RENAISSANCE HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Edited by Stephen Bowd, Sarah Cockram, and John Gagné

Shadow Agents of Renaissance War

Suffering, Supporting, and Supplying Conflict in Italy and Beyond

Amsterdam University Press

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Renaissance History, Art and Culture

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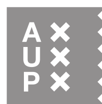

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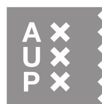

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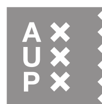

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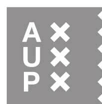

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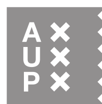

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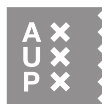

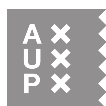

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Introduction: War and Agency

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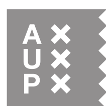

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Introduction

War and Agency

Stephen Bowd, Sarah Cockram, and John Gagné

The shadow agents of war are those men, women, children and other animals who sustain war by means of their preparatory, auxiliary, infrastructural, or supplementary labour. Shadow agents often work in the zone between visibility and invisibility, existing in the shadows of history at moments when the crisis of war tends rather to police and polarize human categories and distinctions.[1] This collection of essays contributes to the history of these obscured actors: women in combat, in defence of home and hearth, acting as foragers, but also as military managers; heralds and bureaucrats in key organizational roles; ancillary service workers such as armourers, merchants and arms dealers; and traditionally marginalized groups such as refugees, slaves, and animals forced into war-related activity. It is a history which is largely unwritten but can contribute to studies of agency, to the vexed and complex relationships between state, society and war, civil and military spheres, and to the history of war more broadly.[2]

By highlighting the work of those who crossed between civil and military areas of life the contributors to this volume map out a largely hidden world and in doing so complicate models of the relationship between the soldiers and civilians which have underpinned master narratives of the rise of the nation-state, the militarization of society and the exercise of 'total' war. Broadly speaking, how do the histories of para- or non-state actors in war challenge the primary role assigned to formal state institutions, including centralized bureaucracy, in the exercise of violence? To what extent do the shadow agents of war affect or respond to military institutions and to the broader militarization of society? How is the boundary between soldier and civilian constructed or complicated by these shadow agents and how might

1 Braudy, 4–5.
2 Péricard.

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this shed light on the exercise of warfare? Indeed, how might this evidence answer the question: 'What was the military in the early modern period?'[3]

The essays in this volume have been written with two distinct, but overlapping, research themes in mind. The first theme focuses on labour in recognition of the fact that war demands so much work. In addition to the labour of soldiers, the war machine has often been driven by the labour of animal bodies and by the bodies of builders, sappers, sex workers, and others. Others have employed their expertise in mathematics, technology, finance, and medicine, as well as heraldry and animal handling. This focus on labour, whether as part of the deep structure of warfare or intermittently mobilized, entails a reconsideration of the historical intersections of war-as-work: how war provoked makers and knowledge-crafters to produce practical and mental or cultural tools that could be used in violent conflict. This focus can also reveal how the demarcation of physical labour and mental expertise may often be unclear and evaluations of both often gendered.

The second, closely related theme explored in this volume is experience. The reconstruction of the experiences of war is especially fraught with difficulty given the inherent problems of record-keeping at a time of social disruption, existential threat and psychological trauma. Indeed, the impact of such violence on individual or collective memories and history writing can be severe.[4] This volume contributes to the process of reconstructing the experience of war by searching out and examining materials in archives and libraries written by or about shadow agents which have previously been overlooked or ignored. There is a great deal of material in the rich collections of Europe which have escaped the eye of military historians and these voices call out for some accounting and for further research as the contributors to this collection amply demonstrate.

Shadow Agency

Theories of agency offer a range of ways to understand the concept of the historical agent or actor, and these have been conceived with varying degrees of intentionality and bodily control or natural force involved in shaping events. At one end of the spectrum lies a traditional idea of agency

3 This was the subtitle of a conference held in Potsdam in 2013 which led to the publication of a volume of essays: Meumann and Pühringer; Meumann, esp. 21–28.

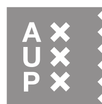
4 For some work on the diversity of conflict memories see 'Pluralistic Memories Project'; Kuijpers, 'The Creation and Development'; Kuijpers and van der Haven; Kuijpers et al.

expressed predominantly in the purposive decision-making and action of an individual with the conscious power to negotiate and transform their historical environment, typically a prime mover (such as the military strategist). The spectrum of agency may then shade into the intentional action of subaltern figures and the unintended actions of the sentient individual (each immersed in, and acting in the context of, sometimes opposition to, social structures).[5] The latter figure may include those usually classed as 'civilians' or auxiliaries in time of war, in a process that has been described as the 'weaponization of the civilian category' by which men and women are brought voluntarily or unwillingly into combat and other activities, and increasingly form the bulk of the casualties of war.[6]

Agency may also be conceptualized on a more collective, relational level, in the actions of networks, in various configurations of actors that can be broadened beyond the human agent to include other organisms, things, and forces, without sentience as a pre-requisite.[7] Such an approach can bring new perspectives to military history, deflating 'great man' theories and revealing the influence of a range of actors in interconnected webs of activity, subverting 'familiar forms of power'.[8] Influential models have been provided by actor network theory (ANT) and the work of Bruno Latour and John Law, as well as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's ideas of assemblage, incorporating animals and objects as inter-related agents.[9] The 'object-oriented ontology' of Graham Harman has recently pushed the idea of the object beyond even the boundaries defined by action or materiality, while others have sought to move beyond the idea of the agent as the master manipulator of resources and suggest how ecological, biological and environmental factors interact to produce change.[10]

By questioning of the contours of agency in this way, it is possible to gain a better understanding of how industries, economies, and individuals may be imbricated into the fabric of war. New possibilities also arise to reconsider the role of animals or indeed of objects in the history of war.[11] In the first place, animal labour may be forced like the labour of humans,[12] but the place of animals in the history of warfare and the means by which the animal body and animal behaviour affect military tactics and outcomes still require

5 For a brief introduction to the agency/structure debate see Munslow, 23–26.
6 Wilke.
7 Nash.
8 Nash, 68.
9 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*; *We Have Never Been Modern*; Law. See also Pearson.
10 Harman; Steinberg.
11 For example, see 'War through Other Stuff'.
12 Eg. Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class'; *Fear of the Animal Planet*.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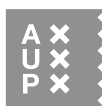
sustained scholarly attention, despite the recent 'animal turn' in historical studies and some scholarship on animals and modern warfare, particularly during the First and Second World Wars.[13] The role of horses, including the affective and practical relationship of the horse and rider working in 'unity', has perhaps received most attention from medieval and early modern scholars of animal history. This topic has obvious relevance for the history of war, and Sarah Cockram's contribution to this volume also reveals a wide array of other beasts with key roles in conflict, including oxen and dogs, which can further be understood through the socio-organizational paradigms of war.[14]

Since John Ellis outlined his 'social history of the machine gun' scholars have begun to show how objects or instruments of war were adopted or resisted according to the play of social and political priorities as much as with respect to the claims for greater technological efficacy.[15] It has been recognized most recently that the spread of knowledge and especially the quantification of space and time have been as important to such innovation in war as the spread of financial capital, mobile labour and the related growth of state power.[16] This dynamic relationship is explored here by Cristiano Zanetti and Catherine Fletcher in their essays on the engineer and the hand-gun respectively. The 'virtual reality' of Renaissance military engineering created by 'superior craftsmen' is well-known, but these engineers were also involved in economic warfare (for example, cadastre-related surveying for taxation) and, like Janello Torriani (ca. 1500–85), in the construction of instruments of intelligence, such as planetary automata and astronomical clocks used for war prognostications.[17] As Catherine Fletcher suggests, the development of the hand-gun as a weapon simple and small enough to be especially mobile and covert raised fears about the spread of violence through society, and even the spectre (and reality) of female hand-gunners who would find their agency without the need for any training.

War and the State

The essays in this collection focus on shadow agents during the years ca. 1400–ca. 1600, a period that has usually been considered crucial in military

13 Eg. Baldin.
14 Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse*; DiMarco.
15 Ellis.
16 Black.
17 Zanetti, 4 (quoting Edgar Zilsel).



history and in the related process of state formation and imperial expansion. As the sociologist Charles Tilly (1929–2008) famously put it: 'War made the state, and the state made war'.[18] The bellicist argument that it was primarily war that made states draws on Weberian models that emphasize the importance to the state of a monopoly of legitimate violence. It has also been marked by the examples of centralized higher-capacity states which were thought to have emerged by ca. 1700 with large standing armies supported by extractive processes including taxation, and administered with complex military institutions, technologies and practices.[19] This argument has overlapped with the military revolution debate as well as the notion of the 'civilizing process' by which the state codified and suppressed socially unacceptable forms of violence and promoted a militarized and internalized 'social discipline' on society.[20]

Charles Tilly's socio-historical model is helpful to this volume in the way that it highlights how a broad spectrum of violence and violent actors might underpin state formation. Recent scholars have also emphasized the diversity of agents and causes that might be at work in state formation and challenged Weberian models of the state. These scholars argue that struggles over judicial and territorial authority, as much as military power, shaped the state and provoked military expansion. They furthermore argue that the instruments of state power were often weak and stress the 'composite' rather than 'absolute' nature of early modern monarchies.[21] These lines of thought have important ramifications for this volume since they bring into the foreground the interaction of ideas, institutions and actors which have previously been neglected or marginalized in accounts of war and state formation, and they suggest how those traditionally considered non-state or non-military agents may be relevant, or even central to this question.[22]

Some of these points may be illustrated with reference to discussions of 'militarism'. In its narrow sense this concept encompasses the values and ideals of military personnel but can also be more broadly understood to underpin a 'militarized' society or state through recruitment, quartering of troops, taxation, organization of supplies and labour, and creation of fortress

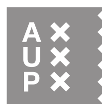
18 Tilly, 'Reflections on the History', 42.

19 Tilly, 73–74; 'War Making'. For a helpful overview of the contributions of sociologists and historians to this topic see Gunn, Grummitt, and Cools, 'War and the State'.

20 Elias; Oestreich. For a corrective to 'civilizing' views see Carroll.

21 Thompson, *War and Government*; '"Money, Money, and Yet More Money"', 288; Elliott.

22 Gunn, Grummitt and Cools, *War, State and Society*; Gunn; James; Spruyt. On 'irregulars' and the state see Davis and Pereira.



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cities deemed necessary for war.[23] The dynamic relationship between civil and military spheres has been variously presented in terms of the Weberian model of the state monopoly of legitimate violence; the Clausewitzian model of a balanced interaction of people, army, and government; and, more recently, in terms of the rapprochement between soldiers and society involving a fusion of military and civil spheres through the expansion of the 'war zone' and 'total war' or by a complementary demarcation of priorities and responsibilities.[24] Studies of the modern military as a 'total' institution largely separated from society have now been challenged by work which shows how closely soldiers, even when they were theoretically sequestered in barracks, could be enmeshed with wider society in spatial and cultural terms.[25] A considerable body of work has addressed this entanglement in early modern Europe, although largely attending to the impact of armies on wider society.[26] This collection aims to redress the balance of enquiry and to show how shadow agents should be viewed alongside the soldiers who brought their 'social baggage' into war and their bellicose swagger into society.[27]

The exploration of the shadowy boundary between soldiers and civilians along these lines has already produced some reconceptualization or expansion of traditional categories. For example, the military or 'campaign community' has been expanded to include women and children (sometimes called, with a pejorative edge, 'camp followers'),[28] as well as 'all the unarmed and all the impediments' of a military camp like carpenters, smiths, horseshoers, stone-cutters, engineers, herdsmen, workers and suppliers described and illustrated by Niccolò Machiavelli in his *Art of War* (1521).[29] A recent study of the aristocratic, well-connected and often heavily indebted 'military enterprisers' who provided troops and supplies in the seventeenth

23 Regan.

24 For an overview see Cornish. For some stimulating thoughts see Wilson, 'Was the Thirty Years War a "Total War"?'.

25 Goffman; Loriga.

26 Tallett; Grimsley, and Rogers; Charters, Rosenhaft and Smith.

27 Wilson, 'Defining Military Culture'.

28 Lynn.

29 Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, 124 (6.69–71). Note also the place in the battle order of 'waggons [or baggage] and [those who are] unarmed' shown in ibid., 172 fig. 4, 176, and the locations of private and public artisans, herds, and provisions in camp illustrated in ibid., 175 fig. 7, 177. Machiavelli's interlocutor in this dialogue refers in each case to the Roman army as a means to draw lessons for contemporary military practices and even mis-cites Josephus on the well-trained 'mob that follows the camp so as to profit' which was 'useful in battles. For they all knew how to stay in their orders and to fight while keeping them'. Ibid., 49 (2.170).

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century has suggested a further revision to the model of the fiscal-military state in which the monopoly of legitimate violence was exercised through direct control of the state's agents by outlining the close and persistent relationship between state and private networks in early modern Europe.[30]

The state's reliance on local communities or actors for military contributions could founder on regional economic or political priorities and demands. Such tensions are illustrated in the case of Venetian reliance on its mainland empire nobles for military expertise, examined in Stephen Bowd's contribution to this volume.[31] Moreover, the relationship between the state and local agents of war was not simply bipolar (i.e. running between centres and peripheries), and the so-called 'new' military historians have built on the work of social, cultural, gender and labour historians to move attention beyond once-dominant institutions, centres, and figures, such as commanders and condottieri.[32] This scholarship has shown how the networks of contractual relationships between subjects, rulers and armed forces operated on the ground in ways shaped by a dense web of established labour relations, feudal privilege, military competencies and entrepreneurial resource management. For example, work on the role of the central state in the territory of Venice, or in Viscontean or Sforza Lombardy, has now been balanced with studies of the work of non-state agents or local communities as they negotiated with each other, as well as with the metropole, to manage the military structure, meet ordinary and extraordinary expenses, and to supply labour in the form of soldiers or sappers.[33]

The role of the war agent as a go-between was critical to this activity and merits greater attention.[34] While the herald, as John Gagné's chapter reminds us, was the professional go-between par excellence, other shadow agents also served as communicators and intermediaries, moving between patrons and clients.[35] Agents (or brokers as they have sometimes been called) have primarily been considered in relation to state building or 'cultural transfer', and their activities should also be analysed more attentively with respect to war.[36] Indeed, it is clear from many of the contributions to this volume that like the agents of information, art objects, or goods which

30 Parrott, *The Business of War*; Wilson, 'Was the Thirty Years War'; Fynn-Paul, 't Hart, and Vermeesch. Compare Iordanou.

31 Glete; Thompson, '"Money"', 288–90; Ongaro.

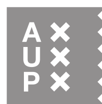
32 Citino; Bourke.

33 See, principally, Ongaro; di Tullio. See also Buono; Rizzo.

34 Hofele and von Koppenfels.

35 Eisenstadt and Roniger.

36 Kettering, *Patronage*; *Patrons, Brokers*; Fuchs and Trakulhun; Keblusek and Noldus.

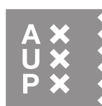


have already been well studied, the shadow agents of war were also highly networked and embedded in complex supply lines. Moreover, they were rarely confined to a single professional cadre or profession and were often valued by their patrons for an ability to move adroitly between different tasks or for their expendability, as in the case of Ioanna Iordanou's spies.[37] In a similar way, scholars of new diplomacy have complicated and expanded our understanding of the diplomat's role and shown that the absence of an official mandate often granted unattached individuals the ability to ingratiate themselves into local networks, adopt native cultural codes, and open new lines of communication inaccessible to ambassadors who had to conform to stricter ritualistic and hierarchical behaviours.[38]

Economy and Labour

The emphasis placed by proponents of the bellicist and military revolution theses on the contribution of war to the rise of the state in terms of fiscal extraction and 'high capacity' seems to have ample confirmation in the archives and in the large proportion of total expenditure most European states devoted to war.[39] Mobilizing resources in this way involved a wide array of contractors, entrepreneurs, tax farmers and others whose activities have been increasingly scrutinized. However, the contributors to this volume have largely ignored such figures and financial systems, instead favouring individuals and networks whose labour tended to fall into the shadows. In this way, they contribute to discussions about the changing nature of work (both of humans and of animals) viewed in terms of the coercion, commitment, or compensation which drove it, and in terms of the end to which it was directed. In particular, contributors consider coerced and unpaid work as well as activities, including the application of thought, which might directly or indirectly transform resources for military exigencies.[40] These various deployments of labour – often mobilized outside the purview of state sponsorship – not only allow us to investigate a larger ensemble of players than we usually consider, but they may also encourage historians to rethink our obsession with the state. Perhaps we pay it too much attention.

37 Cools, Keblusek, and Noldus. See Iordanou's contribution to this volume.
38 Krischer and von Thiessen; Watkins.
39 Bonney.
40 Mocarelli and Ongaro, chap. 1.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The contributors suggest how individual engineers, spies, spice-dealers and bell-ringers, as well as corporate bodies, could all be drawn unexpectedly, intermittently (and sometimes fatally) into 'war-related activity'. As Victoria Bartels reminds us in her contribution to this collection, the slave and the convict rowed side by side in the Medicean war galleys, and their costs required some accounting by the state, as did the work of those forced to labour on many of the grand-ducal projects of the period. This slave economy, based on trading and raiding, has long been at the heart of warfare and in its Christian-Islamic form marked the early modern Mediterranean world. The related practice of ransoming has also been widely prevalent but the precise mechanics of this process and the relationship among ransomed, ransomers, and other shadow agents in Italy and beyond remain largely obscure despite a relative abundance of evidence.[41] For example, when a character in Machiavelli's play *Clizia* (1525) recounts how the eponymous heroine was brought back to Florence 'as plunder' (*la preda*) by a French soldier following the invasion of Naples in 1494, might this suggest a form of enserfment that could arise during the Italian Wars (1494–1559) when ransoms were not forthcoming, or was Machiavelli simply being faithful to his ancient source text?[42]

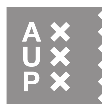
War might bring economic benefit to some and in William Caferro's words might act as 'a shadow agent of [the] economy' in the pre-modern era.[43] Caferro has built on the insights of Robert Lopez, John U. Nef, and Fritz Redlich to reveal the distinctly 'ad hoc' tangle of bureaucratic bodies which worked to secure supplies and labour for war in trecento Florence, and to demonstrate how war aimed to extract economic advantage using tax breaks and immunities to secure allies, or exemptions from duties to favour artisan suppliers.[44] Equally, as Caferro notes, war might purposely and directly damage the economy of the enemy. The English *chevauchées* or raids which inflicted violence on French civilians and their property during the Hundred Years' War may have been a means of underlining the weakness of the Valois monarchy by demonstrating its failure to protect its people or to defeat the English in battle. The devastation of the countryside therefore went beyond the pillaging simply required to keep an army on the move (and may even have damaged supply lines) and amounted to a

41 Ulbricht; Contamine. For some examples of ransoming during the Italian Wars, with references to sources, see Esposito and Vaquero Pineiro; Bowd, 88–92.

42 Machavelli, *Clizia* (1996), 8–9 (I.1); *Clizia* (1548), sig. [Aiiiii]r. See Cavaciocchi.

43 Oral contribution to 'Shadow Agents of War'.

44 Caferro, 'Warfare and Economy'; 'Military Enterprise in Florence', 20. See also McFarlane; Redlich; Nef.



form of economic attrition harmful to the French treasury.[45] Similarly, as Neil Murphy's contribution shows, forced migration and strategies of depopulation brought severe economic consequences to conflict zones, as well as impacting the lives of displaced men, women, and children, and in doing so served an important military need and a necessary prelude to colonization.

It was such destructive effects and failure to add 'use value' that led Chris and Charles Tilly to deem the actions of soldiers as 'anti-work'.[46] However, taking the broader view of work as labour which transforms resources for a particular need, like the English razing villages in the Boulonnais discussed by Murphy, then such actions deserve attention in this light. Soldiers may also be compared with shadow agents through the ways in which they were governed, like other workers, by forms of labour relations that may be analysed in terms of coercion, commitment and compensation understood as income, duration of service and legal constraints.[47] Historians of labour have noted how soldiers' work may be compared in this way with the work of non-combatants in early modern Europe. For example, long-distance seasonal workers such as sixteenth-century Dutch dike builders were sometimes thought to require military-style discipline, while groups like navvies were riven by nationalism, driven by the rewards of plunder, and organized in a military fashion like soldiers. At the same time, early modern military service did not preclude continuing involvement in crafts while the labour of sappers was hardly different from that undertaken by peasants in the course of their rural labours.[48] Machiavelli's main interlocutor in his *Art of War* recommended 'peasants who are used to working the land' as the best soldiers, and observed of soldiers who were normally smiths, carpenters, farriers and stone-cutters: 'It is useful to have many of these because their art is quite worthwhile for many things, since it is a good thing to have one soldier from whom you take a double service'.[49]

This nexus of state, war, economy and labour has been enriched by analyses of gender dynamics.[50] For example, contemporary models and practices of household and estate management for noblewomen in France

45 Rogers, 56–63.

46 Tilly and Tilly, 23.

47 Zürcher; Lucassen. The labour of soldiers is not considered in Ehmer and Lis.

48 Lucassen, 179, 181, 183, 186; Caferro, 'Warfare and Economy'. For the autobiography of a seventeenth-century barber-surgeon who continued to practice in military service see Dietz.

49 Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 26 (1.194–97).

50 Hallenberg; Connell and Messerschmidt.

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and Italy encompassed many war-related activities and meant that they 'constituted and represented … the warrior class'.[51] As Brian Sandberg shows in his contribution to this volume, *femmes fortes* (strong women) who managed and directed artillery forces played a vital role in the French Wars of Religion, assisting in the organization of military campaigns, sieges, and relief attempts. Similarly, the 'two-supporter' model of spousal contribution to the household which has emerged from studies of early modern work, including that of soldiers' wives, points towards a productive and socially-inclusive model for reframing military history, while some historians of the early modern household stress 'thinking in terms of "open houses" or networks [in a way which] highlights movement, mobility, migration, and work opportunities that offered themselves to men, women, and children outside, or in the interstices between, household'.[52] The contemporary judgment applied to the unlearned expertise of such skilled, but formally untrained, working women within, outside or between households may be compared with the common early modern presentation of female martial skills in a narrow or naturalized fashion.[53]

More broadly, in recent years as women have moved into more central positions in the study, as well as the practice, of warfare, the relationship between gender and war has also been reappraised in ways which have enormous importance to the shadow agents project.[54] As Laura Sjoberg has put it:

> Often, people at the margins of global politics, particularly women, are affected by the socially, politically, and materially destabilizing impacts of wars long before they are declared and long after the shooting stops. Who counts as party to the war? Is it only the people and/or states who choose to make wars, or everyone who is involved in or impacted by wars? Often, the people who choose to make wars are not the only ones, or even the primary ones, who are affected by the fighting of those wars.[55]

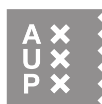
51 Finley-Croswhite; Neuschel; Sandberg.

52 Ågren, 8.

53 O'Day. On 9 Mar. 1500 Isabella d'Este wrote to her husband the marchese of Mantua with a report of military intelligence that she had collected regarding the attempt by Ludovico Sforza, deposed duke of Milan and husband of Isabella's late sister, to retake the city from the French. Nevertheless, she defers to her husband on military matters 'because about [these things] you are learned and I am ignorant'. Este, no. 201.

54 Goldstein; Hacker and Vining; DeGroot and Peniston-Bird.

55 Sjoberg, 17.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The 'experience' of war, in these terms is often much broader than a focus on political or military actors suggests, and Sjoberg argues that 'gender makes war and war makes gender'.[56]

As Carol Cohn has similarly observed, 'war and gender … [are] mutually constitutive'[57] with war both drawing on and producing ideas about gender, as well as interacting with, reflecting or shaping broader social, political, or cultural structures of power relations.[58] Gender can 'encode' power and powerlessness in war in a variety of ways, for example by means of gendercide or the slaughter of males and enslavement of women, or by acts of male and female rape which disempower men by attacking their manliness directly, or through control or subjection of wives and relations, or as a consequence of an imagined femininity, or in female words and gestures calculated to shame 'cowardly' men into action.[59] In sum, notions of separate military and civilian spheres, or of male and female roles demarcated by combat roles, can be collapsed to open up space for the analysis of shadow agency.

This wide-angled approach to the ways in which women were involved in warfare reveals how roles, occupations and institutions were inflected and socially constructed by gender, and it illuminates gendered symbolic discourses about war and peace, weaponry, and nationalism. For example, the activities of women as warriors or foragers or in other roles which blur the line drawn between civilian and combatant, raise questions about the laws and practices of war which have in the past and continue to presume that women cannot take up arms and are therefore to be classed with those groups given what might be called civilian immunity.[60] Stephen Bowd's contribution to this collection builds on all of these theoretical insights and historical revisions of the role of women in war to reveal how household and estate management fitted many women in Renaissance Italy for military management. His chapter on the Brescian noblewoman Alda Pio Gambara also shows how critical family ties and identity were for her agency, and illuminates the challenges faced by a powerful state like Venice in its attempt to monopolize the use of violence or offer protection to its subjects along the lines suggested by Tilly and others.

56 Sjoberg, 18, 24.
57 Cohn, 'Women and Wars', 1.
58 Cohn, 4.
59 Cohn, 10; Strickland; Milligan; Goethals.
60 On the gendering of the concept of the civilian see Carpenter.

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Agents and Civilians

As attention to gender suggests, the category of 'civilian' is a highly unstable one and Hugo Slim, Head of Policy at the International Committee of the Red Cross, has recently suggested that while 'rights holders' are 'more central to considerations of war than ever before', the notion of 'civilian agency' has been eroded.[61] Of course, the emergence of the civilian as a category to be distinguished from combatants and freighted with legal rights or protections is a markedly modern phenomenon most obviously enshrined in the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.[62] But viewed in the long run of European history it is possible to see how it has been much more common for legal authorities simply to note some select groups which might be exempted from harm on a variety of specific grounds: clergy and pilgrims specially protected by the higher authority of the Church; peasants cultivating the land and vital to the needs of society; women and children deemed naturally 'innocent' or considered physically unable to fight; the old and the lame also regarded as generally useless in combat.

In fact, such exemptions were more honoured in the breach than the observance as armies came across the children and women of besieged towns foraging for food and slaughtered them with little compunction, seeming to have regarded all subjects of the enemy as fair game.[63] In their turn, townspeople, as well as peasants, might resort to arms and to guerrilla tactics to protect their crops or their homes from armies. It is clear, as Christine de Pizan wrote in ca. 1410, that those deemed to have given 'aid and comfort' to the enemy could be killed, and that even those who did not bear arms might be collateral damage. As she put it rather conventionally, 'weeds cannot be separated from good plants, because they are so close together that the good ones suffer'.[64] Moreover, moral and practical considerations meant that refugees, old men, children, and women (including prostitutes) might be expelled from a town by their fellow citizens in order to conserve supplies and perhaps encourage divine

61 Slim. More broadly on civilian immunity and its fragility, see Neff; Coates.

62 What follows here draws on Bowd, chap. 4.

63 Anonymous, 49–50.

64 Pizan, 171–2 (3.18). The probable source in this case was Giovanni da Legnano, 224–9. The parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24–30), or weeds gathered up among the wheat, was also cited by some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century just war theorists when they discussed the inevitability of collateral damage among innocent civilians: Reichberg, Syse, and Begby, 325, 364. For the parable's application to early modern theories of religious toleration see Zagorin.

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favour. Gerry Milligan relates in his contribution to this volume that the fate of these 'useless mouths' was often dire and prompted some remarkable literary debates in early modern Italy which have resonances with discussions about political identity and the elimination of 'useless eaters' during the Holocaust.[65]

The medieval emphasis on establishing the just grounds for war (*jus ad bellum*), considered as both a divine punishment on sinful humans and a means to remedy human sins, gave princes a very wide latitude of action indeed and engendered wars in which there was little or no sense of symmetry or equality between sides.[66] The relative neglect of the conduct of war (*jus in bellum*) in legal or theological works, and in other discussions of the art of war penned by Renaissance humanists or soldiers themselves, only very gradually reversed as the sacral character of war receded and a less one-sided and indiscriminately punitive view of non-combatants began to emerge after ca. 1700. At the same time, legally separate spheres or states of war and peace were elaborated and by the middle of the nineteenth century jurists, politicians, and military men were involved in developing rules for the conduct of war which sought to protect combatants, including the figure of the prisoner of war, from a range of harms including torture and death, ransom and forced labour, gas and other selected weapons of war.

In sum, the bellicist model and its critiques together offer a useful lens through which to view this topic of pressing scholarly and public interest. Just as the increase of civilian casualties in war, genocide, 'total' war, and the potential for mass human destruction which emerged in the twentieth century helped to define the civilian as a protected group and focused study on their experiences, so now that the state's monopoly of legitimate violence has more recently been eroded and an array of 'irregular' forces and 'shadowy, intermittent confrontations' or states of violence have arisen, so our attention is increasingly drawn to the shadow agents of war studied by the contributors to this work.[67] Even the seemingly abstruse reflections on space by Deleuze and Guattari have influenced the 'multidimensional warfare' and 'inverse geometry' of military actions by the Israel Defense Forces in urban settings like Nablus where they have determined that the line between civilians and combatants is in constant and rapid flux.[68]

65 Kwiet.

66 For some illuminating discussions of this matter see Rodin and Shue.

67 Pereira, 392; Gros.

68 Weizman, chap. 7.

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Outline of Work

Some aspects of the premodern history of shadow agents of war, such as the topic of women and warfare, have already received scholarly attention.[69] Historians of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1629), the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648), and the Thirty Years' War in Germany (1618–48) have led the way in examining the relationship between military and civil spheres most productively, notably with respect to the role of women, but also in relation to guerrillas and pioneers, bureaucrats and other administrators.[70] By contrast, although Italy has been viewed as a crucible for the development or testing of new military technologies, including artillery and the defensive bastion, and also as a proving ground for state development in which military power and the exercise of war played critical roles, there has been relatively little work on civilians and other shadow agents.[71] Until quite recently the study of war, culture and society has provided a plethora of local studies or has focused on linguistic, literary or artistic expressions of military matters.[72] More recently, studies of heralds, prisoners of war, the organization of local communities for war, as well as a broader history of civilians in the Italian Wars, indicates a growing interest in the question of military-civil relations, the militarization of society, and the place of shadow agents of war in the formation of fiscal-military regional states.[73]

The work of the scholars collected in this volume is often, but not exclusively, addressed to the nature of shadow agents in the Italian Wars. These wars of dynastic ambition were initiated by the invasion of the French king Charles VIII in 1494 and prolonged by the leading powers of Europe who were attracted by the wealth of Italy and the opportunities afforded by a generous array of Italian princes, republics, and other states keen to form alliances and best their rivals. The international nature of this conflict was reflected in the composition of armies which were far from nationally homogenous (although it appears that the membership of squadrons and billeting may have been arranged on ethnic lines),[74] and of course by the movement across regional or national frontiers by soldiers and shadow agents.

69 For example, see Ailes; Fabre-Serris and Keith.

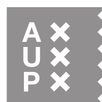
70 Finley-Croswhite; Neuschel; Sandberg; Wilson, 'German Women and War'; Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*; Glete.

71 Pieri; Chittolini; Aubert; Pepper and Adams.

72 Hale; Verrier, *Les Armes de Minerve*; *Le Miroir des Amazones*; Fontana et al.; Fontaine and Fournel; Franceschini; Luzzati.

73 Gagné; Tucci; Jalabert; 'Gendering the Italian Wars'.

74 For billeting along national lines in Marseille in 1523 see de Valbelle, 1:122–3; 2:130.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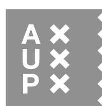
Comparisons of the experience of a range of shadow agents in Italy with that of their counterparts in France, Scotland, or elsewhere in Europe are made possible by the contributions of Neil Murphy (on refugees), Sarah Cockram (on animals), and Victoria Bartels (on galley convicts and slaves) to the first section on the 'unwilling agents' embroiled or forced into war. Both Catherine Fletcher (on arms suppliers) and Cristiano Zanetti (on engineers) place the organizers and suppliers of war in the context of international supply chains, while John Gagné (on heralds) pursues the manner of declaring war and the objects employed to certify the opening of hostilities. William Caferro (on shadow bureaucracy) and Ioanna Iordanou (on spies) outline the organizational parameters and personnel of war in Florence and Venice respectively. In the final section, Stephen Bowd (on female 'military management'), Gerry Milligan (on literary reflections on the gendering of the 'useless mouths' expelled from besieged towns), and Brian Sandberg (on women and artillery during the French Wars of Religion) offer three new perspectives on the experiences of women in war, raising questions of agency, identity and the construction of military and political power.

Future Research

Many agents remain in the shadows. If the development of organizations and the effective use of resources for the sake of war involved coercion and close co-operation with civilians and a variety of political solutions including the state, it could also involve the murkier worlds of 'predation' and 'racketeering', as Charles Tilly observed.[75] Guerrillas, bandits, militias and other 'irregulars' or semi-private and private armies figure in many accounts of war, but their role and the nature of 'small war' more generally has often been obscured or dismissed as insignificant in relation to the general thrust of a military campaign even though they form part of the story of the development of state monopolies of violence and protection as much as 'military enterprisers'.[76] The clergy were prohibited from shedding blood and theoretically immune from harm, but in practice they acted as diplomats, go-betweens, spies (like the unfortunate friar Paolo Biscotto in

75 Tilly, 'War Making', 127. See also Lane, 'National Wealth'; 'The Economic Meaning of War and Protection'; *Venice*, 125.

76 Parrott, 'The Military Enterpriser'; Black, 231–33; Wilson, 'Defining Military Culture'; Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, 278, 310, 401, 500, 533, 688, 767, 784, 792, 837–38; Pepper, esp. 195–201; Davis, 'The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke'.



Ioanna Iordanou's essay), and even took to the battlefield.[77] In the internationalized wars and polyglot armies of the Renaissance the translator must have carried out a crucial task, still little understood.[78] Jewish traders and lenders of goods and money also played important roles. For example, noble families equipped and managed squadrons of soldiers and sappers with the help of Jews, and lent money at interest – directly or through Jewish intermediaries – to local communities expected to provide for their own defence; soldiers naturally pawned helmets or pieces of armour or goblets, lengths of cloth and other goods (perhaps plundered) for short-term, often small loans.[79] Children in modern warfare have received considerable attention, but their role in conflicts in other eras remains little known even though the bearing of arms often marked the formal entry into adulthood or youth and shaped youth fraternities.[80] It is clear that children played vital roles on and off the battlefield and given their relative physical frailty have been affected more severely than other groups by developments in military technology.[81] And what about veterans? For most early modern combatants the experience of war might be brief, but it offered an experience of labour migration or 'cross-community migration' that might shape their subsequent behaviour and outlook in ways harmful, useful or even 'innovative' within society, the economy and the state.[82]

Finally, at the microscopic end of the scale the infectious microorganism or agent might be said to have had the greatest impact on society in times of war and has indeed been considered in global terms as acting in tandem with conflict to alter human history.[83] This raises the question of scale and it makes sense to view many shadow agents and sources as part of transregional and even global systems of exchange, interaction, entanglement which could

77 Jalabert and Simiz. A Franciscan friar sent to encourage the commander in Pavia to surrender in 1524–25 reportedly made appeals to his sense of honour and urged him to avoid a massacre and sack of the town. In response the commander threatened to hang the friar by his belt and ordered him to return to the French camp with the message that he would rather endure a thousand deaths than betray his lord: Taegio, sigs. Fv-Fiiiir.

78 Karttunen; Fontaine and Fournel.

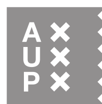
79 On Jewish moneylenders and pawnbrokers protected by the Gambara family in the Bresciano see Guerrini, with letter partially quoted at 1036. On soldierly resort to Jewish moneylenders see, for example, Carpi; Gamba, 25 (1488 list of pawns); and Caferro, 'Warfare', 191–92. On the lease of goods to soldiers by Jewish dealers in the seventeenth-century Padovano see January and Knapton, 39.

80 Mitterauer, 55–58, 123–24, 169–72.

81 Cohn and Goodwin-Gill; Wessells; Rosen; Milton; Ronald; Barclay, Hall, and MacKinnon.

82 Lucassen and Lucassen, quoting Patrick Manning at 351.

83 Cohn, *Epidemics*; Green; Campbell.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also converge upon, or diverge from, local identities.[84] Milanese armourers exported their wares to the East, where an array of warlike goods were sought for expanding and technologically-innovative armies.[85] In return, Ottoman weaponry and tactics made their way into Europe and military theorists like Niccolò Machiavelli developed critiques of European military practices which drew on such global examples in a process of translation and hybridization.[86] More generally, as noted above, the binary models of centre and periphery or territory and frontier which have sometimes marked discussions of the construction of the fiscal-military state have been complicated by global historical methodologies, as have narratives of the evolution of early modern warfare which follow Eurocentric models of 'great' war versus the 'primitive' raiding associated with the rest of the world.[87]

There is also a need to deepen and broaden the array of sources from which scholars may draw. For example, as Linda Fibiger has noted the bioarchaeological record is 'more inclusive' than the written record in terms of gender and age distribution and may well render children, women and animals more visible.[88] There have been a number of archaeological investigations of gravesites, many of them mass burials, related to medieval and early modern European battles: Naestved (1344), Visby (1361), Towton (1461), Uppsala (1520), and Lützen (1632). These skeletal remains provide many clues about types of weaponry and conflict, the prevalence of violence and the demography of warfare, and the nature of burial practices as they may have varied between soldiers and civilians; clues which are often corroborated by textual or other non-textual evidence.[89] For example, the elderly and the young – who might not be considered among the expected demographic for combatants – do feature among the local people massacred at Visby. One of the mass graves related to the siege of the town of Alkmaar in 1573 contains female skeletons, a relatively larger number of older adults, and fewer signs of degenerative disease and healed ante-mortem injuries than the second mass grave. The osteological evidence suggests that the latter contains local men who undertook strenuous activities and had been injured in the past in contrast with the civilian victims of the siege, including female defenders of this type who were often noted by chroniclers.

84 Conrad; Gerritsen; Johnson, Sabean and Trivellato.

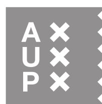
85 Necipoğlu.

86 Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 41, 58–59, 73 (2.81–84, 284–304; 3.123). See also the translator's comments at ibid., xxxii–xxxiii, 195–200, 217–19. On hybridization see Burke. See also Najemy.

87 Charters, Houllemare, and Wilson.

88 Fibiger.

89 Bennike; 'Medieval Massacre'; Nicklisch et al.; Curry and Foard.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But the osteoarchaeological evidence may only take us so far. The chroniclers of the Italian Wars, and other conflicts, describe extensive torture of civilians and a range of killing methods from hacking and blunt weapons to falls from a height. In some of these cases skeletal trauma may be evident, but even if graves in sites of massacre and sack were to be discovered and excavated it would be very difficult to determine whether infra- or post-cranial injuries (e.g. femoral shaft fractures) were the result of conflict, while archaeologists also warn of the difficulties involved even in detecting such trauma on poorly-eroded surfaces of bone (never mind the trauma inflicted on soft tissue).[90]

In a similar way, the work of literary scholars on gender and the poetry of war or on the influence and interaction of battle narratives, needs to be brought into closer dialogue with historical research.[91] Such verses contain many references to the plight of non-combatants, and frequently drew on or shaped contemporary chronicles and histories of war.[92] At the same time, as Cristiano Zanetti notes in his essay, the productions of astrologers, which often crossed between text and image, may be mined for valuable evidence of their role as shadow agents, influencing the decisions of those commanding troops or wielding weapons. The words of combatants themselves should be carefully examined given that most were probably new to war and unlikely to live under military conditions for very long, and certainly not for any significant part of their lives.[93] Their records may also bring to light the tavern owners, innkeepers and others who received weapons as pawns from soldiers, or otherwise supported their endeavours.[94] The new history of war which brings in women as military managers or in other roles within artisanal households should also lead to closer attention to caches of letters, account books and other materials which have been entirely unexamined but which can reveal how women acquired and exercised knowledge of military matters. It is notable, for example, in the case of Alda Pio Gambara explored here by Stephen Bowd, how her involvement with armourers is recorded in her letters but elided in the more masculine

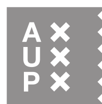
90 For a good discussion of varieties of bone trauma see Nicklisch et al.

91 Milligan; Alazard; McLoughlin.

92 For example, Soranzo, which provides a translation of the poem *Chrysopeia* (1515) in which the poet and alchemist Giovanni Aurelio Augurello refers to the destruction of the lawyer Bologni's country house by troops in 1511: bk. 2, 603–9, while at 610 he compares refugees to Venice to those early refugees who fled Attila (and founded Venice). See ibid., 65. See also Borgo.

93 In addition to Dietz, see Martinez.

94 Caferro, 'Warfare', 191. The Swiss soldier Peter Falk sent letters home from Italy during the campaign of 1512–13, but these remain largely unedited: Zimmermann.



domain of the family account books. Sources such as Books of Secrets and recipes can also broaden the traditional source base of military history to reveal secretive tactics of Renaissance warfare and provide specialist commentary on practices such as the use of invisible ink or disguising the appearance of a spy.[95] The writings of military surgeons, rich in battlefield case histories, also stand to reveal more about the technical innovations that war pushed medicine to develop.[96]

Finally, the imagery of war which can aestheticize or otherwise shape views of conflict may exclude civilians and other shadow agents. Further work will therefore build on new methodologies and evidence, for example of objects of cultural power including armour and guns, to help us see the full picture of war and culture.[97] This is especially important given the closely intertwined roles of artist and engineer or surveyor in the production of plans for fortifications and military maps (Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo), or artists as diplomats (Peter Paul Rubens) or as quasi-diplomatic agents (Gentile Bellini) during the early modern period. In conversations in Rome in ca. 1538 Michelangelo reportedly linked painting closely with the exigencies of war, noting the military commander's desire for maps of the terrain and plans for battle arrays, and he claimed that this coincidence of war and painting was far from casual: 'And what country under the sun is there more warlike than our Italy, or where there are more continual wars and great routs and fiercely pressed sieges? And what country is there under the sun where painting is more esteemed and prized?'[98] It is worth noting, by the way, that Francisco de Hollanda, who reported these words, had been sent to Italy and France by the Portuguese king primarily to view and sketch fortifications.[99]

As the historian Valentin Groebner has argued, the Renaissance image of violence in war has helped to shape modern representations of conflict.[100] Modern accounts of war have also been shaped by many classical, medieval and Renaissance tropes or traditions, but the place of shadow agents in such narratives has not always been recognized. As civilians find themselves in the front lines of modern conflict and form the majority of casualties of war, as war between states is replaced by states of war or violence, and as non-state actors take on war-related roles, these shadow agents have

95 Della Porta, bks. 16 and 20.

96 The bibliography here is vast. See, in the first instance, Mounier-Kuhn.

97 Groebner; Springer; Nethersole; Bendall. See Fletcher's contribution to this volume.

98 de Hollanda, 103–5. Compare Castiglione, 173 (1.49).

99 Tavarés da Conceiçao, 148 n. 21.

100 Groebner.

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moved to the forefront of our thoughts. Consequently, the shape of the relationship between war and society in the past has begun to change and to assume a messy, fragmented, entangled appearance that has very little in common with older histories in which the large part of society simply stood by and observed as armies headed to the front, fled from the hungry and marauding soldiery, or were merely massacred.[101] In short, this collection takes shadow agents from the side lines to the fray, and by doing so changes our understanding of both. In answer to the question posed at the beginning of this Introduction, 'What was the military in the early modern period?', it is possible to agree with the scholar who recently answered that question by asking: 'What *wasn't* war in the early modern period?'[102]

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101 Horodowich.

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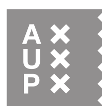
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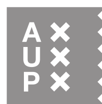

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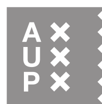

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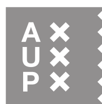
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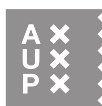
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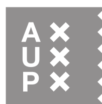
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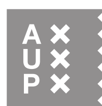

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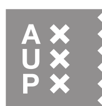

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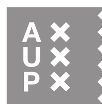

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