefield: social and collective rather than individual. The date of composition has been placed between 1350 and 1400, with Neilson, who regards Edward III as the model for Arthur and the poem to be a criticism of the Hundred Years war, pinpointing its composition to 1365.⁵³ There is much in the text to support this reading. The war against the Romans is portrayed as a dynastic

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⁴⁹ Layamon, 12336-12341.
⁵⁰ The blind king of Bohemia was renowned as one of the most chivalrous men in Christendom, and his death at Crécy is described by the famous passage in Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, i, pp. 578-9. Following the battle, his body was recovered, washed, wrapped in linen cloths and laid in a knight’s bier. Edward and his earls mourned his passing in a service led by the bishop of Durham. Le Baker, p. 75.
⁵¹ Layamon, 13897-13914.
struggle in order to recover and preserve Arthur’s rights on the Continent, with the conflict mainly being conducted in France. A somewhat patriotic flavour is provided by the author, often referring to the Knights of the Round Table as ‘our knights’. However, the text does not shine a positive light upon war. Arthur’s bellicosity is ultimately his downfall, with Mordred’s treason rooted in Arthur’s pride and desire for conquest. The revolving wheel of fortune with the nine worthies pinioned to it implies he has wasted his life in the pursuit of worldly glory.\textsuperscript{54} With the reading of Arthur as Edward III, the chivalry he utilises as the instrument of his will is implicated in his sinful pride. In the battle against the Romans, Arthur deploys archers and dismounted men-at-arms as well as the traditional ‘flour of his knyghtez’, demonstrating an authorial awareness with the way in which battles were conducted by the English during this period.\textsuperscript{55} This practical appreciation of warfare extends to an understanding of the suffering of non-combatants, mirrored by contemporary continental conflict:

Into Tuskane he tournez, when Þus wele tymede,
Takes townnes full tyte, with towress full heghe;
Walles he welte down, wonydyd knyghtez,
Towres he turnes and turmentes Þhe pople,
Wroghte wedwes full wonlke wrotherayle synges,
Ofte wery and wepe and wryngen theire handis;
And all he wastys with werre, thare he awaye rydez,
Thaire welthes and theire wonnyges, wandrethe he wroghte.
Thus they spyngen and sprede and sparis bot lyttil,
Sployllles dispetouslye and spillis theire vynes,
Spedis vnsparely Pat sparede was lange,
Spedis them to Spolett with speris inewe.\textsuperscript{56}

An appreciation of the practicalities of war aside, the portrayal of knighthood and lordship is also valuable in contributing to an understanding of chivalry in the fourteenth century, not necessarily as understood by the highest levels of chivalrous society but by the knights of the provinces who would have made up the likely audience for \textit{Morte Arthure}. Aspects of chivalric convention are rejected, notably the money to be made through the ransom of prisoners with Arthur claiming that it is not becoming of either kings or knights to bargain with prisoners for silver. Perhaps this was a criticism of what was held to be a contemporary motivation for engaging in war: for profit and

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Morte Arthure}, 3150-3161.
not honour through prowess.⁵⁷ Lancelot, a knight that was unmatched in valour, prowess and courtesy elsewhere in the canon and in his treatment by Chretien, is given a very minor role as an ‘also ran’ amongst Arthur’s knights, implying a criticism of the ideals associated with him through the relegation of one of literature’s great lovers. Arthur’s knights are primarily warriors, violent yet loyal, and it seems to be these qualities which make them ‘oure chevalrous knyghttes’.⁵⁸ It is with battle that knighthood is identified: rivers run with blood, shields are shriven, spears are shattered and bowels, livers and lungs are laid open in an orgy of knightly violence. There is also a concern with lineage and the right to arms, exemplified by the dispute between Sir Cliges and the king of Syria and Sir Priamus’ concern to reveal his ancestry to Sir Gawain.⁵⁹

Other romances of the period also reflect an approach which differs from the roman courtois of France. Ywain and Gawain, produced in the north of England in the second half of the fourteenth century, and of particular interest since it was adapted directly from Chretien’s Le Chevalier au Lion, highlighting the differences in taste between France and England, stresses the importance of ‘trowth’ (loyalty, constancy) rather than amour courtois as a motivation to chivalric action.⁶⁰ Where Chretien’s characters discuss love following the Whitsun feast, those in Ywain and Gawain speak of deeds of arms and hunting, and how men might win honour through the ‘doghtines of Þaire gude ded’.⁶¹ Chretien’s original looms large in the work of the English poet, and Ywain and Gawain is more of a work of translation and streamlining than the radical alteration seen in other works’ transition from the French to the English tradition. However, the English version is much shorter, reducing Chretien’s 6818 lines to a mere 4032, and would appear to be the work of a minstrel writing for the provincial baronial hall, laced less with courtliness and high chivalric sentiment than a sober realism and practicality. Thus, the court romance becomes a story of love and high adventure.⁶² The reduction in length serves to remove much of the passion of the original text. One of the main themes of the conflict between marriage and chivalry is explored when Gawain persuades Ywain to join him on the tournament circuit, saying:

⁵⁷ Morte Arthure, 1579-1584.
⁵⁸ Morte Arthure, 2237.
⁵⁹ Morte Arthure, 1680-1699, 2600-2619.
⁶² Ywain and Gawain, p. xvii.
That kniught es nothing to set by
That leves al his chevalry
And ligges bekeand in his bed,
When he haves a lady wed.
For when that he has great endose,
Than war time to win his lose;
For when a knight es chevalrouse,
His lady es the more jelows.
Also she lufes him wele the bet.
Tharfore, sir, thou sal not let
To haunt armes in ilk cuntré;
Than wil men wele more prayse the.63

It is this plea, a mere half the length of Chretien’s version, which persuades Ywain to leave his wife for a year and through his self-centred pursuit of honour, dally too long and break his vow to his wife. Her subsequent rejection of him sends him into madness.

However, the faithfulness shown towards the original text means that Ywain and Gawain has a greater focus on errantry than many other contemporary texts in English, with over half of the story dedicated to a series of episodes where Ywain engages in activities often found within the romance genre. He fights and defeats sir Alers and his knights, rescues the lion (which is to become his companion) from a dragon, does battle with a giant and is victorious against an evil steward; all such episodes are not only designed to chart his path to redemption and the service of ‘trowth’, but also to place emphasis on his individual valour and prowess. It is dedication to his kinsman Colgrevant that sends Ywain on the quest to defeat Salados, the episode which begins the action of the story.64 It is this bond which is tested at the culmination of the story when Ywain does battle with Gawain in a drawn-out yet ultimately inconclusive encounter, which ends only when they discover whom they are fighting. The two warriors embrace and Gawain, traditionally the knight unmatched in prowess, yields to Ywain.65 The transformation of Chretien’s Yvain to the English Ywain is one of a courtier and a lover of the French tradition, to a character of stolid, English romantic virtues, such as courage, prowess, steadfastness and generosity.66

Sir Perceval of Galles, again composed in the north of England c.1300-1340, takes the material of Chretien’s Conte du Graal yet differs radically in its approach, going much further than the translator of Ywain and Gawain in its alteration of the

63 Ywain and Gawain, 1457-1468.
64 Ywain and Gawain, 457-464.
65 Ywain and Gawain, 3639-3670.
66 Ywain and Gawain, p. xxxiii.
story. So different is this version from that of Chretien, that it arguably derives from a more primitive original. The grail quest, with all its associated implications for knighthood have been removed completely, as have the episodes in which Gawain sets the chivalric standards to be surpassed by the hero. The result is a drama of family life, with the grail quest replaced by Perceval’s search for his mother, shifting the plot towards an archetypal folktale of a naive hero, unaware of God but possessed of inborn prowess which sees him slay the Red Knight, the Sultan and a giant before meeting his end in the Holy Land. Perceval is a chivalric novice, who is very much learning ‘on the job’.

Sir Launfal, a late fourteenth-century work composed by one Thomas Chestre, possibly in Kent around the time of the Peasant’s Revolt, takes its inspiration from a Breton lai written by Marie de France. Whilst again removing the courtliness of the original work, it is even somewhat scornful of the courtly world supposedly inhabited by knights. Twice in this short poem, knightly motivation to combat is not for love, honour or fame, but to prevent equipment from rusting. Launfal is undeniably generous, having been made the king’s steward due to his largesse. Away from the court he rapidly spends all his money and accrues debts, eventually becoming unable to maintain his two followers, Arthur’s nephews. In spite of this failure of the lord’s duty to his retainers, they remain faithful to him, swearing to reveal his poverty to no one. His inability to control his finances is solved in the bargain he makes with his fairy lover. She gives him a gift of a purse that produces gold on demand, as well as a servant, a fine horse, her coat of arms and, of course, herself, on the proviso that he never speaks of her. The gifts are absent from the original story, as is the exhausting lovemaking the two engage in. His new-found wealth elicits envy in others and results in the challenge of the giant Sir Valentine. The protagonist exhibits a distinctly anti-chivalric approach to both tournament etiquette and combat. Launfal’s aim is to be victorious by any means possible, even through the intervention of Gyfre the supernatural squire in the battle against the knight from Lombardy.

70 Launfal, 527, 1028.
71 Launfal, 28-32.
72 Launfal, 121-147.
73 Launfal, 349.
74 Launfal, 580-94.
episode is an addition by Chestre, adding action to the essentially moralistic tale of promises made and broken in the Breton Lai. In his own eyes, Launfal’s victory remains undiminished. He commemorates his triumph with the wholesale slaughter of the lords of Atalye, felling them all, ‘lyght as dew’ in a display of his indisputable prowess. This demonstration of his power brings him great happiness as, ‘he wente ayen yn to Bretayn / wyth solas and wyth plawe.’ In his dealings with Guinevere, Launfal is openly abusive, though not without provocation from the queen: a far cry from the courtly mode of speech towards women, let alone queens. It is her provocation which lands him in trouble again, when he tells her of the existence of Tryamour.

In spite of his transgressions as a lover, his uncontrolled and foolish largesse and his dishonourable conduct in using his invisible servant to aid him in combat, Launfal is not used as a moral tool or a cautionary tale to demonstrate the pitfalls if one chooses to stray from the path of chivalry and break oaths to ladies. Instead he achieves total success in his endeavours, securing wealth, victory in battle and the love of the beautiful fairy princess. The English version retains the core of the original tale, but inserts a dose of sex and violence into the story. While this livens up the action, it also makes the character of Launfal richer and more realistic. The English adapted and changed such works to fit their own tastes and the tastes of their audience, which on the above evidence, differed from those found in France. In many cases, the finer points of the chivalric ideal are treated with ambivalence, with protagonists at times achieving positive results from immoral or ‘anti-chivalric’ behaviour. Where chivalric virtues are put forward as beneficial or admirable, it is the archaic warrior virtues of loyalty, generosity and prowess which come to the fore. This insular evolution of knighthood’s portrayal in literature implies a difference in the way in which ideas about chivalry are engaged with in England, and what the audiences of such writings found attractive and appealing. This offers a window on contemporary attitudes relating to the purpose of knighthood, ideal behaviour and the moral compass.

If one wished to engage directly with the voice of English knighthood during the Scottish wars of Edward III and the first phase of the war with France, one can scarce do better than the Scalacronica of Sir Thomas Gray. Gray was born around 1310, meaning that from the end of the reign of Edward II, Gray’s work is based, at least in part, on personal experience. This chronicle in particular should provide us with a rare and valuable insight into the mind of a practicing English knight during conflict; this is

75 Launfal, 612.
76 Launfal, 694-699.
a direct link which is not provided by other contemporary chronicles such as that of Froissart, Murimuth or Avesbury. It is possible that Gray’s career in arms began with the ‘disinherited’ and the stunning victory at Dupplin Muir in August of 1332. *Scalacronica’s* account of the battle is particularly vivid. Though it is impossible to place him here with any certainty, his father’s connection to David of Strathbogie and Henry de Beaumont makes it plausible to assume that Gray the younger was present.\(^{77}\) Gray received letters of protection to accompany the earl of Salisbury to Flanders in 1338, losing a horse assessed at the value of £20 while serving,\(^{78}\) and *Scalacronica* itself implies that the tough northerner was not overly impressed by the recently elevated earl and close friend of the king. Gray is somewhat critical of the royal resources lavished on the elevations of 1337, and describes Montague’s capture by the French in 1340 as ‘foolhardy’.\(^{79}\) Gray participated in the perennial border skirmishes with the Scots and in the great victory of Neville’s Cross in 1346, receiving a personal letter of thanks from Edward III for his services.\(^{80}\) He was then engaged in diplomacy by the Crown and legal business in the Marches of Scotland. In 1355 he was captured by the Scots, being ambushed whilst attempting to repulse a raid in the environs of Norham castle, where he was constable. It was during this period of enforced inactivity that Gray first took up the pen. Following his release late the next year, he returned to his work as a royal justice, before accompanying the large force under Edward III to France in 1359, serving in the retinue of the Black Prince.\(^{81}\) Thomas Gray is therefore well-placed and well-qualified to reveal some of the attitudes knighthood held regarding chivalry. His testimony cannot of course be seen as representative of the views of the entire knightly community, but in a relative desert of source material ‘from the horse’s mouth’, Gray supplies a welcome oasis.

One of the first things of note in *Scalacronica* is the tough, no-nonsense approach Gray appears to take with regard to knighthood. Whilst his French contemporary Geoffroi de Charny, albeit taking up the pen for different reasons, espouses pastimes such as jousting, conversation, dancing and singing in the company of ladies as beneficial to a knight’s virtue, Gray is more critical of such activities.\(^{82}\)

Edward III’s first foray on the Continent is treated with some disdain with Gray

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\(^{77}\) *Scalacronica*, p. xxxv.


\(^{79}\) *Scalacronica*, pp. 123, 129.

\(^{80}\) *Rot. Scot.*, i, pp. 678, 675.

\(^{81}\) *Scalacronica*, pp. xxxvi-xliv.

\(^{82}\) *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny*, p. 113.
bemoaning the fact that for fifteen months the King did nothing warlike at all, except for jousting and leading the high life. It seems that Gray was somewhat sceptical of the military application of jousting. The impression is that he sees jousts *a plaisance* to be frivolous when compared to jousts of war or *a outrance*, giving the latter significantly more attention throughout his chronicle. He mentions the jousts at the sieges of Alnwick castle in 1328, where there were ‘grand jousts of war by formal agreement’.

Leland’s abstract of the crucial years of Gray’s career from 1340-1356 mentions Henry of Lancaster jousting with William Douglas at Berwick, under the watchful eyes of the king, in an episode also described by Henry Knighton. The great martial parade through France which the campaign of 1359 was to become is described in detail as he was serving with the Black Prince. By this point, Gray was likely to be approaching the age of fifty. Again, he mentions jousts of war by indentured agreement between men of Lancaster’s contingent and the defenders of the French city.

Chivalrous spectacle does occasionally creep into Gray’s account. At Fresnay, a French knight named only as ‘le chivaler blauanche’, challenges the English constable to a combat between two English knights and two French. The white knight and his squire were bested by the two Englishmen, who wore arms of vermillion. This episode, reminiscent of many a fictional tale, is one of Gray’s only concessions to romanticism, and in coming directly from a campaign in which he participated, has more likelihood of accuracy than some of the combats described by Froissart in his search for the chivalrous.

When Gray does mention tournaments in peacetime, those great spectacles of which Edward III and his inner circle were so fond, he is somewhat disparaging and dismissive. Again William Montague, earl of Salisbury, is scorned when during Edward III’s minority the King and Montague, ‘led a jolly young life...of jousts and tournaments and feasting the ladies’. It is possible to detect the hint of a sneer in Gray’s summary of the young king’s activities. Away from the joust, Gray is not beyond praising men for their valour in the field. The 1359 campaign again provides evidence of this, as Gray gives credit to the earl of Stafford for repelling a French attack on his encampment and to John Neville for defeating fifty Frenchmen with only thirteen companions near

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83 *Scalacronica*, p. 127.
84 *Scalacronica*, p. 101.
85 *Scalacronica*, p. 134; *Knighton*, p. 39.
86 *Scalacronica*, p. 173.
88 *Scalacronica*, p. 107.
Etampes, before surmising that there were so many and such a variety of feats of English arms performed that it is impossible to recount them all.\(^{89}\)

The sense that one gets from *Scalacronica* is of a warrior ethos with no frills, a practical, soldier’s creed that frowned upon the more leisurely and courteous aspects of the behaviour of wealthy men such as William Montague, perhaps resenting their elevated position. It seems that Gray’s view of chivalry is entirely martial. He is critical of Edward II in making peace with the Scots and keeping himself ‘wholly quiet in peace, concerning himself with nothing of honour or prowess, but only with getting rich.’ This damning report concludes that he ‘gave himself completely to that which completely debarred him from chivalry, delighting himself in avarice and in the delights of the flesh’.\(^{90}\) For Gray, it seems, there was no honour without combat, and no chivalry without war. He was a northern knight from a family long accustomed to border skirmishes, a hard-bitten son of hard-bitten sires who had little time for pomp and spectacle whilst there were enemies to fight. Indeed one of the only occasions in which Gray chooses to breathe the rarefied air of chivalry is to illustrate the rashness of those who fall under its spell. The incident occurs in the time of his father, Thomas Gray senior, when he was constable of Norham castle and concerns a knight named William Marmion. Gray senior would have been familiar with Marmion, the two having been in the orbit of Henry Beaumont since at least 1309.\(^{91}\) The two men were in Beaumont’s retinue at Bannockburn, with Gray being captured and Marmion remaining with Beaumont to serve the following year.\(^{92}\) Marmion was still in Beaumont’s service for the Gascon expedition of 1325, and was thus a knight of some experience.\(^{93}\) At a feast in Lincolnshire in 1319, Marmion was presented with, ‘a war helm with a crest of a gilded wing’, sent to him by his lady. Accompanying the helm was a letter which implored Marmion to travel to the most perilous place in Britain and there make the helm famous. Not being one to refuse his lady’s request, Marmion obliged and travelled to Norham. Presently Alexander Mowbray arrived with a sizeable force of men, and stationed himself outside the castle. Gray senior surveyed the scene from the walls until the gleaming Marmion appeared with the helm on his head. It seems Gray was aware of Marmion’s purpose and said to him, ‘Sir knight, you have come here as a knight errant,

\(^{89}\) *Scalacronica*, pp. 171, 177, 181.

\(^{90}\) *Scalacronica*, pp. 89, 91.

\(^{91}\) *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, vol.V: Supplementary, ed. Simpson and Galbraith (Edinburgh, 1988), nos. 2709, 2737, 2774.

\(^{92}\) Ibid, nos. 1711, 2966, 3087; *Scalacronica*, p. 75.

\(^{93}\) *CPR 1324-1327*, p. 170.
to make that helm famous, and it is more fitting that chivalric deeds should be done on horseback than on foot, whenever this can be suitably done. Mount your horse. See, there are your enemies, put spurs to your horse and do battle in their midst’. With Gray’s promise that his body would be retrieved dead or alive ringing in his ears, Marmion spurred on to battle. If this episode were written in a romance, Marmion would doubtless have cloven his enemies asunder, splitting shields and meeting his end in the clash of steel amongst his fallen foes. But romance this is not, and Marmion was promptly struck in the face and dragged from his horse. The elder Gray, true to his word then led out the garrison on foot, stabbing the enemy horses so they threw their riders and beat the Scots back, before remounting the battered Marmion and pursuing. Nothing is said of what Marmion’s lady thought of all this and it can be read in one of two ways. The episode is undeniably glorious, and could be seen to confirm that reality mirrored romance in the age of chivalry in England. The outcome however, implies this is not the case. It is perhaps better read as the triumph of practicality over idealism. For all Marmion’s good intentions it is proven here, as it was subsequently proven on the battlefields of France, that no amount of chivalric sentiment, ladies’ love or shining armour was a match for cold discipline and practicality. Geoffroi de Charny would doubtless have thought Marmion splendid, yet Gray makes him appear somewhat of a fool, a diversionary bauble so the real soldiers can remove the threat: a cautionary tale on the pitfalls of pride for English knighthood.  

The foundation of the Order of the Garter is one of the most evocative and self-consciously ‘chivalric’ events of the reign of Edward III. At first glance, the Order may have been one of the ways in which ideas espoused on the Continent on matters chivalric were incorporated into the way English knights viewed the subject. During the period in question here, nine European knights were admitted to the order. Of the founder members, three knights: Jean de Grailly, Captal de Buch, Sir Henry d’Em and Sir Sanchet d’Aubreicourt, were admitted as foreigners. Before the end of Edward III’s reign, six more men: Sir Walter Mauny, Sir Frank Van Halen, Enguerrand de Couci, Robert de Namur, Sir Guichard d’Angle and John de Montfort, duke of Brittany were also admitted. However, those invested into the Order as foreigners invariably had very close links with England and the English. Jean de Grailly, a Gascon, had served

94 Scalacronica, pp. 81-3.
Edward III, his liege lord, for many years prior to his inclusion amongst the founder knights of the Order, most prolifically in the company of Henry of Lancaster in his native Aquitaine. 97

The other ‘foreign’ knights fall into two camps, those from lands tied to England through alliance or marriage, and French knights or noblemen who found themselves in English service or found a relationship with England mutually beneficial. Sanchet d’Aubrecicourt’s association with English service stemmed from his father’s links with John of Hainault, whom he accompanied to England on the occasion of his daughter’s marriage to Edward III in 1327. 98 Edward’s marriage had also brought the seventeen year-old Walter Mauny to England. A favourite of his compatriot, Jean Froissart, Mauny was to become one of Edward’s most trusted captains, serving prominently in Scotland and France. 99 Another son of Flanders to enter the hallowed stalls of the Garter was Robert of Namur in 1369. 100 His close relationship with his uncle, Robert d’Artois, predisposed him to an affiliation with the crown of England, and on his return from the Holy Land he joined the English before Calais in 1347 with 300 Flemish men-at-arms. 101 He was granted a pension of 1,200 florins de scuto in exchange for his homage and fealty to Edward III. 102 Henry d’Em, a Brabanter who most likely came into English orbit due to the alliances forged in the Low Countries in the 1330s, was knighted by the Black Prince and agreed to serve him in war for life against all but the duke of Brabant. 103 He may have been involved in the Round Table jousts of 1344, distinguishing himself through his prowess. 104 Frank van Halen, elected to the Order at the same time as Mauny in 1359, was another Brabançon knight who may have attended the Windsor festivities of 1344. 105 He served as a banneret with Lancaster in Aquitaine in 1345 and 1346, 106 where, according to Froissart, he fought at Bergerac, took Langon

97 E101/25/9, m.3.
98 Collins, Garter, p. 54; G. Beltz, Memorials of the Most Noble Order of the Garter (London, 1841), p. 90; Barber argues that this man was in fact the same individual as Eustace d’Auberchicourt. For further information on his career see, Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, pp. 499-510.
100 Collins, Garter, p. 290.
101 Beltz, Garter, p. 170; Crécy and Calais, p. 55.
102 Crécy and Calais, p. 269; CPR 1345-1348, p. 538.
103 CPR 1348-1350, p. 336.
104 Beltz, Garter, p. 87.
105 Collins, Garter, p. 55.
106 E101/25/9, m.3.
and fought at Auberoche and Aiguillon.\textsuperscript{107} He also was one of the knights of Brabant who joined Edward III at Calais in 1359.\textsuperscript{108}

As far as the members of the Order that hailed from France are concerned, it is a similar story with regard to their relationships with England and the English. Enguerrand de Couci was the only son of a noble house, and was admitted to the Order in 1365. He was among the hostages sent to England to secure the release of King Jean following the treaty of Bretigny in 1360. His place in the Order and his subsequent creation as earl of Bedford were by virtue of his marriage to Isabel, second daughter of Edward III. While Edward lived, de Couci did not raise arms against England, though as a Frenchman married into the English Royal house, he was in an awkward position when the war resumed in 1369. Upon Edward III’s death, de Couci surrendered his stall and no longer used his title.\textsuperscript{109} Poitevin knight Guichard d’ Angle’s time in French service culminated with defeat at Poitiers in 1356; Froissart tells us he was left for dead in a heap of his deceased countrymen before again being taken prisoner by the English.\textsuperscript{110} The treaty of Bretigny ceded his ancestral lands in northern Poitou to Edward III, making him a subject of the English crown.\textsuperscript{111} A warm relationship with the Black Prince saw him made marshal of the duchy, before accompanying the Prince and John of Gaunt to Spain.\textsuperscript{112} His stout defence as governor of his native Poitou for the English earned him his Garter stall in 1372, after which he continued in English service, though impoverished by the reclamation of his lands by the French. D’Angle was made earl of Huntingdon on the accession of Richard II in 1377.\textsuperscript{113} Lastly, John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany, had spent his youth in England following the homage of his father to Edward for the disputed duchy in 1345. He served with English forces pressing his rights there, culminating in his victory at Auray in 1364. He was also the earl of Richmond by ancestral right, though this was seemingly dependent upon the political requirements of the English crown.\textsuperscript{114} At the time of his entry into the Order in 1375, he had close ties with England in spite of being a vassal of the French crown.\textsuperscript{115} The above named foreign knights of the Order present us with a somewhat Anglophile, if not

\textsuperscript{107} Froissart, i, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, pp. 462-84, 521, 532.
\textsuperscript{108} Beltz, Garter, p. 125; E101/393/11, fo. 86v. (payroll for 1359-60).
\textsuperscript{109} Beltz, Garter, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{110} Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 5, 433; Knighton, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{111} J. Sumption, Trial by Fire, p. 447.
\textsuperscript{112} Knighton, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{115} Beltz, Garter, p. 199.
Anglicised group, retaining a degree of cultural homogeneity in regard to chivalric values. Instead of imposing a European influence on the character of the fraternity, they were to a degree politically predisposed to do the opposite. The fortunes of men like Mauny and Van Halen were so bound with that of England as to make nationality arbitrary, others were honour bound to the English cause, or had significant stakes in England. In joining the Order, they were invested into the fraternity that was the embodiment of the strength of English arms and the English national interest. From this perspective, it could be argued that the Garter, far from being a pan-European forum for chivalry, is particularly English in character during the period in question.

From the arguments presented above, it is possible to argue in favour of a form of chivalry that is specific in its characteristics, approaches and practice to the English during this period: to argue that the principles of the chivalric ideal evolved here separately and under different conditions than elsewhere in Europe, producing a distinctive English archetype, encouraged by a fledgling sense of ‘Englishness’ found in architecture and language. This difference in the approach to chivalry is in some ways bound together with the insular development of chivalric ideology in England, and the primacy of martial virtues espoused in Norman, Norse and Anglo-Saxon elite culture that were thrown together in the melting pot of England post-1066. These differences manifest themselves in literary tastes and the development of a distinctly English style in the adaptation of romance. The pseudo-historical tales of the foundation of Britain and the heroes of its past had an influence on the aristocracy of Edward’s England. This is seen in the way in which the subject matter of Arthurian legend was handled and in the act of naming aristocratic youths after the luminaries of England’s folk tradition, such as Humphrey de Bohun’s youngest son (d. 1322), named after the Trojan Aeneas, and the cultivation of the Guy of Warwick legend amongst the Beauchamp family. The rise of the English language cultivated a proto-patriotic culture, as did the high profile victories at Halidon Hill (1333), Sluys (1340), Crécy (1346), Neville’s Cross (1346) and Poitiers (1356). As we shall discuss in due course, the manner of these victories discarded ‘traditional’ chivalric convention with great success, providing a distinct confidence in a particularly English way of war. When we discuss chivalry then, it should not simply be done in the singular, rather, it is perhaps more accurate to speak of chivalries: varying forms evolving from a common seed under different circumstances. What remains of the chivalry of the English during our period, what we can discern of its character and priorities, will be the task of the remainder of this work.
Chivalry was a body of ideas governing the behaviour and values of knights and noblemen. It is these men that made up the ‘military community’ of England. For the purposes of what follows, a definition of the use of the term ‘community’ is necessary. Sociologists and anthropologists have debated incessantly about the meaning of the term, and to an extent it defies satisfactory definition when used in this specialist context, for, as Anthony Cohen states, though the term is readily intelligible to the layman, when imported into the social sciences: ‘all definitions contain or imply theories, and the theory of community has been very contentious’.

Fortunately, this ongoing debate need not detain us overmuch. Cohen’s assessment of the term’s use will fit our purpose nicely: ‘community’ implies two related suggestions, that the members of a group have something in common with each other, and that these common features distinguish them from members of other putative groups. ‘Community’, then, is as much about that which distinguishes a group from the rest of society as it is about the similarities between members of that group. Any ideology shared by a group such as this, relies on the fact that the group shares the tenets inherent within that ideology. Norms and values are disseminated and accepted within the group through a shared world-view and outlook, coupled with shared experience and motivations. The community is, to an extent, the mechanism through which we are socialised; where we ‘learn’ culture. In short, in order to establish whether chivalry was a dominant body of ideas understood, practiced and accepted by the military community in our period, we have to understand the ties between men which made this group into a community; that is, that which made them a distinct group within society.

As we shall see, the men that we are to focus upon, the ‘military community’ of fourteenth century England, differ greatly from one another and in some ways defy categorisation as a ‘community’ at all, yet there are significant areas of common ground. By no means the least of these is that all the individuals in question would occupy the second estate in the long held, not to mention unrealistic, impractical and fictional, tripartite distinction within medieval society; those who prayed, those who fought and those who worked. This somewhat narrow world view was strictly

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2 Ibid, p. 12.
hierarchical and inherently Christian, placing the church and churchmen at society’s pinnacle. Mobility within this system was limited, and it was seen as the natural order, stretching back into the distant past. The purpose of the second estate was to fight, firstly in defence of the Faith, but also to defend hearth and home, protect the people and to take a hand in the administration of justice and the ruling of the realm.³ Thus, it is perhaps the case that the individuals we will focus upon viewed themselves in these terms and identified themselves as a part of this group. Even if this was not the case, knights were not clergymen and did not till the soil, and so cannot be classified as the first or third estate.

The wars of Edward I and his son had encouraged the formation of traditions of military service amongst the landed families of the realm, leading to a complex network of comradeship groups on both a local and regional level, held together by the bonds of shared experience and cultural norms and reinforced by the regularity of martial participation and the stability of retinue composition.⁴ It is within this military community that the evidence for a martial culture of chivalry will be found, amongst men with similar backgrounds, interests and experiences. It is undeniable that Edward III was able to reap the full benefit of having this body of men at his disposal, and it could be argued that the levels of participation seen in the wars of our period, not to mention the unprecedented successes on the fields of Scotland and France, owe a great deal to cohesiveness and a sense of collective identity amongst the military classes. The ‘communities of the mind’ found in Edwardian armies had both local and supra-local dimensions.⁵ Indeed, it has been argued that ‘community’ is largely in the mind; it is a mental construct, symbolically condensing notions of similarity and difference. In this way, the reality of the community lies in its members’ perception of the vitality of the dominant cultural structure, which in our case could be termed ‘aristocratic’, ‘martial’ or ‘chivalric’. Community is constructed symbolically, making it a ‘repository of meaning’ and a referent for individual identity.⁶

The formation of this community, however, was by no means a simple process, and it would be an error to take knightly willingness to participate in the wars of the realm for granted simply because of the position they occupied in society. Edward III’s father and grandfather had both experienced problems in summoning the participation

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³ M. Keen, English Society in the Later Middle Ages, pp. 1-5.
⁵ A. Ayton, ‘Armies and Military Communities’, p. 224.
and support they required for their wars and this was an issue also encountered by Edward III himself in the campaigns in Scotland in the mid 1330s. The fact that double the normal rates of pay were offered to men-at-arms for service in the initial forays into France from 1338-40, underlines the Crown’s anxiety surrounding the attitude of the martial classes to a French war, as does the vast expenditure on ultimately fruitless continental alliances.  

For campaigns after 1340, the English were to rely upon troops raised in England, led in the main by Englishmen, men who provide the subjects for our discussions here. What, then, is the motivation for engagement in the wars of Edward III? We can perhaps advance some tentative answers. It is seen as the obligation of men of this class, men of knightly or noble status, to answer the king’s call. It had been a prerequisite of knighthood to flock to the banners and carry the sword against the king’s enemies in England since the days of the Anglo-Saxons. Not only were the men spoken of here the direct natural subordinates of the king and the heads of regional communities, they also saw themselves as the military elite and were relied upon as such. There are, of course, motivations which are inherently practical in nature rather than ideologically driven. Men were roused to war through varying forms of political and social coercion, and they also found that the opportunities for profit, both directly through service and by booty won on foreign fields, were too good to turn down. Indeed, it is possible to argue that some men engaged in such activity vocationally, that effectively they were professional soldiers. It could easily be said that these men took to the field, not in search of the somewhat abstract and indefinable rewards of glory, honour and fame, but to acquire land, title and privilege. The pot was sweetened further by the possibility of the respite of debts and the issue of letters of protection, shielding a man from legal action whilst in the service of the crown.  

The practical and material benefits of service begin to accumulate, but did chivalry also play a role in persuading these men to take up the sword? Is the military community of England engaging with notions of honour gained through prowess on the battlefield, with the loyalty and brotherhood engendered in the tales of Arthur and other knightly literature, or is it a case of shrewd political manipulation on behalf of the king and material opportunism and a sense of obligation on behalf of knights? It is plausible that in a warlike society, the desire for combat and the quest for personal glory should not be underestimated:  

that there is something altogether more intangible and exalted that, even if only in part,  

9 M. Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages*, p. 57.
drives these men. What sense of a chivalric-minded military community, particularly with regard to the virtue of loyalty and the fostering of a sense of fraternity, can we detect amongst these men? Can a community potentially susceptible to being influenced by a common ideology such as chivalry, be identified and defined from the available source material?

It may be instructive at this point to probe a little deeper into the nature and structure of this community, in an attempt to understand the ties that bound such men together to form the class of individuals floating in the chivalric soup of Edwardian martial life. It is perhaps somewhat inaccurate to make reference to the men that are our subject here as the military community. When considering this group, it is beneficial to acknowledge that we are dealing with a host of inter-related communities rather than a single entity. We are dealing with a very large number of individuals, some of whom it is impossible to know very much about at all, who come from a variety of social backgrounds and locations. The individuals concerned occupied a variety of social status positions. The highest of these levels, directly beneath the king himself in the hierarchy of England, were the earls, traditionally a problematic group of powerful individuals. In stark contrast to that of his father, which saw the demise of five earls through rebellion or conspiracy, and the short yet turbulent regency of Roger Mortimer that saw the earl of Kent and Mortimer himself fall, the independent reign of Edward III is characterised by generally amicable relations between the monarch and this exclusive group. By the time Edward III took the reins of his kingdom in his own right in 1330, the ranks of the higher nobility had been worn thin by the strife, executions and forfeitures of the previous decade. Edward’s younger brother, John of Eltham, was the fourteen year old earl of Cornwall and as yet too young to be of great use. The more vigorous of the ‘community of earls’, such as John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, Richard Fitzalan, earl of Arundel and the seventeen year old Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick were to be of great value as counsellors and supporters of the young king during the 1330s and beyond. John de Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, was seemingly never a well man and following his death in 1336 was succeeded by his younger brother, Humphrey, who also suffered from some sort of malady that restricted his activities.

11 M. Ormrod, Edward III, p. 137.
12 M. Ormrod, Edward III, p. 137.
13 C. Given-Wilson, The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages, p. 34.
participation of all five of the above named men, along with Gilbert Umfraville and Henry Beaumont, the earls of Angus and Buchan. Between them, they provided 842 men-at-arms to the royal army. This figure represents 34% of the host, showing the importance of such men and their recruiting power to any hopes of England’s military success. Thomas of Brotherton, Edward’s uncle and earl of Norfolk, took no part in the wars in Scotland after 1333 and seems to have rarely been at court until his premature death in 1338. Henry of Lancaster, though powerful, also appears to have been in poor health and was losing his sight. Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, was sixty three years old in 1330, and died the following year to be succeeded by his nephew John. Hugh Courtenay was restored to the earldom of Devon in 1335, but was in his sixties. As war with France began to appear inevitable, and with the earls of Buchan and Angus occupied with affairs in Scotland, Edward was left with Arundel, Oxford and Warwick as the only men with blades sharp enough, and minds and bodies strong enough, for his purposes.

Thus it was that on the eve of war in March 1337, Edward took the unprecedented step that may well explain his positive standing with the earls of England; he raised six men to the dignity. As we shall see, these were mostly men already close to Edward, men he had already grown to trust. His close friend and confidante William Montague was created earl of Salisbury, William Clinton became earl of Huntingdon, Robert Ufford became earl of Suffolk and William Bohun, earl of Northampton. These four men were all part of the Royal Household and had been involved in the coup at Nottingham castle that allowed Edward to sit the throne independently. Henry of Grosmont, second cousin to the king, was made earl of Derby in a ‘fast track’ to a status he would have gained eventually by hereditary right. Hugh Audley, the spectacularly wealthy recipient of a portion of the Clare inheritance, completed the six. A large proportion of the upper strata of the political and military community was therefore ‘hand picked’ by Edward himself and, to a degree, was a homogenous group. Many of the communities that grew up around these men are better

16 M. Ormrod, Edward III, p. 137.
17 A. Ayton, ‘Edward III and the English Aristocracy’, p. 188.
classed as affinities, such as those of the Black Prince or Henry of Grosmont; they are groups within a group that encompass a kaleidoscopic series of motivations, traditions and interests.

When discussing an overtly martial code such as chivalry, it is tempting to view the men of the knightly and noble classes purely as fighting men, even warriors, and doubtless, this is a part of the individual identities we are concerned with. But the careers of these men are inevitably much more complex than this. They are landlords, judges, keepers of the peace, holders of any number of administrative posts within the shires, as well as warriors. This should not be taken to mean that they were amateurs with sword in hand; far from it, they had been trained from an early age in the mastery of horsemanship and the use of weapons and many found themselves as much more than occasional soldiers; as many as 84% of the knights listed in the county section on the Parliamentary roll of arms can be shown to have participated in military service between 1277 and 1314. Yet for every man of knightly rank riding regularly in a lord’s retinue on campaign, there is likely to be another who seldom did so. Some of course, did not participate at all. During the siege of Calais in 1347, at a time when the largest number of Englishmen were under arms during our period, Nigel Saul estimates that only around seventeen knights and valetti from Gloucestershire participated. This constitutes a little less than half the county’s contingent of eligible men. The place of these men at the head of regional society means that their careers cannot be labelled as simply military; they served a number of purposes vital to the successful management of the realm. This further contributes to their own intrinsic perceptions of their class as one apart from and superior to the rest of contemporary society, and affects the dominant ideological norms prevalent within it.

A man who can be seen to exemplify the rounded career mentioned above is the relatively lowly, remarkably long-lived, yet somewhat typical Cumberland knight, Sir Richard Denton. Born around 1282, his career is relatively invisible in the source material until he reached his thirties. His first documented spell of military service was in November 1314, where he is listed as a serviens in Andrew Harcla’s retinue.

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22 CPR 1350-1354, p. 226. Denton was exempted from appointment to offices against his will in 1352 as he had turned seventy. His longevity is attested to in the Calendar of Close Rolls, the date of his death being 29th March 1363 aged eighty-one, CCR 1360-1364, p. 32.
23 E101/14/15, m. 2.
was given the task of defending Carlisle and the garrison was much engaged with Scottish raiders in the aftermath of the battle of Bannockburn. Denton may have been among the men captured along with Harcla following the siege of Carlisle. He subsequently appears in 1322 as commissioner of array in his home county, before receiving a letter of protection to again serve with Andrew Harcla in Scotland. Denton benefited from loyalty to the Crown, though his loyalty to Harcla is questionable. Following the defeat of Henry of Lancaster at Boroughbridge in 1322, Harcla, newly made earl of Carlisle, made an unauthorised pact with the Scots. Edward II, concerned at what he viewed as treachery in the north, charged Anthony Lucy with apprehending the renegade at Carlisle. Denton was a part of the small group of men Lucy selected for the task, along with fellow Cumberland men Hugh Moriceby and Hugh Louther. Harcla was successfully taken, the only blood being shed by Denton when the keeper of the inner gate of the castle attempted to shut the king’s men in. For his role in the affair, Denton was granted in fee simple the Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmorland holdings of Edmund de Boyville, which Harcla had gained through the rebellion the previous year. He continued in his role as commissioner in Cumberland until travelling to Santiago de Compostela on a pilgrimage in 1330. His military service record is unclear until 1336 when Denton was at the ripe old age of 54. He was then consistently in the service of William Bohun for twelve years between the Scottish campaign of that year and the defence of Calais in 1348, though it seems he was not with the earl of Northampton at the battle of Crécy in 1346. Perhaps he was in the north of England fighting the Scots at Neville’s Cross on the ‘second front’ of Edward’s wars. What prompted a man of Denton’s years into the saddle to campaign with Northampton is unclear; perhaps he was tempted by the prospects of martial success and enrichment, not to mention the prestige that military service increasingly seemed to

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25 CPR 1321-1324, p. 143.
26 CPR 1321-1324, p. 130.
27 J. Nicholson, R. Burn et al, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland v.II (London, 1777), p 231; The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346, ed. H. Maxwell (Glasgow, 1913), p. 243. The Lanercost chronicle designates Denton as a knight when he arrested Harcla in 1322, though there is little evidence to support this until 1336, when he is referred to as such in a horse inventory: E101/19/36, m. 5.
28 CPR 1321-1324, p. 263.
29 CPR 1327-1330, p. 492.
30 For this period, Denton is a true stalwart in Bohun’s retinue: Scotland 1336: E101/19/36, m.5, Low Countries 1337: C81/1734, no.40; Flanders 1338-9: C81/1750, no.12; The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, p. 310; Brittany 1342: C81/1735, no.22, 1345: C81/1735, no.21, and the defence of Calais 1348: C81/1734, no.24.
offer in the mid 1330s. He was certainly consistently involved in the recruitment of men from his home county and as a commissioner of the peace. Denton found himself in William Bohun’s orbit through the latter’s acquisition of Annandale and Lochmaben castle following the death of his brother, John in 1336.\(^\text{31}\) With his lucrative stake in the north of England,\(^\text{32}\) Bohun was subsequently appointed leader of the men of Cumberland and Westmorland.\(^\text{33}\) This meant that Denton was not alone in taking the field with the earl of Northampton; other men of Cumberland and Westmorland joined him. Hugh de Moriceby was in Northampton’s retinue for the campaigns in the Low Countries and Northern France from 1337-39.\(^\text{34}\) Moriceby had been a knight of the shire of Cumberland, and was a familiar face to Denton.\(^\text{35}\) William English is another Cumberland knight of the shire in Bohun’s retinue, serving from 1345-50,\(^\text{36}\) the three being members of a distinctly northern minority in Bohun’s service. Denton was granted the income of cornage in Cumberland for life in 1347 in return for his service to the king and seems to have lived the rest of his life conducting shire administration until his death in 1363.\(^\text{37}\) Denton’s case exemplifies the complex nature of the military community, a community which transcends local boundaries and is characterised by a range of activities not exclusively martial. The intensification of his military service in the autumn of his long life perhaps speaks of the growing appeal of such activity to men of his ilk, hinting at the bloom in enthusiasm amongst the knightly classes for participation in Edward’s wars, within the framework of chivalric sentiment consciously nurtured by Edward III and his captains.

Amongst the relationships which catch the eye when trawling the military service data available, some of the most prominent are familial. Familiarity and trust are essential components of an effective company and a notable feature, at least at the more humble end of the sample, is the regular recurrence in larger retinues of members of the captain’s family at his side participating in the king’s wars. This reveals the blossoming of a familial martial tradition bound to the fortunes of England, and also suggests that the first port of call to fulfil the demands of recruitment was the family. This was not an

\(^{31}\) Rot Scot, i, p. 399.

\(^{32}\) When Henry Percy handed Annandale and Lochmaben to the king in 1334, it was worth 1000mks annually: CCR 1333-1337, p. 327.

\(^{33}\) Rot Scot, i, p. 415.

\(^{34}\) E101/311/31, fo. 3; C81/1750, no.12.


\(^{36}\) Brittany 1345: C76/20, m.21; Crécy 1346: Crécy and Calais, p. 89, C81/1734, no.28; Calais 1347: C76/25, m.5; Scotland 1349-50: C71/29, m.1, C71/30, m.5.

\(^{37}\) CPR 1345-1348, p. 351.
entirely new phenomenon. The Parliamentary Roll lists a great number of knights sharing the same family name in its details of arms found in the shires. Norfolk is sprinkled with Bardolfs, Botetourts and Kerdestones; Northamptonshire and Rutland have triple entries for Haustede and de l’Isle; whilst Segrave, la Zouche and Neville are prevalent in Leicestershire and no fewer than five Hastangs dominate the Staffordshire list.\footnote{A Roll of Arms of the Reign of Edward the Second, ed. N. H. Nicholas (London, 1829).} This not only speaks of the positioning of these families at the very forefront of county life, but also provides evidence for long-standing traditions of military service within these prominent gentry families. This tradition continued into our period. The decade from 1337 to 1347 saw the earl of Northampton often accompanied in war by his brother Edmund, taking the siblings from the Low Countries, to the stunning naval victory at Sluys, the campaigns in Brittany and Normandy and up to the siege of Calais.\footnote{Low Countries 1337: CPR 1334-1338, p. 530; Sluys/Tournai 1340: C81/1735, no.15; Brittany 1342: C76/17, m. 19; Crécy 1346: Crécy and Calais, p. 89; Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, pp. 115, 129.} An even more regular companion of Northampton was his cousin Oliver, at his side constantly from the Lochindorb chevauchée in 1336 through to the defence of Calais in 1348.\footnote{Scotland 1336: E101/19/36, m. 5; Low Countries 1337: CPR 1334-1338, p. 530; Flanders 1338-9: C81/1750, no.12; Sluys/Tournai 1340: C81/1735, no.15; Brittany 1342: C76/17, m.36; Brittany 1345: C81/1735, no.18; Crécy/Calais 1346-7: Crécy and Calais, pp. 86, 138, 147, 157; defence of Calais 1348: C81/1734, no.24.} Thomas Dagworth, renowned captain and victor of Restellou (1346) and La Roche-Derrien (1347), had close connections with the Bohun family. The Dagworth familial connection with the county of Essex saw him enter the service of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, overseeing the Essex lordships of Brecon and Hay.\footnote{C. Rogers, ‘Dagworth, Thomas’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, May, 2005: online edn, Jan 2007 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50128, accessed 18 Nov 2013]} He then served with William Bohun, possibly in the large retinues that he led in Scotland during the 1330s, certainly in the Low Countries in 1337,\footnote{CPR 1334-1338, p. 531.} and in Brittany from 1342-1345.\footnote{Britanny 1342-3:C81/1735, no.22; Brittany 1345: C76/20, m. 21; C81/1735, no.21.} By this point Dagworth was not only a safe pair of hands militarily, but one of the family, evidently impressing Eleanor Bohun as much as he did her brothers and securing a socially advantageous marriage to the widow of the earl of Ormond in 1344.\footnote{C. Rogers, ‘Thomas Dagworth’, ODNB, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50128; Complete Peerage, ed. G. E. Cockayne et al, 12 vols (London, 1910-59), 4, 28.} He was left in de facto control of operations in Brittany in Bohun’s absence during 1346, before being confirmed as lieutenant there by the king before Calais in 1347.\footnote{Crécy and Calais, p. 108.}
The retinue of Robert Ufford, earl of Suffolk, includes his brothers John and Edmund in 1337 and 1338, along with another Edmund, listed as a cousin. Edmund, ‘le frere’, subsequently entered into the service of Henry of Grosmont in 1342, before signing a lifetime indenture of retinue with him in 1347. It is a similar story regarding family members for the retinue of Ralph Stafford who, despite experiencing a somewhat meteoric rise to prominence through an advantageous marriage and evident ability, also relied upon his kin, especially in the earlier part of his career. His brother Richard began his military service alongside Stafford in the late 1320’s, as they joined with their uncle, Ralph Bassett, at Dover Castle. After narrowly escaping imprisonment for murder, Richard would go on to have a successful career in his own right, serving with his elder brother in Hugh Audley’s retinue in 1338, and with the earl of Warwick in Brittany in 1342. He continued to be active both in shire administration and, from 1343, in the service of the Black Prince, joining his retinue at Crécy and serving in Aquitaine. This was to be an enduring association; in 1347, Stafford was appointed steward of the prince’s lands, and was elevated to the status of banneret at Bassoues prior to the start of the chevauchée in 1355. He established a lesser baronial house of his own with a marriage to a Camville heiress.

John Stafford, a member of the Staffords of Bramshall, was a veteran of Boroughbridge and a knight of the Hospital. He was in the retinue of Roger Mortimer for the Stanhope Park expedition of 1327, along with his kinsmen William, Walter and James. In common with Ralph and Richard, John also served in Ralph Basset’s company, this time in Scotland in 1333. He was truly one of Stafford’s stalwarts, serving alongside him in Scotland from 1336, rejoining his kinsman for the Breton

46 CPR 1334-1338, p. 527.
47 Brittany 1342: C76/17, m.22; Aquitaine 1345: C76/20, m.15; indenture of retinue between Grosmont and Ufford: DL 27/155, printed in K. Fowler, The King’s Lieutenant, p. 234.
48 CCR 1323-1327, p. 467.
49 CPR 1334-1338, p. 65
50 E 101/35/3, m. 1.
51 C76/17, m. 20.
53 BPR, i, p. 48.
54 R. Barber, Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine (London, 1978), p. 120.
57 CPR 1327-1330, p140.
58 C 71/13, m. 31.
59 C 81/1749, no. 56.
and Gascon campaigns of 1342,\textsuperscript{60} and 1345,\textsuperscript{61} and remaining with him until after the siege of Calais.\textsuperscript{62} It is also probable that he accompanied Stafford on the second expedition to Aquitaine in 1352.\textsuperscript{63} John’s brother, Sir James Stafford of Sandon, married Ralph Stafford’s sister Mary,\textsuperscript{64} and served in Brittany with household clerk Philip Weston in 1342;\textsuperscript{65} he joined Ralph Stafford’s company in Aquitaine in 1345.\textsuperscript{66} There was also a Walter Stafford who served in Sluys in 1340, Tournai in 1342 and at the siege of Calais.\textsuperscript{67} The Staffords, it seems, stuck together. James Pype was the first child of Stafford’s mother’s second marriage to Thomas Pype of Lichfield.\textsuperscript{68} Pype served with Stafford in Scotland from 1336-38 and again in Brittany, also accompanying him on the 1345 expedition to Aquitaine and remaining with him until after the siege of Calais.\textsuperscript{69} Nicholas de Beek was Stafford’s son in law, having married his daughter Jane. Beek served with his father in law at Calais, also joining him on the Reims campaign of 1359,\textsuperscript{70} and on the Irish expedition in 1361.\textsuperscript{71} Family relationships in Stafford’s retinue continued when Sir Robert Swynnerton married Beek’s daughter (Stafford’s granddaughter). On the journey through England to take ship for France in 1369, the aged Stafford enquired of Swynnerton whether he had fulfilled the terms of his marriage agreement. The reply was evidently unsatisfactory, and Stafford ordered two men to escort Swynnerton home where they were to supervise the completion of the contract before allowing him to return.\textsuperscript{72}

The regularity of military service was in itself a contributory factor to the cohesiveness of the military community and the maintenance of a shared culture within it, a culture which we can call chivalry and which it is our purpose to attempt to characterise and understand. Many of the individuals found in the sample concerned here would have known each other well, and not merely through the common occupations of shire administration and the occasional rubbing of shoulders at feast or

\textsuperscript{60} C 76/17, m. 32.  
\textsuperscript{61} C 61/57, m. 5.  
\textsuperscript{62} Crécy and Calais, p. 117.  
\textsuperscript{63} J. Wedgewood, ‘Staffordshire Parliamentary History’, p. 78.  
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p. 52.  
\textsuperscript{65} C 76/17, m. 25.  
\textsuperscript{66} C 61/57, m. 5.  
\textsuperscript{67} Sluys/Tournai 1340: C 76/15, m. 8; Brittany 1342: C 76/17, m. 32; Calais: Crécy and Calais, p. 117.  
\textsuperscript{68} J. Wedgewood, ‘Staffordshire Parliamentary History’, I, 83.  
\textsuperscript{69} Scotland 1336: C 81/1749, no. 56; 1338: E 101/35/3, m. 1; Brittany 1342: C 76/17, m. 32; Aquitaine 1345: C 61/57, m. 5; Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, p. 273.  
\textsuperscript{70} Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, p. 117; Reims 1359: C 76/38, m. 14.  
\textsuperscript{71} E101/28/15.  
\textsuperscript{72} P. Morgan, War and Society in Medieval Cheshire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 55.
tournament. Rather, the bonds shared through military service: of mutual reliance, trust and respect, of shared experience through the often harrowing and dangerous events of a campaign, tied the disparate elements of the community together, especially in a period of protracted campaigning such as that found in the first half of Edward III’s reign. It is within this psychological and social sphere that chivalry was understood and the values associated with it were accepted, modified and enforced. A caveat is provided by the case of the Black Prince. His profile made him one of the most celebrated personalities of his age, yet the campaigns in which he participated were relatively few. His retinue shows little continuity of service, in part due to the dearth of indentured retainers in his household, but also due to the long period between the campaigns in which he participated. Though there are some individuals that accompanied him on each of his campaigns, his military family is perhaps better viewed not as a coherent unit, but a disparate group whose members saw regular service together, but not always in the same capacity and not always with the Black Prince. With the highly prominent and successful captains found in the rest of the sample group, it is by no means uncommon to have a significant number of identifiable individuals exhibiting a great degree of continuity and regularity of service. The campaign in Brittany in 1342 is illustrative of this continuity. It should be noted that the available data is incomplete and not all of the names of the men who served in aristocratic retinues are available. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions from the surviving material. The earl of Northampton arrived in Brittany in the summer of 1342 with a retinue comprising of six bannerets, fifty two knights and 141 esquires (plus 184 armed men and mounted archers). Of these 199 men-at-arms, all but sixty of them can be named. Of these men, fifty four of them (39%) had served in Northampton’s retinue on at least one previous occasion, while thirty three (24%) had served twice or more. There are some that can be called true stalwarts, men whom Bohun would have known well from the service they gave in Scotland through to this early phase of the French war. Eighteen of the 139 men, 13% of the total we can name in 1342, had served in Northampton’s retinue on four or more occasions. Ralph Stafford, in 1342 still a banneret, was accompanied by seventy three men-at-arms (plus seventy six mounted archers), though only about a third of his men-at-arms can be named. Of these, 26% had served with Stafford before,

74 A. Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, p263; E 36/204, fos 106r, 108v.
75 A. Ayton, *Knights and Warhorses*, p263; E 36/204, fos 106r, 108v.
all but one of them on at least two occasions. Of the fifty men-at-arms that can be named from the earl of Derby’s 183 man retinue (plus 208 mounted archers), 42% had served with him before. When we consider the retinue of the earl of Warwick for the Crécy campaign of 1346, it is a similar story. His company, the largest of the mixed retinues accompanying English magnates, consisted of 348 men. Of the 199 knights and men-at-arms accompanying the earl, we can name 130 of them. Of these, at least 45% of them had served with him before in Scotland or in France. At least 61% of the men that can be named in his company had some prior military service, providing a solid, experienced core of men under his command. Without knowing all of the names, these observations cannot be classed as ‘cast iron’ statistics, though the available evidence demonstrates a degree of stability and continuity in retinue composition. That being said, of the 130 men identified with Warwick in 1346, 44% had served on previous campaigns with a captain other than Beauchamp, indicating that there was mobility within the system. Of the fifty nine men who had served Warwick in the past, only twenty two of them had served him alone—stalwarts such as Nicholas Pecche, William Lucy, Thomas Henleye and Robert Herle.

It is not surprising, given his high profile as Edward III’s foremost captain and taking into account the regularity of his campaigns, that Henry of Grosmont, earl of Derby in 1337 and future duke of Lancaster, was one of the men who also attracted individuals of such constancy to his banner. Roger Beler, though from a family of some antiquity in Grosmont’s heartlands of Leicestershire, came to be of considerable standing in the nearby counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire as well. In the later part of his career, Beler was sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire seven times between 1361 and 1374. His time in Grosmont’s service spanned nearly two decades and took him from the early campaigns in Northern France, through the campaign in Brittany in 1342. He also participated in Grosmont’s successful spell in Aquitaine in 1345, before ending as part of the large English army which marched through France to Reims in 1359. Following his time in the wars, he returned to more mundane activities in the shires; he was charged with the lofty task of discovering whose responsibility it was to repair a bridge near the city of Nottingham in 1362 and received

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76 Ibid, p. 263; E 36/204, fos 106r, 108v.
79 N. France 1340: C76/15., m. 20; Brittany 1342: C76/17., m.16; Aquitaine 1345: E101/25/9., m. 3; Calais 1347: C76/25., m. 9; Normandy/Brittany 1355: C76/33., m.9; Reims 1359: C76/38., m. 16.
an order to array 100 archers from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1369: both suitable tasks for a grey-bearded veteran of Edward’s wars. It was not so much Beler’s loyalty to Henry of Grosmont that brought him material enrichment, though to an extent this is undoubtedly the case. For Beler, it was advantageous marriage that extended his holdings in land and increased his wealth. The source of his marriages seems to have been the very company in which he served. Throughout his life Beler was married four times; this is an impressive figure, even when one takes into account the frequent early demise of spouses. His first marriage was to Margaret de la Ryvere, sister of one of Beler’s military acquaintances, Thomas. She brought Beler the manors of Winfield, Tibshelf, Widmerpole and Gonaldeston from her mother’s side and on partition of the lands of her father, the manor of Boney in Nottinghamshire and lands in Thorpe-Secheville and Kirkeby-Upon-Wreke in Leicestershire were added to Beler’s holdings.

His second marriage was to another Margaret, daughter of John Grey of Codenore, a banneret who served in Grosmont’s retinue along with his son and alongside Beler himself, notably in Aquitaine in 1345. This marriage brought Beler the manor of Cruche, held in chief. The men mentioned above were initially united through comradeship before the ties were formalised in marriage, further binding together the military community.

That bonds forged on the battlefield are enduring and serve to integrate individuals into the wider military community. Ingratiating oneself with the great men of the realm serves to benefit these said individuals and this is exemplified by the case of the aforementioned Robert Herle. His father, William Herle, was a lawyer who held lands in both Northumberland and Leicestershire and was knighted around 1320 when he became a junior justice of the common bench. Robert Herle rose to be one of the members of the Beauchamp affinity that would become highly influential in the West Midlands during the middle of the fourteenth century. He was at the side of the earl of Warwick on a number of the major campaigns in the first phase of the Hundred Years War, beginning with the expedition to Scotland in 1337.

A man of evident ability, and perhaps with a touch of his father’s clerical skill as we shall see from his later career,

80 CPR 1361-1364, p. 289; CPR 1367-1369, p. 239.
81 Thomas de la Ryvere served alongside Beler in Lancaster’s company in 1342: C76/17., m.26; 1345: C76/20., m.15, and 1359: C76/38., m.16.
83 E101/25/9., m. 3; C81/1727., no. 60.
84 CPR 1343-1345, p. 364.
86 E101/20/17., m. 7.
Herle was granted an indenture to serve the earl of Warwick for life in peace and war in 1339. To accompany the indenture, Herle was made the warden of Barnard castle in Northumberland, along with its forests and lands. Barnard had been granted to Guy Beauchamp in 1307 following the rebellion of John Balliol and was an important northern bastion. Though the maintenance grant or fee accompanying the indenture is not known, letters patent from the time show that Beauchamp leased to Herle for life, lands and rents in the vicinity of Barnard, adding to his existing holdings in that county. In 1340, Herle was in Warwick’s retinue for the campaign that encompassed the battle of Sluys and the siege of Tournai and continued his service in the Brittany campaign of 1342.

His association with the earl of Warwick, as per the indenture of 1339, was not restricted to the military sphere. In September of 1343, Herle obtained a pardon of the king’s suit for felonies, larcenies and homicides he had perpetrated and any subsequent outlawries that was sealed before the king in person and witnessed by Thomas Beauchamp. The following year, Herle and Beauchamp were appointed mainpernors to eject a priest from the benefice of Stowmarket in the diocese of Norwich, and the two continued to work side by side as commissioners of the peace in Warwickshire. Herle was also one of a number of men to whom Beauchamp entrusted some of his lands in Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire to provide marriage portions for his daughters, placing emphasis on the presence of Herle in the earl’s inner circle and the established trust between the two men. The two had planned to take to the field again in Flanders in 1345, though the expedition faltered and was abandoned before it had really begun. There is evidence they remained in one another’s company throughout the Crécy campaign and through part of the following siege of Calais. However, it is possible that Herle returned to England some time prior to October 1346 and was present at the battle of Neville’s Cross. Two years after that fateful clash of England and Scotland, he delivered to Edward III a knight named William de Vaux taken prisoner at

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87 Herle was to bring four men at arms to serve the earl during times of war, and was to be a bachelor of Warwick’s household during peacetime, as well as attending him at tournaments, ‘Private Indentures for Life Service in Peace and War 1278-1476’, ed. M. Jones and S. Walker in Camden Miscellany XXXII, Camden 5th series, v.iii (1994), p. 70.
88 CPR 1301-1307, p. 492.
89 CPR 1338-1340, p. 320; CIPM XI, pp. 449-51.
90 Sluys/Tournai: C76/15., m.25; Brittany: E36/204., fo.88r.
91 CPR 1343-1346, p. 118.
92 CPR 1343-1346, p. 289; CPR 1343-1346, p. 490.
93 CPR 1343-1346, p. 517.
94 C81/1742., no. 26; Crécy and Calais, p. 124.
the battle of Durham, thereby receiving £100 as a ‘gift’ in return.\textsuperscript{95} Of course, Herle’s possession of de Vaux does not mean it was Herle that took him prisoner; in fact it appears that Vaux was taken initially by Thomas Rokeby.\textsuperscript{96} He could have been purchased later, or perhaps Herle acquired rights to his ransom by some other means. Given his interests in the north it does not seem unlikely that Herle was at Durham in October 1346, and it is possible that he was present both here and at Crécy, making him a rare witness to England’s twin triumphs of the 1340s.

Following this decade or more in the service of the earl of Warwick, it seems that in the late 1340’s Herle attracted the attention of his sovereign. Ever desirous of able men to serve under him, Edward III granted Herle a promotion of sorts, retaining him for life and granting him an annuity of £100 as his fee for providing ten men-at-arms: himself, one other knight and eight esquires, until appropriate lands or rents could be given him.\textsuperscript{97} In lieu of the annuity, he was eventually granted the income from two priories and their associated farms, bolstered by part of the income from the town of Leicester to arrive at the £100 total.\textsuperscript{98} Following this appointment, he was promptly dispatched to Calais, where he took up the office of captain of the town, a post he was to hold for the next two years.\textsuperscript{99} The trust placed in Herle by his monarch is clearly demonstrated by his appointment as Steward of the lands and households of Edward’s under age sons John and Edmund in 1354, ensuring that their estates were well run.\textsuperscript{100}

Whilst providing this important service to his king, Herle remained close to Beauchamp, he was one of the feoffees along with the earl of Stafford and the clerk Richard Piriton – another of Beauchamp’s servants – when Swansea castle was entailed in 1356.\textsuperscript{101} Further royal appointments followed and in 1359 Herle was named King’s Lieutenant in Brittany, effectively assuming control of a large part of France in the name of Edward III.\textsuperscript{102} By 1361, Herle was constable of Dover castle and warden of the Cinque ports, as well as having the rather grand title of ‘Admiral of all fleets of the south, north and west’.\textsuperscript{103} The fact that Herle was able to serve both Edward III and the earl of Warwick at the same time, with no conflict of interest, is testament to the good relations between the king and his magnates during this period. His career also

\textsuperscript{95} CPR 1348-1350, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{96} Rot Scot, i, p. 678.
\textsuperscript{97} CPR 1348-1350, p. 492.
\textsuperscript{98} CPR 1350-1354, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{99} CPR 1348-1350, p. 590; CCR 1349-1354, pp. 274, 424.
\textsuperscript{100} CPR 1354-1358, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{101} CPR 1354-1358, p. 395.
\textsuperscript{102} CPR 1354-1358, p. 416.
\textsuperscript{103} CPR 1361-1364, pp. 519, 531.
exemplifies the importance of the loyalty Herle and a great many others exhibited in relation to the efficient management of the realm in both war and peace.

Loyalty need not necessarily be demonstrated in a lifelong commitment to the service of a single individual however, and in spite of there being many identifiable cases of a career spent in the service of one man, there are many instances too where individual knights and men-at-arms seem to have been what one might call ‘journeyman retainers’, serving in a number of companies over the course of their careers in arms. In some ways they can be categorised as career campaigners, soldiers of fortune who went to where the fighting was thickest, a minority group with no particular or concrete affiliations, though this is not exclusively the case. This pool of experienced manpower would have been of great use to any given captain or magnate. Those who had served in a variety of companies on a variety of campaigns provided a source of experienced and reliable men to recruit or indenture into ones company. These were men in demand. The 1330s and early 1340s can be characterised by a degree of stability in retinue composition, the result of established social networks and a settled pool of manpower. Exogenous developments in the recruiting system, such as the appearance of the large mixed retinue of men at arms and mounted archers beginning in the 1340s and 1350s, meant that captains had to look beyond established recruiting networks and make use of subcontractors with whom they had no previous close affiliations, reducing retinue level stability. This is a situation that becomes ever more pronounced, especially after 1369, when huge mixed retinues accompany both parvenu captains and established magnates. There are particular times when the movement of men from the service of one captain to another might be observed, such as the years between 1346 and 1350 when the strength of retinues was being replenished following casualties due to battle and disease on the Crécy/Calais campaign, and the losses many captains would have experienced from victims of the plague. Additionally, men would serve those whom they believed would advance their careers or add weight to their purses, so there is a tendency for such individuals to gravitate towards the service of the higher profile captains as their career progresses. There is almost as much evidence that ‘the military community’ was a dynamic and ever changing system as there is for ‘dependables’ that continued in the service of an individual captain through the entirety of their military careers. This dynamic character of the military community was a necessary concomitant

of the combination of renewal and stability that we find in all retinues, a collective state that Andrew Ayton has termed ‘dynamic stability’.\textsuperscript{105}

There is no one man that better demonstrates the fluidity of service and dynamism described above than the career soldier Nigel Loring. From relatively humble beginnings in rural Bedfordshire, Loring rose to become one of the most celebrated and reliable retainers of the Black Prince and this was achieved largely through his skills as a soldier and administrator. Like so many of his contemporaries, Loring began his career in arms in the Scottish war of the 1330s. The earliest appearance of Loring in the records is an annuity issued to him at Berwick in 1335, likely to have been a reward from Edward III for his services on campaign. This service is likely to have been conducted in the retinue of William Montague, future earl of Salisbury and confidante of Edward III, in whose company Loring served in 1338 as an esquire.\textsuperscript{106} Later that year, Loring was granted another annuity at Antwerp when he transferred into the service of the king as a ‘yeoman’. This change in his circumstances was accompanied by a grant in fee of the manor of Alvethale in Shropshire.\textsuperscript{107} One of the versions of Jean Froissart’s famous chronicle, in many ways a somewhat embellished catalogue of the feats of arms performed by many of the warriors of this period, has Loring knighted by the hand of the king following the stunning seaborne victory at the mouth of the river Zwin in 1340.\textsuperscript{108} His wages for this, and the subsequent campaign amounted to £22 10s. 9d.\textsuperscript{109}

Loring led a small contingent in the large English force which landed in Brittany in the autumn of 1342, an army which included many of Froissart’s chivalric luminaries such as Walter Mauny, the earls of Warwick and Derby, Thomas Bradestone and Bartholomew Burgherssh.\textsuperscript{110} He remained in the service of the king for the next two years, receiving letters of protection in 1344 and travelling to meet the Pope in the company of Michael Northburgh, king’s clerk and future bishop of London, to canvass papal opinion on the intended marriage of Edward’s eldest son to Margaret of Brabant.\textsuperscript{111} Clearly, by this point Loring’s star was in ascendance and his martial reputation would be further enhanced through service to arguably the greatest commander of the age, Henry of Grosmont, the king’s cousin and earl of Derby, whom

\textsuperscript{105} A. Ayton, ‘Military Service and the Dynamics of Recruitment’, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{106} A. Ayton, \textit{Knights and Warhorses}, p. 187; E101/20/25., m.5.
\textsuperscript{107} CPR 1338-1340, pp. 191, 397.
\textsuperscript{108} Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 3, 197.
\textsuperscript{109} CCR 1339-1341, p. 525.
\textsuperscript{110} A. Ayton, \textit{Knights and Warhorses}, p. 263.
\textsuperscript{111} CPR 1343-1345, p. 217; CpapR. Letters, 1342-1362, p. 16.
he accompanied on the lengthy and greatly successful campaign in Aquitaine in 1345. He remained in the service of the great man through to the siege of Calais in 1347, where he led another small contingent of one knight, two esquires and a hobelar. Though it is unlikely that Loring fought at Crécy, he was invested as a founder member of the Order of the Garter on the Black Prince’s side. It was around this time that he entered the service of the Black Prince. As a man who had faithfully served Edward III and came with Lancaster’s seal of approval, he was an ideal candidate for the post. The young lion would have need of men such as Loring in the years to come. Thus it was that he was retained for life, in peace and war, with an annuity of £50 and a stake in the manors of Nevyn and Pwllheli in south Wales in 1349. This relationship was to be an enduring one. Loring is described as ‘the Prince’s Chamberlain’ as a witness to the signing of a charter in 1356. Later that year he served with distinction, taking his place at the Prince’s side at Poitiers forming part of his master’s bodyguard, a service recognised by the king’s confirmation of his holding Nevyn and Pwllheli for Loring and his heirs for a rose rent, as well as an £80 annuity from various other lands. Loring continued faithfully in the service of the Black Prince, joining him on the French campaign of 1359-60 and being appointed to oversee the negotiation of the treaty of Bretigny. He remained a confidante of the prince, and was given a seat on his council in Aquitaine, quitting England for a time, and fighting at Najera in 1367. Loring’s career is typical of a number of men who can be categorised as ‘career soldiers’, many of whom were drawn into the orbit of the Black Prince and were immortalised in the pages of writers such as Froissart.

In the case of some captains, the core of the retinue was made up not of career soldiers or even men who can be categorised as regular campaigners, but of a group of men from the same region. This effectively transferred a sense of the county community, a community defined by locale, directly to the military community: the gentry in arms. A look at some of the named members of Ralph Stafford’s retinue reveals that a sizeable contingent of the men accompanying Stafford on campaign in the 1330s and 40s, notwithstanding the members of his family mentioned above, were from

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112 C76/20/15; E101/25/9., m.3.
113 Crécy and Calais, pp. 92, 201.
114 G. Beltz, Garter, p. 65.
115 CPR 1348-1350, p. 805.
116 CPR 1354-1358, p. 468.
117 CPR 1358-1361, p. 289.
118 CCR 1360-1364, p. 359.
119 R. Barber, Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine, p. 181; BPR, iii, p. 32.
120 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 7, 109.
his home county. Henry Cresswell, who served in Stafford’s retinue in Scotland in 1341, and again in Brittany in 1342, was an accomplice to a murder in Staffordshire in 1334, along with Stafford’s brother Richard and cousin, James Stafford. Stafford himself was the beneficiary of the lands confiscated from Cresswell by the king upon his being outlawed. In Cresswell we see a man who would have been known to Stafford prior to his military association. Another individual, Richard Merton, was part of the group of accomplices with Stafford when he raided Hugh Audley’s manor in 1336. He was a member of Stafford’s contingent in Audley’s retinue that year and remained so through the expeditions of 1337 and 1338, serving with Stafford again in Brittany in 1342. Sir Robert Mauvesyn of Rideware-Mauvesyn served with Stafford in 1342, accompanied him to Aquitaine in 1345 and died in the siege camp before Calais in 1347. Other Staffordshire men of note include Robert Rideware, who served with Stafford for four consecutive years leading up to the campaign in the Cambresis in 1339, and the Dodingseles brothers who served in 1345. John Dodingseles was also with Stafford in Ireland in 1361. Sir John Bagot of Bagots Bromley, who fought at Halidon Hill in 1333, served with Stafford in Scotland in 1336, 1337, and at the siege of Calais. He was commissioner of the peace in Staffordshire in 1344 and 1345, and died in 1350, probably of the plague.

One man whose presence in Stafford’s retinue is perhaps unusual is Hugh Wrottesley, a minor Staffordshire landowner who would later join Stafford as a founder member of the Order of the Garter in 1348. Wrottesley was serving with the earl of Salisbury in the Scottish campaign of 1337, and in October of that year, he and his men were being investigated for an assault on one John Perton in Staffordshire.
subsequently died and Wrottesley was suspected of his murder, but pardoned in 1338. Perton would have been well-known to a number of Stafford’s men, having served with some of them on the Scottish campaign of 1336 and up until his death the following year. It would be interesting to know how well Wrottesley integrated into the company when he joined in 1342. Perhaps the fact that he moved on after the Breton campaign is testament to the fact that he did not. Stafford’s company is made up of a core of local men, a core that was little more than a reflection of the framework of county society. His activity in the administration of his home county, as a keeper of the peace, judge and assessor augmented his ability to recruit men locally for service on campaigns. Throughout his career, his retinue retained that local core. For the campaign in Scotland in 1336, twenty men can be identified as having accompanied Stafford and all of them are local men. The retinue Stafford led to Ireland in 1361, whilst much larger, retained its core of Staffordshire men. Of the ninety six knights and esquires that departed England with Stafford in August, at least thirty seven of them (39%) had tenurial interests in his home county.

Of course, Stafford’s retinue, his own particular ‘military community’, was not comprised solely of local men. Some of the other members of his retinue that can be identified add a distinctly supra-local dimension to his company. Commonly these individuals share a connection with Hugh Audley, Stafford’s father in law and one-time captain. It seems that men preferred to serve with those that they knew, captains they trusted and had past experience with. One such man, probably a member of Stafford’s sub-retinue in Audley’s service in 1335, was Thomas Passelle, a Sussex man who would continue to serve Audley with Stafford for the duration of the wars in Scotland and the first forays into France on the campaign in 1340, which involved the battle of Sluys and the siege of Tournai. Passelle would later accompany Stafford to Brittany in 1342 as part of the expeditionary force under the earl of Northampton.

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139 CPR 1338-1340, p. 194.
140 C 71/16, m. 6; C 71/17, m. 20.
141 C 76/17, m. 32.
142 In 1345, Wrottesley was in Brittany with William Bohun, C81/1735., no.21, and with the Black Prince in 1346-7: Crécy and Calais, p. 175.
145 E101/28/21., fo.5r; E101/28/15.
146 1335: C 71/15, m. 32; 1338: E 101/35/3, m. 1; 1339: C 76/14, m. 4; 1340: C 76/15, mm. 6, 8.
147 C 76/17., m. 40.
Edmund Morteyn from Bedfordshire had been Audley’s attorney in Ireland in 1339, and would go on to serve Stafford as a clerk and armourer in the campaigns in Brittany, Aquitaine and at the siege of Calais. In late 1350, Stafford granted him for life the manors of Brickhull and Eysington in Buckinghamshire, along with Mapledorham and Cornhampton and the town of Petersfield in Hampshire. Others came from manors held by Audley that were to be part of Stafford’s eventual inheritance, such as William le Bedel from the Gloucestershire manor of Thornbury, and William Kenn from Suffolk who appear to have joined Stafford’s retinue at Calais, perhaps as replacements for losses suffered over the previous two years of hard campaigning in Aquitaine.

Whilst aspects of chivalry, such as prowess and honour, have the potential to be divisive, encouraging competition and placing emphasis on the differences between knights, be they related to class, ability or political affiliations; fraternity and loyalty serve to balance the scale. These are the great cohesive mechanisms associated with the military communities of the later Middle Ages, binding men together in the face of a world so often rent by violence, confusion and disorder. As another of the cohesive agents of this community, largesse is chivalry in its purest form and yet it’s most political, where great men distribute wealth, whether it be material wealth, lands, or potentially lucrative offices with their associated prestige in order to influence those around them, to draw men into their service and to achieve their personal goals. It is important to separate largesse from the more mundane acts of payment for services rendered in the form of wages, annuities and retainers, and the charitable giving and alms distributed by the wealthy for the benefit of the soul. Largesse was seen as characteristic of ‘true nobility’, an elevating moral and religious quality symptomatic of ‘a good heart’. The bonds created through the distribution of largesse made generosity a social necessity as well as a noble quality. It can be argued that largesse was used as a tool to set knighthood apart from the commercially-minded urban elites, providing a symbolic aspect of difference between one group and another: in this case distinguishing noble from non-noble. Merchants: those city dwellers branded as relatively ‘new money,’ were a group thought to be increasingly covetous of the trappings of chivalry as a signifier of occupying the pinnacle of society. The exercise of

149 Brittany 1342: C 76/17., m. 37; Aquitaine 1345 and 1346: C61/57., m.5, C61/58., m.2; Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, pp. 117, 273.
150 CPR 1348-1350, p. 570.
151 CPR 1345-1348, p. 534.
152 Crécy and Calais, p. 161.
153 D. Crouch, The Birth of Nobility, pp. 68-70.
largesse so lauded in chivalric literature provided a contrast to the mean-spirited acquisitiveness and the grubbing around for pennies which was seen as characterising (doubtless in many cases, unfairly) the *nouveau-riche* mercantile classes.\(^{154}\) There is perhaps a distinction in the nature of fraternal bonds as opposed to those created through largesse. It can be argued that this distinction is primarily class based, with the former occurring between men of a similar or equal social standing and the latter, creating ties of obligation vertically down the social scale. There are, of course, notable exceptions, most obviously seen during our period in the relationships between Edward III and members of his household, and in a number of the cases described above where bonds are formed through a combination of fraternal, financial and social mechanisms.

As with so much of what came to be identifiable as chivalry in the Middle Ages, such notions can find parallels in aspects of martial societies stretching back into the distant past. The importance of largesse is stressed at the beginning of the Old English epic *Beowulf*:

\begin{quote}
Beow’s name was known throughout the north  
And a young prince must be prudent like that,  
giving freely while his father lives  
so that afterwards in age when fighting starts  
steadfast companions will stand by him  
and hold the line. Behaviour that’s admired  
is the path to power among people everywhere.\(^{155}\)
\end{quote}

This is a sentiment with as much resonance in Saxon England as it harboured in the England of Edward III. Edward’s use of largesse was integral to the success of his kingship and a contributory factor to the efficiency with which he prosecuted the war in France. In keeping with many of the facets of English chivalry discussed in this work, largesse can be identified as an age-old concept associated with the diffuse and politically decentralised warrior communities found beyond the Rhine and outside the immediate influence of the Roman Empire. It was central to the identity of the elite warrior, utilising displays of generosity to provoke admiration amongst peers and encourage loyal service amongst followers; these practices were commented upon by Tacitus in his treatise on the Germans composed at the close of the first century AD. Characteristically caustic and from his distinctly Romano-centric perspective, Tacitus’s

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\(^{154}\) R. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 194.  
descriptions of the warmongering Germans could also be applied to the bellicose English of the fourteenth century:

For the Germans have no taste for peace; renown is more easily won among perils, and a large body of retainers cannot be kept together except by means of violence and war. They are always making demands of their chief, asking for a coveted war-horse or a spear stained with the blood of a defeated enemy. Their meals, for which plentiful if homely fare is provided, count in lieu of pay. The wherewithal for this open-handedness comes from war and plunder. A German is not so easily prevailed upon to plough the land and wait patiently for harvest as to challenge a foe and earn wounds for his reward. He thinks it tame and spiritless to accumulate slowly by the sweat of his brow what can be got quickly by the loss of a little blood.

These passages exemplify the universal values of warrior societies across time, the same values central to chivalry: prowess, loyalty and generosity. Though the men of Edward’s England are separated from the Saxons by seven centuries, and the Germani by thirteen, the cohesive aspects of what was to become chivalry can be identified in cultures that are far removed from that found in fourteenth-century England. Granted, the remuneration package had become slightly more complex than ‘plentiful and homely fare’, but the presentation of weapons and horses, the challenge to single combat and the taking of spoils of war is all reminiscent of the relationships between English knights and their masters.

Edward III and his contemporaries can be seen as the direct inheritors of the martial ideologies of Germanic warrior societies. The core tenets of chivalry in England are remarkably unchanged from the forests and marshes of first-century Germania through the successor ideologies of the Alemanni, the Saxons and the Franks, perpetuated and reinforced by Scandinavian warrior codes into the Anglo-Norman period, and eventually displayed by English knights in the fourteenth century. This should come as no surprise, given that the values of warrior society–prowess, loyalty and honour–are central and immutable throughout time. From the very beginning of his reign, Edward III was as adept as he was prolific in the bestowal of royal favour and the distribution of largesse, a ‘ring-giver’ in the truest sense. Jean le Bel speaks of the ‘splendid gifts and finery’ lavished upon John of Hainault by the young king following his coronation. Le Bel continues that, on the advice of his mother, Edward granted John

157 In a sense, ‘homely fare’ is reminiscent of ‘bouche a court’ supplied to men entering into indentures of retinue in our period, M. Jones and S. Walker, ‘Private Indentures’, pp. 37, 47, 55, 70, 73.
a hereditable annuity of four hundred marks, with a further grant of one hundred marks given to his principal squire and counsellor, Phillipe du Chastel.\textsuperscript{158} This largesse was a component of the beneficial relations forged with Hainault in the period immediately preceding Edward’s assumption of the throne, a relationship planned in large part by Edward’s mother. It made sound political sense to treat John of Hainault well, as he was uncle to Edward’s future spouse and a key ally in the initial campaign Edward mounted against the Scots in the north of England. It was not just Hainault and those close to him who were beneficiaries of the generosity of the English crown. At the end of the campaign in 1327, Hainault’s men at arms claimed £21, 482 5s 6d for horses lost or sold on to the English.\textsuperscript{159} This massive sum was in no way recouped by royal officials through the subsequent selling on of 407 animals, which made a mere £920 2s 8d.\textsuperscript{160} The compensated amounts drawn up at the assessment at the muster was significantly more generous than ‘market value’. One can go too far. Henry of Lancaster’s table at the close of the siege of Calais had a great reputation. The partisan chronicle of Henry Knighton speaks of the great hospitality laid on by the patron of his house. Upon Lancaster’s return to England, it was found that he had spent £17, 000 of his own fortune on top of the stipend he received from the king.\textsuperscript{161} Reading of such exploits can leave a bitter taste in the mouth. There is a fine line between largesse and bribery, between fine living and vulgarity. Whilst men were dying of disease in the siege lines around Villeneuve-le-hardi, Lancaster and those close to him feasted and danced. This, as much as anything else, underscores the exclusive nature of nobility, and the manner in which wealth and generosity can be misinterpreted as the chivalric virtue of largesse. Froissart’s ‘plus nobles princes qui peuist chevaucier aus palefroy’ was not above the crassness of such conspicuous consumption.\textsuperscript{162}

Edward’s first-born son was also famous for his generosity towards those who served him well. The records of his household are full of the gifts he distributed to his followers, such as the bay horse he gave to Nigel Loring, his counsellor and chamberlain, in 1352.\textsuperscript{163} Froissart recounts a tale that encapsulates the selfless nature of largesse, the purity to be found in the giving and hints, perhaps, at the potential benefits

\textsuperscript{158} Le Bel, pp. 33-4; For Chastel’s annuity of 100mks per annum from the issues of the port of London see CCR 1327-1330, p. 247; For the annuity granted to John of Hainault, which seems to have been 1000mks rather than 400, see CPR 1327-1330, p. 338.
\textsuperscript{159} E101/18/4. In A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{160} E101/383/8., fo.7r in A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{161} Knighton, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{162} Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 5, 117.
\textsuperscript{163} BPR, iv, p. 72.
to the giver. Following the battle of Poitiers, the Prince of Wales had the wounded James Audley brought to his pavilion upon a litter. The prince bent and embraced the wounded knight, saying to him, ‘Messire Jame, je vous doi bien honourer, car par vostre vaillance et proèce avés-vous hui acquis la grasce et la renomee de nous tous, et y estes tenus par certaine sieute pour le plus preu’.

Due to this, the prince decided to make Audley a retainer for life and granted him the sum of 500 marks a year, a by no means insignificant sum. As is usual with Froissart, this is not an entirely accurate rendition of the story. Unusually, Froissart decreases the reward contrary to his habitual inflation of numbers. The grant was in fact the greater sum of £400, a good reward for a days fighting at the prince’s side. In itself this is a relatively unremarkable episode, simple cause and effect. Audley fights well and the fabulously wealthy and grateful prince rewards him. What happened next, according to Froissart, should probably be taken with a hefty pinch of salt, yet is indicative of the nature of knightly largesse; it was a virtue to be admired in others and aspired to in oneself. Audley returned from his audience with the prince, and promptly sent for the four squires who had served him throughout the day. Addressing his kinsmen in the tent with him, Froissart has Audley say, ‘il est vérités que veci IIII escuiers qui m’ont toutdis loyaument servi, et par espécial à le journée d’hui. Ce que j’ay d’onneur, c’est par leur emprise et leur hardement’. He goes on to say that he wishes to give the reward given to him by the prince to the four squires ‘purement et franchement, sans nul rappel’. This is impressive to the assembled knights, who respond by praising the nobility of the act and commending Audley to God.

Audley’s valour has won him fortune, and he wishes it to be the same for his squires: this is generosity. What elevates it to largesse are the key facets of the act: the simplicity of giving, expecting nothing in return, and the association this has with nobility. It is also important that this act of giving is witnessed by other knights and can be attested to in the future. Loyalty feeds largesse, which has the effect of glorifying and ennobling the giver. It is in this manner, and in the fraternity nurtured through common experience and shared hardships and successes, that a self-conscious sense of community developed.

Though it is impossible to speak in terms of absolutes, emerging from the above discussion is the sense that we are dealing with a complex group of individuals who by no means shared a specific ‘career path’. There are, however, a number of threads that

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165 *BPR*, iii, p. 105.
166 *Froissart*, ed. Lettenhove, 5, 460.
bind this group together. The first and most prevalent of these is military service; chivalry was at heart militaristic and it is impossible to detach it from its martial core. It logically follows that to be chivalrous was to be engaged in martial activity. All of the men who are the subject of this work were thus engaged and can be labelled a community. This is not enough. In order for a community to be anything more than a loose conglomeration of individuals with vaguely shared interests, there has to be more. The group in question has this in abundance. They are the arbiters of justice, the beneficiaries of royal grants and the cogs in the military machine of England. They move in the shires and often ride to war in the same groups. They act as attorneys for one another, become custodians of one another’s lands, look after the interests of one another’s families, act as witnesses to charters and grants, and vouch for one another in the issues of royal pardons. Many of them rubbed shoulders at tournaments and at parliament, and in death—as we shall see—immortalised their relationships in armorials on tombs and funerary monuments. It is a small, close-knit community of the mind, with shared symbols: a repository of meaning, aware of itself and protective of its status. The military community was a living, breathing, fighting societal organism and exhibited the great chivalric virtues of loyalty and fraternity, binding individuals together to the benefit of all.
IV

England, Chivalry and Warfare:

Prowess and Practicality

"Advance our standards, set upon our foes,
Our ancient word of courage fair Saint George
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons."

"Richard III.," Act v, sc. 3.

The rights of a warrior to claim membership of what Ramon Llull called the ‘Order of Chivalry’ were undoubtedly obtained through the perpetration of acts of physical violence. Prowess was the heaviest ordnance in the arsenal of martial virtues, and coupled with wisdom and courage, contributed greatly to the warrior ethos of this, and all preceding eras where knights came together. Geoffroi de Charny in his Livre de Chevalerie states that ‘et pour ce doit l’en prisier plus et honorer gens d’armes pour la guerreque nulls autres gens d’armes qui soient’. In this, Charny clearly places great value upon warfare as the arena in which honour was observed and accrued and chivalry was practiced. Whilst Charny’s work did not circulate widely in England, his views on the centrality of prowess to chivalry are the closest we can get to a contemporary knightly voice on the subject. As it can be argued that prowess, and the more ‘practical’ chivalric virtues were held in especially high regard in England, Charny’s words are of relevance to our understanding of English chivalry. For Charny, the practice of war is a noble pastime and the study and practice of this art, be it battles, sieges or the defence of castles, gives a man honour, the currency of the chivalric classes; ‘que l’en ne doit de ceulx qui en attendant aucuns proffiz ou advancements et essaucemens de leurs estas pour les desertes et guerdon de l’onneur qu’il ont pourchacie ou pourchacent.’ Here, he is referring specifically to men-at-arms and not just the nobility. He believes that for this elite group, their rank alone will ensure that they are well known and will gain them the entitlement to service and honour. Seemingly, for Charny, to be noble is to inherently possess chivalric virtue. By examining how our

1. Therefore one should value and honour men-at-arms engaged in war more highly than any other men-at-arms. The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, ed. R. Kaeuper and E. Kennedy, p. 89. This is a sentiment concurrent with the earlier work of Ramon Llull, Livre De L’Ordre De Chevalerie, ed. V. Minervini, p. 147.
2. Ibid p. 64.
3. And from this honour they gained recognition, rise in status, profit, riches and increase in all benefits. The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, p. 107.
subject group, including noblemen along with the knights and men-at-arms associated with them, conducted themselves in war, and in the relatively infrequent clashes on the open field of battle, it may be possible to gain a sense of what ‘chivalry’ meant to them, and indeed whether Charny’s conviction in the links between chivalry and warfare are justified.

Charny’s view of chivalry, particularly the emphasis placed on honour garnered through exercising prowess on the battlefield, raises a number of pertinent questions for our business here. Traditionally, chivalry itself has been critiqued for its divergence from reality, its impracticality and its idealism. The belief in the honour and glory of warfare is perhaps, to the modern mind at least, amongst the most culpable of its tenets. Also it should be remembered that Charny’s purpose in writing was not purely didactic and his intended audience was not the knightly classes as a whole. His work was intended as a treatise, laying down the guidelines of conduct for members of the French Order of the Star. Firstly, it is interesting to look at Charny’s own experiences on the battlefield. He was viewed by his contemporaries as a great warrior, and a paragon of chivalric virtue. However, his actual experiences of warfare simply do not dovetail with the deeds one might imagine or expect from an individual of such renown. This reputation was one of the highest order, yet his actual battlefield experience during his two decades in arms is somewhat underwhelming. Having served the French crown faithfully in Aquitaine in 1337 and at the siege of Tournai in 1340, he was in the service of the Dauphin in Brittany in 1342 when he was captured by the English, leading a rash cavalry charge at the battle of Morlaix. Following his release he was at the siege of Vannes, before joining the Crusade led by Humbert II in Anatolia. He opposed Lancaster’s actions, unsuccessfully, in Aquitaine during 1346, before failing to retake Calais from the English and again being taken prisoner. He was a member of the Order of the Star, for which his three works on chivalry were most likely composed. The order was itself something of an anticlimax, with many of its members being killed at the battle of Mauron in 1352, before finally being all but extinguished following the capture of King Jean at the battle of Poitiers in 1356. It was this engagement in which Charny himself met his end, brandishing the Oriflamme and defending his King. This is hardly a career steeped in glory, and must bring into question not only Charny’s own reputation for military prowess, but perhaps even the relevance of his thoughts on the subject espoused in his treatise on chivalry. If Charny demonstrated no great triumphs

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4 The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, pp. 3-17.
in the field, yet still maintained that war was the most worthy activity, an activity that
draws men of the best quality, to demonstrate and improve their skills,\(^5\) then perhaps it
is not victory but mere participation which is viewed as honourable. It must also be
considered that the worthy actions lauded by Charny in his *Livre de Chevalerie* are
indicative of the differences in approach to warfare and chivalry demonstrated by the
French and the English at this time.

At its roots, chivalry was, and always had been bellicose, handing centre-stage
to the fighting man and the honour to be garnered through the successful performance of
physical violence. Yet the marrying of honour to the battlefield is perhaps somewhat
anachronistic in relation the practice of warfare by the English in the middle of the
fourteenth century. One may even go as far as to say that battle is the antithesis of
chivalry, the last recourse of the fighting man who would be deemed chivalrous. In
order to explore this further, it is necessary to consider the nature of warfare during this
phase of the Hundred Years War. How was a battle conducted, and what was the role of
the knight on the battlefield? Large battles, in the sense of the chivalry of kingdoms
facing each other in decisive field engagements during this period, were rare. Two large
scale Anglo-French clashes stand out however, battles in which most, if not all of our
sample group participated: the battle of Crécy in 1346 and Poitiers a decade later, both
fought on French soil and both resounding victories for the English. At Crécy the Black
Prince had nominal command of the vanguard, supported by Thomas Beauchamp,
Marshal of the army, and the Constable, William Bohun. Ralph Stafford was
supposedly present, though this seems unlikely, unless he had managed to somehow
extricate himself from the siege of Aiguillon in Aquitaine and travel north to join the
royal host prior to the battle.\(^6\) The rearguard was under the command of the king, and
the third division included the irascible Robert Ufford, earl of Suffolk, probably under

\(^{5}\)Ibid, p. 102.

(London, 1848), I, 163, refers to ‘the lord Stafford’ in the Black Prince’s division. This is possibly a
reference to Richard Stafford (in other editions of Froissart’s text, it is specifically stated that it was
Froissart followed, also places Stafford, prematurely giving him the earldom he was not to receive until
1351, with the Prince. Wrottesley’s occasionally confused collation of the available records places
Stafford in the kings division. *Crécy and Calais*, p. 35. Ralph Stafford was part of Lancaster’s army in
Aquitaine (C61/57 m.5), and was besieged in Aiguillon, which he had captured from the French in
December 1345. Though the city was not fully invested and small bands of men could move in and out,
there was more than enough fighting to occupy Stafford in Gascony, without travelling north. When the
siege was raised and the Dauphin’s army beat a hasty retreat on the 20\(^{th}\) August 1346, it is more than
likely Stafford was still in the town. Even had he wished to, at this point it is inconceivable Stafford could
have travelled the near 900 km form Aiguillon to Crécy in six days. Stafford simply does not appear in
the records leading up to the campaign in the way one would expect a captain of his prominence to do.
the command of the bellicose bishop of Durham. The only member of our primary sample to be absent from Crécy with absolute certainty was Henry of Lancaster, who was engaged in operations in Aquitaine.

At Poitiers, in 1356, the Black Prince was in command of his own division and the English host. Following his baptism of fire at Crécy a decade earlier, he had developed a reputation for martial skill, enhanced by his exploits at the battle of Winchelsea (1350). His command of the ‘Great Raid’ in Aquitaine-Languedoc in 1355 had cemented his pedigree as a commander of no mean skill. The impressive list of personnel in Aquitaine with him includes many of the most experienced warriors of the day. The prince was once again accompanied by Warwick, who led the vanguard. The rearguard was led by the young earl of Salisbury, but he was accompanied by the earl of Suffolk, another veteran of Crécy, who was co-marshal of the army and had extensive experience of fighting in both Scotland and France. Also present was Ralph Stafford, by this point earl of Stafford, who had missed out on the battle of Crécy, and his brother Richard. Then came the core of individuals that had found themselves drawn into the prince’s orbit over the years, such as John Chandos, James Audley, Walter Pavely and Stephen Cossington. According to Geoffrey Le Baker, Suffolk steadied the troops on the day of the battle:

Nor was Thomas [Robert] de Ufford, a true earl of Suffolk, found wanting in his duties on that day. He was an exceptional repository of martial wisdom, and a man who from youth to old age was honoured for his bold exploits. On this day he ran in person along rank after rank, encouraging and emboldening man after man to do his best. He made sure that the young men in the heat of their valour did not advance too rashly and that the archers did not shoot their arrows to no purpose, and his respected words added further fires to their glowing spirits.

Baker’s chronicle is of particular use for the understanding of the battle of Poitiers. It seems his account may be based on documents and other information, some of it probably verbal, directly relating to the campaign. Whilst it is unlikely Baker records Ufford’s words verbatim, it is plausible that the spirit is correct. Men of his experience would have provided a steadying influence in the moments prior to the battle. Both

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Suffolk, still a major campaigner at the ripe old age of 56 and Warwick, now aged 42, were important aspects of the English success at Poitiers, not to mention the Black Prince himself, now a far cry from the boy who had ‘won his spurs’ on the field of Crécy a decade before.

With the exception of a list of the participating cast, and the occasional anecdote such as the one above added by Le Baker, it is notoriously difficult to reconstruct the events of medieval battles. The chroniclers who describe them were not often present on or near the field, though some make use of the testimony of those who were. Communication on the field of battle is problematic, and the scale and nature of the battle itself means that no individual can claim absolute truth with regard to the events of the whole field. Often men cannot claim mastery in recalling the events of even a fraction of the action they have witnessed. This means that as far as the chroniclers of such events are concerned, inconsistency is rife. Writers such as Froissart and Le Bel set out quite consciously to record deeds of chivalry in prose, yet laboured under the values of the verse historians that preceded them to instil the principles of nobility of conduct by recorded example. The focus of such works is necessarily aristocratic and thus inherently flawed as a resource for the reconstruction of events. Additionally, it can be argued that for the medieval audience, strategy and tactics held little interest, or even little value. The result is that the chronicle accounts are littered with small scale reference to individual events, often involving better known parties within the armies, and the deciding factors of the battles are distilled to generalisations and common themes, such as the impetuousness of the enemy, cowardice, indiscipline or inferiority.

The first point worthy of note in relation to conduct on the battlefield, and it is a point we can make with some certainty, is that at Crécy, the English fought on foot. Similarly, at Poitiers the forces under the Black Prince were dismounted, with the exception of elements of the vanguard, who struck the flank of the first French advance before joining the English line. Indeed, from the battle of Bannockburn onwards, there was scarcely a significant engagement where the chivalric classes of the English engaged in battle ahorse in any great numbers. Andrew Harcla deliberately

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11 M. Keen, Nobles, Knights and Men at Arms in the Middle Ages (London, 1996), p. 79.
15 A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy Under Edward III (Woodbridge, 1999) p. 26. This does not mean that the French were slavishly devoted to mounted
dismounted his loyalist troops to defeat the forces of Thomas of Lancaster at Boroughbridge in 1322. The account in the chronicle of Lanercost priory makes it clear that Harcla’s northern troops consciously adopted Scottish style ‘schiltrom’ tactics and that archers were used to great effect alongside defensive tactics.\(^{16}\) A proclamation of 1327 hammered home the intention of dismounting men at arms, including magnates, should the Scots be brought to battle.\(^{17}\) According to Jean Le Bel, who was present on the 1327 campaign, this is precisely what the English did when battle seemed imminent.\(^{18}\) This blueprint for the defeat of Scottish forces was eventually employed with success by the ‘disinherited’ at Dupplin Muir in 1332 and by an army led by Edward III at Halidon Hill a year later, where dismounted men-at-arms and archers won great victories for the English.\(^{19}\) The battle of Morlaix in Brittany took place in 1342, and was seemingly the first time that the ‘Scottish’ model was employed by the English against the French.\(^{20}\) The main difference here with what had gone before was that, though a large number of the earl of Northampton’s small force was made up of archers crucial in the aforementioned Scottish victories, they appear to have been used as infantry in a defensive manner and on chosen ground.\(^{21}\)

Naturally, there are notable exceptions to this ‘rule’. Henry of Lancaster’s incredibly successful campaign in Aquitaine during 1345 and 1346 involved a number of engagements that did not entirely conform to the tactical defensive employed in the clashes mentioned above. Lancaster was a commander of some flair and was on the offensive from the moment he arrived in the duchy. Outside Bergerac, Lancaster used 200 cavalrymen to drive a herd of captured cattle and prisoners past the town in order to draw out the garrison. The French commander sent out his own cavalry who unexpectedly found they faced Lancaster’s horsemen. Both sides charged, but the Anglo-Gascon horse let the French through their lines. Before they could wheel, the French cavalry was attacked by English archers stationed to the rear of Lancaster’s


\(^{18}\) Le Bel, p. 45.


\(^{21}\) At the time of disembarkation, Northampton’s force consisted of around 640 men, 310 of whom were horse archers. E36/204., fo. 108v. in A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 258.
force. In the ensuing disorder, they were surrounded by infantry and the returning horsemen and most were captured or killed; Bergerac was subsequently taken by storm. Victory at the walls of Auberoche was achieved, for the most part, by a surprise cavalry attack on the encamped army of the count de l’Isle. Any Frenchmen that managed to escape the camp was engaged by archers and the Anglo-Gascon garrison, under Frank van Halle, sallied out to add to the chaos. Whilst cavalry played a significant part in Lancaster’s victories at Bergerac and Auberoche, these incidents were not ‘set-piece’ battles after the manner of Crécy and Poitiers. In no small part they owe their success to the guile Lancaster demonstrated as a commander and to the element of surprise he orchestrated. Tactics such as these have implications for the way that chivalry influenced warfare. The use of surprise and deception is difficult to reconcile with the accepted norms of chivalric combat.

The practice of dismounting to fight must also have had implications for the relevance of chivalric concepts within the English approach to battle. After all, what is the Chevalier without the Cheval? Richard Kaeuper notes that ‘on one aspect of knightly fighting, chivalric literature is quite unambiguous: The standard display of prowess takes the form of combat on horseback.’ Ramon Llull, in his influential treatise on chivalry, emphasises the importance of the horse to the knight; when the strongest and most loyal of men were chosen to be knights, the horse, the strongest and most noble of beasts, was chosen to serve them: ‘quant au plus noble home fut donnee la plus noble beste’. According to Llull, the horse also has symbolic significance in the same way as the rest of the knight’s equipment: the bridle symbolising restraint, the reins willing service, generosity and fearlessness and the barding, the temporal goods of the knight. These symbols present the horse as a powerful conduit to the key aspects of a knight’s identity, though this is somewhat tempered when Llull goes on to state that it is not the horse and the arms which give a knight virtue, but the knight himself. The seal of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, shown below depicts the importance of the horse in the projection of martial and aristocratic identity. Beauchamp sits firmly

24 Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 484.
26 R. Kaeuper, Chivalry and Violence, p. 171.
27 Ramon Llull, ed. Minervini, p. 88.
28 Ramon Llull, ed. Minervini, pp. 150-1, 172.
astride his rearing, barded destrier fully equipped in the traditional panoply of the knight, emphasising horsemanship, prowess and power. However, akin to the famous image of Geoffrey Luttrell, Warwick is mounted on a caparisoned warhorse and wears the great helm of the tournament field, the image bearing little relevance to the practice of warfare in a contemporary sense. The seal is a symbol and makes use of traditional chivalric motifs to project an image which would be understood by the knightly classes over whom he claimed lordship.

![The Equestrian seal of Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick.](image)

Perhaps the fact that the English portrayed themselves on horseback in artwork and on seals, yet so readily abandoned the horse in battle, implies a conflict between martial necessity and chivalric ideology: a gulf between the real and the imagined.

Whilst the tactical innovations used by the English cannot be described as entirely new at the start of the Hundred Years war, dismounting prior to engagement was seen as sufficiently revolutionary to cause surprise amongst German and Flemish knights when employed by the English prior to the aborted battle at la Flamengerie in 1339. The nature of engagements such as this relegates the knighthood to the position of common soldiery, fighting shoulder to shoulder with ‘lesser men,’ with their elite

status signifiers such as expensive warhorses removed along with the trappings of the symbolic separation of knighthood from the common man. Any sense of the chivalric arcane is suspended in the press of blood and steel. Additionally, if we accept Ramon Llull’s assertion that aspects of the horse symbolise restraint for knights, then fighting on foot in the line of battle is synonymous with the removal of knightly restraint, a sense of being unleashed to wanton bloodletting, regardless of rank or worth. This is borne out in the evidence for the large number of aristocratic casualties on the field at Crécy. Perhaps the removal of the horse resulted in chivalric conventions falling by the wayside. This is not to say that mounted combat is not bloody; the romance genre is littered with knights fighting on horseback, quite happily lopping off enemy appendages and drenching the ground with blood. What characterises these encounters, in contrast to engagements fought on foot in reality, is the self-conscious adherence to chivalric convention. If one man is unhorsed, the other dismounts; the loss of a weapon prompts a break in the fighting and a man who yields to his opponent is often spared. This was not the case in 1346.

The English force at Crécy was deliberately deployed to maximise the potency of the dismounted warrior, making use of the tactical defensive, and the terrain was chosen to negate the French numerical advantage and to inhibit the effective use of mounted knights against their lines. The location of the field meant that the French would be forced to enter the Valee des Clercs on a relatively narrow front, squeezed between the river Maye on one side and the steep bank on the other. Once in the valley, they would have to wheel to face the English. The English themselves were on a narrow front, atop a ridge, the French thus being funnelled into a killing ground in front of the English position.31 The field was arguably familiar to Edward III and some of his advisors, as it had been a stopping place on previous trips to Ponthieu. Men such as Robert Ufford, Bartholomew Burghersh and Richard Talbot had seen this ground before.32 Similarly at Poitiers, the English were again outnumbered and needed to use the terrain and the tactical defensive to their advantage. This need is the reason behind the significant manoeuvring of the English force prior to the battle. A location was required which was suitable for the tactics the Black Prince wished to employ to be effective. He also knew that when engaging a numerically superior force, one does not concede choice of ground unless it cannot be avoided.33

33 C. Rogers, War Cruel and Sharp, p. 373.
Not only was the English tactical system, flexible and subject to change as it was, centred upon the negation of mounted attacks, elements of it could be viewed as deliberate attempts to destroy the horses that were so central to the ideology of the chivalric warrior elite. At Morlaix in 1342, Northampton’s small force prepared the ground prior to the anticipated French attack by digging pits and trenches around their position, and covering them with grass and hay. This had the effect of narrowing the French advance, moving them into an area where the outflanking of Northampton’s small force was impossible.\footnote{Knighton, p. 43.} This is a tactic deliberately planned to harm horses, to remove the cheval from the chevalier. Whilst this is obviously a sensible and practical solution made necessary by the particular circumstances encountered by the English at Morlaix, it speaks volumes on a symbolic level. It is the premeditated removal of the primary signifier of martial elite status, the removal of that which had traditionally separated ‘chivalry’ from the common soldiery. In a similar manner to the deliberate targeting of horses by archers at Crécy and Poitiers, success at Morlaix relied upon the destruction of horses and the negation of the potency of the mounted warrior. It is possible that similar tactics were employed at Crécy, though Geoffrey le Baker is the only chronicler to mention pits explicitly. According to his account, the English archers scurried from their lines following the defeat of the Genoese and ‘in a short time’ dug pits one foot wide and one foot deep prior to the first French cavalry charge.\footnote{Le Baker, p. 73.} This rather implausible section of Le Baker’s narrative was likely added to his original account somewhat later, probably in the later 1350’s, and may be based on knowledge acquired after his initial setting down of events. Yet reference to pits appears in a section describing the deployment of the archers, and it is just as likely that it is a fiction, loosely based on knowledge of the English tactical system and retrospectively applied to the account of Crécy in an attempt to justify the English victory.\footnote{A. Ayton, ‘Crécy and the Chroniclers’, in Crécy, ed. Ayton and Preston, pp. 340-2.}

In our quest to understand the relationship between chivalry and the English way of war, is worth considering a technological development that, for many, heralded the beginning of the end of anything that can be identified as chivalry: the arrival of gunpowder weapons. Though not uniquely English, there are whisperings of their use in some accounts of engagements during our period. Though the campaign was a failure, it is possible that the English had some form of artillery with them in the north of England as early as 1327, as Barbour relates:
And alsua wounder for to see;  
The tothir crakkis war of wer,  
That thai befor herd never eir.\textsuperscript{37}

It is also possible that the English deployed such weapons at the siege of Berwick in 1333.\textsuperscript{38} Though the technology was not to come into its own for some time yet, there is sufficient evidence to believe that guns were also used at Crécy. Over a century ago T. F. Tout extracted the slender evidence from the issue rolls, proposing that Edward ordered the shipment of guns and powder from the Tower of London prior to the Crécy campaign.\textsuperscript{39} The use of guns at Crécy is not attested to by any of the English chroniclers, nor in any of the newsletters sent back to England from France which have proven so useful in reconstructing the campaign. They are spoken of by Italian writer Giovanni Villani, who has the weapons mounted upon carts, making a great din when fired and causing their share of casualties amongst French knights and horses.\textsuperscript{40} His testimony is that of a contemporary, unlike Barbour, and is supported by the \textit{Grandes Chroniques}, which states three cannons were used by the English.\textsuperscript{41} We can deduce that artillery of some sort was involved in the campaign of 1346-7, and was probably deployed at Calais, from the presence of 12 artillerymen and ‘goners’ in Wrottesley’s edition of Wetewang’s accounts.\textsuperscript{42} On the campaign of 1359-60, a knight named Thomas Morrieux was ‘struck down by a gun’; the likelihood is that this was an enemy gun, though the account is unclear.\textsuperscript{43} It is possible that he was hit by a shot from ‘small arms’ whilst attacking a fortress. One cannot depart further from the chivalric way of war than with the employment of such technology.

Perhaps important in the ‘anti-chivalric’ interpretation of the English victory at Crécy in particular, is the lack of evidence for any French prisoners taken that day. In contrast to the later battle of Poitiers, there is no list of French captives present in the source material for Crécy. English chronicles are silent on the matter, though a Polish chronicle penned around a century later states that Edward released his captives, retaining only those from France. Such an account, distanced in time and space from the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{The Brut}, I, 281. \\
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Chronica di Giovanni Villani}, ed. M. L. Ridotta (Florence, 1823), vii, pp. 165-6. \\
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Grandes Chroniques de France}, ed. J. Viard, 10 vols (Paris, 1920-53), IX, 282. \\
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Crécy and Calais}, p. 203. \\
\textsuperscript{43} Knighton, p. 170, n. 2. 
\end{flushright}
events it describes cannot be accepted as reliable evidence.\textsuperscript{44} Northburgh, the source of so much useful information on the campaign, speaks of prisoners taken by Northampton, Norfolk and Warwick on the 27\textsuperscript{th} August, but says nothing regarding prisoners the day before.\textsuperscript{45} The lists of captives are thus replaced by a list of French casualties, including some of the greatest noblemen Philip de Valois could call to his banner. Henry Knighton tells of some 2000 French knights, men-at-arms and squires killed. A more precise figure of 1542 ‘good men-at-arms’ killed is given in a letter of September 4\textsuperscript{th} from Michael Northburgh.\textsuperscript{46} Such a specific figure implies that this is the product of some sort of official ‘body count’. Knighton gives details of sixteen counts killed, along with the Kings of Mallorca and Bohemia, the Duke of Lorraine, the archbishop of Sees, the bishop of Noyon, the abbot of Corbie and the grand master of the knights Hospitaller.\textsuperscript{47} Froissart is uncharacteristically brief in his description of the dead, stating that the English sent to assess the carnage had discovered eighty banners, the bodies of eleven princes and twelve hundred knights.\textsuperscript{48} The different versions of his chronicle provide supplementary information. He describes the grisly scene of a detachment of English troops and heralds, as well as the heralds of French lords, searching through the bodies to identify the fallen.\textsuperscript{49} The Bourgeois of Valencienn\’e’s account of the battle’s aftermath adds that the dead were stripped of their surcoats displaying coats of arms, 2200 of which were displayed in Edward III’s pavilion. Amidst the stripping of the dead and the burning of captured French equipment, the same account has the victorious Edward ask the teenage Black Prince if he thought the battle to be ‘good sport.’ It is telling that the first experience the young prince had of the glory of battle, of chivalry and of knighthood, leaves him silent and ashamed.\textsuperscript{50} Jean le Bel, whose testimony is certainly based on eyewitness accounts of the battle, omits the King of Mallorca, who in fact survived the battle, but names the Count of Alençon, the Count of Blois, the Counts of Salm, Harcourt, Auxerre, and Sancerre.\textsuperscript{51} The newsletter of King’s clerk Richard Wynkeley adds the Counts of Flanders, Aumale and Beaumont, along with six German Counts. Wynkeley does mention French prisoners, yet not by

\textsuperscript{44} The Annals of Jan Dlugosz, trans. M. Michael (Chichester, 1997), pp. 296-7 in Crécy, ed. Ayton and Preston, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{45} Avesbury, p. 369.
\textsuperscript{46} Michael Northburgh’s letter, 4\textsuperscript{th} September 1346, Avesbury, p. 369.
\textsuperscript{47} Knighton, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{48} Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 589.
\textsuperscript{50} Récits d’un bourgeois de Valenciennes, ed. K. de Lettenhove (Louvain, 1877), p. 234-5.
\textsuperscript{51} Le Bel, p. 183.
name, and it is from these men that he was told ‘the flower of the whole knighthood of France had been killed’.\textsuperscript{52} Froissart, always searching for the chivalric ideal, tells that at least a portion of this butcher’s bill can be attributed to a number of Cornish and Welsh foot, who advanced amongst the French whilst they were in disarray due to the effectiveness of English archery and, armed with ‘grandes coutilles’, set about the floundering counts, barons, knights and esquires, slaying them without mercy. Froissart states that this was not what Edward wanted, and that he would rather have had the ransoms of such men, yet this does not marry with how the English approached the rest of the battle.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps this episode has some truth to it, or perhaps it is an attempt by Froissart to mitigate the inescapable culling of the high-born which occurred on the field of Crécy by laying the slaughter at the door of the ‘pillars et ribaus’ amongst the Welsh and Cornish foot. The reasons behind the lack of prisoners are not hard to find when one regards the predicament of the English with modern eyes. Geoffrey le Baker tells of the French being so confident in their numerical and martial superiority that before the battle their leaders were allocating English captives: ‘the king of Majorca besought the king of England as his prize, others wanted the prince, others the earl of Northampton, others other leaders, according to the degree of nobility’.\textsuperscript{54} Le Baker’s account of Crécy, however, is not without its deficiencies, and there is no way he could know what was being discussed by the French prior to the battle.\textsuperscript{55} Yet this was fairly conventional; it made little sense for great men to kill one another when they could take each other captive, honour-bound to pay significant ransoms for their release. Geoffroi de Charny understood all too well the practice of ransoming noble prisoners, yet advises against placing too much emphasis upon it when there is a job to be done:

\begin{quote}
Si avient moult de foiz, par le defaulted ceulx qui courent au gaing avant que l’en soit au dessus de son fait, que l’en puet reperdre ce que l’en cuide avoir gaigné et les corps avec. Si peut avenir encores de telx gens qui grant volenté ont de gaigner, que quant ce avient que l’en a afaire sur les champs, plusieurs sont qui regardent a prendre prisons et autre gaing; et quant il les ont pris et autres biens, il ont plus grant volenté et desir de sauver leurs prisons ou leur gaing que de secourir et aidier de metre la journee a bonne fin. Et bien puet avenir que par tele maniere peut l’en perdre la journee.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52} Wynkeley’s newsletter 2\textsuperscript{nd} September 1346, Murimuth, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{53} Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 586.
\textsuperscript{54} Le Baker, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{55} For a further critique of Le Baker’s account see Ayton, ‘Crécy and the Chroniclers’ in Crécy, ed. Ayton and Preston, pp. 334-342.
\textsuperscript{56} ‘It often occurs that through lack of those who chase after plunder before the battle is over, that which is thought to be already won can be lost again and lives or reputations as well. It can also happen in relation to such people who are very eager for booty that when there is action on the battlefield, there are a number of men who pay more attention to taking prisoners and other profit, and when they have seized
According to Le Baker, King Philip understood Charny’s point perfectly. Fearing that his knights may be too preoccupied with the search for profit, he ordered that the *Oriflamme* be unfurled, signifying that no prisoners were to be taken on pain of death. Edward III had similar plans, and unfurled his own banner of a dragon clothed with his arms.  

The sentiment, though not the fact, is supported by Jean le Bel, who also tells of Edward’s warning that none of his men should break rank to seek gain or to despoil the dead or the living; there would be enough time for such activity after the battle was won. The results of Edward’s actions seemingly surprised some of his German allies, who were astonished that so much noble blood was being spilt and that no ransoms were to be taken. Despite this protest, Edward’s orders remained unchanged.  

This was an eminently sensible move on the part of the Plantagenet. He knew that the forthcoming battle would be hard fought, the English were outnumbered and discipline had to be maintained. It was also an important part of the English tactical system that the battles held firm. Horses will ever shy away from a solid block of men, yet gaps in the line could be exploited and allow the vaunted horsemen of France licence to slaughter the arrayed English. Whether the English decision to give no quarter was at all influenced by the flying of the *Oriflamme* is immaterial, the main point here being that, from the outset, the English were not approaching the battle with any sense of chivalric convention. Victory was all, at any cost, and this is perhaps reinforced by the fact that the English remained in a state of readiness throughout the night, eating and sleeping without disarming. The discipline demonstrated by the English approach to battle can be seen in detail in the ordinances of 1385, and can be traced in outline in the narrative sources relating to 1346.

Up until this point, the battles of Crécy and Poitiers have much in common: the search for terrain where the effectiveness of French numbers will be diminished and the use of the tactical defensive with dismounted men-at-arms. However, the glaring difference between the two engagements for our purposes here is the manner in which

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57 *Le Baker*, p. 73; For the banner of the dragon, see Appendix I.
59 *Le Bel*, p. 182.
60 For 1385, see A. Curry, ‘Disciplinary Ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish Armies in 1385: An International Code?’, *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011), pp. 287-8; For the disciplinary measures in place in 1346, see chapter V, p. 135.
the taking of captives was treated. The fact that so many more prisoners were taken at Poitiers should not be taken to mean that it was an engagement conducted along more chivalrous lines than Crécy. The figure was somewhat exceptional for contemporary battles, and the list of captives is long and distinguished. Thomas Gray tells us that ‘the king of France was taken prisoner at this battle of Poitiers, and his son Philip, and thirteen counts and an archbishop and sixty six barons and bannerets; the number of men at arms taken was 2000.’62 The indomitable Bartholomew Burgherssh’s dispatch gives us a named list of the primary captives: ‘the King of France; Lord Philip, his youngest son; the Count of Poitiers; the Count of Ponthieu, lord Jaques de Bourbon; the Count of Eu; the Count of Abbeville; the Count of Tancarville; the Count of Ventadour; the Count of Saarbrucken; the Count of Vendôme and his brother; the Count of Rouss; the Count of Vaudemont; the Count of Dammartin; the Count of Nassau; the Archbishop of Sens; the castellan of Amposta; Marshal D’Audrehem; the Count of Auxerre; the Viscount of Narbonne [and eleven others of name]; and a further 2500 persons of whom 2000 were men-at-arms’.63 Froissart tells us that there were English archers who had three or four prisoners in their charge before the battle was done.64 This is an impressive haul indeed, and contrasts quite sharply with the lack of such a list following Crécy.

If a sense of chivalric mercy and knightly restraint was not at the heart of the matter, what other factors could have contributed? Perhaps it was the desire for enrichment through ransom on behalf of the victorious English that led to the number of captives. Such rapaciousness was not uncommon and a French magnate constituted a worthy prize. It is likely that most of the prisoners were quickly given their liberty following ransom agreements, bound to return to Bordeaux to settle their debts within a year.65 In spite of this, seventeen of the most valuable, many of those listed in Burghersh’s dispatch, were purchased from their captors by Edward III, not for financial gain per se but due to their standing and importance in France. The Plantagenet’s reward for his purchase was not financial, but political; the removal of the French king and a number of significant men of the realm in one fell swoop, effectively crippling the French politically and eventually leading to an advantageous peace.

62 Scalacronica, p. 147.
63 Burghersh’s Dispatch, Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 18, 385-7.
64 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 356.
65 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 358.
It is possible there were standing orders that prisoners were to be taken for this very reason. France was under significant English pressure at this point, and there were two other English forces at large in other parts of the country under Edward III and Henry of Lancaster; a haul of significant captives would weaken her further. An order specifically related to the protocol for the taking of prisoners was issued prior to the start of the battle. The constable and marshal were to proclaim to the host that ‘no man should linger over his prisoner on pain of forfeiting him, but that each man without hindrance or dispute should have the prisoner to whom he should first be pledged’. This expectation of captives stands in contrast to the orders for no quarter on both sides at Crécy ten years before. The English army here, though, was much smaller than the one led by Edward III in 1346, amounting to somewhere in the region of 6000 men, a third of whom were archers. If the number of prisoners is to be taken at face value, nearly half the men in the English force would have been guarding French captives. This implies that the majority of captives were taken towards the end of the battle, when King Jean’s division was engaged. Another major difference between Poitiers and Crécy is that King Jean remained on the field where Philip fled. This fact would have caused many French nobles to remain on the field with their king, and to surrender along with him, perhaps contributing to the number of captives. The statutes of the Order of the Star, which all but collapsed in the years following Poitiers, may also have contributed as those initiated vowed never to flee the field of battle. At Poitiers in particular, many of the French noblemen were fighting on foot, which would add to the difficulty of a rapid withdrawal.

The English reliance upon archers is crucial for our understanding of battlefield chivalry, the military significance of knighthood and the number of casualties in the two great battles on French soil. The chronicle accounts are full of references to the effectiveness of English archery upon the massed ranks of the French. Knights on both sides were confronted with the un-gentlemanly efficiency of a weapon traditionally eschewed by their class. Geoffrey Le Baker says that the archers at Crécy were

67 BPR, iv, p. 338.
68 It should be noted that at Auberoche in 1345, Lancaster took a great haul of French captives, emphasising the fact that the immediate circumstances of an engagement are important in determining the number of prisoners. For the lists of Lancaster’s captives see Murimuth, pp. 190, 249-52; Avesbury, pp. 356-7.
69 Burghersh’s Dispatch in, Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 18, 387.
positioned so that ‘they did not stand in front of the men at arms, and they did not meet the enemy face to face, but shot their arrows from the sides of the King’s army.’

Though this does appear in the section of his narrative that was seemingly added at a later date, such tactics take maximum advantage of the number of bowmen in the English host, described by French chronicler Jean de Venette as a ‘great multitude’, realistically too many to restrict to the flanks. A complete understanding of the numbers and composition of the English army at Crécy is problematic. Having said that, the structure the army took in the field is summarised with a degree of consistency by the narrative sources, and the total number of Edward III’s forces can be estimated at around 14000 fighting men of which as many as 8000 were archers, either arrayed or as part of mixed retinues in the companies of the nobility.

The very concept of this mixed retinue structure implies that the constituent parts fought together, each supporting the other in a coherent and flexible fighting unit. It seems odd to assume that in any given engagement, the archers attached to a retinue would detach themselves from their comrades and independently move to the flanks of the main army to fight in the manner described in the chronicles. It could be the case that, if anyone were to have occupied ‘flanking’ positions at Crécy, it would have been the arrayed companies of archers, probably protected by levied spearmen. The archers serving in retinues integrated themselves into, or positioned themselves in front of, the line of infantry, using their bows until ammunition ran out or the enemy closed, before switching to a secondary weapon to fight in the main battle line in similar fashion to the men at arms, or withdrawing to the rear in a support role. The building blocks of a mixed retinue were small mixed companies, comprised of knights and archers, and to break this structure up would be to discard all of its operational advantages.

In some accounts of Dupplin Moor and Halidon Hill, very much the tactical prototypes for the engagements in France, the arrows were said to be flying into the faces of the advancing Scots, blinding them. This implies that at the very least, a proportion of the arrows were coming from the front, not the sides and the rear. It is evident that at the battle of Crécy, the English army was constituted and deployed in such a way as to maximise the

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71 Le Baker, p. 73.
73 For a full analysis of the problems related to the understanding of the army at Crécy see A. Aytton, ‘The English Army at Crécy’ in Crécy, ed. Ayton and Preston, pp. 159-251.
use of the tactical defensive and the potency of the archers. The main weapon of the English was not the knight but the ‘anti-chivalric’ archer, the perfect tool for the destruction of the French cavalry.

This is in stark contrast to their perennial enemies, who approached the battle in a ‘traditional’ manner more accordant with the views on chivalry and battle espoused by Charny. Following on from the disastrous advance of the Genoese crossbowmen who were repulsed by the English archers, the French cavalry attempted to engage the English line. Jean Le Bel, whose chronicle was written on the testimony of the Count of Hainault and his knights, is explicit in his account of the damage done by the English bowmen. The archers ‘were loosing such awesome volleys that the horses were riddled by the dreadful barbed arrows; some refused to go on, others leapt wildly, some viciously lashed and kicked, others turned tail despite their masters’ efforts, and others collapsed as the arrows struck, unable to endure’.76 Regardless of whether this was a concentrated or ragged advance, and at what range the archers began to shoot, the picture is one of chaos. It is arguable that the order to loose was delayed until the horsemen were within a range where it was not possible to miss; at this point the French would be accelerating to the charge. It is also likely that the arrows of the first series of volleys would be aimed at the horses themselves, as they were less heavily armoured than their riders and presented a larger target. This would have had the effect of bringing down a large number of horses in the leading ranks of the French advance, instantly neutralising the potency of the charge, not merely through lack of men but also due to the barrier that a fallen horse will present to those following, by disrupting, or even halting the line.77 The carcasses of the fallen and the wounded would create a grim obstacle course for those that came behind, causing a slowing of pace which would expose more men to the needle-pointed arrows of the keen-eyed English archers. Unhorsed knights could be picked off piecemeal by relatively close range, aimed shots from individual archers: akin to shooting fish in a barrel. Once separated from his horse, the potency of a knight was greatly reduced, emphasising the notion that ‘chivalry’ was laid low by the nature of the English tactical system.78

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76 Le Bel, p. 180.
78 Tactical dispositions were not concrete, and the French were not entirely blind to the potential advantages of fighting on foot. A veteran of Morlaix, Charles of Blois has witnessed the English tactical system first hand, and his company dismounted and attempted to advance on foot. They were overwhelmed and killed. St Omer Chronicle, fo. 262v. in C. Rogers, War Cruel and Sharp, p. 268.
The nature of the terrain meant that there was no natural path of retreat as more horsemen impetuously filed into the killing zone, creating a crush of dead and dying men and horses. Geoffrey Le Baker tells us that ‘in the middle of the host many Frenchmen were crushed to death without any wound by the weight of numbers’.\textsuperscript{79} This action occurred fairly early in the battle according to the chroniclers. This has particular relevance regarding the use of archers when one takes into account that the engagement did not begin until late in the day, around the hour of vespers. Though it was a summer evening, this means that the battle continued into the failing light and darkness, making archery more difficult. There is also an issue pertaining to resources to consider; prolonged use of archers necessitates large reserves of ammunition, which may have been an issue for the English.\textsuperscript{80} It is clear that the archers were decisive in breaking up the attack of the French and a great number of casualties were caused by the discipline and timing of their volleys, facilitated by their tactical deployment. The victory on the day, then, did not belong to the English nobility or the chivalrous classes, as much as to the humble archer raised in the shires or retained by the great men of England. This is a fact which was ignored by Edward III in his businesslike dispatch to Sir Thomas Lucy the week after the battle, attributing the victory to the grace of God rather than the lowlier elements of his forces, praising the courage of his enemies whilst abstaining from the mention of honour and glory through chivalric prowess. Nevertheless, the damage caused by the archers is certainly implied, and it is perhaps to this the king is referring when he says: ‘in a small area where the first assault occurred more than 1500 knights and squires died, quite apart from those who died later elsewhere on the field’.\textsuperscript{81} It is conceivable that the King of France himself did not manage to escape the hail of arrows in this victory of practicality over chivalry, being himself wounded in the face with an English shaft prior to leaving the field.\textsuperscript{82} This event is spoken of by Richard Wynkeley, a clerk who would have seen little actual fighting, and we can say with some certainty he would not have been in a position to witness first-hand an injury to King Philip. It may have been seen by someone who told Wynkeley of it at a later point, or perhaps it was part of the testimony of a French prisoner. It has the whiff of the kind of rumour that surely would have flown through the English lines following a battle such

\textsuperscript{79} Le Baker, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{81} EIII newsletter to Thomas Lucy in Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince, ed. R. Barber, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{82} Richard Wynkeley’s newsletter in Murimuth, p. 216.
as this. In the midst of the host, word of mouth regularly transformed apocryphal tales into ‘facts’, rumours gathered momentum and tales would grow in the act of telling.

It is evident that the French did eventually break through to the English lines, where hand to hand combat ensued, most visibly in the narrative sources around the division under the nominal command of the Black Prince. This was in no sense a gentlemanly encounter. As mentioned above, it was at best fought in twilight and at worst, in darkness, the orders had been given for no prisoners and the French had taken a mauling at the hands of the English archers. When battle was finally joined toe to toe it was perhaps a matter of courage rather than prowess which pulled a man through. In the press of bodies of horses and men, the dead and the dying, what is needed is an iron nerve and sheer physical endurance, rather than the skill at arms developed during a lifetime of chivalrous pursuits. The chronicle accounts are understandably sketchy on most aspects of the battles once the forces actually clashed; there is little told of individual acts of bravado in the melee itself and many of Froissart’s formulaic anecdotes regarding battlefield prowess should be treated with caution. What is clear is that the fighting was exhausting and not for the faint hearted. Froissart implies that this is the case when he speaks of the fighting around the Black Prince’s division being fierce enough to prompt some of the more experienced men around him to send to the king for aid. 83 In spite of this, there are some notable exceptions where deeds of prowess in the heart of the battle are described. The Black Prince is singled out for great praise by Geoffrey le Baker in his account of Poitiers. The horror of the battle is without doubt:

Here men trampled on their own guts, others spat out their teeth; many were hewn to the ground, lost limbs while still standing. Dying men rolled in the blood of others, groaned under the weight of the fallen and with proud hearts, groaned as they left their unworthy bodies. The blood of slaves and princes ran down in one stream to empurple the nearby river and frighten the fish with this delicate nectar. 84

This rather poetic, if harrowing, passage is juxtaposed with Le Baker’s description of ‘the boar of Cornwall’ laying all to waste with his sword, eager in his desire to slay his enemies. 85 Rich chivalric fayre indeed, yet such literary conventions must be questioned. The Black Prince had long been groomed to be the natural replacement for

84 *Le Baker*, p. 131.
85 *Le Baker*, p. 131.
his father, and is always portrayed as the epitome of chivalry: honourable, just and at
the height of his martial powers. Le Baker, who, like Froissart, believed that absolute
truth should never be permitted to ruin a good yarn, portrays him as a god of war; a
shining light in the gathering darkness. Such praise is reserved for the chosen few. The
prince was still only sixteen however, and a cynical view could be taken as to how
much peril the heir to the throne was allowed to face. His division contained some of
the hardiest warriors Edward III had at his disposal, and it can perhaps be assumed that
these veterans were under strict instructions to protect Edward’s first born son at all
costs.

There was also the great din made by soldiers advancing and engaging to
consider, adding to the confusion, disorientation and difficulty of combat itself. The
Genoese advance at Crécy was accompanied by three shouts to intimidate the English.86
There is evidence of trumpets being sounded and drums being beaten. The noise of the
field of Poitiers was said to be so loud that, ‘you would have thought that the mountains
were bellowing to the valleys and that the clouds thundered’.87 These factors, added to
the screams of men and horses and the clash of weapons would have made hearing
anything at all difficult. Sensory deprivation of this kind brings forth man’s primal
instincts; a man’s worth measured by his reaction to the ‘fight or flight’ response, only
the foolhardy would think of chivalry at times such as this, survival would be the
imperative for the majority. Some sense of the exhaustion felt by the English troops at
Crécy can be gained from the chronicle accounts. As we have seen, the battle began at
around the hour of vespers as the sun was setting, and then continued into the evening.
The English had stood for some time prior to this in formation awaiting the French
advance and following the fighting, they remained in the field overnight and many
fought in a smaller engagement the following day.88 We can only speculate what
psychological effects such a prolonged state of battle readiness would have wreaked,
not to mention a long night spent on the field in the company of the dead and
wounded.89 Whilst the chroniclers may attribute glory and honour to the English, it is
debateable as to whether there was anything glorious or honourable about engagements
such as this.

86Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 577.
87 Le Baker, p. 130.
88 Knighton, p. 63; Le Bel, p. 182.
89 This question can never be satisfactorily answered. John Keegan’s account of the battle of Agincourt,
though fundamentally flawed in its use of the available source material, does attempt to address issues
such as the dynamics of such encounters and the psychological effect of battle on the combatants. J.
It could be argued that chivalry was the first casualty on the fields of Crécy and Poitiers. Perhaps the key relationship between chivalry and battle is not to be found in conspicuous acts of gallantry and deeds of valour so lauded by the chronicles. In such a context, high minded clashes between champions have been shown to be problematic. It may be the case that the ritualistic actions of knights prior to battle is, in part, about engaging with something it was mutually understood would be irrelevant when the fighting started. Perhaps the significance of battle to chivalry is better viewed as a rite of passage, a case of having the courage to stand in the maelstrom of war, in the eye of the storm, and not to flee. In this sense, the battlefield is not the proving ground of prowess or proficiency of arms; it is not the arena in which to win honour, but an ordeal which all those who worship at the altar of chivalry must endure, a hardship which binds together disparate souls with a vault of shared experience. Perhaps our reading of prowess in this context should not be taken as one of the high ideals of chivalry, but rather as an integral part of the cult of war which is as old as the time of the first warrior bands. One of the primary functions of knighthood was battle itself, a kind of chivalric prime directive, the unambiguous bloodletting that defined warfare. All the higher ideals of chivalry had essentially evolved from this starting point.

With battles such as these, chivalry was returning to its bloody roots.

Clashes of the scale of Crécy were certainly exceptional and it is true to say that any individual acts appear masked by the enormity of the events that day, but there were many other engagements, from smaller clashes along the same lines to relatively insignificant skirmishes involving small numbers of knights and men-at-arms. Perhaps it is here that more complex manifestations of chivalry and warfare can be seen to co-exist. In an encounter at the smallest end of the scale, the ageing earl of Stafford was attacked by a contingent of French crossbowmen during the Reims campaign of 1359. The picture is a wonderful one, of the grey-bearded, geriatric Stafford punching Frenchmen to the floor. Stafford had been through too much by this point in his career to be bested by mere crossbowmen. Aid eventually arrived, and all sixty Frenchmen were killed or captured.\footnote{Knighton, p. 171.} The campaign in Normandy which culminated in the battle of Crécy is described in some detail by a day to day account, probably compiled by a knight in the English host, known as \textit{Acta Bellica}. It is the most complete record in existence of an English army on campaign, and does not shy away from the darker side of war, telling us much about the destructive nature of the \textit{chevauchée} through
Normandy. Within it are details of the many feats of arms accomplished by the English as they advanced through the French countryside. Many of these smaller scale actions fit much more readily into the model of chivalric display and the projection of prowess so beloved of chroniclers. In an incident which could have been lifted directly from romance, the Earl of Warwick demonstrates remarkable prowess and is singled out for praise. On his way to his lodgings in a small village two miles from La Hogue, Beauchamp was attacked whilst only in the company of his squire, and it seemed he would be captured: ‘but before the enemy could rejoice in their first victory over the English, he recovered his spirits, and, though mounted on a poor horse, he and his squire fought back boldly and he killed some of the attackers. The rest, fearing that they too would be killed, and thinking there was not one Englishman but a thousand, took to their heels with all speed’.  

This is undeniably the stuff of chivalry: a lord of England, heavily outnumbered and isolated, slaughtering Frenchmen from horseback. However, it would be wise to question its inclusion here. The placement of such an episode between passages in which towns and manor houses are being put to the torch by the English soldiery, whilst not necessarily casting doubt on the tale’s accuracy, could be read as chivalric gloss to lighten a heavy load. Another reading of this account is that the story was recounted by Warwick as a way of enhancing his own reputation for prowess. If the story is true, Warwick and his squire were alone when they were ambushed and it is they who would have relayed the tale, perhaps with certain embellishments. Similarly, the account of the actions of Robert Ferrers attacking the castle at Roche-Guyon draws attention to another chivalric episode. Following a violent assault after a daring crossing of the Seine in boats, in which Edward atte Wode was killed, Ferrers and his men took the castle and the garrison surrendered, placing themselves at the mercy of Ferrers. There were a number of ladies in the castle ‘whom he released without shame or injury.’ He then took the oaths of the garrison to pay ransoms before giving them their liberty and returning to Edward III with news of his actions.  

In this conflict which Acta Bellicosa tells us is a welter of fire and blood, Ferrers finds time for courtesy. Whether these accounts have been embellished or not, they stand as evidence that the way contemporaries viewed aspects of the conduct of war could coexist quite comfortably with ideas about chivalry and provide a window

91 Acts of War, ed. Barber, p. 28.
92 Acts of War, ed. Barber, p. 28; Eulogium historiarum sive temporis, ed. F. S. Haydon, Rolls ser., 3 vols (London, 1858-63), III, 208; For the death of Edward atte Wode, see CIPM, IX, no.35.
into chivalric mentalité, showing that honour, prowess and mercy had a place in warfare and were not wholly discarded under the pressure of the campaign.

Individual mounted combat between two warriors is when one would expect to see engagement with chivalric ideals, and this is also noted by Froissart in his description of the capture of Thomas Berkeley by a squire of Picardy named John de Hellenes during the battle of Poitiers. Berkeley is unhorsed and badly wounded by Hellenes. The two exchange names before Berkeley agrees to become the Frenchman’s prisoner. He is taken from the field and carefully tended to until he was moved to Hellenes’ home in Picardy, where he spent a year recovering from his grievous wound before paying six thousand nobles for his release. The identity of Berkeley is unclear; there were apparently four Berkeleys involved in the expedition. However, the current Baron Berkeley (d.1361), also named Thomas, was not present and was far too old to be on campaign. In any case, Froissart tells us that this Berkeley was a young, lusty knight. Froissart could perhaps be in error and be speaking of Maurice Berkeley (d.1368), Thomas’ son, though in 1356 he had not yet inherited his father’s title. Maurice was present on the expedition, and was severely wounded and taken prisoner at Poitiers. Such inconsistencies, rather typical of Froissart, mean the tale may well be apocryphal, intended to demonstrate honour and tenderness between victor and vanquished. Perhaps we should not discount the tale entirely, as Froissart took much of his information on deeds of arms from the heralds’ records of such events. It is possible that Froissart has conflated the story of John Berkeley’s capture later in the war with the battle of Poitiers. Whether the tale is true or not, it again gives us a window into the kind of treatment a defeated knight would ideally receive from his captor, and reveals that such interactions were conducted within chivalric space that regulated conduct. As with many aspects of chivalry, the ideal differs from the reality. With ransoms in particular, though moderation was theoretically favoured so as not to overly impoverish the captive, it was a matter of individual bargaining in which the captor held all the cards. Such matters were very much open to exploitation. English soldiers in French captivity during the 1370s seemed to have had a varied experience, both in the treatment they received and in the terms of their release. Many were forced to rely on the goodwill

93 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 355.
95 The Complete Peerage, 2,130.
of friends and to borrow money, or to expend significant portions of their gains of the previous decades to secure their liberation. 98

One aspect of warfare in which chivalric space is consciously created and engaged with is the joust of war. Combats such as this occur frequently on a number of campaigns. In 1346 when the English were crossing the ford at Blanchetaque, a French knight challenged the English to send a knight across the ford and joust three times to show his love for his lady. Thomas Colville met the Frenchman’s challenge, and the two jousted twice before a splintered shield brought an end to proceedings. The two supposedly later became firm friends. 99 Similarly, on the 1359 Reims campaign, men of Henry of Lancaster’s division engaged in ‘ioustes de guere par couenant taille, a demaund dez Fraunceis hors de Reynes’. One French knight was killed and two more wounded by blows from a halberd. 100 Such an engagement is narrowly avoided due to a truce prior to the battle of Poitiers when John Chandos meets with the Lord of Clermont and discovers they both bear the same device of a blue Madonna on their surcoats. Froissart, in his usual manner, makes the exchange one which is entirely cordial, with Clermont saying if it were not for the truce, he would prove to Chandos that he had no right to wear the device. Chandos replies that come the next day’s battle, he will prove he has as much right as Clermont to the arms. 101 They depart as nonchalantly as they met. Clermont was later to be killed in the battle. This tale is somewhat typical of Froissart, and is quite possibly erroneous. There is no evidence that Chandos was ever associated with such a device. His arms are recorded as Argent, a Pile Gules by Beltz, (following Ashmole), and this is in keeping with the arms provided for his father, Edward Chandos, on the Second Dunstable Roll. 102 Reliance on Froissart for matters chivalric should be embarked upon with caution. Similar care must be applied when considering the evidence provided by Chandos Herald. According to the text, a formal combat of one hundred against one hundred is offered by Geoffroi de Charny as a way of resolving the face off at Poitiers, but the notion is rejected by the earl of Warwick,

100 Scalacronica, p. 172.
evidently supremely confident of the superiority of English arms. Though the
demonstrated caution should be exercised, the implication from these texts is of an
English view that proof of chivalric prowess comes a poor second place to a decisive
military victory, perhaps another nail in the coffin of battlefield chivalry. There were
times however, when honour demanded action. Honour and reputation were in many
ways inextricable from matters martial; a reputation could be won, maintained,
Improved, and lost through combat.

In 1351, as the great Henry of Lancaster entered middle age, he departed from
England bound for Prussia, to fight against the pagans there. Prior to his arrival, and
much to Lancaster’s distress, a truce was concluded between the Christians and the
pagans. Upon returning to Cologne, he was informed that the duke of Brunswick
intended to impede his pilgrimage. This offended Lancaster, who believed it was ‘not
proper for such a duke to meddle with a foreign knight on pilgrimage, who had done
him no harm, and that if the duke wished to have any dealings with him he would find
him ready to do all that it behove a knight to do’. The quarrel continued and
culminated in Lancaster travelling to Paris to meet Brunswick in combat. Lancaster was
received with great honour, a testament to his pan-European fame. It then seems that
Brunswick lost the will to fight, becoming pale and being unable to hold his shield.
Lancaster, by contrast, remained calm and cheerful. When Brunswick attempted to
forfeit the contest, he remained adamant:

Et dixit se nolle locum exire pro quocumque tractatu aut Concordia nisi haberet
prelium, nec alio modo uelle prelium dimittere, nisi saluo honore suo, et sanguinis sui et
legii domini sui Regis Anglie et tocius regni Anglorum, in toto in quantam saltem in eo
est, ita quod gens Anglorum per ipsum non incureret crimen pudoris, sed saluus esset
honor eius in toto.

Geoffrey Le Baker supports the notion that Brunswick was somewhat unmanned in the
face of the Englishman; with his horse being skittish he was unable to put on his helmet,
‘or he feebly pretended he could not’. Lancaster’s reputation was maintained by such
acts and the chroniclers of the day, and in later times, recorded his deeds and praised his

103 The Life of the Black Prince by the Herald of Sir John Chandos, ed. M. Pope and C. Lodge (Oxford,
104 Knighton, p. 113.
105 ‘And he said that he would not leave the place for any negotiation or agreement until he had had a
battle, nor would he abandon the battle unless his honour was assured, and that of his kin, and of his liege
lord the king of England, and all the realm of England so far as it was involved, so that the English people
should not incur shame through him, but his honour should be altogether secure’. Knighton, pp. 116-118.
106 Le Baker, p. 105.
actions. It says much for Lancaster’s martial reputation that he and Brunswick did not even cross swords before the German duke’s ardour was cooled. An alternative version of events is provided by evidence that is not as partisan as that of Knighton and Le Baker regarding Lancaster. It is just as likely that King Jean, not wanting two such men to shed one another’s blood, decided to settle the affair himself, to which Le Baker does attest. Letters of reconciliation drawn up by Jean imply that this was the case, as does the fact that Lancaster returned home with the gift of a thorn from the crown of Christ, given to him by the French monarch.107 A face-off of this kind, irrespective of its conclusion, is indicative of the fact that these men inhabited a world where interactions between knights in a martial sense were governed by chivalric convention. Honour comes into play and combat is formalised, observed and regulated. The addition of ‘rules and regulations’ to encounters such as this make them quite distinct from warfare proper, where knights joined in the slaughter along with their socio-military inferiors. This is a distinctly chivalric engagement, though none the less hazardous to health than the gutter brawls of the battlefield.

The epitome of a battle for the sake of battle and in honour of chivalry is seen in the so-called battle of the thirty during the Breton war of succession. It was fought in 1351 between thirty knights: men-at-arms and squires led by Robert de Beamanoir, constable of Josselin castle on the side of Charles of Blois, and a mix of Englishmen, German mercenaries and Bretons under one Brandebourg, captain of Ploërmel, also sometimes rendered as Bembrough, for the Montfortist cause.108 According to a Breton lay describing the event, Bembrough had been laying waste to the countryside since the death of Sir Thomas Dagworth at Auray the previous year.109 Following the suggestion by Beaumanoir of a joust between picked knights, Bembrough counters with a proposal for a larger-scale engagement, on an open plain where there will be no interference.110 Involved on the ‘English’ side were the two famous routier leaders, Sir Hugh Calveley and Sir Robert Knolles.111 Calveley was later to fight at Poitiers, and under the command of John Chandos at Auray in 1364. His relationship with the Black Prince may have been as close as to involve a ‘brothers in arms’ arrangement, and he later

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108 For the context of this engagement, and its relation to the Breton theatre see, M. Jones, ‘Breton Soldiers from the Battle of the Thirty (26 March 1351) to Nicopolis (25 September 1396)’, in The Soldier Experience in the Fourteenth Century, ed. Bell et al, pp. 157-75.
110 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 282.
fought in the rearguard at the battle of Nájera in 1367.\textsuperscript{112} The arms of Robert Knolles appear on Calveley’s tomb, and the redoubtable routier captain’s story is one of rags to riches. Eventually holding lands in Norfolk, Kent and in Brittany, Knolles saw action in Brittany, Normandy and Spain, making allies of Jean de Montfort, the Black Prince and John of Gaunt before his death in 1407.\textsuperscript{113} The Battle of the Thirty marks one of the first forays into the chivalric world of two men who would gain a reputation for engagement with such ideals despite their relatively humble beginnings and extensive careers as ‘swords for hire’.

In spite of Huizinga’s misgivings about such encounters; ‘the uselessness of these chivalric spectacles was so evident that those in authority resented them’,\textsuperscript{114} it was the stuff of legend for the likes of Froissart. An engagement such as this was ideal for his purposes. He describes the valiant nature of the men on both sides, ‘as if they had been so many Rolands and Oliver’s’.\textsuperscript{115} There were rest periods, where men drank wine and dressed their wounds before the battle resumed: ‘vous poés bien croire que il faisoient entre yaulx maint beaulx fait d’armes, gens pour gens, corps à corps, main à main. On n’avoir point en devant passet deux cens an soy recorder la cause paraille’.\textsuperscript{116} For our purposes here it provides an example of the penetration of chivalric martial culture in a theatre of war, a bridge between the chivalric and the pragmatic. Current military practice was observed, the two contingents dismounted to fight,\textsuperscript{117} and it is with undiluted savagery that the two sides set about one another. The ballad vividly describes the action; the combatants engaging fiercely across a field strewn with battered helms, splintered spears and stained with blood. When Beaumanoir, exhausted, cries out for water, he is answered by Geoffroy Du Bois, ‘boif ton sanc, Beaumanoir, la soif te passera’!\textsuperscript{118} There is no hint of mercy in a fight such as this, especially following the death of the English captain, Bembrough. In this sense it has much in common with other battles of the day. Yet this is where the similarity with many contemporary engagements ends. The agreement prior to the engagement between Beaumanoir and Bembrough, the choosing of specific time and place, the regulation of the conduct of the observers and participants and the selection of thirty warriors to fight upon each side

\textsuperscript{115} Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 283.
\textsuperscript{116} Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 283.
\textsuperscript{117} Le Bel, p. 213; Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 282.
\textsuperscript{118} H. R. Brush, ‘La Bataille’, p. 108.
formalises the structure of the meeting. Though one of the purposes of the encounter was, doubtless, to relieve the suffering of those innocents caught between the two garrisons, \footnote{M. Jones, ‘Breton Soldiers’, p. 159.} of itself a ‘chivalric’ matter, it could also be argued that the primary motivation was of little importance in the wider conflict. No borders or fortresses are being defended, there is no ‘prize’ for victory other than honour, and there is little motivation to participate other than to exhibit prowess that will be spoken of throughout the world, transporting the participants to another plane of existence at once exclusive and exalted: an encounter governed by mutually understood laws and customs divergent from normal reality.

Jean le Bel’s account of the event makes no mention of the mistreatment of peasants, instead styling the encounter as a battle for the love of the participant’s ladies; he poses that the thirty against thirty format was settled upon because it was more honourable than single jousts. \footnote{Le Bel, pp. 212-14.} This is, at heart, combat for the sake of combat, an exhibition of prowess in pursuit of honour. It is the pursuit of honour towards which all knights should strive, as in the words of Ramon Llull: ‘honneur vault mieulx que deniers ne ou ne argent, sans nulle comparoison’. \footnote{Ramon Llull, ed. Minervini, p. 116.} In sharp contrast to larger engagements, it is for this reason that the feats of arms in the battle of the thirty were perpetrated. Of particular interest in this encounter is the relationship between chivalry and the mounted warrior. If we are to believe Le Bel’s account, upon which the kernel of Froissart’s account seems to rely, then the combat was won for the ‘French’ by a Breton on horseback. \footnote{Le Bel, p. 214; Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 284.} The poem describing the event concurs, and it is likely that Le Bel had read it at some point, or at least heard a portion of it recited. \footnote{H. R. Brush, ‘La Bataille de Trente Anglois et de Trente Bretons’, Modern Philology, vol. 9, no. 4 (1912), p. 516.} Nowhere is there mention of an agreement stating that it was mandatory to fight on foot. Le Bel mentions that a number of Frenchmen remained mounted throughout the engagement. \footnote{Le Bel, p. 213.} There is no hint that the mounted attack was viewed as dishonourable at the time. It is interesting that the combat was won in this way, the traditional, chivalric way; especially when one considers that this event occurs just five years after the battle of Crécy where French mounted knights were laid low by Englishmen on foot. This small triumph of French
chivalry is celebrated by the poem and in French Chronicles; the English remain silent.\textsuperscript{125}

It seems, then, that chivalry and the battlefield are strange bedfellows during this period. Contemporary battles were dangerous affairs in which knights were conversely required to slaughter all in their path or take as many prisoners as possible, depending upon the given political and military factors pertaining to particular engagements. The way of war espoused by the cult of chivalry, on horseback with lances couched, was rarely engaged in, albeit with some notable exceptions. Instead warriors were to be found fighting in close order foot formations to maximise the use of the tactical defensive and terrain. In this sense, knightly prowess was hampered by the constraints of the tactical system employed by the English. Such a system could even perhaps be termed ‘anti-chivalric’, in that it entailed the deliberate rejection of the ideals of knightly combat, removed the warhorse and concentrated in no small part on ways to negate the effectiveness of cavalry tactics through the use of the war bow and emergent gunpowder weapons. It was, however, a triumph of the use of combined arms, with English archery accomplishing much before the mailed fist of French knighthood. This has wider implications with regard to the place of the chivalric classes in war. There is little evidence of any sense that knighthood was used as an elite force on the battlefield; it was only a constituent part of English armies and an expensive one at that. There appears to be little reconciliation with the gentlemanly way of war and knightly conventions found in manuals of chivalry produced by the likes of Llull and Charny. Honour is subsumed by larger concerns; the massed armies of England were practical tools to accomplish practical goals, almost tailor made to curtail the heroic and individualistic tendencies fostered by knighthood. In spite of this, and if it is possible to extrapolate real events from chronicle accounts, there are glimpses of conduct which does conform to the chivalric ideal. Valour is exhibited, courage displayed and honourable exchanges are witnessed. Battle has a place in the chivalric \textit{milieux}, though it seems it is not the primary arena for the practice of chivalry. In this sense a distinction can perhaps be drawn between the actions at chivalry’s core: the battle, violence and the shedding of blood, and the higher and more refined elements of chivalry governing the ways in which knights interact. One gets the sense that there is a time and a place for chivalry, even amongst the chivalrous, and that anything beyond the baseline of the battlefield was somewhat fluid, subject to modification and the dictates of fashion. That

is not to say that chivalrous acts are empty or contrived. Honour was undeniably the arcane currency through which many a temporal fortune was made, yet pitched battle was a rare yet necessary obstacle for those who sought its gain. The battlefield can be viewed as the setting for the triumph of human nature over culture. No matter how dedicated a man was to the chivalric ideal, for many it was set aside when battle was joined. Unlike fighting, chivalry was exclusive, practiced amongst those of the correct status and experience, an aspect of the knightly character which was only of value in certain situations. The practicalities of warfare often stifled the projection of chivalric identity, yet to lay claim to it, one had to have the necessary skills in which to excel on the battlefield. What set the knighthood of England apart from their lowlier compatriots in the English host, that which made them ‘chivalrous’, was the regulated and exclusive interactions of chivalric ceremonial, rather than their conduct in the face of the enemy.
V

‘Put all to sword, and make the spoil your own’. ¹

Beneath the Iron Mask: Knighthood, Chivalry and Criminality

Much of the writing on matters chivalric in the later Middle Ages was centred around the importance of honour to knighthood. Geoffrey de Charny sees honour as the wellspring of men of worth: one’s honour is to be guarded carefully, as it can be lost far more quickly than it is gained. As such, a man should strive to ensure that he suffers no reproach, and should never tire from such activities as jousting, conversation, dancing and singing in the company of ladies, whilst maintaining his honour and status in word and deed.² So strong was this imperative that it was believed by some that a good knight had more to fear from dishonour or shame than he did from death.³ Histories of the fourteenth century, however, speak of knights repeatedly perpetrating acts that are shameful. These acts include atrocities during war which go beyond the accepted, legitimate violence of chivalric prowess and swim in the darker undercurrents of human interaction. The Vows of the Heron is an Anglo-Norman poem produced in the Low Countries in the late 1330’s or early 1340’s. It describes a feast in 1338, where Edward III and a number of his knights vow to perform certain acts in the forthcoming war with France. The poem is only tenuously based on real events, and was perhaps written as a parody of what its Flemish author viewed as the chivalric excesses of Edward’s court. History becomes fiction as aspects of the protagonist’s biographies are exaggerated or inverted. William Montague, for example, had lost an eye during the wars in Scotland, and he vows to keep one eye closed for the duration of the war. The author of the poem is amusing himself at Montague’s expense, either his vow is hollow; the eye to be closed has already been lost, or the earl will uselessly grope blindly around France.⁴ The poem has been classified as ‘a grimly satirical document which, when the Hundred Years War was just beginning, foreshadowed what it was in the main to be, a struggle productive only of destruction, frustration and suffering’.⁵ With the exception of John of Hainault, the knights are associated with ignoble, unsuccessful or cruel acts. Walter

² The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, pp. 113-115.
³ Ibid, p. 133; Ramon Llull, ed. Minervini, p. 133.
⁵ B. J. Whiting, ‘The Vows of the Heron’, Speculum 20, no.3 (1945), p. 278.
Mauny vowed to burn a town and leave its inhabitants slain. Jean de Fauquemont is asked what adventure he intends to undertake to prove his dedication to Edward’s war. His reply is disturbing: ‘que j’iroie le fu par devant li bouter, et si n’epargneroie ne moustier ne autel, femme grosse n’enfant que je peusse trouver, ne parent ne amis, tant me peust-il amer, pour tant que il vausi st roy Edouart grever’. Strong words indeed and indicative of the lengths the servants of the Plantagenet would go to in order to see his will done. What is perhaps surprising is the response that this elicits from the gathered company; they praise Fauquemont, believing his actions would bring honour to his lord. The content of the poem has made its interpretation somewhat tricky. The vows range in tone from comical, to ironic and with Fauquemont’s vow, the outright savage. Whilst unreliable as an historical source, it does suggest that such despicable actions on the part of knighthood were not beyond the realms of conception. It was possible to be a knight, even one retained by a powerful European monarch whose court was a renowned hotbed of chivalric sentiment, and commit gross acts of atrocity, acts which to modern sensibilities would be considered shameful, even abhorrent, whilst maintaining an honourable reputation. It may even be argued that such behaviour, or at least the potential for it, was a desirable trait in a knight. When King Peter of Aragon (1319-87) listed the qualities he looked for in a knight, he said ‘they should be cruel, so as not to have pity in pillaging their enemies, nor in wounding nor in killing them’. Scruples were clearly not a prerequisite in order for a knight to be effective.

It is often at sieges, or rather at their conclusion, that the atrocities of war appear most blatant and the suffering of the non-combatant is placed in the starkest relief. If no accord had been reached between the fortress and the besiegers prior to the official start of the siege, the action was to the death without quarter. If the fortress was subsequently taken by storm, free licence was given to the victor, any atrocity was permissible and many towns suffered burning, murder and rapine at the hands of a victorious besieging force. Technically, churches and churchmen were immune from harm, though often these too were not spared. All goods and chattels belonging to the inhabitants were forfeit, and the loot to be gained proved a major incentive to soldiers to endure the privations of a siege, the poor living conditions and exposure to disease which always hounded an army encamped before a fortress for any significant time. This presumably

7 Ibid, p. 20.
played some part in the justification for atrocity—the need to reward troops who had risked their lives—but the atrocities of the sack perhaps have more to do with a sense of punishing the town for a rejection of the besieger’s authority. In spite of Froissart’s view of the cruelty and savagery of the culmination of sieges, as at Limoges in 1370, such actions were permissible, if not able to be condoned. A lack of mercy and the perpetration of atrocity was an accepted outcome of siege warfare.

In spite of the often savage nature of a siege’s last hurrah, it is perhaps possible to discern individuals behaving in ways which demonstrate a concern for their honour and a desire to maintain, or enhance, their reputation during the fall of towns and fortresses. The actions of the English as they took control of the Norman town of Caen, in 1346, illustrate the licensed atrocity which occurred at the fall of fortified places. The Acta Bellica speaks of the foot soldiers of the English army killing anyone they could find, without allowing anyone to ransom themselves. Michael Northburgh tells us that the townspeople were killed in great numbers, and that it was impossible to know how many were ‘men of substance’ as they had been stripped naked and left to lie in the streets. At the abbey of La Trinité, the nuns and lay sisters were all raped and the abbey was burned, along with a large part of the town. Froissart asserts that, with the English archers mercilessly slaying the garrison around them, the constable and the count of Tancarville spotted the cyclopic English knight Thomas Holland through the fray. Holland was known to them due to their mutual participation in the campaigns against the heathen in Prussia. In fear for their lives, Tancarville and the twenty five knights in his party asked Holland to take them prisoner, thus rendering them safe. Holland agreed and left the Frenchmen in the charge of some of his men before remounting and heading back into the throng of English soldiery. Holland not only saved Tancarville and his company, but also ‘rode through the streets and prevented many acts of cruelty’. In spite of the chaos all around him, Holland maintained his sense of honour and acted in defence of the weak. He was not alone in this, as, according to

9 M. Keen, The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 121-3.
10 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 8, 40-3.
11 The sack of Limoges, and the fact that the loss of life may not have been as high as some editions of Froissart suggest, is summarised in J. Sumption, Divided Houses: The Hundred Years War III (London, 2009), pp. 81-4.
13 Avesbury, p. 359.
14 Le Bel, p. 173.
15 Presumably, Holland was recognised through his heraldry, which made him identifiable amidst the chaos.
Froissart, other knights and squires were also engaged in the defence of the hapless citizenry of Caen. Whilst it is certain that Holland was involved in the capture of prominent Frenchmen, the continental chroniclers do not mention his role in the protection of the citizens, though they speak of the violence, rape and burning as Caen fell. In any case, perhaps Holland’s actions were not entirely altruistic. He later received the sum of 80,000 florins from Edward III for the Count of Eu, proving that the protection of those in need could turn a hefty profit. Thomas Daniel, rather than Holland, was accredited with the capture of Tancarville himself. For handing this high profile prisoner over to the Prince of Wales, and for re-planting the heir’s banner at Crécy, he received an annuity of forty marks from the prince’s manor at Frodesham.

There are yet more glimpses which imply that honour maintained a fundamental significance to the great men of England during wartime. The actions of Henry of Lancaster at the siege of Rennes in 1357 illustrate just how vital honour was to the maintenance of a man’s reputation. Lancaster, somewhat unusually, was struggling to achieve his objective after a nine month siege. He was under significant political pressure. A truce with France had been concluded on the 23rd March, and he had been formally ordered by Edward III to raise the siege a month later. Fowler states that, according to Cuvelier, Lancaster had made a vow not to leave the town before he had raised his standard over the battlements, which may explain his reluctance to concede defeat. Having staked his honour and prestige on the outcome of the siege, Lancaster was in a difficult position. This was made even more difficult by Edward’s next correspondence in early July, insisting that the siege be raised. With the dual pressures of his king’s increasing agitation and the proximity of a French army under Charles of Blois, Lancaster decided to enter into negotiations with the townsmen. It was agreed that Lancaster would receive 100,000 écus in return for his withdrawal. To this significant financial package was added the caveat that he would be presented with the keys to the town and could fly the Lancastrian banner over the walls, thus obtaining a

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19 CPR 1345-1348, p. 337.
20 BPR, i, p. 45.
21 Knighton, p. 153.
22 Foedera, conventions, litterae etc., ed. T. Rymer, revised edn by A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Coley, 4 vols in 7 parts (Record Comm., 1816-69), III, i, 353.
23 K. Fowler, The King’s Lieutenant, p. 163.
24 The Anonimalle chronicle is specific in stating that Lancaster was conducting the siege on behalf of John de Montfort, and that it would be dishonourable to give it up, Anonimalle, ed. Galbraith, p. 40.
25 Foedera,III, i, 359.
kind of symbolic victory.\textsuperscript{26} Even in defeat, appearance was everything. Rennes was of considerable economic and administrative importance, but little military value.\textsuperscript{27} Yet Lancaster had invested too much in the taking of the town to meekly withdraw. To those watching it would appear as if Lancaster had won, but had graciously permitted the town to remain in the hands of the French. Instead of suffering an embarrassing defeat, Lancaster appeared magnanimous and face was saved. It was also important for morale; Lancaster’s troops had endured much hardship due to the cold during the long siege,\textsuperscript{28} and to depart without any sense of triumph would damage the great man’s reputation in their eyes, a reputation which had perhaps attracted a significant number of them into his service in the first place.\textsuperscript{29} In this case, the retinue acts as the audience for the chivalric persona Lancaster displays in the face of the enemy.

If the siege of a town was invested with a sense of martial pride and honour, then the defence of one was also a grave responsibility. It was, for example, seen as a great dishonour and viewed as treacherous for a captain to surrender his fortress without first enduring a siege. In 1354, William, Baron Greystoke, who had served various terms in France under the likes of William Bohun and Henry of Lancaster,\textsuperscript{30} was appointed as captain of Berwick castle.\textsuperscript{31} Berwick was subsequently lost to the Scots whilst Greystoke had left to go on campaign with the king in France. In spite of his absence, Greystoke was held to account for the loss of Berwick because he had:

undertaken at his peril the keeping thereof by commission from the king [and] had withdrawn from the town on his own authority without licence or mandate from the king, in his absence and default, [Berwick] was taken by the king’s enemies of Scotland, and of the men thereof, some were slain and some taken and put to ransom and their goods and the goods of the king there were plundered wasted and destroyed.\textsuperscript{32}

Though he was subsequently pardoned at the request of the queen, and in light of his valuable service to Edward III, it was nonetheless a blot on his copy book. In order to avoid shame one must nurture reputation, conduct oneself honourably and be seen to be successful in one’s endeavours. Nonetheless, in a number of situations it seems that all

\textsuperscript{26} Knighton, p. 155; Anonimalle, ed. Galbraith, p. 40; K. Fowler, The King’s Lieutenant, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{27} J. Sumption, Trial by Fire, p. 272.
\textsuperscript{28} Knighton, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{29} Thomas Walsingham is explicit in his view that Lancaster’s generosity was a significant in attracting recruits, though his statement that the great man’s custom was to give his own spoils to his men is perhaps an exaggeration. Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1863), p. 284.
\textsuperscript{30} With Bohun in Brittany, 1342: E36/204,fo.86v; With Lancaster in Aquitaine, 1345: E101/25/9, m. 3.
\textsuperscript{31} Complete Peerage, VI, 193, n. d.
\textsuperscript{32} CPR 1358-1361, p. 18.
sense of honour is put to one side, and the cruelty of knighthood so valued by the King of Aragon comes to the fore.

The siege in which the English demonstrated the most commitment in the first phase of the Hundred Years War was undeniably that of Calais in 1346 and 1347. With a force matched in size only by the army accompanying the king on his expedition to Reims in 1359-60, Edward III invested the city on its three landward sides, and was reinforced by ships dispatched from Winchelsea and Sandwich that arrived off the harbour the following day. The intention was to starve the population into submission, and the English sent for machines to attempt to break down the walls and settled in for a long siege. The dedication shown by the English towards the capture of Calais exceeds that of any other siege conducted during this period, and demonstrates the importance of the town as a foothold in France: a bridgehead for any future landings. Such were the privations eventually suffered by the population of Calais during the siege that they ate all the horses and dogs in the town, and in their desperation and hunger, consumed all the rats as well. Away from the siege proper, English captains were free to roam the countryside almost at will, sacking towns and torching the land with little resistance from the beleaguered forces of the French crown. Thomas Beauchamp was himself engaged in operations in the environs of Calais. He led an Anglo-Flemish force to the market town of Therouanne, where a fair was in progress, killed the garrison, badly wounding the Bishop in the process, and proceeded to loot the market, ‘carrying its treasures in carts and on packhorses to the king at Calais, and they were all greatly enriched with wares of almost incalculable variety’. The French countryside suffered most where the English forces were static, with the invaders being forced to forage for supplies within a concentrated area, placing local resources under pressure, to the detriment, and often ruin, of the local population.

Meanwhile, on the other side of France, Henry of Lancaster busied himself with the ravaging of Poitou and Saintonge, with the small walled town of St-Jean-de-Angely one of a number of settlements to suffer under his attentions. Lancaster was drawn here by the imprisonment of a number of men of Walter Mauny’s party, who were captured...

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33 J. Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, p. 537. A naval blockade of the town was impossible during the long winter of the siege, and the inhabitants of Calais were provisioned by a convoy of merchant ships before the worst of the winter weather set in. On the maritime dimension of the siege, and Edward’s foresight and preparation for such an undertaking, see C. Lambert, ‘Edward III’s Siege of Calais: A reappraisal’, *JMMH* 37 (2011), pp. 247-56.


36 Knighton, p. 65.
en route to the French king under safe conduct. The town was taken by force and its inhabitants’ oaths were taken to, in Lancaster’s own words, ‘become English’.\textsuperscript{37} Heavy tax burdens were placed upon them, being forced to pay 4000 more \textit{ecus} per year to Edward of England than they had to Philip of France. The inhabitants of Poitiers chose to resist, and paid the price. In a letter penned shortly afterwards, Lancaster reported that as a consequence all the residents of the town were captured or killed.\textsuperscript{38} Not content with military supremacy, the English heaped misery upon the citizens of France. A campaign to win hearts and minds this was not.

The siege often served as a disruption to the mobility and effectiveness of larger operations. The \textit{chevauchée}, the great mounted raids bent on destruction and terror, were strategically employed by the English with great success on French soil. The concept was a simple one, and replicated the strategy employed against the English by the Scots, involving spreading out over a wide front and destroying as much of the enemy countryside as possible, looting villages, burning fields, capturing livestock and terrorising the general population.\textsuperscript{39} Its aims were primarily threefold. The first (though here there is no order of precedence) was to weaken the economic base of the enemy through the destruction of resources, whilst at the same time allowing one’s own troops to enrich and feed themselves from enemy lands. Secondly, destruction on such a scale demoralises the local population and weakens central political authority, as the first duty of any monarch is to protect his people. In a period that had a very positivist conception of rights, if one was unable to defend something, one did not have a right to it. Therefore a \textit{chevauchée} could be used, very publicly, call into question the legitimacy of the position of the Valois monarchy and demonstrate the justice of the Plantagenet claim. Thirdly, and this factor was viewed as especially important in the Crécy campaign of 1346, the \textit{chevauchée} was seen as a method for provoking the enemy into taking the field.\textsuperscript{40} When the English were burning France, it placed pressure on the French monarchy to react and expel the invaders. The above factors were less relevant in Scotland, where atrocity was used as a weapon in its own right by both sides to subdue the population and assert respective rights north of the border.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{37} Avesbury, p. 373.
\bibitem{38} Avesbury, pp. 374-5.
\bibitem{40} C. Rogers, \textit{War Cruel and Sharp}, p. 238.
\bibitem{41} The character of the devastation in Scotland in the 1330s is the subject of I. Macinnes, “‘Shock and Awe’: The Use of Terror as a Psychological Weapon in the Bruce-Balliol Civil War 1332-1338” in
\end{thebibliography}

132
counter raids over the frontier are typified by events in 1335 when the English ranged freely through the Scottish marches. The chronicle of Lanercost is well placed to tell the tale:

Wherefore they freely marched through all the land on this side of the Forth and beyond it, burning, laying waste, and carrying off spoil and booty. Some of them, especially the Welsh, spared neither clergy nor their monasteries, plundering regulars and seculars impartially. Also the seamen of Newcastle burnt a great part of the town of Dundee, with the dormitory and school of the Minorite friars, carrying away their great bell; and they burnt one friar who formerly had been a knight, a man of wholly pure and holy life.  

Such wanton destruction is often attributed to the Welsh troops in English armies, yet the English contingents were just as capable of identical behaviour; indeed there is little evidence of their captains acting to limit their misdemeanours.

Such methods were not always effective in achieving their aims. Edward III’s first campaign on the continent, conducted in the Cambrésis in 1339, was characterised by destruction in an attempt to force King Philip to engage the English in the field. The Earls of Suffolk, Northampton and Derby, along with Ralph, Baron of Stafford, accompanied the King, and from entering the region on September 18th they proceeded to ‘…put the land of Cambrésis to flame and fire, and for the whole of the following week did not cease to fire those parts, in such a manner as the countryside everywhere was wholly bereft of crops and animals and other like produce’. Robert Ufford, the earl of Suffolk, played an active part in this campaign, sacking the town of Beaumetz in French Artois. The scale of the destruction was vast, so much so that the Pope, out of compassion for the suffering of the innocent, granted 6000 gold florins in aid. This was distributed according to need and based on individual circumstances, with care taken to distinguish those impoverished by the war from those who were simply impoverished. Ultimately, the efforts of the English and the suffering of the people was to no avail; the

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42 *Lanercost*, p. 291.


44 *Knighton*, p. 17; *Le Bel*, pp. 79-80; Similar information is provided in French chronicle material, *Chronographia regum Francorum*, ed. H. Moranvillé, 3 vols (Paris, 1891-7), ii, 73.

45 *Le Bel*, p. 80; *Froissart*, ed. Lettenhove, 18, 85.

French would not meet the English in battle. King Philip chose instead to wait until his enemy’s supplies ran out and they were forced to depart. This characterises the contrasting approaches to the war of the French and English kings, for Philip, discretion was the better part of valour.\(^{47}\) Despite the expense of alliances on the continent, and all the martial will he could muster, Edward returned to England frustrated.

An excellent record of the chevauchée leading up to the battle of Crécy is preserved in a series of newsletters from men who landed at La Hogue with the king. With the exception of Bartholomew Burgherrsh the elder, the authors were not direct participants in the events they describe, yet their first-hand testimony stands as an example of how such raids were conducted. Further information is provided by the anonymous, yet ever useful, *Acta Bellica*osa. The earl of Lancaster and Ralph Stafford were conducting operations in Aquitaine at the time, but the earls of Northampton, Suffolk and Warwick, along with the sixteen year old Prince of Wales, were with the royal army. Upon arrival, the English began the process of subduing the immediate vicinity; the Chancellor of St Paul’s wrote to his friends in London on the 17\(^{th}\) of July that ‘ita quod in patria circumjacente, ad distantiam viginti milliariam et amplius, non reperitur aliquis de patria qui resistat’.\(^{48}\) The army dispersed in many directions, and spent their time ‘slaying enemy foot soldiers and burning excellent towns and manor houses’.\(^{49}\) As the columns advanced through Normandy, the pattern was repeated. Many towns were put to the torch, including Barfleur, Caen as described above, Torigny, Cormolain, Cheaux and St Germain-en-Laye.\(^{50}\) As more and more towns were taken and put to the flame, and more of the countryside was looted, the notion of a just war to press Edward’s right to the throne of France was lost. The expedition became a destructive drive through a countryside populated by innocents, the victims of an essentially uncontrollable mob.

This does not mean that attempts to exert control over armies on the march did not occur. The military ordinances drawn up for the army that Richard II led into Scotland in 1385 may be instructive here. Many of the twenty six clauses are concerned with maintaining army discipline and cohesion on the march into Scotland, or prisoner protocol, logistics and supply. However, the first clause relates to the loyalty and obedience required of the troops and the third prohibits the robbing of churches, the

\(^{47}\) For his stance, Philip was criticised and his honour was tarnished, *Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. J. Viard, 9, 172-3.

\(^{48}\) *Murimuth*, p. 200.


killing of churchmen, anchorites, women, children, and non-combatants, whilst also forbidding rape.\textsuperscript{51} There is evidence that orders of this ilk were issued in 1346 by Edward III in an attempt to control his army. Aspects of the orders regarded the conservation of supplies, a practical measure similar to those issued in 1385,\textsuperscript{52} yet the main thrust seems to have been to limit burning, looting and the harm of civilians. Financial incentives were even offered in order to ensure proper behaviour; a reward of forty shillings would be given to any man apprehending someone engaged in criminal acts. According to \textit{Acta Bellicosa}, Edward ordered that no towns or manors were to be burned, no churches or holy places were to be sacked, or any old folk, women or children harmed. A ‘catch all’ clause is also mentioned, whereby the English were forbidden from threatening people, or doing any kind of wrong ‘on pain of life or limb’. This appears in a section of \textit{Acta Bellicosa} in the wake of reports detailing the burning of towns and manors, stating that the men who had already disembarked ‘cheerfully and boldly set fire to the countryside around, until the sky itself glowed with a fiery colour’.\textsuperscript{53} Edward may have been attempting to close the stable door whilst his horse was setting France ablaze. The only other source to mention any such standing orders issued at La Hogue is the \textit{Historia Roffensis}, a contemporary chronicle that does not include the attempt to prevent the burning of property, and adds people ‘who freely enter the king’s peace’ to those who should not be harmed or molested.\textsuperscript{54} The appointment of the earl of Northampton as Constable of the army ‘to check the rashness of the troops’, had no discernable effect on limiting their activities.\textsuperscript{55} In spite of Edward’s apparent concern for the welfare of those whom he viewed to be his subjects in waiting,\textsuperscript{56} the English ran wild. The author of \textit{Acta Bellicosa} confidently asserts that the orders were broken by ‘evildoers’, foot soldiers who had gone ahead of the main force, or archers.\textsuperscript{57} Conceivably, this is an attempt to distance knighthood from the less reputable elements of the army, yet the perpetrators, if they were not knights themselves, were presumably under the command of individuals that at the very least

had the authority to carry out punishments in accordance with the king’s orders. Such punishments, if they occurred, are not mentioned.

The great English expedition of 1359-60 was similarly characterised by the devastation of the French countryside and the suffering of the local population. Jean de Venette, in his heartfelt account of the destruction, brings home the desolation and long term damage left by the passing of the English host:

The loss by fire of the village of Venette, where I was born, is to be lamented, together with that of many others nearby...Houses and churches no longer presented a smiling appearance with newly repaired roofs but rather the lamentable spectacle of scattered, smoking ruins to which they had been reduced by devouring flames...The pleasant sound of bells was heard indeed, not as a summons to divine worship, but as a warning of hostile incursions, in order that men may seek hiding places while the enemy were yet on their way.  

This is a situation replicated across vast tracts of France, and was brought about by the actions of the armies of England, and indeed those of France, as they manoeuvred. These actions were to have great social repercussions in the French countryside for years to come.

What Edward was realistically attempting to achieve in relation to army discipline in 1346 and 1359 was not the wholesale prevention of atrocity; instead he sought to bring a semblance of order to the chaos. Rather than stopping his men burning town and country, he was trying to channel them into burning strategically. To remain an effective fighting force, a degree of cohesion was required and random pillage could belogistically damaging. The lapses in discipline described in Acta Bellicosa, and from the French perspective on the 1359 campaign by Jean de Venette, tell of the difficulty inherent in this policy when dealing with large numbers of troops: there will always be those who slip through the net and act on their own impulses. In defence of the English captains it could be argued that in many cases those in command could only do so much to direct the violence on the broad front of a chevauchée. Whilst military ordinances could be understood as the chivalrous minority attempting to impose their high ideals on the common soldiery, instead they tell a different story. They stand as further testimony to chivalry and its tenets falling by the wayside as the wider strategic

58 The Chronicle of Jean de Venette, pp. 93-4.
considerations on campaign come to the fore; atrocity was a matter of policy, chivalry was not.

The *chevauchées* conducted by Henry of Lancaster in Aquitaine in 1345-46 were arguably less destructive than those conducted in Normandy and elsewhere throughout our period. Though towns were sacked, there is less evidence for harm being inflicted upon the population. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, Aquitaine was essentially English territory, and had been administered by the Plantagenets since 1152. Gascon loyalty was such that the region was not annexed to the French crown until 1451-3, and only then by force of arms. Secondly, Lancaster’s forces were significantly smaller than those operating in the north under the king, and so were doubtless easier to control. There were also a large number of native Gascon troops involved in the campaign, adding a personal element to the conflict affecting many of its participants. The war in Aquitaine can largely be characterised as one of sieges and skirmishes, yet the Anglo-French conflict was often ‘embroiled with private feuds and vendettas’. This meant that Aquitaine and its population were long accustomed to raiding, the burning of villages and the capture of animals. Lancaster was remarkably active during his time in Aquitaine, demonstrating the energy and commitment synonymous with his long career in arms, and the tactics he employed were largely identical to those employed in other theatres. Henry Knighton, always fond of recounting the exploits of a patron of his house, tells of the Bergerac campaign that Lancaster and his men wasted the countryside and captured fifty two towns. The sack of Bergerac itself yielded great wealth, with Lancaster’s personal profit amounting to ‘a whole barrel of gold besides other treasures beyond number.’

Indeed, it seems that profit was one of the main results of English activity in France, perhaps accounting for the frequency and severity of raiding in the countryside. Robert Knolles, who rose from somewhat humble beginnings to wealth and influence and was proclaimed by Knighton to be ‘a great knight and powerful lord’, made great profit and cemented what was to become a formidable reputation through the sack of French towns. At Auxerre in 1358 the actions of Knolles and his men were so extreme that in their terror some of the town’s inhabitants leapt over the walls, breaking their necks or drowning in preference to the treatment they would receive at Knolles’s hand.

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62 *Knighton*, p. 53.
The English are said to have grown rich on the spoils of Auxerre, becoming wealthy on the gold, silver and jewels they pilfered from French citizens. The following verse is quoted in Knighton’s chronicle: ‘Roberte Cnollys, per te fit Francia mollis /ense tuo tollis predas, dans wnera collis.’ Using Knolles as an example is not without its pitfalls. He began his career as an archer, and acquired his estates in Brittany by dubious means. He seems to have been a man that craved the respectability that land and title could bring, and managed to obtain a degree of legitimacy despite having gained his status by fire and sword. Naturally, his ‘world view’ surely differed from that of a Bohun or a Beauchamp; these were established houses with true pedigree who undoubtedly looked down their noses at parvenus such as Knolles. To men such as this, he was perhaps a grubby little commoner, yet he found a place for himself by playing to his strengths. In a sense it was chivalry that had paved Knolles’s way to success, and despite his background he cut himself a slice of the good life and advanced socially through his ruthlessness and martial ability.

As ever amongst fighting men, profit is a powerful motivator. Yet many of these actions in return for plunder are perpetrated by those who laid claim to chivalry as a creed, and who had a reputation amongst contemporaries as good and honourable knights. Even if not directly involved, knights can still be seen as culpable. It is the captains and commanders who permitted such acts of atrocity, if only through lack of prevention or sanction. There seems to be no impediment to the minds of contemporary commentators in reconciling the contradictory nature of the behaviour of English knights in France in relation to chivalry. In spite of some areas of France avoiding serious damage through the ‘fire and sword’ tactics of the English, so common had the destruction of hearth and home as the result of warfare become that Bouvet in his Tree of Battles laments the situation. Looking back towards some mythical golden age when the situation was different, he rails against the way in which wars are conducted. We can consider him a worthy judge, having witnessed first-hand the privations of the French peasantry during the first phase of the Hundred Years War in France:

For in these days all wars are directed against the poor labouring people and their goods and chattels. I do not call this war, but it seems to me to be pillage and robbery. Further, that way of warfare does not follow the ordinances of worthy chivalry or of the ancient custom of noble warriors who upheld justice, the widow, the orphan and the

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63 ‘Robert Knollys, thou hast laid France low, Thy plundering sword brings all the land to woe’, Knighton, p. 165.
poor. And nowadays it is the opposite that they do everywhere, and the man who does not know how to set places on fire, to rob churches and usurp their rights and to imprison the priests, is not fit to carry on war. And for this reason the knights of today have not the glory and praise of the old champions of former times, and their deeds can never come to great perfection of virtue.\textsuperscript{65}

Such exploitation and harm to the innocent does not concur with contemporary didactic conceptions of the honour analogous with chivalry, and perhaps stands as testimony to the attitudes of English knights and men-at-arms. Ramon Llull in treatise on chivalry states that:

Office de chevalier est maintenir et deffendre femmes, veuves et orphelins…pour ce que elle est grant, hommorer et puissant, soit en seccours et en aide a ceulx qui sont dessoubz luy et moins puissant et moins hommorer de luy. Donquez, comme il soit ainsi, faire tort et force a femmes veuve, qui ont mestier de aide, et desheriter orphelins qui ont mestier de gouverneur, et robere et destruire la chetive gent qui n’a point de povoir, et tollir a ceulx qui auroient mestier que en leur donnast, telles choses ne se pouent concorder a l’ordre de chevalerie, ear c’est mauvaistie, cruaulite et tirannie.\textsuperscript{66}

English activities in France certainly find no accord with Lull’s view of what knighthood should be. Whilst Geoffroi de Charny, writing for the French Order of the Star, believes that men of worth should be, ‘fiers et hardis contre leurs amis’, he also concurs with Lull that they should be, ‘piteux et misericors sur ceulz qui le requierent par amendement’.\textsuperscript{67} The sack following a siege and the chevauchée were certainly neither tender nor merciful, and it seems that for much of the time the foe was not the soldiery of France, but the common people.

If we are to take mercy and the defence of the weak as one of the primary tenets of medieval chivalry, how can the actions of the English knights and captains in France be reconciled with the notion that they placed any importance on this aspect of the chivalric ideal at all? Despite the high motives ascribed to the heroes in the pages of Froissart, they lived in a violent and uncertain age, and the relative rarity of set piece

\textsuperscript{66} ‘The office of a Knight is to maintain and defend women, widows and orphans…the great, honourable and mighty must succour and aid those who are under them, those less mighty and less honourable than he. Then as it is to do wrong and to force women and widows, who have need of aid, and orphans who have need of governance, and to rob and destroy the feeble who have need of strength, and to take away from them that which is given to them. These things may not accord to the order of chivalry, for this is wickedness, cruelty and tyranny’. \textit{Ramon Llull}, ed. Minervini, pp. 110-11.
\textsuperscript{67} ‘proud and bold against their foes’; ‘tender and merciful to those who need assistance.’ \textit{The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny}, ed. Kaeuper and Kennedy, p. 129.
battles meant it was all too easy for the non-combatant to encounter enemy forces. This was also contributed to by the topography of France itself, with many small, fortified towns with large expanses of open country between. The reluctance of the English to leave an enemy stronghold at their backs meant that the war necessarily took the form of a series of small sieges, with English forces remaining static. The longer the English tarried, the greater the suffering of the French peasantry. Moreover, the character of contemporary warfare was in itself a contributory factor in the suffering of the masses. One of the aims of the English was to demoralise the French population to exert pressure on the French monarchy. Thus, the peasantry suffered arson, physical harm, theft and damage to homes, crops and livestock, in addition to having to pay protection money and ransoms to a seemingly merciless soldiery.68

The nature of that soldiery may have also been a factor in the maltreatment of peasants. From the charters of pardon granted to men who had served in the wars instead of accepting their sentence, commonly for murder, it is probable that a significant minority of the armies that travelled to France were made up of outlaws.69 Many of these men were to serve for a specified period at their own expense before such ‘service pardons’ were granted, and this surely served to exacerbate the looting instinct and the suffering of the local populations involved.70 Caution should be employed, however, if we are to speak of those engaged in the harassment of the peasantry. It does not necessarily follow that a man engaged in criminal activity at home will continue to do so when ‘under the standard’. The status of many of the recipients of pardons is difficult to ascertain, and it is likely that the majority of those serving for pardons came from the lower reaches of society, though this is not always the case. Particular types of misdemeanour may have been beneath the majority of well bred English criminals. On many occasions, the chivalrous classes could detach themselves from the grubby business of pillage through the employment of individuals for whom resource redistribution was a profession. These piloures or pillards were charged with the acquisition of the goods and forage that kept the army moving and the horses fed. The name is more specific than the general modern English ‘pillager’, and is not used to refer to just anyone who engaged in looting and robbery; this was a term for a particular type of soldier. More often than not, the oppression of the peasantry was not a

70 A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 145.
confrontation between noble and non-noble, but between pillards and peasants.\textsuperscript{71} That such men existed is alluded to by Thomas Gray’s description of knights in the duke of Lancaster’s retinue in 1360 dressing as ‘lez pilours, vadletz, forraiours saunz glaives’ in order to encourage the French to engage them. A number of such foragers had been previously taken. Two knights got a little carried away and were taken by the French themselves.\textsuperscript{72} This was a legitimate activity, practiced by the French on ‘friendly’ peasants as much as by the English.

‘Legitimate’ activities aside, a closer look at the personnel serving with the captains of England on campaign shows that men from a variety of social backgrounds, not just the lower echelons of Edward’s armies-the archers, the scurrilous Welsh and other levies-had criminal tendencies. There were those amongst the knights themselves whose consciences were less than pure. One such man was Hugh Wrottesley, son of a minor noble house in Staffordshire whom we first see planning a trip to the Holy Land in 1334,\textsuperscript{73} and then in the service of William Montague, earl of Salisbury, in Scotland and the Low Countries in 1337 and 1338.\textsuperscript{74} From mid 1336, it seems that Wrottesley was in dispute with the Perton family, also of Staffordshire. In 1337, Wrottesley and his men assaulted one John Perton; he was so badly beaten that he died of his wounds. Wrottesley and the other perpetrators obtained letters of protection and proceeded to campaign with Montague, before receiving a pardon the following year.\textsuperscript{75} This was not the end of Wrottesley’s criminal activity. In 1355 he was again granted a pardon, ‘of special grace’, pertaining to the deaths of Philip de Luttleye and Philip Wydmere and his subsequent escape from Marshalsea prison.\textsuperscript{76} It seems, at least in Sir Hugh’s case, that a man’s actions were not as important as his connections; his chivalric standing was not jeopardised if the correct company was kept. Wrottesley was a founder member of the Order of the Garter, strongly hinting at good relations with both the crown and the Black Prince.\textsuperscript{77} Connection with the former is reinforced by an annuity of £40 granted

\textsuperscript{72} Scalacronica, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{CPR} 1330-1334, p. 535.
\textsuperscript{74} Scotland, 1337-8: C 71/17, m. 5. Low Countries, 1338-9: \textit{Treaty Rolls} 1337-1339, no. 404.
\textsuperscript{75} G. Wrottesley, \textit{A History of the Family of Wrottesley of Wrottesley Co. Stafford} (Exeter, 1903), pp. 93-7; \textit{CPR} 1338-1340, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{CPR} 1354-1358, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{77} Beltz, \textit{Garter}, p. 64.
for life in 1350, and with the latter by a gift of a pair of armour plates covered in black velvet, possibly in recognition for service at Poitiers in 1356.

Members of notorious criminal gangs occasionally found themselves on campaign, and surely continued with their wicked ways in Scotland and France. One such family were the Folvilles of Leicestershire. Of the seven sons of John Folville of Ashby Folville, only his namesake and heir would have made his father proud. The other six, and their associates, were a villainous bunch, the worst of them being Eustace Folville (d. 1346). Throughout his criminal career, he was responsible for at least five murders and a score of other felonies. Eustace served in the wars in Scotland, receiving a pardon for doing so, and also served in Flanders in 1338. His end was marked by the Leicestershire chronicler Henry Knighton. His brother Robert was almost as malignant, and yet also received pardons for his crimes. In 1327, the Sheriff of Nottingham was informed that he was ‘roaming abroad in search of victims to beat, wound and hold to ransom’. The gang was more aggressively pursued by the authorities following the fall of Roger Mortimer, implying that they had friends in high places in his regime; nevertheless, they were still not brought to justice. It would appear that Robert took up the sword in William Bohun’s service, the latter contributing to the 1000mks as surety for Folville’s good behaviour in 1332. Folville was also in Bohun’s retinue in the Low Countries in 1337; evidently, the new earl felt he could find a use for his ruthlessness. When the Folvilles were forced to leave Leicestershire, they fell in with another criminal gang, the Coterels of Derbyshire, and went on to wreak havoc in other counties. The Coterel story is similar to that of their partners in crime, a sordid tale riddled with pillage, rape, extortion and murder. It was stated by the jurors of Bakewell that the Coterels ‘rode armed publicly and secretly in the manner of war both day and night’. They were brave enough to engage in the harrying of lands held by Henry of Lancaster in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, though this did not seem to

78 CPR 1350-1354, p. 5.
79 BPR iv, p. 245.
82 Knighton, p. 76.
83 CPR 1327-1330, p. 10.
84 CCR 1327-1330, p. 213.
86 CPR 1330-1334, pp. 367-8; CCR 1330-1333, p. 611.
discourage him from adding the leader of the gang, James Coterel, to his retinue in 1336.\(^\text{88}\) Perhaps the wily aristocrat wanted Coterel where he could keep an eye on him.

A brief examination of other members of aristocratic retinues reveals that knighthood was by no means beyond reproach as far as criminality was concerned. Though no specific offence is listed, a general pardon was issued by Edward III at Calais in early September 1346 to a great number of individuals, amongst whom were a number of knights from the retinue of the earl of Warwick. Gilbert Chesteleyn, William Hondesacre, John Trillowe, Walter Dalderby, Walter Dastyn, William Spenser, Ralph Lovell, Andrew Braunch, Thomas Murdak and Aymer de St Amand were all pardoned in this manner, implying some form of criminality, however severe, either during the course of the campaign or prior to it, whilst back on English soil.\(^\text{89}\) All of the above are knights and St Amand was a man of some status, serving the earl of Warwick on the Breton campaign of 1342,\(^\text{90}\) in Flanders in 1345,\(^\text{91}\) and throughout the Crécy and Calais expedition.\(^\text{92}\) In a more specific sense, rape looms large amongst the offences committed by knights. Sir John de Hales, who in 1345 served in the retinue of Henry of Grosmont in Aquitaine and with Robert Ufford a year later, was pardoned at Ufford’s request for the rape of Alice de Langton.\(^\text{93}\) Similarly, Sir John Maunsel, serving with the earl of Stafford in 1352 was pardoned for the rape of Elizabeth, the widow of William de Percy.\(^\text{94}\)

Thomas de Lisle, bishop of Ely, was accused of assaulting the widow of Thomas Wake in 1354. Lady Wake was the sister of Henry of Lancaster and cousin to the king. In the course of the proceedings, a whole raft of offences came to light, placing de Lisle at the head of a gang that had run rampant in his eleven year spell as a bishop. The offences ranged from simple threats, extortion and theft, to arson, assault and murder.\(^\text{95}\) One of the members of his gang was Thomas de Baa, Constable of Wisbech castle, who found himself in Lancaster’s service in 1338 and with Thomas Beauchamp at the battle of Crécy.\(^\text{96}\) John Moleyns, an associate of the king and a man who had served alongside many of the knights spoken of thus far, had what can only be described as a ‘colourful’

\(^\text{88}\) CPR 1327-1330, p. 432; E101/15/12.
\(^\text{89}\) CPR 1345-1348, pp. 483-505.
\(^\text{90}\) C76/17, m.24.
\(^\text{91}\) C81/1742., no.17.
\(^\text{92}\) Crécy and Calais, p. 91; C81/1742., no.25.
\(^\text{93}\) With Lancaster, 1345: E101/25/9, m.3; with Ufford, 1346: Crécy and Calais, p. 82; Pardoned for rape CPR 1345-1348, p. 125.
\(^\text{94}\) CPR 1350-1354, p. 216.
\(^\text{96}\) Ibid, p. 291; With Lancaster 1338: E36/203. fo. 125v; With Beauchamp 1346: C81/1742, no. 25.
career. His list of offences ranged from the harbouring of felons, through to cattle rustling, burglary, and murder. A protégé of William Montague, his relationship with the earl and the king, coupled with an active military career were the only real reasons why Moleyns, an habitual offender with links to criminal gangs operating in and around Buckinghamshire, escaped execution. His wayward habits proved to be the end of him, and he died in shame, imprisoned at Cambridge castle in 1360. Thomas Bradestone, another close friend of the king was notorious for permitting, if not actively partaking in, all manner of ‘thuggery and violence’ in his home county of Gloucestershire. The knight was seemingly forgiven many things if his loyalty held; admirable in itself perhaps, but hardly the high minded stuff of chivalric romance, or even the more practical guides to the practice of knighthood.

When one begins to examine the enrolled pardons for those of sub-knightly status, criminality becomes a much more common theme. The army seems to become something of a haven for thieves, extortionists, rapists and murderers, somewhat more vicious, yet kindred spirits to the ‘scum of the earth’ Wellington wielded so efficiently in the peninsular campaigns of the early nineteenth century. Returning to Warwick’s retinue for the moment, some men stand out as being particularly villainous. Accompanying the earl on the great Reims expedition of 1359-60 were such men as John Leaume, pardoned for no fewer than five murders in 1359, and those who seemingly wished to embrace all manner of criminal activity like Geoffrey de Marlputte. Not only was service to Warwick enough to exonerate Marlputte of the murder of one John Horewod of Wynslow, but also of three robberies (one from Staffordshire lawyer William Shareshull), the harbouring of fugitives, escaping from Marshalsea prison and extortions of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the prior of Risshelep and their tenants. John Prest, one of the king’s archers, was pardoned for the rape of Margery de Blakeston in return for his good service. Nicholas Bolton, John Lavenham and John Watham were all pardoned for the rape of the unfortunate

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97 Moleyns is described as Montague’s scutifer in 1332, A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 230, n. 163; He also served in Scotland in Montague’s retinue in 1335 and 1336: C71/15., m. 30, C71/16., m. 18.
101 CPR 1358-1361, p. 504.
102 CPR 1358-1361, p. 563.
103 CPR 1350-1354, p. 224.
Elenor de Merton, as they had served at Calais.\textsuperscript{104} With such scoundrels in the ranks, it is little surprise that France suffered under the actions of the English armies. These men may well have been archers, like Prest, who even at the time had a reputation for all kinds of mischief. Yet the sheer number of such men pardoned, and that is only those pardons enrolled, implies that great numbers of men saw military service as an effective means of avoiding paying the price for their crimes.

It also tells us that even amongst those aristocratic captains with entirely honourable reputations, those reputations were not tarnished by having such rogues in one’s employ, neither was it seen as an oddity. Some may claim that it was often not the knights themselves who were responsible for the horrors visited upon the general populace, though the fact that they were complicit in the barbarism witnessed in France, and at worst the perpetrators themselves, implies that this is not the case. Even if it were, the opinion of Geoffroi de Charny on the matter is clear:

\begin{quote}
\textit{et certes ne plus ne sont nulz seigneurs dignes de vivre qui teles genz ont en leur puissance et a vecques ce ont la cogenicience de leurs males facons se il ne font tele justice que tuit autre qui avroient volenté de mal faire s’en retraissent et deussent retraire.}\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

This is somewhat typical of Charny’s death before dishonour approach to chivalry, yet was evidently not as important to English captains. It has been shown that there were elements in English hosts that needed little encouragement to indulge in criminal behaviour when on English soil. When abroad, and unleashed by their commanders to behave as they pleased, war became an outlet for their baser instincts. It could even be said that proportionally, knights were just as responsible for rape, murder and theft as any other element within the army. In the granting of pardons as a motivation to serve, Edward III persuaded many a knightly criminal to apply their dubious talents in the prosecution of his wars, redirecting their energies and unleashing their villainy in Scotland and France.\textsuperscript{106}

Not only were the peasantry at risk from roving bands of invaders; permanent, or semi-permanent garrisons behaved in a similar way. This prompted Walter Bentley, the English lieutenant of Brittany in 1352, to denounce such behaviour in a memorandum to the king, complaining that they ‘make gross profits in divers ways,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{104} CPR 1348-1350, p. 464.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny, p. 179.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} J. Aberth, ‘Crime and Justice under Edward III: The Case of Thomas de Lisle’, pp. 300-1.
\end{itemize}
namely by pillaging poor people and others on their borders...rapidly destroying the poor people and Holy Church, to the great detriment of the war-effort of our lord the king’.\footnote{107} Not wanting to live in the garrisons unless they received high wages from the crown, these men roamed the region, taking for their own the towns and fortresses they subdued. When they had acquired enough coin, they purchased safe-conducts and returned to England.\footnote{108} These actions were conducted in supposedly ‘friendly’ territory, and royal captains were largely powerless to stop it. The story was the same in other areas supposedly held by the English, the indigenous population harassed and molested. Many towns opted to attempt to placate the English garrisons by cash payments in exchange for respite. This was the case of the town of Agen in Guienne in the summer of 1353. Protection was sought because ‘every day our people are harmed, captured and robbed, so that we do not dare work our lands, and the King [of France] does not defend us, nor can he defend us, from the bad men, and our people are abandoning the town every day’.\footnote{109} Miserable indeed it must have been to have lived in such times. The delay in payment for troops, or its complete absence, meant that soldiers would eagerly take any chance of profit. More money could be made by the average man in a short time on foreign soil than he could ever hope for at home. There seems to be little disassociation between honour and profit amongst knights; indeed this is another example of the consistency of the values of warrior culture throughout history. From the great triumphs of parasitic imperial Rome to raiders from Scandinavia in the 9th century, piles of loot symbolised the success which allowed renown to spread and honour to blossom. Simple economics played a significant part in the suffering of non-combatants through pillage and theft.

This problem was well understood by the fifteenth century when Christine de Pisan wrote of the importance of regular wages for men-at-arms to avoid taking unduly from the countryside. The theft of private property in Pisan’s view had nothing to do with war, and was a ‘wicked and violent’ extortion on common people. It was the responsibility of the commander to ensure that his troops were paid and to punish those who stole from the people they encountered.\footnote{110} Pisan, of course, was writing from a French perspective, having connections to the French court and experience of the
misery endured by France during the supremacy of English arms. Bouvet’s *Tree of Battles*, which greatly informs de Pisan, takes a similar view: men who go to war for the sake of pillage have no right to wages, because no obligation is incurred ‘by what is dishonest, condemned or wicked’.¹¹¹ Both the above texts espouse views born of the experience of the English in France, and the consequent suffering of her people. Both also take a view of warfare, and of the managing of ‘chivalry’, as a matter for lawyers and not soldiers: these texts, very different to those of Llull and Charny, are moral and legal handbooks for the professional soldier, maintaining an ‘honour code’ without sacrificing their practical focus. Whilst a form of ‘international law’ set out in such works governed what could be taken and under what circumstances, to the victor, especially following a siege and storming of a town as events at Caen in 1346 show, most things remained legally possible. Thus, war became a kind of ‘game’, a chivalric ‘game’ for those with access to chivalric circles, and a dirty and savage one for the disreputable elements within armies.¹¹² In some senses, the peasantry can be viewed as a legitimate military target, not in themselves as such, but for what they represented. The non-combatant contributed to the enemy war effort through taxation; the crops they grew and the animals they raised went to feed the armies of France. Even goose feathers had a military use. The clergy encouraged congregations to pray for victory and public processions sought divine approval and aid in war. Thus, the rural communities had their part to play in war; indeed it was from them that the enemy’s future fighting men would be drawn. While the person of the non-combatant should be respected unless he offered armed resistance, his property and assets constituted legitimate spoils, even a strategic necessity.¹¹³

In the main, then, the *chevauchée* as a form of economic and morale sapping warfare conducted primarily against non-combatants does not sit well with modern conceptions of what constitutes chivalric martial practice, and the brutality of the sack seems totally at odds with the notion of protecting the weak. The realities of war in this sense are seemingly irreconcilable with the chivalric ethos as described in the didactic treatises on chivalry. There can be no doubt that English knightly and aristocratic captains deliberately embarked upon campaigns of terror, atrocity and destruction as a matter of policy and it has been shown that this was perhaps exacerbated, or even

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¹¹¹ *Tree of Battles*, p. 144
facilitated, by the nature of contemporary soldiery. John Barnie has asserted that the military code and esprit de corps of knighthood and the aristocracy effectively isolated these groups from the brutality and suffering that characterised operations in France and Scotland, though the fact that it has been shown that the second estate was often as criminally culpable as the common soldiery calls this into question.  

It should be borne in mind that the code by which the nobility conducted themselves was exclusive. Non-combatants were not part of it, and were effectively irrelevant in the eyes of men such as Henry of Lancaster and his ilk. Enemies of equal status were usually treated with courtesy, as befitted men of their rank, before being exchanged or ransomed for profit. The ransoms of knights were debts of honour, which were kept by the prisoner as much out of fear of being regarded as a liar and a cheat as for any misgivings about his eventual prosecution in the courts. The release of noble prisoners so they could raise their ransom was often accompanied by pledges of guarantee against non-payment. This process did not always run smoothly, and the code of honour amongst knights was not always observed. James Pipe, as the son of Ralph Stafford’s mother’s second husband, had shared many experiences with the young Stafford. Pipe was also one of the most regular members of Stafford’s military retinue, serving alongside him in the Scottish campaigns of the mid 1330’s, before following William Bohun to Brittany, and from Aquitaine to Calais in 1345-7. Due to Stafford’s relative lack of activity in the mid 1350’s, Pipe found himself in Lancaster’s service in 1356, and in 1358 took the fortress of Epernon from the French. He had made a great deal of money as one of Lancaster’s lieutenants in Normandy, giving aid to the king of Navarre and terrorising the lands around Paris. Knighton’s view of Pipe and his comrades was that they were so rich and opulent that they seemed more like lords of the land than soldiers. However, because a French mason had ineffectively walled up a window, Pipe was surprised whilst in bed within his fastness and captured. His captors negotiated a ransom sum immediately from the money Pipe had with him in the tower, and well advised they were to do so as Pipe had in the past shown that his word of honour was worth little. He had previously been captured near Graunsoures and

114 J. Barnie War in Medieval Society, p. 72.
115 N. Wright, Knights and Peasants, p. 76.
116 Pipe, amongst others, was part of the ‘gang’ accompanying Stafford in 1336 when he raided Hugh Audley’s manor at Thaxstead and abducted Audley’s daughter Margaret, whom Stafford later married against the will of her father. CPR 1334-1338, p. 298.
117 With Stafford in Scotland: Rot, Scot., i. p. 637; With Bohun, 1342: E36/204., fo.86v; Stafford, 1345: C61/57., m. 5. 1347: CPR 1345-1348, p. 551.
118 C76/34., mm. 8 & 14.
escaped without paying his agreed ransom. Some members of the nearby English
garrison had noticed that Pipe always took a stroll at a certain time of day. They
shrewdly hid nearby, caught his attention and spirited him away, declaring him rescued.
The French declared that ‘cest rescous nestoit pas covenable, mes encounter sa fiaunce,
depuis qe il lour auoit assure de tenir loial prisoun, saunz fraud, collusion, ou mal
engine’. They accused Pipe and charged him publicly, claiming that the whole thing
was his idea and the English were acting contrary to the laws of chivalry.\textsuperscript{120} This is
reported by Thomas Gray, himself a knight, who makes no comment on the supposedly
dishonourable behaviour of James Pipe, perhaps indicating that such breaches of trust
and departures from the ‘code’ of chivalry were not as serious as Charny and Llull
would have us believe. We should be mindful of the fact that Pipe seems to have no
objections to paying his ransom the second time around. His actions in France, of
course, had assured that he could afford to do so.

To a degree, then, knights went to some lengths not to kill each other, though
this should be tempered by the evidence of the battlefield death tolls presented in the
previous chapter. The specialised armour which they wore, protecting against most of
the weapons that might be used against them, meant that the actual risks of fighting
were diminished, at least when compared to those experienced by less wealthy
combatants. This, coupled with the relative rarity of pitched battle and the greater focus
on raids and sieges, means that it can be argued that non-combatants stood a
significantly greater chance of harm than warriors.\textsuperscript{121} One could argue that the general
population, especially those encountered on enemy soil, were of little consequence,
either as far as the code of chivalry was concerned, or within the framework of wider
strategic issues. The mistreatment of such a group, which to the modern mind would
constitute ‘war crimes’, should not necessarily detract from the value placed on
chivalric ideals by English knights. More often than not, it seems to have been the
common soldiery that were ordered to turn their hands to the basest of acts. Essentially,
that soldiery also fell into the same category as their victims. In the ‘game’ of chivalry,
such folk were not players, and what occurs ‘beneath’ chivalry is precisely that, almost
a separate war in which the armed peasants in the English host set about the vulnerable
peasants of France: a war that was of no concern to knights and captains. That peasants
fell outside of the chivalric value system is demonstrated by an event near Southampton
in 1339. Following a raid on the town, some English peasants cornered a company of

\textsuperscript{120} Scalacronica, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{121} M. Keen, Chivalry, p. 220.
invaders. The leader, supposedly the son of the king of Sicily, was knocked to the floor by an ‘English rustic’, and though he shouted to be ransomed, he was not understood. The rustic cheerfully clubbed him to death, uttering the words ‘yes, I know you are a Frenchman’. The peasant did not understand that wealthy men of gentle birth were to be ransomed, and responded to pleas for ransom in a manner that speaks not only of the insular and anti-French sentiment present in England, but of the lack of access the peasantry had to the machinations of the chivalric value system.

Even so, to attempt to justify the maltreatment of the non-combatant by excluding them from the way in which chivalry was conceptualised by knights is too simplistic. The non-combatant was also an actor upon the chivalric stage, one to whom, as we have seen, the tenets of chivalry pledge protection. Perhaps the notion of the protection of the weak in this case has some kind of primitive nationalism attached to it; that the peasantry of France were fair game for the English because they were French. This may hold water, until one understands that the French peasantry were equally maltreated by French knighthood as they were by the English. There is certainly a general indifference to the welfare of ‘common folk’ on both sides of the Channel. Reasons for this may be found in The Tree of Battles, in which the peasant is presented as the very antithesis of knighthood. According to Bouvet, a knight must not till the soil, tend vines, keep beasts, be a shepherd, or a matchmaker or a lawyer; otherwise he should lose knighthood and the privileges of a knight. The only thing which should occupy a knight in thought and deed is the practice of arms and campaigning for the honour of his lord. This is a far cry from the idealistic view of knighthood as a group of moral and martial superiority, selected from amongst all people as the best and the bravest in order to govern, protect the weak, maintain courts for justice and protect free trade espoused by Llull. Of course, the better part of a century separates the two writers. Bouvet writes in the social turmoil following the Black Death, and consequently craves the reinstitution of class boundaries. To him, Llull’s time must have appeared a simpler age.

Far from placing any kind of limit on the violent instincts of knights, chivalry can be seen as prompting men to seek war, attributing honour and praise to those who did so. The primacy of prowess in chivalric ideology meant that the most recognisable and accessible method of advancement through honour was by the sword, making the

122 Le Baker, p. 55.
123 Tree of Battles, p. 131
horrors of war endemic.\textsuperscript{125} This was as true in the fourteenth century as it was at the
dawn of the chivalric age in the tenth, indicating that the influence the more primitive
and martial aspects of chivalry exerted on knighthood was as powerful as ever. That
being said, it would also seem that the more civilised aspects of chivalry, the protection
of the weak, and knighthood’s responsibility to set an example of ideal conduct—in a
sense to be the shepherds of humanity—appears in the context of the sample studied here,
and in the context of the Hundred Years War, to take a back seat. In fact it may not even
have held any significance for knights, who in this period seem to have felt little or no
compulsion to extend mercy or courtesy to their social inferiors, those who were
incapable of aspiring to, or engaging with, chivalry on a personal level.\textsuperscript{126}

In the previous chapter, we explored the battlefield as an arena in which
knighthood was released to the slaughter. This goes some way to justifying brutality, yet
the atrocities visited upon an essentially defenceless peasantry reveal a darker side. The
reasons for this are not difficult to find. Chivalry, as a set of ideals by which knights
conducted their lives, was inherently impractical. In the real world, elevation to
knighthood and/or noble status does not change the fundamental nature of mankind; it
will not and cannot change the way in which individuals behave in situations of
psychological stress. Thus, when push comes to shove, it stands to reason that the more
contradictory elements of any code which we can call chivalry will be subject to
scrutiny and modification. Where turning one’s back and refusing single combat
brought shame, the wanton murder of the innocent did not, regardless of what was
written in the clerical treatises on knightly conduct and the high ‘order of chivalry’. To
be lords of war whilst protecting the weak and honouring the vanquished was often a
bridge too far, a conceptual leap which in the heat of the moment, even with the most
Christian and well meaning conscience, the majority of knights failed to make. Self
preservation, self enrichment and ultimate success in their endeavours took priority over
their greater (at least in a purely idealistic, chivalric sense) responsibility to their fellow
man. The weak are defeated by the strong; the peasant, the townsman and those bereft
of political or physical authority are crushed beneath the hooves of knighthood. In a war
such as this, just as in all wars in all ages, chivalry did little to mitigate suffering. This
perhaps has less to do with inherent weaknesses and contradictions within chivalric
ideology, and is more related to the fundamental inability of individuals to see beyond
their own selfish motivations and uphold the more protective and altruistic elements of

\textsuperscript{125} M. Vale, \textit{War and Chivalry}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{126} J. Barnie, \textit{War in Medieval Society}, p. 70.
the chivalric creed. Chivalry could not divorce knighthood from its barbarity. It would seem from the evidence presented in the preceding two chapters that chivalry as described in the manuals extant during the first phase of the Hundred Years War, was not adhered to by the English with any degree of faithfulness. Personal honour was important, it is true, yet reported acts which meet with the high ideals so pervasive in the literature are few and far between.

What does this mean for English chivalry in this period? If one were to ask men such as Henry of Lancaster how to reconcile his own high reputation for chivalry with the conduct of himself and his cohorts in France, the response would perhaps be a decidedly Gallic shrug followed by something akin to ‘c’est la guerre’. Wars are for winning, something at which the English excelled during this period, and both the men involved and their commanders would have seen that the end justified the means. Chivalry had a place in war, as a great part of its ideology revolved around the legitimisation of violence. The chronicles tell us of the clashes between champions and the glory of battle, we see men protecting their honour and accruing wealth to cement their status. Yet the overriding impression of warfare is of a struggle for survival and ultimately victory. Any ‘code’ of chivalry to which the English adhered in this period was adaptable, fluid, and situationally specific. The occasional feat of arms is a diversion from the more serious business of pillage and destruction, and chivalry owes more to the pen than the sword.\textsuperscript{127} Warfare, it seems, is the domain of reality and practicality, a domain into which chivalry is but a small concern, despite what we are told by Froissart and his kind. The relevant aspects of chivalry lauded by Llull and Charny are the age old companions of warrior societies: prowess, loyalty and the preservation of personal honour. It is the same with those aspects of war which we see as inherently negative: murder, suffering, starvation and treachery. These had been companions of war since time began, and all rode in the wake of Edward’s armies. These aspects of war are immutable, and stood untempered by chivalry.

The origins of heraldry, defined by Maurice Keen as ‘the systematic use of hereditary insignia on the shield of a knight or nobleman’ are not especially hard to pin down. Heraldry’s beginnings correspond with the rise of the tournament and the development of new forms of armour in the twelfth century. This shrouded the mounted warrior in metal, making recognition on the tournament field impossible without the display of some device or other to reveal the bearer’s identity, a factor as valuable on the battlefield as it was in the tourney. Seals provide evidence for the use of heraldic devices on shields in France, England and Germany from around the second quarter of the twelfth century, and these can safely be termed ‘heraldic’ due to their inheritance by the descendants of the first bearer. The checky arms on the seal of Waleran, count of Meulan and lord of Worcester (d.1166) was seemingly inherited from his maternal uncle, Ralph, count of Vermandois (d.1152) and was subsequently borne later, with differences, by his own descendants and those of his mother’s second marriage: the families of Warenne and the Beaumont earls of Warwick. Of course, the use of symbolism amongst warriors was not at all new at this point in the twelfth century. Devices and designs had appeared upon the faces of shields for as long as shields had been in use. The legions of Rome carried shields with designs specific to their unit, emphasising coherency, uniformity, identity and togetherness in the face of the enemy. Units of the later Roman army were identified by the designs on their shields, as demonstrated by the unique Notitia Dignitatum of the late fourth or early fifth century, listing military commands symbolised by various motifs, from simple shapes to animals such as lions, horses, snakes and even the symbol known to us as Yin and Yang. The Old English epic Beowulf hints that animal symbols on shields, helms and banners were in some senses hereditary and synonymous with particular individuals. It is implied that Hrothgar and his men wear the crest of the boar in battle, a hardy beast being associated

1M. Keen, Chivalry, p. 125.
3Notitia Dignitatum, ed. O. Seeck (Frankfurt, 1962).
with warrior ferocity.\textsuperscript{4} When the eponymous hero returns to his own king, he presents him with the treasures he had been given by Hrothgar saying, ‘I have few kinsmen who are close, my king, except for your kind self’. He then presents King Hygelac with a standard and a helm bearing Hrothgar’s boar symbol and speaks of their, and by association, Hrothgar’s, lineage.\textsuperscript{5}

It is in the tournaments of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that heralds and heraldry in a true hereditary sense, originate and develop. Knowing one’s opponent in the chaos of the melee was a valuable asset, as one could then identify targets for capture and ransom. This in itself could prove to be a great source of potential enrichment. Being easily recognisable was also advantageous. Tournaments were observed by one’s peers, one’s lords, ladies and judges, whose opinion of individual valour could result in a prize. It was therefore desirable to advertise one’s identity. The favour of a lord, accrued through one’s mastery of the tourney, could bring great financial reward. The goodwill of a lady has its obvious advantage to the red-blooded male, and tournaments were undoubtedly occasions imbued with a sexual charge. That ladies were present at tournaments in our period in particular is shown by the account of the tournament proposed by Edward III’s close friend William Montague at Cheapside in September 1331. Near the start of proceedings, the large wooden stand, constructed so that Queen Philippa and her ladies could view events, collapsed. Many knights and ladies were injured, though the Queen escaped unscathed. The tournament went on in spite of this near disaster, showing that observing, and being observed at such events was invested with great importance.\textsuperscript{6} It seems likely that the key impetus behind this advertisement of one’s identity was the potential for the acquisition of renown, the enhancement of reputation and the honour and glory which sprung from deeds of great prowess. The ease with which arms could be recognised by those viewing events is described in the work of Chretien de Troyes. At the tournament described in \textit{The Knight of the Cart}, the knights involved are identified by the arms they bear and the crests of their helms. Governal of Roberdic is identified by his red shield with a golden band, the son of the king of Aragon, who has come ‘to win honour and renown’ carries a shield displaying a dragon and an eagle side by side, Semiramis and his companion carry matching devices of dark lions on gilded shields; the list goes on. The great and the


\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Beowulf}, trans S. Heaney, 2148-2163, p. 147.

good were identified by the arms they bore, and this symbolism became part of their own chivalric identity.7

When knighthood and the nobility began to carry such symbols, heraldry became intimately related with nobility itself. The hereditary nature of heraldic insignia meant that not only was heraldry a way of identifying individuals on a battlefield or in a tournament, it was a visible statement of lineage, a badge of honour and a declaration of knightly or noble status. Indeed, there is a school of thought which views this aspect of heraldry as being the most important. Fox-Davies’s position, proposing that heraldry arose from the post-conquest system of feudal tenure, and that those with land had to lead their followers into battle and used arms to facilitate their recognition,8 was acerbically criticised by J. H Round. Round argued that military service is but one of the tenures by which land could be held, that tenure in serjeancy, socage and frank-almoine meant that military obligation only applied to certain individuals. Of those who were military tenants, service was due of a knight’s fee (themselves or a proxy) and others by fractions of a knight’s fee. These men had no followers, and the notion that arms were assumed for the purposes of recognition applies only to a small number of ‘barons’; a single knight did not go to war to lead, but to be led. Thus, as Round would have it, vanity was the catalyst for armorial display.9 Of course, by the fourteenth century things had moved on somewhat, and recognition by the members of one’s company was important, even if it may not have been so two centuries before. Even if a need for identification was important in the earlier armorial period, the shield, only being visible from limited angles and obscured by the press of bodies, mud and blood during the melee, was not the most practical place to display such devices. This is presumably behind the display of arms on any available surface, on banners, surcoats and caparisons. Yet the charges themselves were not always simple to distinguish at a distance; many were similar or duplications of one another. Instead of acting as a practical military device to make a knight conspicuous in the fray, arms were perhaps more an expression of individual identity, lineage and status utilised on the tournament field and in war. Their real potency resided in their ability to advertise the relationship between families through kinship and affinity.10

7 Chretien, The Knight of the Cart, p. 278.
Heraldry became emblematic of the pride of birth, the station and the culture of nobility and knighthood. Eventually, the entitlement to bear arms came to replace knighthood itself as the key to admission into chivalry: to be armigerous was to be chivalrous, and vice versa.\textsuperscript{11} It is clear that the armigerous classes felt that they had expertise in the reading of the significance of heraldic representation, yet it should be borne in mind that such images only possess meaning in relation to the society in which they are produced. We must attempt to read these images as they were read by contemporaries, and beware of over-analysing or misreading their meanings.\textsuperscript{12} The animals depicted upon arms sometimes carried meaning, and the colours used often had some symbolic or allegorical significance. Arms were much more than a mere mark of recognition or a statement of belonging to a certain group; they spoke of pride in loyal service, martial achievements and family connections. They could also be employed to recall a story, a foundation legend or a myth.\textsuperscript{13} A famous coat of arms could play upon famous deeds of the past, and provided a direct and visible link to heroic ancestors, investing a scion of a great house with a symbol of arcane chivalric power. Such symbolism was all the more potent in an age of little book ownership and in a group amongst whom an intricate command of the written word should by no means be taken for granted. Though this was changing by the fourteenth century, it would be an error to assume that a picture did not speak louder than words to many. The history of arms was, in a sense, the symbolic history of chivalry and knighthood, a symbol pregnant with meaning which could be understood and interpreted amongst one’s peers.

The figure of the herald is almost as synonymous with the concepts of chivalry as the caparisoned mounted warrior. It is in relation to the tournament that the earliest evidence of heralds appears. Heralds were sent prior to such ludic events to proclaim the tournament, and would precede or accompany their lord to the event. They proclaimed and lauded the names of the participants and were expected to recognise them, recording their exploits as well as understanding their individual characters and histories. They served as attendants to ladies as well as acting as counsellors and masters of ceremonies for their lords and the members of their company.\textsuperscript{14} Heralds came to occupy a place of dignity in the chivalric world as the acknowledged experts in armoury and all matters of secular ceremony from jousts and tournaments and the

\textsuperscript{11}M. Keen \textit{Chivalry}, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{12}P. Coss, ‘Knighthood, Heraldry and Social Exclusion’, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{13}M. Keen, \textit{Chivalry}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{14}A. R. Wagner, \textit{Heralds and Heraldry}, p. 26. For the thirteenth century French poetry describing such activities, see Ibid appendix B.
judgement of prowess, to coronations, knightings and funerals. In times of war they counted the dead and compiled lists of the distinguished that had perished. They had a role in mustering troops in that they recorded those present, also making lists of enemy leaders, though Keen notes this was more likely to be ceremonial than practical: a celebration and record of assembled martial dignity.\textsuperscript{15} It is plausible that a heraldic list lies behind the names detailed in accounts of the Crécy campaign found in the St. Omer Chronicle and Acta Bellicosa. The list in the St. Omer chronicle in particular dovetails this view of a ‘visual inspection’ of the English army as the Prince of Wales’ division, at the forefront of the English army and the most exposed to French attacks, is the most comprehensively listed.\textsuperscript{16} The herald’s lists were also compiled for state occasions. When Edward III travelled to Koblenz for his meeting with the Emperor in 1338 in order to be made Vicar of the Empire, it is the figure of four dukes, three archbishops, thirty seven counts and barons, bannerets and others to the number of 17,000 which Henry Knighton uses to report the event in his chronicle; such precision can only have come from a heraldic record.\textsuperscript{17} Were we to seek irrefutable proof that heraldic evidence was utilised as source material for the writers of chronicles, we need look no further than the work of Froissart. The herald’s duty to record feats of arms and valour in the field is one close to the heart of the chronicler, and he states in his prologue that he will make unabashed use of the evidence of Kings of Arms and heralds in his work, a fact which goes some distance to explaining the undeniable stance of the chivalric apologist found within its pages.\textsuperscript{18} Heralds were also entrusted to carry news from distant places in times of war and peace; they were utilised as messengers and played roles in diplomacy. In 1338 ‘Carlisle Herald’, who had been given his title by the king during a Scottish campaign, brought news to Edward III from Aquitaine.\textsuperscript{19} That same year, payments from the wardrobe were made to one ‘Andree Norreys regi haraldorum’.\textsuperscript{20} Edward III dispatched a herald to offer battle to Philip de Valois at Buironfosse in 1339, and he returned to the English host with the news that the challenge had been accepted.\textsuperscript{21} In 1364, news of John Chandos’ victory over Charles of Blois was brought by a ‘pursuivant of arms’, who the king nominated his herald and gave him the name

\textsuperscript{15}M. Keen, Chivalry, p. 135.  
\textsuperscript{17}Knighton , p. 9.  
\textsuperscript{18}Froissart , ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 71.  
\textsuperscript{19}Froissart , ed. Lettenhove, 2, 393-4.  
\textsuperscript{20}The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell , p. 304.  
\textsuperscript{21}Froissart , ed. Lettenhove, 3, 38.
This same man was used again in his capacity as a messenger in 1367 when he brought news of the Black Prince’s victory at Nájera. The king showed his gratitude by granting him a life annuity of twenty marks from the exchequer. Shortly before that same battle, it was a herald who was charged with delivering the correspondence between Henry of Trastamara and the Black Prince. It seems that in this case the herald delivered his message and then waited with the English army until a message was prepared to return to his master. Heralds were therefore important figures with a wide variety of roles, from tournament cheerleader to trusted royal emissary.

Perhaps the single most important function of the herald, one that may enhance our understanding of English chivalry, is their role as custodians of chivalric memory. As the arbiters of prowess we find heralds at all manners of gatherings where that most chivalric of attributes was displayed. With martial skill a particularly precious coin in the currency of chivalry, heralds, as the interpreters of martial achievement, become central to our understanding of what chivalry was, and how it may have been understood. If the cult of chivalry were to be explained in terms of an ecclesiastical model, then it is heralds who could be read as its priests. Some of the qualities and rights possessed by heralds bring to mind the reports and opinions put forward in the Roman histories of the druids and bards encountered in Britain and Gaul. In common with these mystical individuals, heralds were poets and singers, bearing a huge amount of information regarding lineage and tales from the chivalric past. They had a degree of immunity from hostile action in order to allow them to fulfil their role as observers and judges of the belligerents. In battle they occupy a space almost between worlds: seen yet unseen, removed from events, lurking within the ether of chivalric mysticism. It could be argued that this role endowed the herald with a singular power over that which he observed, a free rein with which to interpret events and judge the actors upon the stage of chivalry before them. In order to be chivalrous and to gain the honour associated with prowess, one had to be designated so by the observer; this is the seed from which reputations grew. This makes heralds somewhat liminal creatures, peripheral, yet central: concurrently subservient to, and judges of knighthood. The concern of heralds was the literature and mythology of chivalry. As the druids were the guardians of

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22 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 7, 65.
23 CPR 1364-1367, p. 408.
24 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 442-47.
history and genealogy for the ancient Britons, thus were heralds for English knighthood. The late thirteenth-century *Herald’s Roll* not only provides details of contemporary knighthood and their arms, but reaches back into the constructed chivalric past to include the arms of legendary, mythical or romantic figures. Thus, mythical eastern Christian leader Prester John leads the list, Roland and Bevis of Hampton are sandwiched between the arms of Maltravers, and the count of Flanders and the arms of St. Edmund and Edward the Confessor sit between the kings of Germany and France. This shows a direct interaction between legendary fictional and tangible historical records of prowess and genealogy, linking myth with reality and history with the present to connect contemporary knighthood directly to the heroic past.

This imagined history made it entirely possible for knights to envisage a direct link between themselves and the heroic age of Arthur, and for the Beauchamp earls of Warwick to claim the fictional champion Guy of Warwick as their ancestor. Thomas Beauchamp’s father was named for the hero in 1298, and two of his sons were named Guy and Reinbrun, reflecting the romantic hero and his own son; but the association ran deeper than this. Thomas Beauchamp’s successor as earl of Warwick constructed Guy’s Tower at Warwick Castle in 1394 at the cost of £395 5s. and 2d. At 128 feet tall, this twelve-sided tower is testament to the desire of the Beauchamp earls to associate themselves with the legend. An overt pictorial link between the legend and the Beauchamp earls is found on a mazer, a maplewood drinking bowl mounted in silver gilt, dated to the first half of the fourteenth century. The scene depicted upon the cup is that of Guy of Warwick slaying the Irish dragon at the request of King Aethelstan. Crucially, he is armed and mounted as a contemporary knight, and bears the Beauchamp arms, *Gules, a fess between six crosses crosslet or*, on his shield. The large size of the mazer makes it suitable for a communal grace cup, and perhaps underlines the importance of the story of Guy of Warwick at Beauchamp feasts. The Beauchamps had not always been earls of Warwick, but ascended to the honour through the female line from the fourth earl, Waleran Beaumont. The arms of the Beaumont earls of Warwick, and the arms subsequently attributed to the legendary Guy, *Checky, or and azure a chevron ermine*, were used as a counterseal by Guy Beauchamp at the dawn of the fourteenth century. Thus, the arms of the Beauchamp earls and the traditional arms

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of the earls of Warwick both find their way into the rolls of arms of Edward III. The appropriation of Guy of Warwick gathered pace in later years, with Richard Beauchamp quartering the arms of his house and the old earls, a process which was retained and added to by the Neville earls in the fifteenth century.

References to heralds from the twelfth century onwards make much of their associations with minstrels who sang of the heroes of old as well as composing lays praising and glorifying contemporary elites. In the records of the court of Edward I, payments to heralds and minstrels are presented together under a general heading of ministralli. The author of the Song of Caerlaverock of the early fourteenth century illustrates the talents of an English herald/minstrel well, being equally conversant in blazon and chivalrous verse. When blazoning the arms of Guy, earl of Warwick, the author makes reference to ‘ma rime de guy’, implying that he also penned a version of the romance of that name. The analogy of heralds and a secular priesthood is further borne out through the herald’s oath, conceptually similar to ecclesiastical vows and, in essence, to those sworn by knights. To be a herald was to be invested as such, opening the door to an exclusive community with special responsibilities, rights and privileges. They were not, however, independent or autonomous; heralds were attached to individual lords and thus bestowed favour and praise in decidedly unequal measures. Chandos herald, the author of the verse Life of the Black Prince, exemplifies this. The Prince and John Chandos are presented in this work as paragons of chivalry and great exemplars of knighthood. In many senses this is an accurate picture, but the herald’s role was to enhance the reputation of his patron. Whilst this does provide the herald with a degree of power, as with all those who record events, it does colour the perspective of his work. The fact remains that history’s verdict on the great and the good amongst England’s knights and princes, owes much to the opinion of a small group of individuals, all possessed of their own agendas and bias, who were motivated by the desire to record the deeds and enhance the reputations of certain individuals for their own benefit and prosperity as much as for their patron. It is the work of heralds that provided a portion of the information that chroniclers utilised to describe the deeds

of the great men of the realm in war. John, Suffolk Herald, who gave evidence in 1386 in support of Morley’s claim before the Court of Chivalry, stated that he had been present at the battles of Sluys (1340),\textsuperscript{34} Crécy (1346) and on the Reims campaign (1359-60), and would have been a valuable source of anecdotal information about the events and personalities concerned.\textsuperscript{35} Hereford Herald served the Bohuns, and it is possible that the greater part of Jenyn’s Ordinary was compiled by a Lancaster Herald for Henry of Grosmont around 1360.\textsuperscript{36}

We must say a few words here regarding the exclusive nature of the assumption of arms and the language of blazon. Blazon had to be learnt; there are rules and this means that an individual had to be part of the chivalric, aristocratic milieu to have access to the codified information. It was not available to all. Additionally, one must look at the language of blazon. It is French, reflecting the nature of its genesis and the contemporary popularity at that point in history with French martial culture. It has already been stated (see Chapter II) that it should in no way be assumed that England in the fourteenth century was interchangeable with the England of two hundred years before, or that what was popular in France was thus popular in England. That being said, heraldry was of undeniable importance. The point here is that it was another form of the social exclusivity which seems to characterise chivalry. In due course it will be shown that, in comparison with times past, the gates to the castle of chivalry in the fourteenth century were fairly easy to access through heraldry.

The late fourteenth-century work, Tree of Battles, an instructive treatise composed in France by the monk Honoré Bovet for the purpose of advising both the young king and the lay community, proposes answers to numerous questions regarding the legitimacies of arms and the bearing thereof. Bovet begins with a general discussion declaring that coats of arms fall into two distinct groups. There are those which are made for a position of dignity, such as the eagle of the Holy Roman Emperor, the leopard of England, the fleur de lis of France and the silver cross for the count of Savoy. No man may bear such arms without a difference, or is permitted to affix them to his house or town with the exception of the bearers of such great dignities. The example is given that the uncles, brothers and other relations of kings and princes never bear the

\textsuperscript{34} It is interesting to note that Suffolk was in French captivity at the time of the battle of Sluys.
\textsuperscript{35} C47/6/1., no.75.
unaltered arms of their houses without difference. Thus the arms of England born by Edward III of the quartered leopards and *Fleur de lis*, is also carried by his son and heir, the Black Prince, but with a difference of *a label of three points argent*. John of Gaunt similarly wore the arms of England with difference, yet following his marriage to Constance of Castile in 1371, combined with the Castilian castle and lion, thereby asserting his kingship over Castile and Leon. Henry of Lancaster, second cousin to Edward III, bore similar arms, deriving thematically royal arms through descent from Edmund Crouchback, brother of Edward I. The second category pertains to certain arms that denote an office. To bear these arms, or to hang them in one’s house or to have them in one’s possession with the intent to keep them if one does not have title to do so, should result in punishment. Bovet then proceeds to the matter of less exalted arms and the regulations pertaining to them. Whilst it is held as true that certain ‘barons and other gentlemen’, as Bovet terms them, have their arms through means of an ancestral gift, and these should not be born by those of different blood, he sees no issue with individuals in other countries bearing those same arms, and no legal means to prevent them doing so. The notion that arms are similar to names is also put forward, so that each may choose arms as he wishes. The problem of course arises when two individuals who have laid claim to the same arms encounter one another. This was the source of much litigation in the Court of Chivalry, of which certain transcripts of proceedings have survived. Whilst Bovet allows that, arms and names being similar, it should in principle be permissible for a number of unrelated individuals to bear the same arms, he states that common things belonging to no person, such as fish and deer, become the property of those who take them first. Arms should be treated in a similar way: those who first assumed them and wore them publicly have the right, and it is the duty of the sovereign to set right any dispute which may arise on such matters. Invariably, it will be the scion of the more ancient house that prevails in such matters and the inquest should be conducted without recourse to combat. In matters of family honour such as these, the plaintiffs must defer to royal justice. This was one of the many purposes of the aforementioned Court of Chivalry. The records of its proceedings are a valuable resource for understanding the military community and their service records. The anecdotal evidence given in the many depositions from the cases which survive is an invaluable insight into the chivalric mind of fourteenth-century England.

37 *Tree of Battles*, p. 203.
38 See Appendix II.
39 *Tree of Battles*, p. 204.
The Court of Chivalry was not only concerned with armorial disputes, but was also convened to arbitrate on issues relating to prisoners, ransoms, safe conducts, indentures and other such military matters. The records of the Court are sadly lost to us in the main, yet copies of the records of two cases of armorial dispute from the reign of Richard II survive to bear testament to the seriousness with which the bearing of arms was taken and the affiliation between arms and identity. The first reference to the Court of Chivalry appears to be dateable to 1346. In the case of Lovell vs. Morley (1386-1391), an esquire by the name of John Molham testified that whilst in the service of the Constable of England, William Bohun, he had acted as clerk to the Court of Chivalry in the dispute between Lords Burnell and Morley over the right to bear the arms, Argent, a lion rampant sable crowned and armed or. The details of the high profile cases of Scrope vs. Grosvenor and Lovell vs. Morley resulting from Richard II’s campaign in Scotland in 1385 need not concern us here. Yet the fact that they happened at all, and indeed that it was a phenomenon which had been happening on campaigns since at least 1346, is testament to the fact that the arms borne by an individual signified much more than a mark of military identity. The fact that a court was convened, witnesses called and depositions were recorded in order to avoid bloodshed over the issue at hand, shows that coats of arms were symbols of family and marriage, tenurial bonds, patronage and clientage and above all, they were signifiers of dignity, honour and lineage. It is significant that such courts existed, that there were areas where common law would not suffice to resolve disputes; this is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of campaigns were conducted outside of England where common law did not apply. Additionally, the cult of chivalry propagated by Edward III created a heightened sensitivity regarding the rights to particular bearings at a time when more individuals were beginning to adopt heraldic arms.

Heraldry, then, was at the very core of chivalry and can reveal a great deal about the nature of, and relationships within, the military community in the fourteenth century. In the reign of Edward III, heraldry was becoming increasingly significant in the lives of the armigerous. Andrew Ayton has noted that the ‘militarisation’ of the

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43 This is confirmed by the work of David Simpkin on the Galloway Roll of 1300, a period that constitutes an important precursor to that in focus here, D. Simpkin, ‘The Galloway Roll (1300): its content, composition and value to military history’ Historical Research, vol 82, no. 218 (2009), pp. 613-34.
gentry due to rising demands of recruitment during the second third of the fourteenth century can be charted by the process of armorial dissemination. Many families in this period, prompted by involvement in the wars, became armigerous for the first time; others changed their heraldic identity to reflect relationships with other families or captains. This is supported by the continued emergence of newly armigerous families following the Parliamentary Roll of Arms in 1312, and the heightened complexity of blazon on the rolls of arms of Edward III’s reign. Records of service amongst knights tell us who was serving where, when and alongside whom, but what has heraldry to reveal about the interrelationships of the chivalrous community? In few places is heraldry used to demonstrate martial ties more explicitly than in the armorial brass of Sir Hugh Hastings at Elsing church in Norfolk. Not only are the arms of Foliot, Hugh’s wife’s family, and Hastings (the later disputed Or a manche gules with a label) displayed on the brass, but in the sides of the overarching tabernacle are depictions of a number of exalted companions, which reveal the rich tapestry of martial, tenurial and familial ties within the military community. Two of the plates bearing the mourners are now missing, as is the marginal fillet inscription bearing the arms of Hastings and Foliot. This monument in effect serves as a depiction of the relationships Hastings had developed and maintained throughout his life, and records them for posterity, not merely as a record of his personal status, but also that of his family. It also serves to convey two important and interrelated messages: the triumph of Christian resurrection, where Hastings’s soul is ascending to heaven, as shown in the upper part of the brass, and the temporal triumph over the French, conveyed by the array of martial ‘talent’ in the side panels. On the northern side of the tabernacle in descending order are the arms of Henry of Grosmont, in whose retinue Hastings served on the brief Scottish campaign of 1336, the campaign in the Cambrésis in 1339 and the great English victory at sea off Sluys in 1340. Situated below Lancaster’s arms are the Quarterly, or, a manche gules, barry of ten argent and azure of Sir Hugh’s half-nephew, Laurence, earl of Pembroke. It was in Pembroke’s comitiva that Hastings served on the expedition to Brittany in

48 Scotland 1336: E101/15/12; N. France 1339: C76/12., m. 8; Sluys/Tournai 1340: C76/15., m. 21.
1342. Embarking from England in the fleet led by Robert d’Artois, Hastings fought in an engagement with a Spanish and Genoese fleet, before participating in the taking of Vannes and the siege of Rennes.\textsuperscript{49} He also served under Lancaster in Pembroke’s retinue during the successes in Aquitaine in 1345, fighting at La Reole and Bergerac.\textsuperscript{50} Ralph Stafford’s arms follow Pembroke’s on the brass, presumably because Stafford was a major commander on both the Breton and Gascon expeditions, as well as mirroring Hasting’s earlier service in both Scotland and France. The north side is completed by the arms of Aymer de St. Amand, a banneret and fellow Norfolk landholder who served the earl of Warwick in Brittany, Flanders and Normandy.\textsuperscript{51} It is likely he associated with Hastings at the siege of Calais. Edward III, the king Hastings diligently served until his death, heads the opposing side followed by three more of Hasting’s kinsmen. Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, was the half-nephew of Hastings’s grandmother Isabella, and had fought in Scotland and France with Hugh. Edward Despenser, who died at the battle of Morlaix in 1342,\textsuperscript{52} was his cousin, whereas the final space was taken by his brother-in-law, Roger, lord Grey of Ruthin, who had married his half-sister Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{53} Such a carefully selected group betrays the influence of someone with intimate knowledge of Hugh Hastings in the monument’s design. It is likely that this was Henry of Lancaster, Hugh’s captain, chief executor and the man from whom he held lands in Norfolk and Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{54} The presence of St. George towards the top of the brass points to an individual familiar with the ideas surrounding the subsequent Order of the Garter. In a sense this stands as a posthumous nod toward Hastings’ likely inclusion as a member of that exclusive fraternity had he lived. It is also interesting to note, that of all the men depicted on the brass, Edward Despenser is alone amongst the weepers in no longer inhabiting the temporal realm; indeed, he had not been doing so for around five years prior to the creation of the monument at Elsing. The brass stands as a monument Despenser as well as Hastings; the military brotherhood, represented through the medium of heraldry, simultaneously

\textsuperscript{49} Hastings with Pembroke 1342: C 76/17., m. 27.
\textsuperscript{51} Brittany 1342:C76/17., m. 24; Flanders 1345: C76/20, m. 11; Crécy 1346: C81/1742, no. 17; Crécy and Calais, pp. 91, 131.
\textsuperscript{52}Edward Despenser was serving in the retinue of Hugh Despenser at Morlaix, C61/54., mm. 18, 30, in A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 258. His death is mentioned by Murimuth, p. 127 and see also CIPM, VIII, no. 395.
\textsuperscript{53} Complete Peerage, VI, 153.
\textsuperscript{54} N. Saul, English Church Monuments, p. 218; CIPM, IX, no. 47.
commemorates the past, tells the story of the present, and looks ahead knowingly to the future, as demonstrated by the Garter inference.

Thus, heraldry can be read as the reflection of a collective identity amongst knights, an identity forged through military service and familial affiliations, but also utilised as a way of promoting an individual identity and lineage to the rest of the chivalric world: a visual symbol of belonging to the chivalric community. The importance and popularity of armorial bearing during the reign of Edward III is well demonstrated by the Carlisle Roll, an occasional roll of arms produced for the campaign in Scotland in 1335. The campaign of 1335 was announced at the parliament in York, held in late May, and was endorsed by the lords and the commons. Unlike the campaign of the previous year, Edward’s call to arms was heeded in great numbers, and by mid-July he had over 13,000 men under arms at Newcastle, making this the largest royal army that ever marched into Scotland. The men accompanying the magnates alone—men at arms and mounted archers—numbered 3635. With an army this large, Edward chose to divide his forces in two. This two-pronged assault involved the king’s contingent advancing northwards from Carlisle and the remainder, under Balliol, heading west from Berwick for a rendezvous on the Clyde. The roll was perhaps intended to be a large one, detailing the mounted portion of the army mustering at Carlisle, yet the extant section of the roll provides details of the arms of the advanced guard, just 276 individuals, comprising two earls, Hereford and Warwick, thirteen bannerets and twenty nine foreign knights, mainly from the Low Countries, with the remainder being native knights. The list is headed by the constable of the army, John de Bohun, earl of Hereford, and it is possible that he was the commissioner of the original version of the roll. In some cases, though not in all, the roll reveals some of the contingents that made up this part of the army. Entries 201-211, for example, detail the arms borne by Robert Ufford and his retinue.

One of the features of the Carlisle roll, despite its partial coverage of the army, is the number of individuals who appear to be newly armigerous, perhaps highlighting the enthusiasm which was growing amongst the gentry for Edward’s wars and the appeal

58 Scalacronica, pp. 119-120; Lanercost, pp. 290-1.
and perceived importance of an armorial identity. There are 276 individuals named on the roll and, as we are concerned with Englishmen, we may discount the twenty nine foreign knights. Of the remaining 247 individuals, eighty one are listed whose family names and arms do not appear on any of the rolls of arms from the reign of Edward I, or on the large Parliamentary Roll of Arms (PRA) of around 1312 during the reign of Edward II. This figure, amounting to just under a third of the knights named on the roll, is significant. It should be borne in mind that the heraldic records for between around 1310 and the early 1330s are rather thin, and the PRA, though it provides the names of 1,110 knights, includes many individuals from the same families and may not be as comprehensive as has traditionally been thought. Any conclusions drawn are thus somewhat undercut by these interpretative problems, and families who appear to be newly armigerous in the 1330s may not have actually been so. We are, as ever, constrained by the available evidence. However, the surviving material does suggest the assumption of arms by ‘new’ families, and speaks volumes of the appeal of an armorial identity and its relation to military service.

It is also interesting to note that the ‘newly armigerous’ are not confined to the families of the ‘newly knighted’, or to the lower end of the social scale, choosing to display arms as a sign of status. Established knightly families are seen armed for the first time in the mid 1330s. A prominent example of this may be found in Robert Bourchier, the son of a judge of the common pleas, Sir John Bourchier of Stanstead in Halstead, Essex. Bourchier inherited the lands of his father in 1329. He may be the Robert Bursour who appears on the occasional roll for the Dunstable tournament of 1334, though the arms Argent, a cross engrailed or appearing here differ from those found on the Carlisle roll of a year later. On the latter roll, concerning the campaign of 1335 in Scotland, Bourchier is listed with the arms Argent, a cross engrailed gules, between three water bougets sable, the ‘bougets’ element being a play on his surname. There is a Robert Bousser who sealed with A fess engrailed between four bougets in 1326, and this points toward the arms listed on the Carlisle roll being correctly blazoned. It is almost certain both rolls are referring to the same individual and that the arms listed on the Dunstable roll are erroneous, as they unconventionally blazon metal

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62 A Roll of Arms of the Reign of Edward the Second, ed. N. H. Nicholas (London, 1829), hereafter PRA.
63 Complete Peerage, II, 246.
on metal. Bourchier’s military career was typical of a man of his status in this period. His service under John de Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, in 1335 brought the reward of new lands in Hatfield Peverell, Langelord and Ulting, Essex later that year. In spite of the passing of John de Bohun in 1336, Bourchier remained in the service of the Bohun family, with the exception of a short spell of service in Scotland with Hugh Audley, earl of Gloucester in 1338. In 1340, Bourchier was in Northern France with William Bohun; he remained in the earl’s service as a banneret through the Breton campaign of 1342-3, and was in Brittany again in 1345. Bourchier then went on to raise his banner as one of the two bannerets in Northampton’s retinue at Crécy in 1346, where he served in the vaunted first division, nominally led by the Prince of Wales. His non-military service is also a significant part of his career. He accompanied Bartholomew Burghersh on a diplomatic mission to France in 1327 and attended Parliament as a knight of the shire for his native Essex from 1328 to 1339, as well as being a commissioner of the peace in that county and undertaking a number of judicial duties. The pinnacle of this aspect of his career came in 1340 when he was made Lord Chancellor when the Stratford faction was culled; Bourchier was evidently seen as a more competent man who could be relied upon to support the monarch. This promising career was cut short by the plague in 1349. Bourchier’s arms seem to be uniquely derived, being unrelated to the arms of the Vere earls of Oxford who held large swathes of land in Essex, or those of the Bohuns whom he served in war. They are also unrelated to those of Hugh Audley, who had granted Bourchier an annuity of £100 which was replaced by the same sum from the king on his appointment as Chancellor in 1340. Similar arms can be seen enrolled for a John de Vere of Northamptonshire (Argent, a cross gules), the Linde family of Somerset (Argent, a cross engrailed/indentend gules), and Cobham of Essex (Gules, a cross argent), yet there is

67 CPR 1334-1338, p. 172.  
68 E101/35/3, m. 1.  
69 C81/1735, no. 15.  
70 1342-3: C81/1735, no. 22; 1345: Foedera, III, i, 38-9.  
71 C76/23, m. 16; Bourchier also served in Northampton’s retinue at Calais in 1347: Crécy and Calais, p. 129, and 1348: C81/1734, no. 24.  
73 Complete Peerage, II, 246.  
76 Ibid, p. 258.  
77 PRA, p. 23.
no discernable relationship with any of these families and the Bourchiers. Similar arms are also given for Sir John Montgomery (*Argent, a cross engrailed gules between four mullets gules*), a household banneret and Queen’s steward. Montgomery, seemingly from Northamptonshire, has a similar military record to Bourchier and died the same year, yet there is little to link the two men aside from this.

Other coats of arms make a play on the names of the bearers in a similar manner to those of Bourchier: this is known as canting. Such arms include those of Lucy, *Gules, three lucies argent* (a ‘lucie’ in this case being a representation of a pike), the arms of Corbet of Caus in Shropshire, *Or, two corbies sable within a bordure indented gules* (the ‘corbies’ being ravens), and the arms of Boteller of Wemme, Shropshire, incorporating six butler’s cups which not only play on the family name, but are also symbolic of service. In the case of the Botellers, the arms change from the reign of Edward I to that of his son. William Boteller of Wemme, prior to the PRA, is listed as bearing the arms *Gules, crusily or a fess checky sable and argent*. On the PRA the canting of cups is added, and he bears *Azure, a bend and six cups or*. The interestingly named Thomas Hoscarle is blazoned on Powell’s Roll of the late 1340s or early 1350s as bearing *Azure, three battle axes argent*. William Hurstal bore the same arms, and is listed on St George’s Roll and Charles’s Roll, both from around 1285. Axes are found on the arms associated with the king of Denmark, and the Hurstals, or Huscarls as they are sometimes known, have used the similarity of their name to associate themselves with the *húskarlar*, the household warriors of the Danish nobility, despite hailing from the distinctly non-Danish county of Surrey.

Thomas Bradestone was another individual whose rise to fame from humble origins corresponded with the assumption of arms in the 1330s. His early military career was spent in the service of the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle, the Bradestone’s Gloucestershire neighbours, with the young Thomas serving Maurice Berkeley; he was

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80 *CPR* 1340-1343, p. 550.
81 Montgomery served in the household in Scotland and France, and was a man with expensive tastes as far as horses were concerned, for the campaign in the Cambresis, his *destrier* was valued at £100, *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norrell*, p. 317. He was dead by January 1350, possibly of the plague, *CPR* 1348-1350, p. 448.
83 *The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. G. Brault, II, 64; *PRA*, p. 82.
86 Ibid, II, 467.
given letters of protection to accompany him to Aquitaine in 1320 along with Maurice’s
sons, Thomas and Maurice.\textsuperscript{87} This affiliation meant that he joined the Berkeleys in the
marcher’s rebellion against Edward II and the Despensers in 1321. His participation cast
him into ill favour, but it was not to last, and he was pardoned and had his lands
returned in 1323.\textsuperscript{88} Following the accession of Edward III, Bradestone became an
esquire in the royal household, seemingly introduced to the role by Maurice Berkeley’s
son, Thomas.\textsuperscript{89} Bradestone’s rise is a prime example of connections providing
advancement, as the wife of his patron was Margaret, daughter of the Queen’s lover,
Roger Mortimer. His place in the household assured, Bradestone became close to the
young king and was a knight by 1330.\textsuperscript{90} To add to the numerous grants of lands and
rents already bestowed on him by the king, Bradestone received an inn on the high
street of Calais in gratitude for his service at the great siege of 1347.\textsuperscript{91} By the time of
the compilation of an occasional roll of arms for the Dunstable tournament in 1334,
Bradestone had assumed a coat of arms.\textsuperscript{92} Like Bourchier above, his family has no
recorded arms until this date and the arms he bore, Argent, on a quarter gules, a rose or,
bear little resemblance to any of his known affiliates, associates or captains.\textsuperscript{93}

One possible avenue for the inspiration behind the arms of Bradestone could be
the enduring association with the Berkeley family. He was charged with the array of
archers in Gloucestershire prior to the Crécy campaign alongside Thomas Berkeley, the
man who set him on his way at court in 1327.\textsuperscript{94} The arms of Thomas Berkeley (d.1361),
Gules, a chevron between three cinquefoils argent, whilst far from being identical to
Bradestone’s, may be from where the latter derived the rose (cinquefoil) in the quartered
element of his arms: a nod to the patronage he had received.\textsuperscript{95} Derivation of arms aside,
it was with Maurice Berkeley (d.1347), the younger brother of Thomas,\textsuperscript{96} that
Bradestone shared the strongest bond. Maurice’s home at Uley in Gloucestershire was
close to Bradestone’s own, and both men were knights of the royal household,
Bradestone from 1328,\textsuperscript{97} and Berkeley was retained by the crown for life in 1330.\textsuperscript{98} So

\textsuperscript{87} CPR 1317-1321, p. 432.
\textsuperscript{88} CPR 1321-1324, p. 248.
\textsuperscript{89} CPR 1327-1330, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{90} CPR 1330-1334, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{91} CPR 1345-1348, p. 566.
\textsuperscript{92} ‘Second Dunstable Roll’ in English Medieval Rolls of Arms, ed. Mitchell, p. 462.
\textsuperscript{93} For more on Thomas Bradestone and his intriguing armorial bearing, see chapter VII, pp. 201-2.
\textsuperscript{94} Crécy and Calais, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{95} The Rolls of Arms of Edward I, ed. G. Brault, II, 48.
\textsuperscript{96} Complete Peerage, II, 130.
\textsuperscript{97} Cal. Mem. Rolls 1326-7, p. 374.
\textsuperscript{98} CPR 1327-1330, p. 530.
close was their bond that it has been argued they may have had a ‘brothers in arms’ arrangement, though there is no evidence that a formal indenture ever existed.\(^\text{99}\)

In an example whose grandeur far exceeds that of Hugh Hastings’ brass in Norfolk, the magnificent East window in what was once Gloucester Abbey, now Gloucester Cathedral, may serve as testament to this relationship. At the foot of the window are three groups of shields. Of these, there are fourteen that can be said to be original, of which ten remain. Those on the left are the arms of Richard Fitzalan, earl of Arundel, Thomas Berkeley, Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, and the earl of Northampton, William Bohun. The central shields are those of the Black Prince, Henry of Lancaster and certainly one of the original shields was that of Edward III. On the right hand side are the arms of Laurence Hastings, earl of Pembroke, Richard Talbot and finally, side by side, the arms of Maurice Berkeley and Thomas Bradestone.\(^\text{100}\)

Many of these men have the Crécy/Calais campaign in common, with Talbot, Bradestone and Maurice Berkeley all serving in the king’s division for the battle itself.\(^\text{101}\) Pembroke and Lancaster were in Aquitaine in 1346 but were present at the siege of Calais. It has been argued that the window could just as easily commemorate the Scottish Wars,\(^\text{102}\) though if this is the case then the arms of the Black Prince are out of place as he did not participate. The window was probably commissioned and installed between 1348 and 1350, and though it cannot be proved, it may have been commissioned by Bradestone to commemorate England’s famous victory and the part it played by the great men of the realm. He was a Gloucestershire man with close ties to the Berkeleys, and the positioning of his patron, Thomas Berkeley, with the three earls may be a tribute to this relationship.\(^\text{103}\) It may also be commemorative of the enduring bond between himself and his friend Maurice Berkeley, who died of dysentery at the walls of Calais: a lasting tribute to their glory years, heraldically immortalised, with their reputations enhanced through association with the great men of England.\(^\text{104}\)

There are a number of men with a lower profile than Bradestone and Berkeley who derived their arms from those of the family of the captain they served with in war. Thomas Bourne of Kent may be such an individual. As is often the way with such

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\(^\text{104}\) N. Saul, *Knights and Esquires*, p. 77.
things, there is a John Bourne, also of Kent, who is listed on the Herald’s Roll of c.1279 as bearing the arms *Ermine, on a bend azure three lions rampant argent*. This man was mayor of Bordeaux in 1289, and seems to have died before 1335. There is a temptation to say that this man was Thomas Bourne’s father or some other relation, though this need not be the case. As early as 1329, Thomas Bourne served in the retinue of Bartholomew Burghershsh (d. 1355), who was himself a Kentish man, and the military link between Bourne and the Burghershsh family was an enduring one. Bourne was on campaign in Scotland in 1335, as was Burghershsh, though it is not clear that they served together, and he joined the company of John, earl of Cornwall, the following year. Cornwall gave him a horse worth £90 for his service, which was subsequently taken from Bourne by the king. Bourne was a witness to a charter at York in 1335 with Henry Burghershsh Bishop of Lincoln, and continued his service in the bellicose bishop’s company until 1340. In 1338 and 1340, there was also a priest, Bartholomew Bourne, in the bishop’s service. He is said to be a king’s clerk and the parson of Walsoken, a village near Wisbech on the Cambridgeshire-Norfolk border, in 1337. Following the bishop’s death, Bourne rejoined Bartholomew Burghershsh in 1341 and served with him in Brittany the following year. At Crécy, Bourne served in the household division, while Burghershsh was in the vanguard. Bourne died at the siege of Calais. His service with Burghershsh is reflected in his armorial bearing; by the time of the second Dunstable tournament in 1334, he bore the arms of Bartholomew Burghershsh, *Gules, a lion rampant queue forchie or*, differenced with, *a bordure engrailed argent*, and is also listed with these arms on the roll for the Scottish campaign the following year. If it is the case that the John Bourne mentioned above is Thomas Bourne’s father, then it seems Thomas altered those arms to better resemble Burhershsh’s
bearing. If there is no familial relationship, then it would appear that Bourne assumed his coat of arms, in honour of his service with Burgherssh, at some point prior to the 1334 tournament at Dunstable.

The assumption of arms in this manner was not uncommon. The highly respected and successful Yorkshire knight, Sir Thomas Ughtred, bore the arms, *Gules, a cross patonce or, five mullets gules*. This was derived from both he and his father’s service with the Latimer family; thus, they bore the *Gules, a cross patonce or* of Latimer differenced.\(^\text{120}\) Even when a captain in his own right, Thomas Ughtred retained these arms. Prior to a chequered career in the service of his king, John Molyns served William Montague,\(^\text{121}\) having a hand in the Nottingham castle coup of 1330.\(^\text{122}\) He continued to serve Montague as a part of the household, and was referred to as Steward of the Household in 1337.\(^\text{123}\) Two years later he was made a knight banneret with an annuity of £100 for his support.\(^\text{124}\) His marriage into the Mauduit family, coupled with royal favour, made him a significant landowner and brought him wealth, yet his fluctuating fortunes saw him in disfavour and imprisoned in the wake of the political crisis of 1340-41.\(^\text{125}\) He subsequently managed to return to the king’s good graces and was summoned to France in September of 1346 with as many men at arms and archers as he could collect.\(^\text{126}\) A habitual criminal,\(^\text{127}\) he died a prisoner of the Crown after the Commons petitioned the king on account of his abuses of power as steward of the Queen’s lands.\(^\text{128}\) Though Molyn’s career extended far beyond the death of his captain and patron, William Montague, the arms that he chose to bear reflect their relationship. The arms of Montague, *Argent, three fusils gules*, are echoed in the *Sable, on a chief argent, three fusils conjoined in a fess gules* of Molyns.\(^\text{129}\)

There are also a number of cases where an individual changes his coat of arms, either reverting to arms previously held by his family, or assuming a new armorial identity due to a marriage alliance. In spite of Beltz’s assertion that Hugh Wrottesley,

\(^{121}\) *CPR* 1327-1330, pp. 442-3.
\(^{122}\) C. Shenton, ‘Edward III and the Coup of 1330’ in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J. Bothwell, p. 21; Molyns was pardoned in 1331 for his actions *CPR* 1330-1334, pp. 110, 412.
\(^{123}\) *CPR* 1334-1338, p. 518; *Complete Peerage*, IX, 37.
\(^{124}\) *CPR* 1338-1340, p. 402.
\(^{125}\) *Complete Peerage*, IX, 38.
\(^{126}\) Crécy and Calais, p. 102.
\(^{128}\) *Complete Peerage*, IX, 39.
founder member of the Order of the Garter, was of an ‘ancient family long seated at Wrottesley, in the county of Stafford’,¹³⁰ the name does not appear on any of the rolls of arms from the reign of Edward I, nor on the Parliamentary roll of his successor. The arms attributed to him vary, yet Beltz and Wrottesley attribute him with the Basset *Or, three piles sable, a canton ermine* as an element of his armorial bearing.¹³¹ This differs from the fretty coat carried by his grandfather,¹³² though it seems that Wrottesley’s seal retained the coat of his ancestors.¹³³ The Basset element of Wrottesley’s arms is by virtue of his father’s marriage to Joan, daughter of Roger Basset, the younger brother of Ralph Basset of Drayton.¹³⁴ The other half of Wrottesley’s arms is the *Gules, a chief and three cross crosslets* or of Arderne, the arms of his second wife’s family.¹³⁵ This makes the arms Wrottesley bears a true hybrid of Arderne and Basset, with the original Wrottesley arms only surviving on his seal. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the case of Sir John Hardreshull. The veteran knight’s father married Juliana Hatch and served in the retinue of her father Eustace from 1294 until his death in 1303. He abandoned his paternal arms for the *Or, a cross indented gules* of his father-in-law’s house, differencing with a *martlet vair* in the first quarter.¹³⁶ Sir John abandoned these arms in favour of those of his paternal grandfather, *Argent, a chevron sable surmounted by an orle of martlets gules*, evidently seeing his paternal lineage as more important than the military and familial activity of his father.¹³⁷

In other cases, the link seems to be purely military, as can be seen with the arms of Mowbray of Thirsk in Yorkshire. Though having family ties in Scotland, John Mowbray fought against the Scots from 1308 and was another who found himself on the wrong side at Boroughbridge. He lost his head through his actions, yet, as was common in our period, the sins of the father do not forever taint the name of the son. John Mowbray had his father’s lands restored to him in 1327 and bore his coat of arms

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¹³⁴ For the arms of Basset, see *PRA*, p. 71.
Gules, a lion rampant argent.\textsuperscript{138} Excepting the members of his family who provided retinue service and bore the family arms differenced, at least two other men who served with John Mowbray in the wars against the Scots in the 1330s bore arms derived from those of their captain. Roger de Weston, who served in 1337 and 1340 bore Gules, a lion rampant argent, crusilly fitchy or, a baston engrailed sable,\textsuperscript{139} and Nicholas Hewick, serving consistently from Halidon Hill in 1333 to at least 1337 bore Gules, a lion rampant argent, pomels d’or.\textsuperscript{140}

![John Mowbray](John-Mowbray.png)  
John Mowbray  
Gules, a lion rampant argent  

![Nicholas Hewick](Nicholas-Hewick.png)  
Nicholas Hewick  
Gules, a lion rampant argent, pomels d’or  

![Roger de Weston](Roger-de-Weston.png)  
Roger de Weston  
Gules, a lion rampant argent, crusilly fitchy or, a baston sable  

If heraldry can help us translate martial bonds of affinity and community, perhaps the study of coats of arms can also assist in identifying geographical relationships. In the case of the Uffords of Suffolk, the house of the future earldom created in 1337, the coat sable, a cross indented or can be traced through the records of the heralds and used to identify such affinities. These were the arms carried by Robert Ufford (d.1298), who was justice of Chester in 1276 and 1277, the keeper of Orford castle and holder of many lands in Suffolk.\textsuperscript{141} They were carried by the eldest living son of the house throughout our period down to William, the 2nd earl of Suffolk, whose death in 1381 brought to an end the line of the Ufford earls.\textsuperscript{142} These arms were also carried by Ufford senior’s brother John, differenced with two escallops argent, and another relative, Thomas, slain on the field at Bannockburn, differenced with a bend argent.\textsuperscript{143} There are, perhaps, glimpses of the influence of these arms elsewhere in the

\textsuperscript{140}Nicholas Hewick’s arms: ‘Cotgrave’s Ordinary’, ed. Nicholas, p. 9; With Mowbray in Scotland in 1333: C 71/13., m. 28; 1334: C 71/14., m. 6; 1335: C71/15., m. 29; 1337: E 101/20/17., mm. 2, 10d.  
\textsuperscript{141}The Rolls of Arms of Edward I, ed. G. Brault, II, 428; CIPM, VI, no.58.  
\textsuperscript{143}The Rolls of Arms of Edward I, ed. G. Brault, II, 428; PRA, p. 40.
county of Suffolk. Charles’ Roll of c.1285 lists a Ralph Whaddon, possibly from Norfolk, who accompanied Robert Ufford to Ireland in 1276 and bore Ufford’s sable, a cross indented or, differenced with two escallops argent in chief.\textsuperscript{144} It seems that in Whaddon’s case, the arms he bore are derived from military service with Ufford, as no familial or tenurial ties seem to have existed. Another Suffolk knight, Robert Howell of Ilketshall and Wyverstone, bore the arms Sable, a cross or, which passed to his sons following his murder around 1286.\textsuperscript{145} This was carried by his eldest son Robert, and then his brother Hugh (d. c 1339). The youngest son Stephen bore the arms of his father difference with a label argent.\textsuperscript{146} The Howells seem to have had no direct military affiliation with the Uffords, though Stephen was pardoned by Edward II for his affiliations with the earl of Lancaster in 1318, and accompanied the young Robert Ufford, the future earl of Suffolk, on the Scottish campaign of 1322.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{144}\textit{The Rolls of Arms of Edward I}, ed. G. Brault, II, 453.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{CPR} 1317-1321, p. 232; \textit{CPR} 1321-1324, p. 187.
Coats of Arms of Suffolk

Thomas Ufford d.1314
Sable, a cross indented or
a bend argent

Robert Ufford d.1298
Sable, a cross indented or

John Ufford
Sable, a cross indented or
In chief two escallops argent

Robert Ufford d.1316
Sable, a cross indented or

Hugh Howell
Sable, a cross or

Steven Howell
Sable, a cross or
a label argent

John Peyton
Sable, a cross engrailed or
a molet argent

Piers Tadingtone
Sable, a cross or recersele

Robert Boys
Ermine, a cross sable

Ralph Shelton
Azure, a cross or

John Carbonel
Gules, a cross argent
A bordure indented or

Ralph Ufford d.1346
Sable, a cross engrailed or
an annulet argent

Robert Ufford E. Suffolk
Sable, a cross engrailed or

William Kirketot
Azure, a cross argent
five escallops gules

John Ufford d.1348
Sable, a cross engrailed or
A riband argent

Edmund Ufford
Sable, a cross engrailed or
a label argent

Thomas Ufford d.1368
Sable, a cross engrailed or
a label 3 pendants argent

Walter Ufford
Sable, a cross engrailed or
a crown argent

John Botetourt
Or, a saltire
engrailed sable
It is difficult to be sure about the relationship of families such as the Howells to the Uffords, given the incomplete nature of both the military and armorial records. Despite these challenges, it appears that the Uffords were the first family recorded as bearing their arms, and the notion that their status in Suffolk may have spawned a county armorial affinity, though difficult to prove, is intriguing nevertheless.

Other Suffolk men who are not listed on the rolls of arms for the reign of the first Edward, appear with arms thematically similar to those of Ufford under the second. The Peytons do not appear on the rolls of arms from the reign of Edward I, but are listed on the PRA with the arms Sable, a cross engrailed or, a molet argent, with a Henry Peyton part of the earl of Suffolk’s retinue at Crécy in 1346. Other families, such as the Tadingtons (Sable, a cross or recersele), Boys (Ermine, a cross sable) and Sheltons (Azure, a cross or) also appear on the PRA with crossed arms at this time. John Botetourt of Mendlesham, Suffolk (d.1324) was on the opposite side to the Uffords at Boroughbridge in 1322 and bore the arms Or, a saltire engrailed sable. There were enduring links between the families, however, with Baldwin Botetourt serving in the earl of Suffolk’s retinue in Brittany in 1342. The bond between the families was further strengthened by the marriage of one of the earl’s sons to Elizabeth Botetourt. The Carbonels of Waldingford also have similar arms, Gules, a cross argent, a bordure indented or, as do the Kiketots of Great Ashfield, Azure, a cross argent, on the cross five escallops gules.

What the heraldry of Suffolk may hint at is that thematically similar coats demonstrate an armorial tradition particular to this county. The armigerous of Suffolk were not all related by bonds of family and military service, or even ties of land tenure; perhaps it was a sense of place which drove them to assume similar arms to the largest landholders of the county. Helpfully, the PRA is organised by county and an analysis of the regularity of crosses on coats of arms reveals that Suffolk has the highest number of any of the counties listed. Of the sixty two knights listed for Suffolk, sixteen of them (26%) carry crosses or saltires on their arms. Naturally, this is far from conclusive proof that county heraldic affinities governed by locale are a phenomenon, though the

148 PRA, p. 40; Crécy and Calais, p. 164.
149 PRA, p. 41.
151 E 36/204., fo. 86v.
152 Suffolk’s first son, Robert (d. 1368), married Elizabeth Botetourt, daughter of John Botetourt and the widow of William Latimer at some point prior to 20th August 1337, when he was pardoned by Edward III for marrying without permission. CPR 1334-1338, p. 405.
154 PRA, pp. 40-5.
notion does perhaps find support elsewhere in the PRA. For counties of Westmorland and Lancaster, enrolled together, 41% of the seventeen knights listed carry a *cross patonce*.\(^{155}\) Of the twelve knights listed for Huntingdonshire, 50% of them have *crusilly* arms.\(^ {156}\) The arrayed knights of Suffolk could perhaps recognise sections of their county community in a host from the crosses which many of them bore upon their shields. They may take their lead from the Uffords in a number of cases, but it is overwhelmingly the county of Suffolk which unites the group, rather than service to a particular family or lord. Thus, it is a sense of place which seems to be the dominant factor in the choice of arms, at least in the small sample of Suffolk knights discussed above. This, rather than service to king or lord, or their own lineage, is what they chose to advertise to the military community, friend and foe alike, through the arms they bore.

If one were to regard Staffordshire in the same manner as Suffolk, the story is similar, yet not identical. The Stafford chevron is perhaps not as common in Staffordshire as one would expect, yet the possible reasons for this are not hard to find. Ralph Stafford came into his great inheritances and influence in the middle of his life with a portion of the great Clare inheritance being settled upon him in 1343, opening new recruiting grounds across the country, turning him into a lord of national stature and eventually bringing him an earldom.\(^ {157}\) The Corbet inheritance was gained later still, and came incrementally, providing power in vast swathes of Shropshire.\(^ {158}\) Prior to this inheritance, Ralph held the lands of his father, yet these were significantly smaller than the lands in Staffordshire and other counties held by Robert Stafford in 1086. Manors such as Aston, Shareshull, Swynnerton, Salt and Wrottley had been settled upon other Staffordshire families, who had developed their own arms independently of Stafford in the intervening centuries.\(^ {159}\) For our period, then, Ralph Stafford’s rise to prominence comes too late for us to view the full extent of his influence in the armorial record; nevertheless, traces of it can still be found. Stafford’s retinue, especially in the Scottish wars of the 1330s, was made up of a core of local men and though Stafford was at this time one of several middling fish in the Staffordshire pond, his arms still influenced others.

\(^{155}\) Ibid, pp. 88–9.
\(^{156}\) Ibid, pp. 63–4.
\(^{157}\) CPR 1343-1345, pp. 140, 366, 384.
\(^{158}\) CCR 1346-1349, p. 395; CPR 1354-1358, p. 544.
Similarly to the Uffords, we see a dissemination of the family arms through the sons of the house of Stafford and its related branches. Ralph, Baron and later Earl of Stafford, bore the arms Or, a chevron gules carried by his father. His grandfather, Nicholas carried the same arms differenced with three roundels argent on the chevron.\textsuperscript{160}

Coats of Arms of Stafford

Ralph Stafford’s brother Richard, lord of Clifton and Pype, himself destined for a share of Staffordshire’s bounty and glory on the field of battle, bore the arms Argent, a

\textsuperscript{160}The Rolls of Arms of Edward I, ed. G. Brault, II, 397.
John Stafford, who served alongside Ralph, joining his retinue during the Scottish wars and serving through the campaigns in Brittany and Aquitaine before following him to the siege of Calais, bore Argent, a chevron gules. It seems likely that John was cousin to Richard and Ralph and had begun his military service in the retinue of Roger Mortimer in 1327, alongside his kinsmen William, Walter and James Stafford. The county was littered with other more modest houses bearing the name: a testament to the deep roots of the family. Thus we see the brothers John Stafford of Bramshall and James Stafford of Sandon serving as MPs for the county and in the retinue of Ralph Stafford, before marrying into the family proper during our period. Stafford of Bramshall married Ralph Stafford’s daughter, Margaret and bore the arms of Stafford with a bordure engrailed sable. Stafford of Sandon, the elder of the brothers, married Ralph Stafford’s sister Mary, and bore the chevron differenced with five bezants. Clearly, as far as the extended family was concerned, the Staffords follow the same line as the Uffords with regard to armorial dissemination.

In spite of Ralph Stafford’s influence in the county, skill as captain in war and his massive subsequent wealth, the Stafford chevron does not feature as heavily in Staffordshire, or in his retinue, as one might expect. That is not to say that it cannot be found. John de Hynkeley, who served with Stafford in Aquitaine and at the siege of Calais, being granted letters of protection along with other men from Staffordshire in Stafford’s retinue, bore Gules, a chevron engrailed argent. He is not recorded on any roll of arms prior to the so-called Powell’s Roll of around 1350, and there is a possibility that he was newly knighted and armigerous at this time. Thomas Hilton is listed on the same roll as bearing the arms Argent, a chevron gules, identical to those carried by John Stafford and very similar to those of Richard Stafford. Hilton is somewhat difficult to pin down in the historical record, yet the identical arms imply an association with the Staffords. The same can be said for other Staffordshire men such as

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162 Scotland 1336: C81/1749., no.56; 1337: C 71/17., m. 22; 1338: E 101/35/3., m.1; Brittany 1342: C 76/17., m. 32; Aquitaine 1345: C61/57., m.5; Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, p. 117.
164 CPR 1327-1330, p. 140.
166 Ibid, p. 52.
167 Aquitaine 1345:C61/57., m.5; Calais 1347: Crécy and Calais, p. 118.
John Perton of Perton and Stirchley, who could have been in Stafford’s service as early as 1336, and was with him in Aquitaine in 1345-6. Perton was a knight by 1347, and served with Lancaster in France in 1355 before joining Richard Stafford to fight at Poitiers in 1356, later serving as M.P for Staffordshire. Perton derived his arms Azure, on a chevron gules between three pears or, as many bezants (the pears being another example of canting), from the Stafford chevron in reflection of this service alongside the Stafford family in war.

An interesting heraldic conundrum is provided by John Sutton, lord of Dudley castle. The Suttons came into the castle lordship of Dudley, Staffordshire, when John de Somery died childless in 1322. The lordship then passed to John de Sutton (d.c.1330) who had married de Somery’s elder sister Margaret. Wrottesley lists the arms of Sutton of Dudley at the battle of Crécy as the Or, two lions passant azure of de Somery, yet this is not reflected by the rolls of arms of the reign of Edward III. The arms of Somery are not those given for the Suttons, and it is possible that in later generations the Sutton arms were adapted to better reflect their place in Staffordshire society, not only holding Dudley castle, but the manors of Seggesleye, Kingswinford and Rouley Somery in the south-west of the county. On the second Dunstable roll of 1334, John de Sutton (d.1359) is listed as bearing the arms Or, three chevronels sable, with his son (d.1370) listed on Powell’s roll as bearing the same arms differenced with a label of three pendants gules. This similarity with the arms of Stafford can be seen to reflect the Sutton’s growing association with the Stafford family in war and county administration, an association which was formalised by marriage in 1357 when the third John Sutton married Ralph Stafford’s daughter Catherine.

The cases we have explored demonstrate that heraldry was central to chivalric identity. On the one hand it is distinctly individual, a display of one’s position in society and of one’s lineage. Yet the very design of shields blazoned on the rolls of arms of our

170 C/81/1749., no.56.
172 CCR 1346-1349, p. 386.
173 C76/33., m. 8.
175 Complete Peerage, XII, pt.1, p. 115.
178 CPR 1334-1338, p. 343.
period, and indeed the proximity of one man to another on the roll itself, speaks of the hand of heraldry in the formation and continuation of collective identity. Heraldry reflects social, local or tenurial connections, as well as shared military experience. In spite of the cases mentioned above, it was by no means common for a man who was newly armigerous to assume arms based on those of his captain in war, his tenurial lord, or a more significant house in his locality. It seems that individuals in many cases sought to bear arms which were distinctive to them, to set them apart from others and to display their own family’s sense of individual pride and honour. The identity men chose to project to the world, the symbols of their lineage as much as their relations and affiliations, vary tremendously, and the reasons behind their assumption are just as various. What is certain is that to the chivalric and military communities of the fourteenth century, these symbols were important, though the foundations upon which they were built were not immovable. Marriage, inheritance and military service changed the heraldic landscape for some, while to others armorial identity was an immutable signifier of their own chivalric identity and their family history. Heraldry, the bright and colourful face of the Edwardian host, can be used to reveal the complex yet vibrant subtext of the Edwardian military community.

It would be remiss in an undertaking such as this to disregard the notion that Edward III actively nurtured the cult of chivalry, and did so over and above many English kings of the medieval period. For Edward, chivalry was a powerful tool, one that made a significant contribution to his style of kingship. His penchant for all things chivalric is amply demonstrated by what we know of his personality. Repeatedly, we see him at the tourney, fighting as a knight, winning personal renown and inspiring those around him to greater feats of prowess and chivalric expression. His court was one of romantic excesses, feasts, pageants and spectacle. For at least part of his reign he was also conspicuously martial, leading his men in war, as shown by his decision to place himself very much in harm’s way at Halidon Hill in 1333 and on the waters off Sluys in 1340. In this sense he can be viewed as the catalyst for chivalric expression during his reign, the locus of chivalric sentiment and an exemplar for those around him. Where Edward trod, chivalry sprung anew. There is also, of course, his founding of the Order of the Garter to consider. This was his lasting contribution to chivalry in England, a living monument to his vision, which would become the most renowned and coveted knightly fraternity in Europe. It could be argued that when subsequent generations wrote and read of the deeds of King Arthur, it was not the legendary fifth-century warlord, shrouded in the mists of myth and history, to which their minds were drawn, but the shining beacon of chivalric achievement supplied by Edward III and his court. He became a national emblem for the knightly classes, a banner around which the chivalrous could rally.

In spite of the practical approach to chivalry demonstrated by the English during this period, there are aspects of aristocratic and knightly behaviour—the two can rarely be examined independently—that appear to wholeheartedly subscribe to the ‘higher’ characteristics of the chivalric ideal. These are the times when behaviour is tightly controlled and restricted, times when ‘chivalric’ identities come to the fore and reality,
at least the reality upon which our focus has as yet fallen, is discarded in favour of something altogether less tangible. On the battlefield, and in the twin worlds of court and camp, chivalry was an efficient and practical set of norms and values governing knightly conduct. Away from battle, and in certain exalted company, the English surrendered themselves to the celebration of youth, prowess, beauty and exclusivity which romantic chivalry embodied. This was a world where religion, romance, fraternity, wealth and chivalry all combined in a heady mixture, producing a chimerical reality where men became more than men. Glorious symbols which spoke clearer than words, knights now inhabited a ritualised, near sacred space, both exalted and fantastical: the ‘chivalric arcane’.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the tournament field. As demonstrated in previous chapters, the tournament as a training exercise for actual warfare was somewhat anachronistic, particularly during the period in question and had perhaps been so for some time. It has been shown that the English way of war deliberately disregarded the use of heavy horse as the hammer blow with which to turn the tide of battle. Instead, the tactical defensive was utilised with great success on the fields of France, with men-at-arms in dense foot formations on prepared, preferably chosen, ground. It is true that horses still had a significant role to play in war: contingents in the latter half of the century were arrayed as mounted companies, providing the advantage of mobility in the field. The chevauchée, the great mounted raids across swathes of France, depended upon horses, as did the pursuit of any foe broken by the powerful English foot formations and ‘combined arms’ tactics. There are also a plethora of smaller-scale engagements and skirmishes which were fought on horseback. The continued importance of horses on campaign is reflected in the number of animals recorded as lost on expeditions in Scotland and France. The restauro equorum accounts from the Breton campaign of autumn 1342 tell us that, of those whose mounts were appraised prior to departure, 147 animals were lost. On the Reims campaign of 1359-60, a much larger force than that seen in Brittany, the Black Prince’s retinue alone lost 395 horses, whilst the duke of Lancaster lost 216.\footnote{A. Ayton, \textit{Knights and Warhorses}, pp. 265-65.} Although horses still had a crucial role to play in the English war machine, they were not battle winners. For the English, the mounted warrior, if he had ever been a decisive tactical instrument; if he had ever been the master of the Western way of war, was certainly no longer. His day had passed, if
ever he had one, a fact reinforced in the minds of English knights by the arrow-spitted corpses of the pride of France on that famous field in Ponthieu.

These developments suggest that the gap between tournaments and warfare was growing increasingly wide at this point in time. Though it has been argued convincingly that one of the functions of the tournament was to hone the martial skills and horsemanship demanded by battle, whilst also familiarising mounted warriors with fighting in groups as they would in the field, such skills were of much less use than they had once been in actual warfare; yet were still useful for war-games. A glance at the list of names on the roll of arms compiled for the Dunstable tournament of 1334 will reveal that the participants in tournaments are the same men as those performing military service. Indeed, indentures of retinue contract the same individuals for both activities. These contracts were entered into with a variety of terms attached and conferred all manner of benefits and obligations between captain and retainer. The obligations of service often differed depending on whether it was performed during a campaign or for a tournament. The agreement between Thomas Beauchamp and Robert Herle, made in April 1339, bound Herle to the earl’s service for life with four men-at-arms in wartime and one bachelere (Herle himself) for tournaments. Horses would be provided by the earl, along with fodder and wages for grooms. Similarly, Edmund Ufford entered into a contract with Henry of Lancaster to serve for the term of his life with three men-at-arms, well armed and mounted, in times of war. For tournaments, Ufford was required to bring only one esquire and was permitted to draw wages for three garsouns, presumably to care for the horses. The tournament was certainly conceptually related to warfare and jousts certainly occurred during wartime. Yet indentures such as these show that the tournament and warfare should be viewed as parallel, but different, aspects of ‘military-cultural’ ritual. John Lynn proposes an interesting model which separates the ‘discourse on war’, war as it is supposed to be, with the ‘reality of war’, the objective facts pertaining to war as it really is. Lynn states that the value of the model lies not merely in the separation of discourse from reality, but in the exploration of the relationship between them. This raises the question of the very definition of war, and the answer to that question differs from culture to culture.

6 DL27/155, printed in K. Fowler, The King’s Lieutenant, p. 234.
and era to era. Lynn proposes that, should a cultural need be great enough, and reality prove unable to fulfil that need, then ‘special forms of combat’ will appear, replacing reality with that which conforms to the dominant discourse. Thus the tournament offered ‘the ultimate replacement’ for ‘real’ combat to those engaging with the chivalric ‘discourse on war’. 7 Attractive as it is, this perhaps goes a little far. Rather than replacing actual warfare, the tournament is better viewed as an exclusive and violent sport with, as Lynn would have it, its own particular ‘discourse’: a better fit with chivalric ideology. In the main, Lynn is surely correct in his assertion that fourteenth-century warfare did not conform to the aristocratic discourse on chivalry.8

Yet elements of that discourse are to be found on campaign, such as chivalric display, the treatment and ransom of aristocratic prisoners and the joust of war. It has been argued in a previous chapter that the English way of war was notably ‘anti-chivalric’, yet the tournament should not be viewed as a true ‘chivalric’ replacement. The controlled structure of such events, the symbolism and pageantry involved and the fact that tournaments were observed by spectators culminates in a scenario that makes use of martial skills, but is much more akin to a sporting event than a military one. Tourneying societies existed, such as that led by Henry of Lancaster in Lincoln in 1345 which was to hold events on the Monday of every Whitsun week, adding to the sense of occasion.9 Like hunting, the tournament was a dangerous aristocratic leisure activity. Unlike hunting, which did offer equestrian exercise, the tournament offered inexperienced knights a chance to blood themselves manu e mano and gave those longer in the tooth the opportunity to display skills which warfare rarely required them to use in a spectacular social occasion. Whilst participation was wide and tournaments frequent, the community remained a closed one, with participants restricted to the socio-military elite.10 There can be few better reasons for this than the fact that participation in such events came at spectacular financial cost, not just for the animals themselves, but for the specialised types of armour needed to face the particular challenges encountered on the tournament field. This armour differed from the protection used by knights on the battlefield. The will of Bartholomew Burghersh (d.1371), for example, is specific in the bequest of jousting armour to Walter Paveley.11 An inventory of the goods belonging to Roger Mortimer dating from 1322, divides his helmets into three groups: three helms

8 Ibid, p. 93.
9 CPR 1343-1345, p. 379.
10 A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, pp. 33-4.
11 Testamenta Vetusta, ed. N. H. Nicholas, p. 76.
for jousts, just one for war and six for tournaments. Though it is not clear how these helms differed from one another, the separation implies different styles of headgear for the different challenges each scenario would bring. The breastplate was introduced around the middle of the fourteenth century and in the 1340s, Edward III was charged 16s each for several ‘poitrines pur jousten’. Lancaster was made a gift of ‘a pair of plates for the jousts and a breastplate’ from the Black Prince in 1358, showing that specific types of armour, produced at significant cost, were used in the tournament.

Also worthy of consideration is the significant time and effort tournament preparation required a vast undertaking for man and beast. Moreover, a tournament horse faced different challenges than a warhorse, schooled to brave the sensory assaults of the battlefield and deliver a charge into a solid mass against the natural instinct to shy away. The training of a horse to manoeuvre as a destrier on the tourney field would require the rider’s subtle use of the spur, stirrup and bit and for the mount to recognise these cues to re-orientate the motion of his entire body. The changing of leading leg at a canter or a gallop is crucial in the rapid execution of turns. This lead change takes place at the moment of suspension, when all four of the horse’s feet are off the ground, meaning the rider must be fully appraised of the positioning of his mount’s hooves and the horse must be given sufficient notice to be able to anticipate the change. From the outset, a horse must be schooled to be capable of such movements, to train its body to be able to do that which is asked of it. This is a significant investment in time. When one adds the need to maintain aerobic fitness in these animals, to build the stamina and heart capacity to be capable of sustaining performance over the course of a tourney, then a huge amount of a knight’s time in any given day (or more likely that of his servants) would be spent in training and maintaining horses. Carroll Gilmore believes that, taking the relative infrequency and ineffectiveness of mounted combat in war into account, such levels of training cannot be justified as preparation for war and can only realistically be seen as activities related to ludic events. That tournaments were the cavalry battles of the Middle Ages. Whilst this may be true, it should not detract from the fact that equestrian skills were still of great benefit to the English during wartime,

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14 BPR, iv, p. 247.
15 This is not to say that knights were not fully conversant with the training of horses. From an early age they would have been in the saddle, and much of their leisure time would have been spent with horses.
and warhorses were still of great importance. That the type of training undergone by tournament mounts may have differed from that of warhorses is implied by wills of the period, which occasionally leave horses to named individuals. For example, the text of the will of Thomas Beauchamp, the earl of Warwick, specifies that his best ‘tilting horse’ was left to John Beauchamp, whilst Roger Beauchamp, evidently not as well liked, was to make do with his ‘next best tilting horse’.

That the earl is so specific implies that the horses used in tournaments were different from those used in war, and these beasts were trained in different ways for the different challenges they would face.

When one also considers that the last recorded melee tournament in England was at Dunstable in 1342, the gap between the tournament and war widens still further. Throughout the 1340s, the forms of tourney to which legends of the circuit such as William Marshal was so adept were supplanted by the joust. Tournaments were no longer a wide-ranging romp involving squadrons of knights akin to real battles, but one on one contests. This carefully regulated test of individual prowess became the only consistent arena in which the traditional military class kept alive the methods and ethos of chivalrous combat. Their popularity amongst spectators and participants alike meant that the enduring image of the chivalrous warrior was not that found on the field of war, but in the contrived, constructed, yet undeniably glorious tournament arena, where knight and warhorse remained inseparable.

It was on occasions such as this that the imagery and symbolism of chivalry was displayed, and the complex web of reference associated with the chivalric mind was played out with a sense of theatre and festivity, where prowess was praised in the most lavish manner possible. In the source material remaining to us, nowhere is this better seen than in the case of Edward III, himself a prolific tourneyer, who is believed to have attended or hosted (though not necessarily as a participant) ninety five such events during the course of his reign. The nature of the source material is such that there are certain to have been other events which were not recorded; therefore the actual figure is likely to be significantly higher. That tournaments were pregnant with symbolism is well illustrated by the event at Dunstable in 1334. An occasional roll of arms was drawn up for the event, listing the 135 attendees and their coats of arms headed by John of Eltham, Edward III’s brother and earl of Cornwall.

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17 Testamenta Vetusta, ed. N. H. Nicholas, p. 80.
18 A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, pp. 35-37.
king himself is not present amongst the participants. However, Juliet Vale has noted that
the wardrobe accounts for that year are littered with references to the provision of items
such as harnesses, pennons and standards decorated with the arms of Lionel,21 and
surmises that the otherwise anonymous Monsr Lionel, approximately midway through
the list, is none other than Edward participating in the guise of another knight. Vale also
puts forward that the way in which the roll is organised, with Eltham at the head and
Edward approximately halfway through, could be read as the company being divided
into two teams for the purpose of the joust, teams led by the king and his brother.22

The symbolism associated with Edward’s alter ego can be interpreted in a
number of ways, the most appealing of which is perhaps to be found in Edward’s
passion for Arthurianism. That he chooses to appear as one of the Round Table knights,
technically—though this is hard to believe—anonymously, in emulation of the Fair
Unknown, implies a deliberate association between the king and the Arthurian knight
that had meaning for Edward and would have been understood by those present.
Edward/Lionel carries the arms Argent, a quarter gules, in itself quite a striking coat of
arms. A single quarter such as this was seemingly quite rare in 1334. There appear to be
none at all listed on the much larger Parliamentary Roll of Arms dating from the reign
of Edward’s father, and only a handful recorded on Cotgrave’s Ordinary of around
1340. This makes it likely that the arms carried by Edward at Dunstable in 1334 would
have really stood out, providing a talking point for both spectators and participants
alike. It is interesting to note that argent and gules are the colours of the arms of
Edward’s close friend and confidant William Montague, who immediately precedes him
on the roll.23 More interestingly, Thomas Bradestone appears on the second Dunstable
roll bearing arms almost identical to those of the king. Bradestone bears Argent, on a
quarter gules a cinquefoil or, seemingly the first time he has carried any arms at all.24
Neither Bradestone nor his family are recorded as being armigerous prior to this date
and he bears these arms for the rest of his life. Could his appearance here, on this roll,
with these arms, imply he somehow derived his arms through Edward’s association with
Lionel at this tournament?

21 ‘30 scutis de armis Lionell, 4 hernesia integra de armiss Lionell pro justis et tournamenta, 7 hernesia de
esidemarmis pro remontur, 1 vexillo cum hachementis des armis Lionell, 2 vexillis des armis Lionell, 20
vexillis des armis Lionell, 20 penonnell des armis Lionell’. Enrolled account of William de la Zouche,
keeper of the Great Wardrobe, 7-8 EIII, E361/2, mm. 11v, 13r.
22 J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry, p. 68.
23 Monsr William de Montagu: Argent, three fusils in fess gules, ‘Second Dunstable Roll’ in English
Richard Barber has recently written that the arms carried by Edward on this occasion are the arms of the earldom of Chester, and that ‘Lionel is simply an earlier avatar of Edward himself, not a pale imitation of a hero of romance’. There are a number of problems with this somewhat dismissive interpretation of Edward’s arms at Dunstable. Firstly, as Barber himself points out, the earldom of Chester was conferred upon Edward’s son, the Prince of Wales, the year before this tournament. It is unclear why Edward would choose to hijack one of his son’s armorial identities at this tournament. Secondly, whilst it is true that the arms of the earl of Chester appear as Argent, a canton gules, they do not do so until significantly later, seemingly no earlier than the reign of Richard II. The arms for Chester in 1334 are more likely to have been the Azure, three garbs or blazoned during the time that Edward II held the honour. It is much more likely that the arms of Chester were altered for a reason related to Edward III’s association with Lionel than for it to be the other way around. Barber also takes no account of the similarity in the bearing of both Bradestone and Montague or their close relationship with Edward. The story here is arguably much more complex. It is therefore in the character of ‘Lionel’ that we must seek our answers.

Upon investigating the pseudo-historical armorial tradition associated with King Arthur and his knights, a problem arises: Argent, a quarter gules are not the arms attributed to Sir Lionel. However, there is significant evidence from an armorial tradition associated with thirteenth-century French literature, that these were the arms carried by a much more prominent Arthurian hero, Sir Gawain. This is supported by a number of manuscript illuminations of the prose Lancelot cycle, presenting a possible spanner in

The plot thickens when we acknowledge that there are at least two other possibilities for the accepted arms of Sir Gawain in this period.

Three of the possible arms attributed to Sir Gawain.

The first of these (from the left in the image above), Sable, fretty or, appears on the Herald’s Roll of c.1279 in association with the Maltravers family, the unidentified ‘Gaweyn Mautravers’ immediately preceding the arms of the fictional Roland and Bevis of Hampton, implying that the family arms may have been inspired by the Arthurian hero. This perhaps alludes to some perceived association between the Maltravers family and sir Gawain originating in the later thirteenth century. These arms endured, and are listed as being those of John Maltravers on Powell’s Roll of the mid-fourteenth century. Maltravers, along with William Gurney, appears to have been responsible for the murder of Edward II in 1327. Accordingly, he was sentenced to death by Edward III and fled the country following the confiscation of his estates. His lands were restored to him following his service at Crécy in 1346. He died in 1364 and was buried in the chantry chapel of St Mary the Virgin at Lytchett Matravers in Dorset, where a floor slab of blue Tournai marble was decorated in brass (now lost) with the Maltravers fret.

The second, Gules, an eagle or, is a more tempting proposition and is found in an early thirteenth-century continuation of Perceval, where Gawain derives his arms from Judas Maccabaeus. It is likely that Edward wore a golden eagle crest at the 1334 tournament, and this coupled with the arms he bore, could be an attempt at an association with Gawain as well as, or instead of, Lionel. This crest was presented to William Montague the following year, who seems to have held it in trust before passing

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33 G. Brault, Early Blazon, p. 42.
34 J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry, p. 69.
it on to his godson, Edward’s son Lionel of Antwerp, in 1339.\textsuperscript{35} In the English tradition, Gawain was a knight dedicated to fighting, masculine adventure and competition; he is the chief knight of Arthur’s fraternity and an exemplar of ‘secular’ knighthood,\textsuperscript{36} of whom even the great Lancelot was afraid.\textsuperscript{37} He is thus an appealing motif, whose emulation illustrates well the distinction between the model of kingly sanctity presented in France and the more straightforward military heroism embodied by Richard I, Edward I and of course, Edward III himself.\textsuperscript{38} It would appear that as far as his coat of arms is concerned, Edward is emulating Sir Gawain, in a scenario that in some way involves William Montague. But there are other questions raised when one tries to understand something of the events at Dunstable. Firstly, what is the significance of Sir Lionel to Edward III, and secondly, what, if anything, does this have to do with Thomas Bradestone?

Lionel is not amongst the names that spring to mind when one thinks of Arthur’s Round Table. He appears in the vulgate cycle of the early thirteenth century as the eldest son of King Bors of Gaunes, who is the brother of Lancelot’s father, King Ban of Benoic. Ban flees his kingdom when it comes under attack by King Claudas, and dies in exile. His brother Bors, Lionel’s father, dies of grief shortly afterward, leaving both Benoic and Gaunes in the hands of Claudas.\textsuperscript{39} The same tradition that has Edward bearing Gawain’s arms in 1334 provides these arms for Lionel and his family:

\textsuperscript{35} Cal. Charter Rolls, IV. 1327-41, pp. 348-9; CPR 1338-1340, p. 393.
\textsuperscript{38}M. Keen, ‘Chivalry and English Kingship in the Later Middle Ages’ in War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150-1500, ed. C. Given-Wilson (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 260-1.
\textsuperscript{39}Lancelot-Grail, III, 13-16.
As far as the colour scheme is concerned, these arms fit well with the arms carried by Edward, Bradestone and Montague, but they are quite dissimilar in pattern to those that Edward bears. This perhaps implies there is some kind of dual meaning in the Lionel/Gawain combination. Can anything be found in the tale of Sir Lionel that may have been appealing to Edward III?

Following the death of his father and whilst their mother flees to a nunnery, Lionel and his younger brother, also Bors, are handed over to the care of a knight named Pharien, to be raised in secret in the hope they will one day come into their inheritance. Claudas discovers their existence and persuades Pharien to hand the boys over, before confining them in a tower along with their erstwhile protector. The Lady of the Lake, who already has charge of their cousin Lancelot, hears of the plight of the princes, and has her servant, Seraide, help them escape the court of the usurper. Whilst at dinner, the impetuous and wrathful young Lionel tries to kill Claudas by beating him about the head with a cup, smashing his crown in the process. In the confusion, Lionel takes up the smitten usurper’s sword and mortally wounds his son, Dorin. Seraide intervenes, and uses her magic to transform Lionel and Bors into a pair of greyhounds, enabling them to escape from Claudas’s court, and continue their education with

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40 Lancelot-Grail, III, 22.
41 Lancelot-Grail, III, 47-54.
Lancelot in the realm of the Lady of the Lake.\textsuperscript{42} Lionel is eventually knighted at the court of Arthur, having followed in his cousin’s footsteps to Britain, and is engaged in the adventurous life of a knight errant.\textsuperscript{43} He fights in the war against Claudas, at the culmination of which Lancelot nominates him to be King of Gaul, a title which is eventually assumed by Lancelot.\textsuperscript{44} Prior to the Lancelot’s war against Arthur, Lionel is crowned King of Gaunes by his cousin, finally coming into his birthright.\textsuperscript{45} He meets his end in battle against the sons of Mordred, being slain by the eldest of them, Melehan. He is buried by his brother at Winchester in a tomb befitting a king.\textsuperscript{46} Lionel’s prowess is undoubted; he is the image of Lancelot, his cousin, and considered to be one of the greatest knights in the world.\textsuperscript{47}

However, the same Arthurian canon also offers us examples of Lionel’s fallibility and a whole host of less savoury aspects to his character. He repeatedly gets himself captured and needs to be rescued by Lancelot; on not one, but two occasions he is whipped with thorns by his captors.\textsuperscript{48} Lionel is also distinctly impetuous and impulsive from an early age.\textsuperscript{49} He has trouble containing his rage at a perceived betrayal by his brother Bors, when the latter chooses to save a maiden from harm rather than rescue Lionel from yet another spell of captivity. The picture below tells the story, Lionel is naked and being beaten with thorns, whilst his brother moves in the opposite direction towards the imperilled maiden.

\textsuperscript{42} Lancelot-Grail, III, 55-7.  
\textsuperscript{43} Lancelot-Grail, IV, 114.  
\textsuperscript{44} Lancelot-Grail, V, 399.  
\textsuperscript{45} Lancelot-Grail, VII, 86.  
\textsuperscript{46} Lancelot-Grail, VII, 131-4.  
\textsuperscript{47} Lancelot-Grail, III, 49; Lancelot-Grail, VII, 89.  
\textsuperscript{48} Lancelot-Grail, V, 84; Lancelot-Grail, VI, 108.  
\textsuperscript{49} Lancelot-Grail, III, 49, 54.
Despite Bors begging his forgiveness, Lionel wounds him grievously when they next meet. Bors is unarmed and will not fight against his brother, but Lionel tramples him with his horse and is about to cut off his head, when a hermit intervenes, throwing himself over the prone and helpless Bors. In spite of the hermit pointing out the danger of committing a mortal sin, Lionel kills him trying to get to Bors. Even the intervention of fellow knight Calogrenant cannot curtail Lionel’s rage, as he too loses his life trying to protect Bors from his brother’s wrath. The only way Lionel can be subdued is through divine intervention in the form of a bolt of lightning sent from heaven. In this episode, Lionel shows himself to lack the self control exhibited by other knights of the Round Table, revealing a dark, dangerous and altogether less palatable side of his character.\(^{50}\)

Of all the protagonists in the tales of Arthur, Lionel seems to be a strange choice, especially for one as well-versed in the legend as Edward is likely to have been. Yet his use of the name and arms of this minor Arthurian knight was clearly not merely a whim. In the year of the Dunstable tournament, Edward was supplied with hangings of Lombardy work for an entire room, with a green taffeta border powdered with the arms of Lionel (which, of course, are not the arms of Lionel, but those of Gawain). In 1338, he named his son, born in Antwerp, after the knight and at the betrothal of the young prince four years later at another tournament at Dunstable, green, red and white were the predominant colours and the decoration was to include the arms of the Sir Lionel hybrid on a green field.\(^{51}\) Edward was transferring the arms of the Arthurian knight to his son. Indeed, the future arms of the prince may reflect this association, being the arms of England differenced with a label of three points argent, each charged with a canton gules, thus retaining the white and red.\(^{52}\) It was argued by Beltz that this label related to the honour of Clare, which devolved on Lionel through Elizabeth de Clare, grandmother of his wife, Elizabeth de Burgh.\(^{53}\) However, the arms of Clare, Or, three chevrons gules,\(^{54}\) bear no relation to what amounts to the Argent, a quarter gules in miniature found on the arms of Lionel of Antwerp, and it seems at least plausible that the label is rooted in the events of the 1334 tournament.

Juliet Vale muses that the persona of Lionel was assumed in relation to the lions, or leopards, on the arms of England and Caroline Shenton adds that this was the latest

\(^{50}\) Lancelot-Grail, III, 117-119.
\(^{51}\) J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry, p. 69.
\(^{52}\) See Appendix II.
\(^{53}\) G. Beltz, Garter, p. 130.
\(^{54}\) Rolls of Arms of Edward I, ed. G. Brault, II, 106.
and most explicit event in a trend of leopard/lion imagery associated with Edward.\textsuperscript{55} Whilst the leopard in medieval bestiary often had negative connotations, there is an alternative definition which may explain why Edward was happy with the association. A leopard was not merely the pard cross-bred with a lion, but the heraldic charge \textit{lion passant-guardant}. A lion walking and looking around him was thought to be behaving like a leopard and was therefore known as a \textit{lion-leoparde}. The same charge is found on the arms of England; the lion, king of beasts, is a symbol of Christ and an animal of courage and ferocity to be both feared and admired.\textsuperscript{56} Edward himself owned a menagerie, and seems to have taken a number of big cats north with him in 1333. Having the beasts of the royal arms accompanying the king on campaign cements an explicit association with such beasts and the king in the minds of his people. Approaching the issue with this perspective, the naming of Lionel of Antwerp is not so much an act of Arthurian enthusiasm but a conscious effort to manipulate the imagery of Edward’s kingship to include his son, Lionel: the son of the ‘Lion of England’.\textsuperscript{57} This is compelling, but does not take into account the assumption of the mythical arms of Sir Lionel, \textit{Argent, a quarter gules}, for the Dunstable tournament. The arms of England, Edward’s own arms, bearing the lions as a charge, surely would have sufficed if an association with the king of beasts was all Edward was trying to achieve.

Perhaps the answer does indeed lie somewhere in the story of the Arthurian Lionel. Ian Mortimer makes the interesting point that the youth of Edward and Lionel converge at the point where they live in thrall at the court of the man who has usurped the throne of their father. In the case of the mythical Lionel, this is that of Claudas, mirrored in Edward’s case by Roger Mortimer, his mother’s lover, who ruled England in all but name following the deposition of Edward II.\textsuperscript{58} Interestingly, the association between Edward and Lionel may have been initiated by Roger Mortimer. For the tournament at Wigmore in 1329, Edward was given a cup decorated with the fictitious arms of Lionel by his mother’s paramour.\textsuperscript{59} One can imagine some of the lines spoken

\textsuperscript{57} C. Shenton, ‘Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard’, pp. 73-80.
\textsuperscript{58} I. Mortimer, \textit{The Perfect King}, p. 115. Compelling as this is, Mortimer perhaps makes too much of the deposition and probable death of Edward II and its effect upon the psychological state of the young Edward III.
by Lionel on the matter of his father’s kingdom just as easily being spoken by Edward with regard to Mortimer. Speaking of his plan to kill Claudas, Lionel says:

if I die trying to win what is mine by right, death will be welcome, for it is better to die in honour than live in shame, robbed of my land. My soul, moreover, will be at peace if I have sought revenge, for if the son of a king is disinherited, he is in fact deprived of his life.\(^{60}\)

Indeed, this is a sentiment which Edward acted upon in 1330, seizing Mortimer at Nottingham castle and subsequently having him executed. Compelling as this analogy may be, it does not solve the problem of Thomas Bradestone bearing the arms of Lionel differenced. Putting aside for a moment the fact that the arms Edward carries at Dunstable are those of sir Gawain and not sir Lionel, and assuming that Edward is indeed connecting himself with Lionel in this manner, then the role of Bors, Lionel’s brother and co-captive at the court of Claudas, would surely be played by Edward’s own brother, John of Eltham, who had shared Edward’s own childhood experience. If anyone is playing this role, the armorial similarity implies that in this case it is Bradestone, not Prince John [Eltham], who is playing this role.

Furthermore, in 1334 Mortimer had been dead for four years. If Edward wanted to celebrate stepping out from Mortimer’s shadow or mark the end of the unhappy association with a man who laid claim to his birthright, perhaps he would have done so sooner. There had been four known tournaments between Mortimer’s fall and Dunstable.\(^{61}\) Taking this as a solution to the problem surely raises more questions than it answers. The parity in the formative years of Edward and Lionel is intriguing, even more so when we consider another key biographical aspect shared by the two men. Lionel eventually assumed the throne of his father and is touted as a possible king of Gaul. Edward, as we know, also had a claim to this throne, and was to make a point of emphasising this later in his reign. It has been argued that this was a political tool to justify his actions in relation to England’s continental possessions and the alliances he forged in the Low Countries in the later 1330s, but could this episode allude to the fact that the claim was in his mind as early as 1334? Lionel’s assumption of the throne of Gaunes could also be another line of comparison with the life of Edward. Gaunes, like Aquitaine, was part of France, held by Lionel as a vassal to the king of Gaul, just as

\(^{60}\) \textit{Lancelot-Grail}, III, 51.
Edward’s birthright was held as a vassal to the king of France. There are, then, a number of possible reasons why Edward could have chosen the Lionel of the vulgate cycle as his chivalric alter-ego.

An alternative model to the Arthurian Lionel can perhaps be found in the pages of the huge romance *Perceforest*. This massive work was composed in the Low Countries, probably under the patronage of Count William of Hainault, in the late 1320s or early 1330s. Set in England and the Low Countries, it takes the form of a prehistory of Arthur’s Britain under the stewardship of Alexander, the world conqueror with whom Count William cultivated an affiliation.\(^{62}\) In the words of Jean le Bel, Edward held such great feasts and tournaments attended by the great and good of England that ‘everyone said he was the second King Arthur’,\(^{63}\) and we have seen that there is a perceptible effort on Edward’s part to align himself with Arthurian imagery. It is possible that Edward III was presented with a copy of this work on his marriage to Count William’s daughter, Philippa, in 1328. *Perceforest* can be seen as the unification of the Alexander and Arthur legends, a unity made real by the joining of Edward and Philippa in marriage.\(^{64}\) Edward’s possession of a copy of *Perceforest* at this time means that it is conceivable that a tournament held in 1334 could be influenced by his reading of the romance. The Sir Lyonnel of *Perceforest* is a young squire at the start of the romance, the grandson of the evil knight Darnant, whose clan are at war with King Perceforest and Alexander. Lyonnel immediately distances himself from his grandfather on encountering the king, saying that he feels his duty is to his liege lord rather than his clan, claiming that his greatest wish is to be knighted by Perceforest’s hand.\(^{65}\) Lyonnel is actually first amongst a group of young aspirants to be knighted by the king, as it was thought that he would grow to be the most valiant. This would have been an appealing concept for a young king such as Edward III, aspiring to live up to his family name and emulate his bellicose and competent grandfather.

Lyonnel and his companions were present for the coronation of King Perceforest and participated in a tournament whilst they waited for the ceremony to begin. The queen marked them out as being her own knights, interestingly with the emblem of a silver rose in the right hand corner of their shields to distinguish them from the other knights at the tournament.\(^{66}\) Lyonnel excels on his debut and at the subsequent meeting

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62 *Perceforest*, p. 25.
63 *The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel*, ed. N. Bryant, p. 65.
64 *Perceforest*, p. 25.
65 *Perceforest*, p. 82.
66 Perhaps the golden *Cinquefoil* or rose on the shield of Bradestone makes reference to this.
at the feast of the goddess Venus, where he is described as ‘the flower of all the knights at the tournament’.

Indeed, Lyonnel’s prowess in *Perceforest* could well have been more appealing to Edward than that of his vulgate equivalent. He rapidly gains a reputation for violence and skill that made challengers wary. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the trials which Lyonnel undergoes in order to satisfy his desire to see again a maiden he watches bathing in a pool.

After a series of mystical encounters, a trope common in such romances, Lyonnel discovers that in order to see the maiden again, he must defeat a golden-haired giant. His desire is such that he thinks nothing of embarking on such a quest, despite the advice of his squire to the contrary. Along the way, his prowess is repeatedly tested, firstly by fighting and vanquishing a pair of lions who have been terrorising the surrounding area. He takes one of the cubs as his companion and travels to a castle, where we are told that: ‘his renown was such that ladies and damsels and knights declared that all reported deeds of chivalry were pale and dull compared with the noble lord Lyonnel, whose honour was ever growing’. Despite slaying a dragon on the way and eventually defeating the giant, Lyonnel is tricked out of his prize and never gets to see his maiden again. Aside from his prowess, there is another aspect of the *Perceforest* Lyonnel that may have repercussions for the events at Dunstable in 1334. Lyonnel is a tournament champion who changes the device on his shield so regularly that he is often impossible to recognise; this provides a tempting justification for Edward assuming the name of Lionel whilst bearing the arms of Gawain. The possibility exists that Edward found a pleasing similarity to himself in aspects of the *Perceforest* Lyonnel and the vulgate Lionel, and that both characters influenced his assumption of this identity.

Finally, what of Thomas Bradestone? He and Edward were doubtless close associates. Royal favour can be seen as early as December 1327 when Bradestone was awarded custody of the lands and rents of Simon de Northwode during the minority of his heir. Bradestone was introduced to royal service around this time, probably by Thomas Berkeley, and it can be argued that the rose, or *cinquefoil* found on Bradeston’s coat of arms is related to the patronage he received from the Berkeley family.

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67 *Perceforest*, pp. 111-2, 162.
68 *Perceforest*, pp. 178, 192.
69 *Perceforest*, p. 197.
70 *CPR* 1327-1330, p. 193; *CCR* 1330-1333, p. 203.
He became a Yeoman in the Royal Household and was granted the life custody of the forest of Kingswode and the chase of Filwode.\textsuperscript{71} He was a knight by September 1330, likely in connection with Maurice Berkeley being retained for life by the Crown with 14 men-at-arms,\textsuperscript{72} and to better maintain himself in his new station was granted the custody of the town and barton of Gloucester: effectively a life grant.\textsuperscript{73} His role in the events at Nottingham castle in the October of 1330, are unclear, but Caroline Shenton posits that the nature of his involvement is hinted at in a royal armourer’s account of November 1330. The account names Bradestone and six others in royal service who were to be the recipients of rather expensive and ornate aketons, an aketon being a quilted jacket worn between the shirt and a coat of mail to protect against friction. The price of these garments, and the fact that the costs are noted individually on the account, marks them out as somewhat special.\textsuperscript{74} Three of the jackets on the account were made for John Neville, William Clinton and Robert Ufford, men we know were involved directly in Mortimer’s fall. With Bradestone, the other men named are Maurice Berkeley, Pancio de Controne, the king’s physician, and Robert Wyville, bishop of Salisbury and clerk to queen Isabella. Two similar jackets had been made months before for the king and a man named William. Shenton argues this is almost certainly William Montague, confidant of the king and one of the main protagonists in the coup of 1330. What appears to be happening here is that the men in Edward’s household are being

\textsuperscript{71} CPR 1327-1330, p. 342. On Bradestone and his association with the Berkeleys see chapter VI, pp. 169-71.
\textsuperscript{72} CPR 1327-1330, p. 530.
\textsuperscript{73} CPR 1330-1333, p. 16. The grant was for the duration of the life of Queen Isabella, but for the remainder of Bradestone’s life should he survive her.
demarcated by a distinguishing item of apparel to signify their status as loyal supporters of Edward, in the same way as we know occurred with tournament teams and the Garter knights.\textsuperscript{75} In light of this association, it no longer seems quite as strange that Bradestone would appear as a companion knight of the king, a player on the chivalric stage, distinguished as such through the arms he bore at Dunstable in 1334. His close relationship with Edward is compounded by Bradestone being pardoned all debts in April 1339 ‘in part recompense of his labours and charges in the service of the king from his early years in constant attendance at his side’.\textsuperscript{76} For similar reasons, he was granted in fee the manor of Sheldeford in Surrey later the same year,\textsuperscript{77} and raised to the status of banneret, with an annuity of 500 marks.\textsuperscript{78}

What is hammered home when one attempts to understand what these events meant to contemporaries is that they were extraordinarily complex occasions. This tournament alone and Edward’s assumption of the identity of Lionel, allows us a glimpse of the layers of meaning and intricacy within the symbolism employed. Thematically, the assumption of this identity could include: any or all of the associations with Edward’s childhood, the symbolism of the lion to the English royal house, an affinity with Arthurian heroes such as Gawain and the less well-known Lionel, with all that that entails, the creation and maintenance of dynastic ties and its associated imagery, and perhaps even an allusion to the claim to the throne of France. This last possibility is tantalisingly reinforced when one marries Lionel’s continental associations to Gawain as heir to the throne of Camelot; thus in the two characters the kingdoms of France and England are unified.

The tournament also highlights some of Edward’s intimate relationships with men such as Bradestone and William Montague. The possibility exists that the assumption of the arms of Lionel was part of some kind of ‘in joke’ for Edward and his friends. Of course, this is conjecture, but read in a certain way, one can imagine knights nudging one another and chuckling to themselves as the king rode by with a grin on his face, bearing the name of a petulant bit-part in a well known tale and the arms of Gawain, a knight of great repute. There is of course, the outside possibility that Edward had made an error and simply bore the wrong arms by mistake. But the very fact that Edward commissioned a number of items associating these arms explicitly with the

\textsuperscript{75} C. Shenton, ‘Edward III and the Coup of 1330’, pp. 24-5.
\textsuperscript{76} CPR 1338-1340, p. 381.
\textsuperscript{77} CPR 1338-1340, p. 399.
\textsuperscript{78} CPR 1338-1340, p. 395.
name of Lionel implies that if he was in error, the error was permitted to endure. An even more remote possibility, yet one it would be churlish not to raise is that the Monsr Lionel listed on the roll of arms was not Edward III at all, but the presence of so many items pertaining to Lionel in the royal accounts of the period make this thankfully unlikely. Whatever Edward actually meant by his emulation of Lionel in 1334, it is more than likely that this symbolically charged event would have been clearly understood by those present. A contemporary audience would have possessed the ability to ‘read’ such subtle allusions in ways problematic to the modern mind. Such events highlight Edward’s clever use of semiotic devices to convey messages to those he gathered around him; he employed the trappings of chivalry and romance to enhance these messages, to pick out and honour those who had done him good service and to bind men to king and country. Tournaments were events at which the propaganda of Edward’s chivalric kingship was deployed, events that enhanced the cohesion of the military classes so vital to their successes in war.

Being such elaborate social and political spectacles, it comes as no surprise that tournaments play an important role in other great chivalric ceremonial events of Edward’s reign, such as the deeply interesting, yet abortive, Order of the Round Table, and the famous and enduring Order of the Garter. The proposed Order of the Round Table in 1344 gives us another insight into the way in which chivalric ceremonial within Edward’s court was influenced by prevalent romantic ideas, specifically the legend of England’s greatest conquering monarch, Arthur. Any degree of certainty pertaining to literacy and the way texts were consumed is difficult, but it is clear that tales of Arthur were well-known, perhaps through recitals if not individual, private reading. It is but a small step, as we have seen, from recital to re-enactment, and this is no better illustrated than in the proposed order of chivalry in 1344.79 This becomes more pertinent when one considers the potency of Arthur as an emblem of the proto-nationalistic sentiments circulating in England at the time, and Edward’s previous assumption of Arthurian identity on a public stage. Here though, there is no ambiguity or confusion as to who takes the role of Arthur; Edward is not attempting to be a ‘first among equals’, but is consciously setting himself at the head of his knights, creating ritualised, hierarchical space on the legendary Arthurian model which would have been familiar to contemporaries. The first reference to a ‘Round Table’ event in England, seemingly a kind of spin-off, theatrical tournament using Arthurian characters and

themes, comes in 1232, with a prohibitive writ from Henry II.\textsuperscript{80} It was then banned altogether by royal command in 1252.\textsuperscript{81} Details of what such events entailed are few, but a poem by a *jongleur* named Sarrasin may provide an insight into the way in which jousting and play-acting may have combined in a festival of chivalry. The poem describes a tournament at La Hem, north-eastern France, in 1278, a region which was traditionally a hotbed of tournament activity. Utilising the material of Chretien de Troyes Arthurian romances, events take the form of elaborate aristocratic role-play and consist of a series of interludes involving characters such as Guinevere, Kay, and Yvain, along with the essential abusive dwarf.\textsuperscript{82}

Edward III’s own Round Table project culminated in the festivities described by Adam Murimuth in 1344. The event is opened by a ‘solempne convivium’, with the ladies dining in Windsor’s great hall, seated according to their rank. Meanwhile, the Prince of Wales, knights, barons, and presumably the king himself, attended a lavish banquet in tents with all the other guests.\textsuperscript{83} Interestingly, the ladies were accompanied by two French knights, the only two to have travelled across the Channel for the occasion. This could be read in two ways, the first being that the two Frenchmen were fortunate to be dining with the women; they found themselves in some sort of courtly utopia and revelled in the service they could provide to such exalted ladies as the queen of England and her mother-in-law. Alternatively, it could be read as Edward taking the opportunity to offer a subtle insult. Murimuth points out that the seating plan was arranged by Edward himself, so the French knights did not find themselves in the great hall by chance. Perhaps the king was implying that French knights would be more at home with women than in the company of his own advisors, friends and captains. The announcement of the founding of the Round Table comes at the end of three days of jousting, involving the king and nineteen other knights against all comers. A prize was given to the most successful challengers on each of the three days, respectively: Miles Stapleton, Philip Despenser and John Blount. This appears to be a joust akin to any other, with no reference to any Arthurian antics. This is curious, as the Round Table ‘event’ itself was arranged for the following Whitsun, and oaths were taken by those who wished to be members.\textsuperscript{84} Interestingly, there is no direct allusion in Murimuth’s description that this was to be an ‘order’ of any kind, merely that the ‘nobilissima

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\item \textsuperscript{80} *Foedera* I, i, 205.
\item \textsuperscript{81} *CCR* 1251-1253, p. 251.
\item \textsuperscript{82} J. R. Barber, ‘Why Did Edward III Hold the Round Table-The Chivalric Background’, pp. 90-1.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Murimuth, p. 155.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Murimuth, p. 156.
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domus’ was to be constructed for the event, with no implication that there would be other events to follow. The oaths taken in this case, could be nothing more than the commitment to observe the rules and adhere to the ‘storyline’ of the proposed Round Table event to come, as seen in the account of the Round Table at La Hem in 1278, rather than any desire to emulate a permanent knightly fraternity on an Arthurian theme. On the other hand, when Henry of Lancaster was elected the captain of the aforementioned tournament society in Lincoln in 1345, it was permitted on the grounds that ‘if the king on the said feast have any assembly elsewhere within the realm by pretext of the round table, jousts, or other deeds of arms, the jousts at Lincoln shall not be held but the captain shall appoint another day for them within one month’.  

This at least implies that the proposal for a Round Table was to be somewhat more than a one-off event, yet by no means gives the impression that it was intended to be an order of chivalry in the same manner as the Garter a few years later. In any case it would appear that the proposed event was never held, and the grand building project was abandoned in November 1344.

Another version of the chronicle account of this event is known to exist. Whilst attributed to Murimuth, the Cotton MS. Nero D.x manuscript gives the date of the Windsor festival as ‘die sancti Georgii martyris’, as opposed to the accepted date of 19th January found in other versions of the text. This is a possible conflation, an error in the same manner to that made by Jean Froissart in confusing the 1344 tournament and the gathering held in 1348 on St George’s Day, also at Windsor, to celebrate the founding of the Order of the Garter. If this is the case, then this version of Murimuth’s chronicle was probably not penned by him at all, as it is likely he died prior to the founding of the Garter: he was in his seventy second year in 1346. This scribal uncertainty, coupled with the initial error in the account may cast aspersions on its reliability. This version, whilst not explicitly stating that this is supposed to be a confraternity of knights, implies as much through Edward’s statement of a desire to maintain a Round Table and the specific number of knights to be involved; though the possibility remains that, being written a number of years after the events it describes,

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85 CPR 1343-1345, p. 379.
87 Murimuth, p. 231.
88 Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 454.
89 E. M Thompson, ed. Adae Murimuth, p. x.
there is a degree of confusion between events of 1344 and those of the Garter foundation four years later.

What is of interest in this version, however, are the extra details it provides about the ceremonial nature of the occasion. On the Thursday morning following the jousting, the king was arrayed so as to project the most discernible symbol of royal power possible. He wore his crown and a mantle of precious velvet, and carried the sceptre of his office; Philippa was similarly attired. Following the hearing of Mass, the company is led in procession to the point of assembly by the sceptre bearing earls of Derby and Salisbury, as respective steward and marshal of England. It is here that Edward swears upon the Bible that he will begin and maintain a Round Table of 300 knights after the manner of King Arthur. Derby, Salisbury, Warwick, Arundel, Suffolk and Pembroke are among the notables who echo his oath. The end of the ceremony is marked by the sounding of drums and trumpets, whereby the attendees feast opulently. This is another example of Edward making use of chivalry and its trappings to assert a positive vision of his kingship, forge tangible associations with the pseudo-historic past and strengthen the bonds between himself and his magnates. Where in previous tournaments he had appeared styled as an Arthurian knight errant, in elaborate costume or simply as a competitor, at the culmination of the festivities here he appears in the full regalia of kingship and the Round Table association fixes him in the contemporary mind as Arthur reborn. From the hearing of Mass and through the procession, hierarchical, chivalric space is created, culminating in the announcement of the Round Table and the solemn oaths that follow it. Reversion to normality and a return to the mundane is marked by the sounding of the trumpets and the beating of drums, and Arthur becomes Edward once again. This projection of power may have been, in part, purposefully contrived to contribute to the effectiveness of recruitment for the forthcoming campaigns of 1345 and 1346, which were to require vast mobilisation of manpower. The general letter of protection issued ‘for all of whatsoever region and nation coming to the tournament appointed to be held at Wyndesore’, certainly implies the anticipation of a large attendance; thus chivalry and politics are combined to achieve Edward’s ends.

Whether the Round Table event was intended to be a precursor to the foundation of an order of chivalry or not, there are elements of the 1344 event, and indeed the

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90 Murimuth, p. 231.
91 Murimuth, p. 232.
92 CPR 1343-1345, p. 159.
subsequent foundation of the Order of the Garter, which are influenced by contemporary romance literature. It is with the founding of Perceforest’s order of chivalry, the Franc Palais, that striking parallels with Edward’s activities can be drawn. The hall housing the Order is similar to the work undertaken by Edward at Windsor:

> it was on the first floor of a round tower of astounding size: the diameter of the hall was more than two hundred feet. In the centre stood an enormous pillar that supported the vaulted ceiling...right around the hall curved a marble table, most beautifully made, standing quite high off the ground on pillars; and it ran so close to the windows that anyone sitting at the table would be resting his back against the tower wall.\(^{93}\)

Perhaps more significantly, its circumference was such that it could seat 300 knights abreast;\(^{94}\) the round hall and the number of knights are identical to that of the 1344 event. Richard Barber argues that it may be this number which cements Perceforest as the inspiration for Edward’s Round Table, rather than the Round Table of Arthur. The classical setting of Perceforest may have influenced the author’s choice of 300 knights as the origin of knighthood was traced to the equites of classical Rome, numbering 100 from each of the three original Roman tribes. The fact that Edward chose this number for his Round Table, rather than the 150 knights of Arthur’s table found in the vulgate cycle, points towards the emulation of Perceforest.\(^{95}\) Another echo can be found in the use of the tournament to decide whether individuals were worthy of admittance into the order. Perceforest provides us with a vivid, contemporary, albeit romantically embellished, account of how such events worked and the spectacle they presented.\(^{96}\)

The prize on offer was one of the coveted seats at the table of the Franc Palais, and the honour of hanging one’s shield behind the seat in a manner similar to that of the stall plates of the Order of the Garter in St George’s chapel. Prior to the tournament, the ladies gather together to decide who amongst them is the most beautiful, as she will be the one to bestow a kiss upon the knight victorious in the tournament. The king is seated with them as the tournament was deemed inappropriate and too dangerous for ‘such a high prince’.\(^{97}\) They are close enough to the action for one of the ladies to be struck with a piece of armour sheared from the cuirass of one of the participants.\(^{98}\) This highlights

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\(^{93}\) Perceforest, p. 249.  
\(^{94}\) Perceforest, p. 249.  
\(^{95}\) R. Barber, ‘Imaginary Buildings’ in Edward III’s Round Table at Windsor, pp. 106-7.  
\(^{96}\) For the account of the Franc Palais tourney see Perceforest, pp. 253-61.  
\(^{97}\) Perceforest, p. 254.  
\(^{98}\) Perceforest, p. 255.
the importance of observation in such events, emphasising that honour is only achieved by class consensus, and also foregrounds the importance of women to this process: it is for them and the king that the knights ‘perform’. There are, of course, numerous differences between the Franc Palais and Edward’s own activities. Where Perceforest sits with the ladies to observe, Edward was often a participant in his chivalric events. The manner of the table also differs slightly; Edward’s table, as we know, was proposed to be one that was completely round, in the manner of Arthur’s table. The table of the Franc Palais is not completely round, but semi-circular, with a rather grand fountain in the centre which is lacking in Edward’s proposed structure. Yet the sentiment remained the same and Edward’s motivation in 1344 can perhaps be neatly summarised by the words of the herald at the close of the Franc Palais tournament: ‘Ah! Noble Perceforest, how you should rejoice, being lord, master and king of the Franc Palais, the home of such high chivalry as this! Henceforth you can boast that you’re the king of the finest knights in the world’.99 Seemingly, Edward’s proposal was a fusion of Arthurian ideas and the more appealing motifs of Perceforest, itself rooted in the Arthurian tradition. At tournaments and other such chivalric events, the boundaries between romance, myth and reality could become blurred in the chimerical reality of chivalric spectacle.

Elements of both the Round Table and the Franc Palais creep into the most enduring legacy of Edward’s chivalric kingship, the Order of the Garter. Though a much more limited company in terms of numbers, it was clearly intended to be a company of heroes, comprising members that were ‘un gentilhomme de sang, et chevalier sans reproche’.100 Akin to the Franc Palais the arms of the members were displayed in the sanctioned chivalric space in which the meetings of the Order took place.101 Much has been written of the reasons behind the Garter foundation in 1349, and Juliet Vale offers perhaps the most compelling justification for its creation.102 Her work puts forward that the foundation of the Order was politically motivated, revolving around the military successes of the 1340s and culminating in the great victories at Crécy and Calais. The famous, conspicuously French motto of the order, and blue and gold, the royal colours of France as well as of the Garter, were seemingly both

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99 Perceforest, p. 259.
101 Each of the member knights displayed their sword, helm and banner in their particular stall whilst alive, and following their death, a stall plate bearing their name and arms commemorated their membership, and through heraldry, their life, deeds and lineage. D. Boulton, Knights of the Crown, p. 138; Perceforest, p. 253.
102 J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry, pp. 76-91.
employed on livery, beds and garments prior to the 1346 campaign. As we have seen, it is possible that Edward took his claim to the throne of France more seriously than has been previously thought and used tournaments and their associated imagery to project this claim to the chivalric community of England. Therefore, we could read the Garter foundation as another assertion to the claim, a claim already vindicated by the great triumph in France. Those men with seats in the Windsor chapel were bound to that claim through their membership; they were partners in the endeavours of the realm.

Though many of the members of the Order can be placed as participants in the great military feats of 1346-7, most notably the battle of Crécy itself, this is not exclusively the case. This problem aside, the foundation surely was more than a commemorative fraternity. It is important to try to understand what it meant to contemporaries to be a Garter knight and what, if any, benefits and responsibilities were conferred upon the brethren? One of the aspects of the Garter was surely tournament related, and it is possible that the twenty six man complement could be divided into two, evenly matched tournament ‘teams’, led respectively by the Edward and the Black Prince. This, at first glance is compelling; it seems that such teams did indeed exist and were sometimes made up of thirteen members. At the tournament at Smithfield in 1343, where the prize was taken by the earl of Warwick and in which the Black Prince participated, one of the groups involved consisted of the ‘Pope’ and twelve of his ‘Cardinals’, making up a thirteen man team. In a prose redaction of Robert de Boron’s Merlin (c.1200), Merlin speaks of both Christ’s table at the last supper and Joseph of Arimathea’s Grail table having thirteen places, giving further significance to the number. As we have seen, tournaments formed an important part of chivalric ceremonial, whether it be to celebrate a victory or to mark an occasion in Edward’s life, such as the birth of a child. With the centrality of prowess in chivalric ideology and the fondness for festivity at the Edwardian court, tournaments abounded. Hastiludes

103 J. Vale, Edward III and Chivalry, pp. 80-2.
104 Of the founder members, it is well known that Henry of Grosmont and the Captal de Buch were in Aquitaine when the battle was fought at Crécy. The whereabouts of Sanchet d’Abrecicourt are unknown, and it is a similar case for the somewhat elusive Henry Eam, though he was retained for life by the Black Prince in 1349 and may have been with the first division in August 1346 (CPR 1348-1350, p. 336). Ralph Stafford, later earl of Stafford, was also in Aquitaine, as we have seen, despite assertions elsewhere to the contrary; Knighton, p. 65; Murimuth, p. 249; Avesbury, p. 373; Scalacronica, p. 135.
106 Murimuth, p. 146.
108 See R. Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, appendix 4, pp. 520-4 for a list of the known tournaments of EIII’s reign, and the probable reasons they were held.
were certainly an element of the Garter foundation, but the notion that the structure of the Order was directly related to tournament activity is arguably problematic.

As the source material gives us few real insights in this regard, it is difficult to speak with any authority about the age of tournament participants, or the related ability of the body to endure the rigours of the tournament as it ages. However, some tentative comments about the age of some of the founder members, and their capability of competing in this manner is certainly possible. Of the twenty three founder members of the Order whose ages we can be fairly certain about on the probable date of the first Garter tournament on St George’s day 1349, the average age is a fairly robust thirty two. There are a number of men in their late teens and early twenties, such as Hugh Courtenay, Bartholomew Burgherssh, Roger Mortimer and William Montague, men who would be enthused and vital at the start of their careers in arms. Yet there are also men who would be seen as elder statesmen of the order. Ralph Stafford, John de Grey and Thomas Wale were all approaching fifty, while Richard Fitzsimon, the Black Prince’s standard bearer, was the oldest man at fifty four years of age. Robert Ufford, earl of Suffolk, who took Fitzsimon’s place in the order following his death, was fifty one in 1349 and Thomas Ughtred, upon his admission to the order between 1358 and 1360, was in at least his mid-sixties. It is probable that a fair proportion of these men would be unwilling or unable to participate in the physical exertions of the list and the melee. In 1342, age and infirmity was used as the excuse for non-attendance at the tournament held at Dunstable for the earls of Gloucester (fifty three), Arundel (at the tender age of twenty nine), Devon (thirty nine), Surrey (fifty six) and Huntingdon (thirty eight), though this may be a weak excuse in the case of Huntingdon and Arundel, who were seemingly in disfavour at the time. Obviously we cannot apply this directly to the members of the Garter as all individuals are different, but it does perhaps indicate the age at which men decided to leave tournament participation to the more vigorous members of the military community. That being said, there is evidence that some of these men remained militarily active as their beards turned grey. At fifty eight, Ufford was co-marshal of the Black Prince’s army that

110 Complete Peerage, I, 346.
111 Complete Peerage, I, 242.
112 Complete Peerage, IV, 324.
113 Complete Peerage, XII, pt. I, 508.
114 Complete Peerage, VI, 648.
fought at Poitiers in 1356. He was on campaign with Edward III again in 1359, and this large force also included retinues led by Ralph Stafford, at almost sixty, and Thomas Ughtred, who would have been approaching seventy. Age was clearly no real obstruction to participation in military activity, though it is surely questionable that a man in the autumn of his life was willing or physically capable of facing off against men forty years their junior on the tournament field. Whilst it is likely that tournaments were planned to be a part of the activities of the Order of the Garter at annual meetings, it seems plausible that any division into ‘teams’ on either side of St George’s chapel was symbolic rather than practical. If this is the case, it further contributes to the altered reality created through chivalric ceremonial.

There was no room for ambiguity and altered reality as far as the hierarchy of the Order was concerned. Edward was firmly placed as the figurehead of the fraternity and wielded near complete power. He was responsible for the appointment of the twenty five other founder members and also had the right to appoint all but the first twenty six clerks and veteran knights. His permission was required for any companion to be absent from annual meetings, requiem mass or election and also had to be sought if any companion wished to leave the country. He also had effective veto over any of the Order’s internal legislation and was literally at the forefront of the Order in terms of the hierarchical space occupied within the chapel. His costume also differed from the other companions and he occupied the place of honour at the rear of processional activity. The Prince of Wales is also given his own space in which to operate at the head of his own ‘side’ of the chapel, subservient to his father yet above the other companions. This is not the first time the prince had been distinguished from the other great men of the realm. He had already made his debut on the stage of chivalric ceremonial when he was created duke at the same time as his father raised six new earls in 1337. On this occasion, the six year old prince was set apart from the comparatively grizzled veterans elevated to earldoms, not only by his youth, but by his title, Duke of Cornwall, the first of that standing created in England.

Although the Order of the Garter can be seen as hierarchical in spatial organisation and in matters of obligation, it was distinctly egalitarian in matters of

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116 Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, 17, 354.
117 A. Ayton, Knights and Warhorses, p. 265.
118 D. Boulton, Knights of the Crown, p. 125.
119 Scalacronica, p. 123.
honour. It was a society led by the sovereign, but within which the sovereign was no less a companion than the other members.\textsuperscript{121} It is knighthood rather than lordship which is celebrated in the Order of the Garter. This can be seen as an extension of the idea of ‘anonymous’ participation in tournaments, further contributing to the altered state of reality within the chivalric sphere. The notion of equality allows traditional, hierarchical norms to be temporarily discarded: all members are companions of the Order, equals within a pre-ordained chivalric space. Although limited to the knightly class, membership of the Order and the ritual life within it removed the traditional strata amongst its members in relation to wealth and lineage. In this microcosm, it functioned not to maintain the status quo, but to promote change through the elimination of boundaries, the removal of classes within a class. The ritualistic side of Edwardian chivalry, whilst toeing the party line in regard to the supremacy of the monarchy, simultaneously served to subvert it in terms of wider chivalric community. It elevated the Garter companions above the normal parameters of their existence and forged an order of equals striving for the cultural capital of their caste: honour.

The obligations placed upon members of the Order were few. Many were related to the maintenance of the status of Windsor as a cult centre and the benefits to companions were either spiritual or directly related to personal honour. As the head of the Order, Edward carried the greatest obligation in the spiritual function of the fraternity. The spiritual element to the Garter is another factor which separates it from Edward’s previous chivalric activity, which was in part characterised by its secularism. At heart, the Garter was a religious foundation. The space in which its annual meetings were held was not an opulent, purpose built structure of chivalric excess, but a place of worship. The patron of the Order was chosen as St. George, long a favourite of England and a soldier martyr of sufficient bellicosity to suit Edward’s requirements for his new Order, a fitting patron for a society of heroes. Not least amongst the spiritual benefits were the masses to be sung for deceased members of the Order. Companions were obliged to pay for these masses themselves on a graded scale. The Sovereign was to pay to have 1000 masses sung for the deceased, a foreign king, 800, the Prince of Wales 700, and so on through the ranks of the companions down to bachelor knights such as Walter Paveley and Otho Holland who were obliged to pay for 100 masses to be sung.\textsuperscript{122} This practice obviously favours the more humble companions, who would receive many more masses than they ever paid out for upon the event of their death. For

\textsuperscript{121}D. Boulton, \textit{Knights of the Crown}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{122}D. Boulton, \textit{Knights of the Crown}, p. 139.
those members who died early in the Garter’s history, such as Sanchet d’Abrecicourt, Richard Fitz Simon, and Hugh Courtenay, the benefit was huge as their path through purgatory would be significantly eased by the masses paid for by their companions while they had to pay hardly anything themselves. The earthly benefits of membership were all attributable to status. To be a member of the Order was effectively to have been raised to a seat at the top table of English chivalry by the hand of the monarch himself, and to be seen as a knight of distinction and renown, possessed of unswerving loyalty to the Crown. The Garter was both a guarantee of honour whilst alive and a spiritual insurance policy for the next world, whilst providing a solid buttress for the chivalric monarchy of Edward III.

Chivalric space was not only created in tangible constructions like the chapel of St George at Windsor; it can also be temporarily constituted in much less serene circumstances. Evidence of this is seen immediately prior to the start of the Crécy campaign of 1346 when, in the calm before the storm, new knights are made, akin to new blades to be tested in the maelstrom of the battlefield. Upon landing at La Hogue, Edward’s first act was to knight the young Prince of Wales, as well as other significant young firebrands in his company such as Roger Mortimer and the son of his much missed companion, William Montague. John de Lisle was elevated to the status of banneret on the day of the battle of Crécy itself. It seems unlikely that the full solemnity of the ritual by which knights were made was observed on this occasion, and the scant descriptions of the event perhaps mark it out as fairly commonplace. Indeed, Edward knighted Henry of Flanders, perhaps the Henry Eam who was a founder member of the Order of the Garter, in 1339 upon crossing from Flanders into France. It has the feel of a field commission, a brevet rank, bestowed to be fully confirmed at another time and in another place. It also has the air of necessity. As we know, the prince was placed in nominal command of one of the English battles, and could hardly be expected to assume such responsibility were he not a knight. This adds context to the famous statement given to Edward III by Froissart when aid was requested for his son’s beleaguered division: ‘et dittes leur que je leur mande que il laissent à l’enfant gaegnier

123 G. Beltz, Garter, p. 92; Richard Barber has subsequently cast doubt on the death of d’Aubrechicourt, and indeed on the accepted list of the succession of Garter knights, R. Barber, Edward III and the Triumph of England, pp. 296-300, 499-510.
125 G. Beltz, Garter, p. 53.
126 Bartholomew Burghersh’s newsletter 17th July 1346, Murimuth, p. 200.
127 CPR 1345-1348, p. 194.
128 Froissart, ed. Ainsworth and Diller, I, 221.
ses esperons; car je voel, se Dieux l’a ordonné, que la journée soit sienne, et que li honneur l’en demeure et à chiaus en qui carge je l’ai bailliet’. Spurious as this statement may be, it gives the sense of knighthood bestowed, yet not confirmed. Once the prince was a knight, it seems he went on to make others of his companions knights also. Despite the aforementioned practicality of the English approach to warfare, the air crackles with chivalric energy on an occasion pregnant with possibility. The prince had turned sixteen the previous month and this event is symbolic of his coming of age in the eyes of his father and in the eyes of the English chivalric community, an elevation in the young man’s status. It also represents a continuity of sorts in the chivalrous traditions of the Plantagenet family. With the prince knighting a number of his followers immediately after becoming a knight himself, he is effectively selecting his honour guard for the forthcoming campaign, exercising his will for the first time in the chivalric sphere. It is also significant that Edward chose to knight him in France, when surely this could just as easily have been done in England prior to departure. This act further contributed to the prince’s legend; he was made a knight on French soil, the soil upon which he would see his greatest military feats performed. The ceremonial aspects of chivalry are laden with meaning and symbolism, adding to the exclusivity of the chivalric classes. To understand these events is to gain a foothold in understanding chivalry in England.

129 Froissart, ed. Ainswoth and Diller, I, 583.
130 The Chancellor of St Paul’s newsletter 17th July 1346, Murimuth, p. 201.
Conclusion

Crouched upon the headland of the Northumbrian coast, between the villages of Craster and Embleton, is what remains of the mighty Dunstanburgh castle. It was one of the many seats listed in the extensive holdings of Henry of Grosmont, duke of Lancaster, on his death in 1361.¹ It was built in the second decade of the fourteenth century by Henry’s uncle, Thomas, eventual traitor and the wealthiest magnate of England. It is in an odd place, in an otherwise empty landscape and appears to defend nothing. The site was excavated and surveyed in 2003, and revealed the true extent of the medieval structure, at least twice the size of the visible remains. Much of the area encompassed by the curtain walls was never occupied, implying it was constructed to give the impression of size and strength rather than to be a true fortress in the manner of Bamburgh castle ten kilometres to the north. When paleoenvironmentalists took soil core samples from the castle’s western approach, it was found that the area was dominated by a series of freshwater meres, too shallow to be defensive. These features would have made the castle appear to be floating on an island, with water to the west and the sea to the east, reminiscent of the mythical isle of Avalon of Arthurian fame. If Lancaster built the castle to provide a link to the pseudo-historical past, he is not alone. We have seen evidence of such things before. Intriguing as this is, the excavation revealed something else. The earthworks surrounding the castle are not contemporaneous with its construction, but formed the ramparts of a promontory fort from the pre-Roman Iron-Age. Perhaps Lancaster was not just building with the Arthurian legend in mind, but a more distant and savage warrior past, shrouded in legend and mystery.² The roots of Dunstanburgh run deep.

So it is with chivalry in England. People speak of a pre-chivalric age; it is hard to imagine such a thing ever existed. Warriors have always had codes of conduct, modes of behaviour. These values may change over time, evolve and develop, but they remain guidelines governing practice within groups. ‘Chivalry’ was the name that these guidelines were given in the Middle Ages, stemming, somewhat confusingly, from the French chevalier. Yet it lived and breathed long before the French used the term, even in England. The unwritten honour code amongst men whose role it is to fight is as old as the very concept of the warrior himself, and realistically flows back through the ages.

¹ *CIPM*, II, no.118.
to hunting etiquette on the plains of the distant human past. In our period, chivalry was fighting against progress, the inexorable march of time. The military developments of Edward’s reign in the manner in which armies were raised and tactics and new technology employed, ushered in a new way of fighting which was not individual, heroic or ‘chivalric’, but was the first step on the long road to the industrialised warfare unleashed so disastrously in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is perhaps on the battlefield that the chivalry of England is placed in starkest relief. This is surely fitting, as violence and the prosecution of war was at the heart of the chivalric ideal. What perhaps distinguishes the English knight from his counterpart in France is his willingness to temporarily set aside the horse and the lance so eulogised in fiction, and to accept the tactical necessity of victory without chivalry. The use of the tactical defensive meant that the self-conscious and widely understood superiority of the mounted warrior was disappearing from battlefields: battlefields upon which the English were increasingly victorious. The English fought in a specifically ‘anti-chivalric’ manner, sought to negate the effectiveness of the mounted warrior by employing tactics that deliberately destroyed that which set him apart from the foot soldier. The reliance upon archers must have been accompanied by the realisation that warfare was no longer just the domain of the knightly caste. The men raised in England’s shires were not just a reluctant peasant militia, badgered into service by longstanding, customary obligation, but increasingly upwardly mobile and highly proficient individuals vital to success abroad. War was becoming a more national enterprise, the effective components of the host more representative of England as a whole, with combined arms tactics that meant each man was vital to victory. Archers, not knights were the most feared killers in Edward’s armies. Battles were not won by the wealthy and privileged alone, and perhaps they never had been. Knightly individualism and the heroic deeds beloved of romance were necessarily subsumed by the military collective. Denied an elite role in war, knighthood began the retreat into itself which was to characterise it in the coming centuries. Chivalry was constantly evolving, and any chivalric golden age in England was a memory. This process continued, so that by the sixteenth century, any sense that chivalry was a holistic code providing an essential reference point for knightly behaviour was a thing of the past.³

We are obliged to view knightly conduct through the lenses constructed for us by contemporary chroniclers, each with their own axe to grind or agenda to

³ N. Saul, *For Honour and Fame*, p. 365.
address. Our view of chivalric action is necessarily adapted, tainted even, by the perspective of the narrator. We must concede that reality in such an enterprise is a hard won reward; we can glimpse it, listen for its whispers, but we cannot stare into its face. That said, there are occasions where it is perhaps possible to filter out the background noise and smokescreens thrown up by men such as Froissart, Knighton and Le Bel. This is most effectively achieved by using such material as a starting point, and enriching it with more empirical military service data and valuable material such as the surviving rolls of arms. When this is embellished with an appreciation of romance literature, we may gain valuable insights. This is of particular value when we turn to the projection of chivalric identity. Many families can be seen to assume the trappings of knighthood in our period, most observably in the form of coats of arms. These were sometimes related to familial or tenurial connections, but were just as often assumed simply to display status and martial pride. This can be read as a collective cry for the recognition of knighthood’s value and an acknowledgement of their place in society. In England, the potency of the symbol of the mounted warrior and his enduring association with superiority both on and off the battlefield remained long after he had effectively become tactically obsolete. As we have seen, the English way of war had undergone significant tactical changes during the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, diminishing the battlefield role of the mounted warrior. The much published picture below was commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham in Lincolnshire at the end of the 1330s, and was part of the famous psalter bearing his name. Yet it can be argued that this is not a scene grounded in reality. It is a complex image, with layers of meaning. Sir Geoffrey is supposedly leaving for war, yet by the time of the psalter’s production, his fighting days were done. A decade before, he had been too ill even to assume his duties as the commissioner of array for Kesteven. Rather than being an image of knighthood in action, the depiction of Luttrell acts as a memorial to his younger days when he could respond to a call to arms. The armour he wears is in itself anachronistic, the great helm and the large ailettes at his shoulders are reminiscent of armour used in contemporary tournaments rather than on battlefields. The fact that his face is visible in profile underlines that it was intended for this to be a non-illusory image grounded in reality, yet the arming of the knight recalls scenes from romance. This makes the image

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4 See chapter IV.
6 M. Camille, Mirror in Parchment, p. 56.
simultaneously real and unreal. It is the image that Luttrell wished to display to society at large, his peers and his rivals, a celebration of his status as a knight, his lineage and his privileged position within society. Luttrell is using the symbolism of chivalry in order to cement his place in society in the eyes of his family and his descendants. In this sense, chivalry permits the suspension and distortion of reality, and depicts life through the lens of an elite value system.

Occasions of chivalric ceremonial were moments where the projection of such elite identities were at their most ebullient, an environment where caste consciousness and solidarity reached a high point denied on the field of battle. It could be argued that these are the only environments where chivalry truly existed. These were events laden with symbolism, veiled meaning and ‘in-jokes’, and had become more complex, and significantly less dangerous, than in previous centuries. The melee tournament was dead, phased out during the reign of Edward III, and the joust bore little resemblance to contemporary warfare. It instead offered the opportunity for knights to suspend reality and engage with the myth of knight errantry, an itch that warfare often failed to scratch. The fame that some knights gained through tournament activity was only applicable within their own class, a romanticised idealisation of the world as it was perceived as

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being in the hallowed past. As England witnessed a decline in military participation by knights as the fourteenth century waned, this group became smaller and ever more protective of its anachronistic supremacy.

Henry of Lancaster and those like him should be approached with caution in the search for something identifiably English in the chivalry of England. He had a pan-European reputation, held court in Avignon and Bordeaux, as well as at Calais. He was a warrior prince and fabulously wealthy. The higher aristocracy is likely not where the chivalry of the English will be found, though even their chivalric exploits can be characterised by a combination of practical self-interest and military necessity. It is with the majority, the knights of England, rather than a handful of aristocrats who trace their lineage back to the lackeys of the Conqueror that ‘English’ chivalry can be found. What we are surely dealing with is a series of differing degrees of ‘Englishness’ in the approach individuals took towards chivalry. It would be unrealistic for us to expect Henry of Grosmont to approach chivalry in the same way as Thomas Ughtred, Roger Beler, or even Robert Ufford, just as one would expect these three men to have varying approaches to organising a feast, a hunt, or to the practice of religion. Alongside the notion that there are co-existing chivalries in different parts of Europe, it must also be the case that there are overlapping and concurrent chivalries acting upon the conduct of knights in England, forming kaleidoscopic, ever decreasing circles around the chivalric ideal. Engagement with that ideal seems to be related in some sense to class, and the amount of time one chooses to devote to the more peripheral, ‘new’ additions related to courtliness and Christian morality. The average soldier will engage with the ‘ancient’, martial chivalric tenets of honour, bravery, loyalty; the courtier will deal with these notions differently. It is situationally specific, and there is every chance that there was little overlap in the worlds inhabited by those that engaged with these varying ‘chivalric sub-sets’.

Chevalerie is what it was called in France, and we have surviving manuals detailing its primary ideas and concepts. It may have carried the same name in England, or at least that is the name that has found its way to us in the surviving source material. Yet nowhere is it stated that French knights had the same ideas about what was meant by the term as English knights, nowhere are we told that to be considered chivalrous in England would be to have a similar opinion held of you in France. We know how the French understood the term, and we know what it meant to the English in the century after Edward’s reign. Nowhere are we categorically informed as to the meaning of the
term to contemporary Englishmen. All our theorising must be rooted in the available English evidence. In few places is the unique character of English chivalry demonstrated more than in the treatment of Arthur as a conqueror. This reading of the pseudo-historical king was retained by Malory, and his prominence as a character in his own right in the English tradition is indicative of the different cultural approaches to the themes of the Arthurian canon. Prowess in English Arthurian tales is collective rather than individual.

It is that very collective which is so fascinating when we consider England under Edward III. It was a close knit community, and had become so during the course of the reign, demonstrating a shared cultural outlook. Traditions of military service were well embedded within families and the wider ‘military community’ comprised of interlinked sub-communities on a local and supra-local level. Retinues were intricately bound together through shared local origins, class, experience, family ties and brotherhood; on occasion by formal arrangement. Edward III was able to develop this sense of community by effectively hand-picking the higher nobility, meaning from the very top down there were men in positions of power that could be relied upon and trusted. At the outset, it was stated that this work was not about Edward III, and in many senses, that is the case. He was the monarch of a kingdom that was in the process of becoming a nation. In one sense, chivalry in England revolved around this most flamboyant, bellicose, charismatic and flawed of kings. Whatever our opinion of Edward as a monarch, he successfully martialled chivalric sentiment into a political force. He was the spark of England’s chivalric flame, the high priest of its chivalric cult and the ultimate arbiter in the pursuit of honour, the cultural capital of the chivalrous classes. This class was a community geared towards military success, yet it began to disintegrate when the king began to lose the vitality and force of will that had been the crucible of its creation.

Perhaps romantic chivalry existed as some kind of catharsis for the military mind. In the modern era, it is not unusual to hear of ‘shell shock’, ‘gulf war syndrome’ and similar psychological conditions in the modern soldier. The medieval battlefield was surely no less strenuous on the mind of belligerents than modern equivalents. We can perhaps surmise that romance served to rationalise the horrors of combat, that chivalry was a value system created by knights in an attempt to justify the brutality of their actions. If chivalry was a façade, if chivalry was a dream, then it was a necessary one, contrived to allow the tortured mind of the medieval warrior some respite. Knights
were not beyond acts of barbarism; the laws of war made allowances for it. Their adherence to high moral codes and exalted ethical views can be read as romantic gloss, to be picked up and discarded at will after the manner of a well-thumbed book. Knights were warriors, and in the Europe of the fourteenth century, to be designated as such was to be a killer. Killing is at once the prime directive and antithesis of chivalry, the most fundamentally contradictory of its many contradictions. Like Tantalus, when the knights of England attempted to reach for chivalric perfection, it retreated. To attempt it was to fail; knights were as fallible as any other. The prime focus of English chivalry in this period, a period of great success when England’s stock was high, can be summarised by the words of Edward III himself, that:

   It is not becoming for belted knights to eloign themselves from places where deeds of war may take place, but rather to go to those places and stay there for their honour’s sake.\(^8\)

\(^8\) CCR 1339-1344, p. 444.
Appendix I

On Dragons

Geoffrey le Baker is the only chronicler to mention the unfurling of the dragon banner, ‘Draco’, by the English, at Crécy in 1346. The banner, according to le Baker, was used in response to the Oriflamme, the banner of St Denis, flown by the French to signify to their troops that no quarter was to be given.¹ Le Baker is perhaps not the most reliable of individuals to consult when trying to understand the battle of Crécy. His account is certainly colourful and vivid, and may be based, in part, on a campaign diary augmented with oral testimony gathered from members of the vanguard, upon which his account is largely focussed.² We have already seen from his comments about what the French lords were doing prior to the battle that Baker was not above invention, and modern scholars remain sceptical of his reliability. Gransden notes that, ‘he [Baker] loved good stories, many of which probably display his talent as a raconteur more than his integrity as an historian’.³ Andrew Ayton, in a thorough critical account of the available evidence for the battle of Crécy, and the provenance of that evidence, views the ‘Draco’ episode as ‘probably pure invention’.⁴ It is true that Baker’s account should be approached with caution and contains elements that are of dubious accuracy, despite being a ‘rippling yarn’. Yet, if we are searching for something that is identifiably and specifically ‘English’ on the battlefield, then Baker’s dragon raises interesting possibilities, and perhaps deserves a little thought.

The dragon has something of a pedigree as a symbol, not only in Britain, but in the wider world. The late Roman army made use of dragon standards for cavalry units in emulation of those carried by their erstwhile enemies from the steppe, Sarmatians and other nomadic groups, that harried the borders of the Empire from the fourth century. There are a number of chivalric orders from elsewhere in Europe that make use of the dragon as a device, and then, of course, there is the matter of St George and his slaying of such a beast to consider. If one was to focus on Britain alone, it is perhaps possible to draw a line back through the past, to the pseudo-historical world of Arthurian legend, already touted as an important component of the English chivalric psyche, which raises the possibility of a link with English kingship and the symbol of the dragon.

¹ Geoffrey Le Baker, p. 73.

222
Gildas, in his ‘Ruin of Britain’, penned around AD 540, bemoans the condition of Britain, and criticises five ‘kings’ for their part in her demise. One of these is Maglocunus, a latinised version of Maelgwn of Gwynedd. Gildas places him above the other four ‘kings’ he mentions, ‘mightier than many both in power and malice, more profuse in giving, more extravagant in sin’, and refers to him as, ‘dragon of the island’. The dragon perhaps has connotations of power amongst the kings of Britain. 

Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*, completed around 1136 and hugely influential in the development of the Arthurian legend in England, also gives the dragon a place amongst British kings. He speaks of the rise of Uther Pendragon, father of Arthur and High King of the Britons. Pendragon literally translates as ‘dragon head’ or ‘head of the dragon’, the *Pendragon* was the British equivalent of the Saxon *Bretwalda*, and it was a dragon that writhed upon the banner of the royal house. According to Monmouth, the name Pendragon is assumed by Uther due to a comet whose tail was shaped like a dragon seen in the sky prior to the battle with Paschent and Gilmomanius. Merlin interprets the omen as being a representation of Uther himself, telling that his brother has died, but that he will win the forthcoming battle and become king. The light coming from the comet also foretells the birth of Arthur and that Uther’s line will rule Britain. Following his victory and rise to the kingship, Uther associated himself with the comet in assuming his name. He orders two dragons to be fashioned out of gold, one of which he places in Winchester cathedral. The other he takes for his standard.

Further to the Arthurian link, and the relationship between British kings and the dragon, is the possible link between the dragon and the house of Wessex, under whose stewardship England first became a united realm beneath a single king. At the battle of Burford in AD 752, the West Saxons fought the Mercians under the symbol of the golden dragon: ‘Ethelhun, who led the West Saxons, bearing the royal standard, a golden dragon, transfixed the standard bearer of the enemy’. This raises the possibility that the Saxon royal dynasty in the Arthurian heartland assumed a traditional, pseudo-historical British symbol in an attempt to legitimise their position of authority in the region. It is plausible to argue that this assumption of a symbol of status endured. There is a possibility that Edmund Ironside’s battle standard was that of a dragon, and was carried into battle against the army led by Cnut at Assandun in 1016. Further to this,

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the image from the Bayeux tapestry below, depicting the death of Harold, shows two dragon standards. Whilst at this point he led the English host at Hastings, he had been earl of Wessex prior to his ascension.

As Harold attempts to pull the arrow from his eye, the figure to his left carries a standard of a red dragon. The stricken standard bearer to the left of this figure also bears a standard of a dragon, this one is golden, arguably the banner of the royal house of Wessex mentioned by Henry of Huntingdon.9

Such symbols are potent, adding legitimacy and a sense of continuity to an incoming regime, as valuable to the Saxon kings using the symbol of the Britons as it would be to their Norman overlords after 1066. It seems that Richard I may have carried a dragon standard on Crusade, at the siege of Messina in 1190 and on campaign in Palestine the following year, and that it was in turn used by his brother John.10 Of special interest to us here, that Henry III, Edward III’s great grandfather, also carried such a standard. Henry III was born in Wessex, and had commissioned the making of a dragon standard in 1244, which he kept in Westminster Abbey, reminiscent of the Oriflamme of France at St Denis.11 According to Matthew Paris, this was his standard when he fought against Simon de Montfort at Lewes in 1264, was that of a dragon:

The king, being informed of the approach of the barons, soon set himself in motion with his army and went forward to meet them with unfurled banners, preceded by the royal ensign, which bore on it a dragon, as if announcing itself the messenger of death.12

9 www.medievalarchives.com
11 CCR 1242-1247, p. 201.
This fits in with the dragon being used as a symbol of no quarter on the field at Crécy in 1346, and, looking backwards, with the dragons flying in the sky as a symbol of the portent of death, described by Henry of Huntingdon on the eve of Scandinavian raids in AD 793.\textsuperscript{13} In both cases, the association with dragons and death is clear. Edward I also used the banner of the dragon, which had been installed at Westminster abbey by his father. Notably, following the death of John Comyn in 1306, Aymer de Valance was appointed the king’s lieutenant in Lothian, and was to have success against the Scots at the battle of Methven.\textsuperscript{14} Barbour, in relating the appointment, puts it thus, that Edward, ‘bad him men off armys ta, and in all hy till Scotland ga, and byrn and slay, and rais drogoun’.\textsuperscript{15} Here, perhaps, is another implication that the English raised a dragon banner to signify death, vengeance and no quarter to be given. There is the suggestion of another link between Edward I and dragons, which may explain both his and his grandson’s use of the dragon symbol. This comes in the form of a prophecy, in which the six kings of England following John were characterised as animals. In the prophecy, Edward I was synonymous with the dragon. He is said to be abroad when the ‘lamb’ (Henry III) dies, to rule three kingdoms, to terrify Wales and to die ‘near the marches of another land’. The earliest known version of this text is in Anglo-Norman prose and was written soon after 1312.\textsuperscript{16} There are then, perhaps some reasons why Edward III would unfurl a dragon standard in 1346, and that Le Baker may have the right of it when he mentions such a banner. This has implications for the antiquity of some of the ideas the English had with regard to the martial tradition that was central to their chivalric ideology, and provides us with another direct and unique link between chivalry in Edward III’s England, and the warrior past of the islands, a link from the Britons, adopted by the Saxon house of Wessex and subsequently the Anglo-Norman inheritors of land and title.

\textsuperscript{13} Henry of Huntingdon’s Chronicle, trans. T. Forrester, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{14} CPR 1301-1307, p. 426
Appendix II

The Variants of the Arms of England

Edward III pre-1340  Edward III post 1340  Henry of Lancaster

Edward of Woodstock  John of Gaunt  Lionel of Antwerp

Edmund of Langley  Thomas of Woodstock

226
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