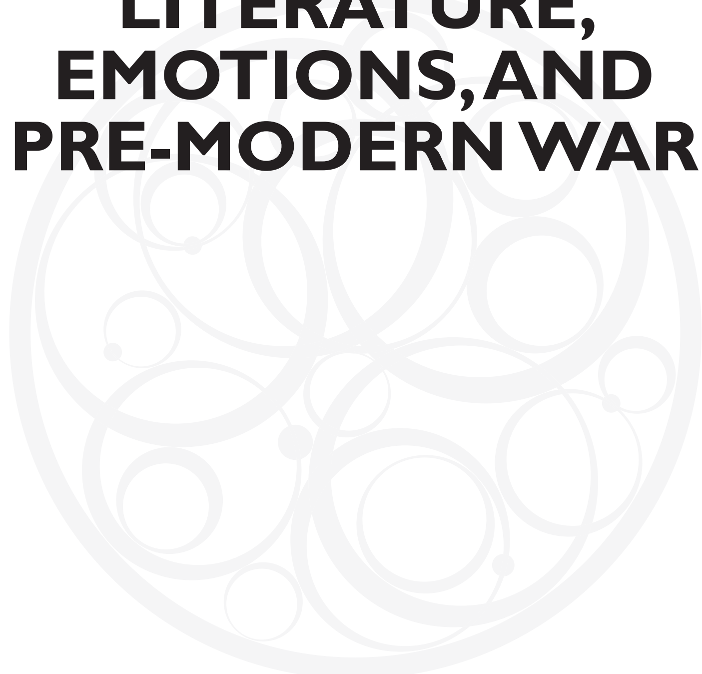
LITERATURE, EMOTIONS, AND PRE-MODERN WAR



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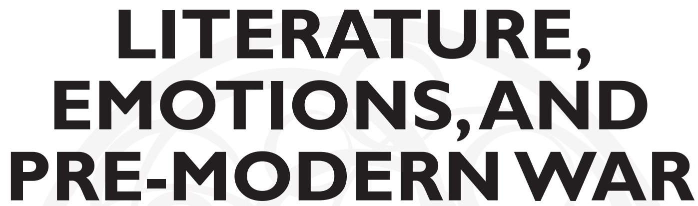

LITERATURE, EMOTIONS, AND PRE-MODERN WAR

CONFLICT IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Edited by
CLAIRE MCILROY and ANNE M. SCOTT

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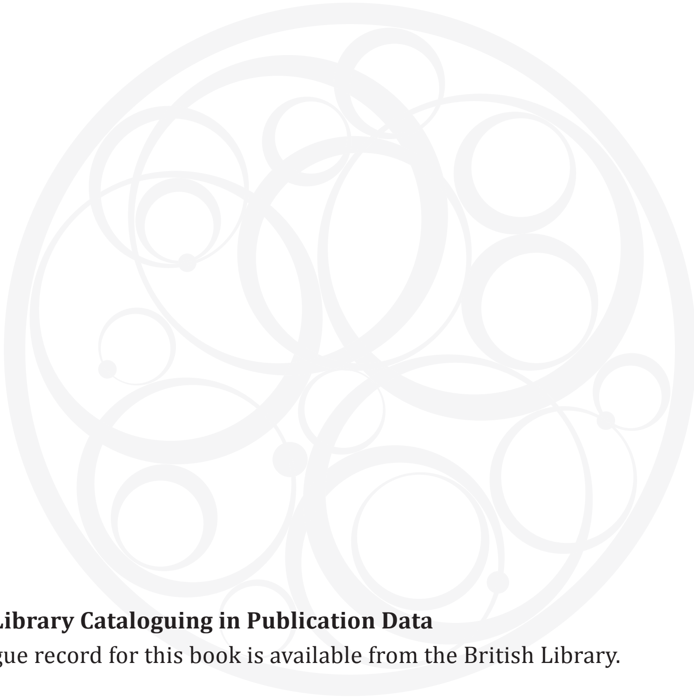

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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ISBN (print): 9781641893084
eISBN (PDF): 9781641893091

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Abbreviations

MED	*Middle English Dictionary*. Edited by Hans Kurath and S. M. Kuhn. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952–. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. Edited by John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, 20 vols, second edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
The Works of Sir Thomas Malory	Sir Thomas Malory, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*. Edited by Eugène Vinaver, vol. 3, third edition, P. J. C. Field. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

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PREFACE

Andrew Lynch

I AM HONOURED to be asked to contribute a preface to this collection of twelve chapters by long-term friends and colleagues. I deeply appreciate such a kind gift from a set of scholars whose store of cultural reference, scholarly information, and specialist expertise I admire so much. Thank you all! The editors are providing the Introduction to the volume, and giving a broader context to the individual chapters. They have suggested that I write a less formal piece for it, and I am taking the opportunity to reflect a while on what is involved, for me, in the business of studying medieval and medievalist war literature in the contemporary world.

The chapters gathered here are connected by their involvement in the literature and culture of medieval and early modern war in England and France, with a final study of its afterlife in Italy. They range in time from the eighth century to the twentieth, and cover multiple genres: epic; *chanson*; romance; religious satire; political and social treatise; chronicle; theatre and film. They are by no means all about actual wars, real or imagined, but the literal and metaphorical variety of their subjects gives a good indication of how omnipresent both the idea and the impact of war have been in the long history of Western Europe and its cultural influence. They show that "war" extends far beyond the battlefield or the delineated years of military campaigns.

I am interested in how written and cultural forms of all kinds communicate war: how they conceive what it is, how they structure understandings of its rationale and execution, and evaluate its effects. Some kinds of writing on war, such as treatises and advice literature, address these matters consciously and directly, but most do not, and one must pick up their sense of "war" more obliquely from the analysis of textual practice: from the welter of formal and generic tendencies, rhythms and soundscapes, speech habits, obsessions, emphases and omissions that make up the overall action of this literature to inform our thoughts and emotions. I have always liked Pierre Macherey's idea that literature destroys ideology by using it, and in this context I think of literary criticism—attentive to the ideological fault lines and contradictions of texts, along with all their other qualities—as both a way of seeing better what war means in texts and a modest means of resisting attempts to recycle it in simplified versions.

I should explain more. My whole working life as an academic has been in Australia, and I study past war literature, in good part, with an eye to the cultural labour that the imaginary of war performs in my own country, where both government policy and conservative press influence have ensured it dominates historical consciousness, in highly selective ways. In Australia, very much more has been written, more films and documentaries made, more museums and monuments erected, and more public money spent in order to commemorate wars than for any other formative national events: the

arrival of Europeans on the land; the great Gold Rush of the mid-nineteenth century; the Federation of six separate states into one Commonwealth in 1901; the Great Depression; the continuing transformation of Australia by new waves of immigration. And more is heard by the public about Australia's part in international wars than about the more than 60,000-year-old history and culture of our Indigenous peoples.

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra, the chief national institution in this area, does not commemorate fighting between Aboriginal Australians and military, police, and citizen militia forces. From 1770 up to 1930, at least, many thousands died in these conflicts, but they are not recognized as "wars." As a result, this part of the national history receives less public recognition. The situation is quite different from what applies in New Zealand, for example, where the "New Zealand Wars" (formerly called the "Maori Wars") are widely acknowledged.

Accordingly, in the Australian public mind war refers to military service overseas, not to the European conquest of Australia. Unlike in many former colonies, war did not provide Australia with a means of liberation from colonial control. Rather, war became emotionally important to settler Australians after our existence as a sovereign country was achieved. Then in 1914, entry into the Great War was welcomed as a chance to show that the new nation was a loyal part of the British Empire. That imperial rationale has long since been replaced by another, as shown by the words of the then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, writing for a News Corp publication on ANZAC Day, 2015 (ANZAC Day commemorates Australia's part in the Dardanelles campaign of 1915 and in all overseas wars):

> In the magnificent failure at Gallipoli, the successful advances in the Middle East and the terrible victory on the Western Front, our soldiers embodied the commitment to freedom, the spirit of adventure and the bonds of mateship that we hold dear to this day. Their values helped to forge our nation's identity. Their sacrifice has helped to ensure that to be an Australian remains "the greatest privilege that the world has to offer."[1]

Under such conditions, I have unsurprisingly become a suspicious and politicized reader of war literature, conscious of my difficulty in "knowing what to feel" about war, not through lack of imagination or knowledge, but through awareness of the more recent political sponsorship of its public profile. It is hard to acknowledge one's natural respect and compassion for the courage and sufferings of combatants in a context where those very qualities are now exploited to affirm war as a character-building national "adventure" and to treat its mass killings as a fight for "freedom." To that mindset it would seem blasphemous to point out that our soldiers were not actually sent off to "sacrifice" themselves but to kill enemy soldiers. But in any case, where are the "values" and the sufferings of the enemy, of women, or of non-combatants on all sides in this narrative of accrued national "privilege"? It is truly a "forged" identity for Australia.

In its more metaphorical applications, "war" is now normalized as a proper activity. Even in the time of relative Western peace in which I and most of the writers in this book

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1 Tony Abbott, "Anzac Values Forged Our Identity at Gallipoli," *The Australian*, April 25, 2015.

have largely lived—when our countries' wars have largely been exported elsewhere or directed at identified "others" within their power—war's oppositional structures of thought and its thematics of worthy struggle have influenced many aspects of our lives. Our societies "fight" poverty, homelessness, and cancer. The culture of aggressive competition that permeates business is increasingly applied in other areas, including education. In Australia, universities once understood to "serve" their local communities now battle it out for global rankings. In a strange irony, it is now mainly veterans—those who have fought in actual wars—who are simply honoured for "service." We need to keep thinking hard about where the imaginary of war, with all its applications and symbolic transformations, is taking us. What we do with the legacy of medieval and early modern war literature is an important part of that.

At the present time, when non-violent approaches to global problems are increasingly replaced by militarized strategies—Australia's mandatory imprisonment of refugees arriving by boat is an instance—and racist organizations across the world fantasize about links with the Middle Ages, the study of Western medieval and early modern war literature clearly involves dangers and responsibilities. Whether or not it has been recognized, that has been the case for a very long time. Ever since the end of the Middle Ages, when continuing claims to personal nobility and honour, national virtue, and military tradition survived other religious and cultural rejections of the past, medieval war literature has constituted a resource for which succeeding ages have found uses. Positive adaptations of medieval and early modern war and warriors have been strangely protected from the otherwise dominant story of continuing historical progress from a barbarous past to a civilized present, even while the notion of "violence" often defines the Middle Ages *per se* for modernity.

In an earlier era of medievalism, the main appeal of "chivalry" was the idealism, fair play, and lack of personal animosity that writers like Walter Scott could see in its best practices. Such a view allowed war to be seen as an undertaking in which gentlemen could participate, and has been critiqued for presenting it as a theatre for shows of disinterested magnanimity. At the other end of the spectrum, some modern versions of the medieval warrior offer patterns of uninhibited masculine aggression and dominance, like the thug Beowulf of Robert Zemeckis' 2007 film—"I am lust! I am power!"—so different in manner and outlook from his early English namesake. More dangerously than these individualist models, the medievalization of war, or the staging of extremely aggressive actions as "medieval" war, often invoke as their context a supposedly age-old national, racial, or religious struggle, always simultaneously a moral struggle, against natural enemies. The imagined great cause is seen to summon the "medieval" warrior and his violence, and to give modern agents an enhanced identity and a special destiny. We have seen the perpetrators of two atrocious massacres in recent times stage themselves as resistance fighters in the context of a civilizational crisis, and both claim a connection to the "Knights Templar." One could easily multiply current examples of such appropriations of the medieval for bad causes, from Eastern and Central Europe to America and Australia.

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It must be admitted that medieval and early modern literature would provide plenty of material to anyone looking for these purposes, including in canonical authors. The stark anti-Semitism of Chrétien de Troyes' *Conte du Graal*, written at a time when persecution of Jews in Northern France was on the upsurge, is one example.[2] Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*, which epitomized his charm for Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, has a story premised on the murderous envy of "cursed Jues," "[h]ateful to Crist and to his compaignye"—the rationale for many pogroms. For Spenser, as Suzanne Conklin Akbari shows, the "Turk" and the Pope together make up Antichrist, and "[b]y describing English Catholics as 'Turkes and Sarazins', Spenser makes his own countrymen seem to be aliens, people wholly excluded from the community … in the context of a religious war, when shared national identity competes with religious difference."[3] The seemingly endless adaptability of this kind of apocalyptic reading of the world, quite ahistorical but exercising great symbolic power, is one of its most worrying features, along with its millenarian insistence that "something must be done."

Similarly, investment in medieval and early modern war literature is a feature of many modern prejudices and atrocities. Richard Utz, Martin Shichtman, and Laurie A. Finke have investigated the intimate involvement of Hitler's Germany with the medieval.[4] One could equally note the "Teutonic" supremacism fundamental to the medievalism of Charles Kingsley, a Cambridge professor of history and mainstream author in Victorian England.[5] Louise D'Arcens has shown how the colonial Australian novelist Rolf Boldrewood adapted *Ivanhoe*'s story of Saxon liberation from the "Norman yoke" to occlude reference to the enslavement of Aboriginal Australians, allowing the colonists to "retain the righteousness reserved for the injured, as well as asserting their right to regain their historical destiny through conquest."[6] There could be very many such examples listed.

In the face of all this worrying knowledge, why should we continue to "learn war" through the medium of medieval and medievalist texts? I would argue that our awareness of the dangers makes even more urgent the need for informed reading of the medieval and early modern literature of war, because to apprehend this writing in its long-range, historicized complexity of utterance and reception is a step towards weakening

2 Lisa Lampert-Weissig, "'Why Is This Knight Different from All Other Knights?' Jews, Anti-Semitism, and the Old French Grail Narratives," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106, no. 2, Master Narratives of the Middle Ages (April, 2007): 224–47.

3 Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "The Rhetoric of Antichrist in Western Lives of Muhammad," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8, no. 3 (1997): 297–307 at 305.

4 Richard Utz, *Medievalism: A Manifesto* (Bradford: Arc Humanities, 2017); Martin Shichtman and Laurie A. Finke, "Exegetical History: Nazis at the Round Table," *Postmedieval* 5, no. 3 (2014): 278–94.

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5 Andrew Lynch, "Mediating English Historical Evolution in Charles Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* (1866)," in *Emotions in Late Modernity*, ed. Roger Patulny et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 161–75.

6 Louise D'Arcens, "Inverse Invasions: Medievalism and Colonialism in Rolf Boldrewood's *A Sydney-Side Saxon*," *Parergon* 22, no. 2 (July 2005): 159–82 at 175.

the power of the false doctrines and bogus symbolic analogies it is sometimes used to support—the Christchurch terrorist linked his murders to the Siege of Acre (1189) and the Siege of Vienna (1683). Prejudicial violence thrives on generalities—taking a part for the whole—and on monomyths of "age-old" causes and confrontations—as then, so now. Medieval scholars, I hope, can make a helpful contribution here. Careful reading of the literature of the past in its own context alerts us to its stubborn differences from the present, to features that do not satisfy present-day readerly needs of "relevance" of whatever kind. It shows how contemporary weaponizing and instrumentalizing of the medieval distorts the history it cites.

"Relevance" has a powerful call for medievalists, who see that our expertise can be important to aspects of contemporary life. One good way of showing that right now would be to use our knowledge to put critical limits on the notion that we are still living the Middle Ages, or living in a new Middle Ages, as Umberto Eco variously put it. We need to articulate the specificities that disrupt a sense that modern prejudices are mystically rooted in the medieval past, while keeping keenly aware of medieval literature's dark side and its remaining openness to bad uses. To return to the example of Chaucer, the anti-Semitic strain in the *Prioress's Tale* is "age-old" in one way, but also specific to a vindictive kind of popular Christian hagiography, admittedly one with a horribly long afterlife. It does not relate, for example, to the later conspiracy theory of a Jewish cabal seeking to dominate world finance, which has a very different aetiology. We falsify the nature of anti-Semitism, or of any forms of racial and religious prejudice, if we treat them as undifferentiated matters to which all examples contribute alike. Such ahistorical ways of thinking unwittingly mimic the racial and religious essentialism of prejudiced outlooks.

Crusades literature offers the most extreme medieval examples of prejudicial violence, claiming a moral right to invasive warfare, in which the Christian forces are styled as defenders or liberators of foreign places already identified as their own. Here a total absence of "love" for the enemy is justified, because they are "enemies of the cross of Christ."[7] Only Christ's side has any right to receive love.[8] This kind of thinking is prevalent in medieval and early modern war literature directed at identified religious enemies, whether "pagans," Jews, Muslims, or heretics. Yet the wars based, or supposed to be based, on these grounds, are also clearly specific to contemporary cultural and political requirements. They were not, for instance, wars undertaken in defense of modern ideas of "Western Civilization" or Western "freedoms," and those who enlist them in those contexts can be shown to be wrong. Nothing palliates the horror of medieval and early modern atrocities and of the texts that supported them. But it remains important to show that certain modern atrocities are not "medieval," however

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7 Beverly Mayne Kienzle, "Preaching the Cross: Liturgy and Crusade Propaganda," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 53 (2009): 11–32.

8 Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," *History* 65 (1980): 177–92.

they are dressed up, and so to remove the prestige that medievalist cultural associations seem to provide them in some eyes.

We can make a parallel but inverse kind of intervention by analyzing earlier instances of modern medievalism. To continue my earlier example, by examining Australian literature of the period 1914–1918 we find that the Great War was then much more about Empire than Nation, that there was no simple national unity but fierce debates about participation, and the public mind of the period was bombarded by stupidly propagandist views of causes and effects, designed to spread national hatreds. These last found their way into medievalist literary expressions, in which France became Joan of Arc, the Australian army was exhorted to "Do the last Crusaders' work/On the bastard Teuton-Turk," and it was "the holiest task to slay … Yon blatant heathenrie."[9] Studying this literature today offers an instructive contrast to the Great War of "mateship," "sacrifice," and new national identity that Australians now hear so much of. It also shows the spurious short-term opportunism of aligning contemporary conflicts with medievalist archetypes. Up until the war much British-oriented culture had been decidedly Germanophile and suspicious of France; the supposedly "timeless" medieval archetypes were actually created to suit the occasion. Overall, the study of past war literature within its own time reveals many features that weaken its applicability to current situations, while the study of its reception history and influence shows up radical changes in the demands of meaning that successive ages have made on it, and in the uses to which it has been put. Together, these historical specificities deny the idea that a sensible function of this literature can be to enlist modernity in ancient struggles, or summon a modern hero to join the old fight on behalf of his beleaguered tribe.

War literature, like war itself, is a messy business, but its failure to execute ideological agendas with perfect precision should be one of its saving graces, because it makes the wars it relates less easily reduced to partisan readings, or to simplifying symbols and slogans. Many of the core war narratives in medieval European literature and its early modern afterlife—Thebes, Troy, Rome, Alexander, Arthur—are left to us in multiple forms and genres, and in contested and hybridized historiographical traditions. They tell different stories, and often enlist very mixed sympathies. They differ, in effect, from the influential model of medievalist war in writers like Tennyson and Tolkien, who tend to treat the subject allegorically. Tolkien once wrote that "romance" has grown out of allegory and its wars are still derived from the "inner war" of allegory in which good is on one side and various modes of badness on the other. In real (exterior) life men are on both sides.[10] In the medieval wars of Thebes and Troy, including the twelfth-century *romans antiques*, that kind of "romance" division does not apply: as in Tolkien's "real life," villains and heroes fight and die on each side, so readers' sympathies are divided. These are avoidable conflicts arising out of reckless greed, pride, and dishonesty, and

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9 Quotations in this paragraph are from Christopher Brennan, *A Chant of Doom* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918).

10 *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien: A Selection*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter with assistance from Christopher Tolkien (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 82.

they do the participants no good. Medieval Troy stories also often acknowledge that traditions of war writing are themselves partisan, pushing the agenda of a particular side rather than respecting truth. Above all, there is not much suggestion that these wars, however famous for the deeds of their heroes, or their long-term results, are good things in themselves, or that the outcome is a providential dispensation to let good triumph over evil. Trauma and grief are the outcomes, great cities destroyed. Survivors, like Aeneas, are led into years of new strife. Many of the "victors," like Ajax, Achilles, and Agamemnon, also come to bad ends.

In allegorical treatments like Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, opponents of the "right" side tend to be symbolic embodiments of evil—the "Beast"—beyond redemption, and with no legitimate interests of their own or right to exist. Partly through the continuing effects of racial, religious, and ethnic hatred, sometimes in medievalist guises, and partly through the moral archetypes of medievalist fantasy—what can you do with Orcs except kill them?—these attitudes towards opponents are thought to be generally characteristic of medieval and early modern war literature. But that is misleading. Questions of the "right" to war and of right conduct in war are usually operative in medieval writing, even if not directly addressed in principle. Even the romances of Alexander's conquests contain rebukes of the hero's pride and contrast his outlook with higher, "philosophical" views of life. The Alliterative *Morte Arthure* qualifies its praise for Arthur as a warrior with a sense of the destructiveness of his ambition, both to the lands he invades and to his own regime. Notable later medieval English writers—the *Gawain*-poet, Gower, Chaucer, and Hoccleve—pointedly avoid describing battle in detail—they clearly have better material to relate. Shakespeare hedges his apparent support for a national hero like Henry V with all kinds of questions about whether the king's campaign is justified, and lays Henry's arguments for it open to the charge of "Machiavellian fraud."[11] The interests of the victors are not necessarily the interests of God. Writers also often make a clear distinction, as Malory does, between brave conduct in the field of battle once a war starts, and the "dolorous" nature of war itself, where "good men" die on both sides. Similarly, not all medieval and medievalist war literature treats its warriors as the supporters of a sacred cause, however brave they are. It is acknowledged that war and fighting often involve people quite against their own inclinations in bad causes, and that these are often the best characters: Hector in medieval Troy narratives, Gunnar in *Njáls saga*, Lancelot and Arthur in the close of the French Vulgate Cycle, and Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. Those most willing to have trouble start are often amongst the worst: Paris, Mord Valgardsson, Agravain, and Mordred. Malory's book was not written to show the failures of chivalry, as some have claimed, and cannot be read as the anti-war manifesto T. H. White wanted it to be, but despite all its enthusiasm for "worship in arms," Arthur expresses the sadness and human waste of the last war, and a deep

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11 John S. Mebane, "'Impious War': Religion and Ideology of Warfare in Henry V," *Studies in Philology* 104, no. 2 (2007): 250–66.

sense that there are no winners: "Alas, alas, that ever yet this war began." Close reading of many medieval texts uncovers resistance in them to idea of "glorious" or "holy" war, forming a basis for our proper scholarly resistance to their modern instrumentalization in those terms.

Over many years now, I have been drawn back to the beautiful passage in Laȝamon's *Brut* (lines 11338–345) where the poet praises the happiness of a twelve-year period of peace in Arthur's reign, a time in which nothing happens in the adversarial and acquisitive terms of his ultimate source text, Geoffrey's *Historia*, yet everything good—unimaginable happiness—happens for the king and his people. If I have a regret about my long-term involvement in medieval and medievalist literature, it would be not having written more often about peace. Another notion is that since the thematics of war and aggressive competition now seem to control so many areas of our lives, it would have been good to connect the study of medieval and medievalist literature with critique of other kinds of contemporary war—on the environment, on human rights, on education and the arts, and on the intrinsic values that uphold humane societies. That might provide some ideas for the future. Meanwhile, I wholeheartedly thank the editors again for preparing this book, and express again my very deep gratitude to the contributors for their work.

Andrew Lynch is Emeritus Professor of English and Literary Studies at The University of Western Australia, and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow there. He has published widely on medieval literature and its modern afterlives, including *Malory's Book of Arms* (1977). Recent publications include two co-edited collections: *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe*, 1100–1700 (2019) and *A Cultural History of Emotions*, 6 vols. (2019). Amongst his current projects are co-editorship of the journal *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* (Brill) and *The Cambridge History of Arthurian Literature and Culture*.

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INTRODUCTION: THE LONG REACH OF WAR

Claire McIlroy and Anne M. Scott*

> War is not severed from time but comes from the past and renders uncertain the future.

So writes Robert S. White in the opening chapter of this collection, epigrammatically justifying the title of our Introduction: "The Long Reach of War." Our focus in this volume is on a range of factors that affect the lives of human beings who are impacted by war and conflict. The wars under consideration range from historical events, such as the Battle of Maldon, the Crusades, the wars between England and France, and the French civil wars of religion, through literary replications of war such as the Trojan War and the battles fought by Arthur's knights, to the metaphysical conflict between Christ and Lucifer, truth and sin, in *Piers Plowman*.

The chapters pay tribute either obliquely or directly to the work of Andrew Lynch who has made his own the study of Thomas Malory, opening up the text of *Le Morte Darthur* to subtleties of interpretation based on human attributes to do with name, vision, blood, emotion, and gesture as they relate to the battles and wars of the text. In the context of this volume, his work on the way medievalism has been harnessed into the service of glorifying war has had a major impact on scholars in the field, as the chapters show. Lynch has also deepened and broadened the way emotions are read, leading new generations of scholars to an explicit recognition and understanding of emotions in history and literature. This volume is presented in recognition of his wide-ranging scholarship, skilful mentoring, and strong collegiality.

This volume is not exclusively concerned with Malory, nor emotions, although several chapters do use *Le Morte Darthur* as a point of reference. Instead, the collection as a whole takes an extended look at the many ways in which the processes of war and conflict impact human life. The chapters select literary texts of poetry, drama and song, discursive texts concerning the landscape, and, in the final chapter, modern medievalist film satire, to explore the many ways in which human beings and their lives are touched, given heightened meaning, or changed by experiences stemming from war and conflict.

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The chapters are arranged thematically, under headings of "The Emotional Costs of War," "Voicing Conflict," and "The Impact of War."

While within the sections the chapters are arranged in, generally, chronological order, an exception is made for White's Shakespearean study, "Love in Times of War: War Wives and Widows in Shakespeare." This chapter encapsulates many of the issues taken up in the course of the following chapters; just as Shakespeare ostensibly writes for all times and peoples, White's chapter points out the universality of themes concerning war, themes which will be picked up and applied to specific times and texts by the later chapters. In choosing to consider war wives and widows, White concentrates on characters who are often so marginal as to make a single, brief appearance in a play, speaking no more than a few lines, yet those are fraught with intense though scarcely articulated emotion. He shows how, in a few broad strokes, Shakespeare portrays women's keenly felt experience of severance, loss, or, as in the case of Henry V's war bride Catherine, forced surrender to an unsympathetic victor/husband. Importantly for this collection, which references the modern in its connection to the pre-modern, White draws attention to the way Shakespeare speaks to modern times, pointing out resonances which anticipate in his plays the genre of the modern "war movie." Referencing Paul Fussell's classic study *The Great War and Modern Memory*, White speaks of war as an "experience" which has enough similarities from age to age to confer some kind of continuity and human significance through each occurrence. As the subsequent chapters unfold, the themes addressed by White are picked up and applied to works written in different ages and genres, always addressing the human impact of conflict or war.

The Emotional Costs of War

The following three chapters in this first section concern themselves directly with emotional disjunction caused by the circumstances of war or conflict. Stephanie Trigg and Stephanie Downes write of the emotions experienced by three women, two fictional characters and one historical person, who are used as tools through which men believe they can make a truce between warring nations. Their reasoning is that "when war concludes with a marriage alliance, the symbolic and practical involvement of women in securing peace is paramount." Symbolic and practical the involvement may be; however, this chapter analyzes closely the emotional cost the women must bear so that the men may make the peace. Chaucer's heroine in *Troilus and Criseyde* finds her life torn apart by her severance from Troilus when she is sent to the Greek camp in a hostage exchange for the Trojan, Antenor; the chapter portrays her extreme vulnerability, preyed upon by Diomede who poses as her only protector within a hostile camp. A second damaged woman, Isabelle, the young widow of the assassinated King Richard II, is returned to France by Richard's successor in the hopes of securing peace between the two nations. Contemporary chronicle accounts paint a picture of distress and indignation on the part of Isabelle and both grief and joy among her French and English followers, differently interpreted according to the chronicler's own political sympathies. The third woman, Queen Guenevere, is returned to Arthur by Lancelot ostensibly in order to maintain the

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peace of the Round Table. Conflicted though the emotions of Guenevere, Lancelot and Arthur may be between shame, love, and injured loyalty, as Trigg and Downes say,

> in the act of restoration women are reduced—or elevated—to their status as ceremonial symbols; ideally as symbols of peace, but often in practice as symbols of more complex external relationships or internal feelings … The primary social symbolism of each woman … is as a promise of peacetime in the midst of war.

In all these instances, the complex feelings of the women who are the focus of the peace negotiations are of no consequence in practice, and the fact that the sought-for peace is in each case either short-lived or a downright failure only heightens the poignancy of these war-damaged women's wasted emotions.

Following with a study of another Chaucerian text, the *Knight's Tale*, Raluca Radulescu addresses the notion of "roaming" as an indicator of emotional expression and development among three young people, each of whom is a prisoner of war. Confined within their respective spaces, Palamon and Arcite in their prison tower, Emelye in her garden, each one suffers more from the emotion of love than from the imprisonment that war has caused, albeit an imprisonment which is the instrument that enables them to fall in love. Yet as the tale unfolds, it is this love that Palamon and Arcite both feel for Emelye that changes their personal relationship. From being loving cousins and sworn brothers in warfare, they change to being enemies and rivals in love, with fatal consequences. The confined "roaming" of the three young people inverts the normal expectations of knights who roam freely in landscapes seeking adventure and the love of a lady. Radulescu suggests that the emotions the knights display in the pursuit of Emelye "show how the trauma of both war and incarceration has altered their perception of reality and their response to stimuli."

Underlying the emotional content of all the examples already mentioned is the massive component of grief experienced by all: lovers, hostages, and the women treated as political pawns. Karen Cherewatuk in the next chapter addresses grief as a common and indeed a major emotional experience in *Le Morte Darthur*. She closely examines the grief and mourning that result from armed combat and shows how grief is moved from the edges of the narrative to the centre in the death scenes of the final huge conflict. By doing so, she distinguishes grief as an individual reaction, producing effects of swooning, weeping, and sometimes enraged action in search of revenge, while mourning, equally intense, is more communal. In conclusion, she writes that "In material culture, tombs are sites that merge love, loss, grief, and mourning. So too in the textual culture represented in the *Morte Darthur*. Malory achieves this effect by employing rhetoric that heightens the sorrow expressed there."

Voicing Conflict

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Rhetoric enables the poet to give voice to the complexity of emotion and so the second section of the volume, "Voicing conflict," moves from the analysis of emotions to broader concerns related to human behaviour in war and conflict. Ad Putter's study, *The Battle of Maldon* and of *Beowulf*, addresses an aspect hitherto unnoticed by critics of Old English

poetry: the remarkable emphasis the poets place on the need to "remember." Arguing that it is inaccurate to think of warriors in these poems acting according to a preordained code of conduct, Putter suggests instead that they make choices informed by loyalty. In the Old English heroic context, to remember is more than a cognitive impulse, it is a call to action, to recall and to fulfil in action the promises made in peacetime. "Voicing" invokes loyalty through vows made in the mead hall and remembered on the battlefield. As Putter says, "This form of 'remembering' is about 'overt action' that makes present behaviour consistent with past behaviour." Those who remember in this way become heroes; those who forget are cowards.

Helen Dell finds that codes of conduct reflected in the *chansons de croisade* express loyalties conflicted between duties owed to God and duties owed to the lady. Given voice in the chansons, tropes that recur draw upon ideas of loyalty to God to whom the soldier is bound by feudal ties as a Christian vassal and by the ties of gratitude for his sacrifice in the crucifixion. In this, the crusaders resemble the heroes of Old English poetry discussed in the previous chapter; but service of God in the Crusades may conflict with service of the lady who, in the tradition of *fin'amors*, sometimes rivals the pull of God. Dell teases out the complexities set up when the lover has to break the code of *fin'amors* by placing service to God above service to his lady. In these songs, the reward afforded by the lady is distant, indefinite, always in the future, whereas the reward promised by God is defined and attainable. Service in the crusade will bring heavenly reward and perhaps a martyr's crown; service to the lady brings the agonizing delight of unfulfilled but potentially exquisite love. In terms of the *chanson de croisade* genre, as Dell says, "to have two supreme figures, God and the Lady, in opposition but very differently positioned in relation (or non-relation) to the lover and his desire, was obviously a gift to the genre in the complexities it offered."

The conflict between Christ and Lucifer in *Piers Plowman* takes the idea of warfare onto the metaphysical plane, and Langland voices the opposition between Christ and sin through powerful images. Anne M. Scott traces the many occurrences of the image of Christ as a knight and his conflict with sin and death as a joust, images particularly germane to the themes covered in this volume. It is through imagery that Langland finds a voice to elucidate the mysterious union of divinity and humanity in Christ and his vanquishing of sin, imaged as the devil. Langland's understanding of God is of a triune being, and his poem makes sense of God's presence in the mundane world by imaging the ways in which the deity became human. The logic flowing from this truth is that only God can vanquish sin, and only a God who understands human nature can understand the reality of sin. But the overall impact of the imagery is to bring into clear focus Langland's portrayal of Christ as the embodiment of love, that all-pervasive attribute of God that he shares with human beings to their eternal benefit. The poem demonstrates convincingly that the crucifixion of Christ, though apparently inglorious, is an act of triumph in the battle between Christ and Lucifer. Of all the wars that are dealt with in the course of this volume, this one is absolutely necessary. Love can do no other than joust to vanquish evil. The poem presents this understanding as something to be embraced by the reader for the good of the soul; the text is one which invites a response of the mind and heart.

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Stressing embodiment in valour and emotion, Corinne Saunders draws on recent research to show the significance of breath in *Le Morte Darthur*. The chapter explores the treatment of breath (and breathlessness) in *Le Morte Darthur* within its wider late medieval medical, literary and cultural contexts, looking in particular at breath in relation to war and peace, knightly prowess, and emotion. Linking with earlier chapters in this collection which discuss the tears and swooning connected with grief, Saunders more fully explores *Le Morte Darthur*, finding that breath articulates and makes visible emotion, in joy, but most of all in laments, sighs, and swoons. Breath, she explains, is also integral to knightly prowess; the movements of breath mark the greatness in love and war of Malory's protagonists, Launcelot, Tristram, Lamorak, Palomides. And in the Grail Quest, the spiritual is seen and felt in the movements of the air and the embodied experience of vision, through tears, sleep, and swoon.

The last chapter in this section, by James Simpson, discusses drama as a way of giving voice to those who suffer the ills of civil war, and gaining voice for the different members of the polity whose lives are impacted by civil war. Political theory and historical fiction are two possible ways of gaining voice and gaining traction in a civil war context. Another is drama, which gains voice by giving voice. Both England and France were affected by civil war in the fifteenth century, and Alain Chartier's *Quadrilogue Invectif* was translated from French into English in two versions. Where *Piers Plowman* is written in a register that invites shared contemplation of divine mysteries, the *Quadrilogue* registers that three estates, knights, clergy and people, have been given voices in order that a parliamentary, national voice be gained. Both of these texts set out to cause change, the *Quadrilogue* within a disturbed national polity, *Piers Plowman* within a universal need for spiritual coherence.

The Impact of War

The final section, "The Impact of War," contains three chapters which highlight some unexpected consequences of the impact of war. John Ganim outlines the way the Crusades reemerge in European national romances in the fifteenth century giving rise to literary forms of the new romance and epic. In these romances, the historical frame of reference is not the loss of Jerusalem in 1187, but the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Hosts of warriors set off to defeat what Ganim describes as a "disturbingly refashioned infidel," with the Ottoman Empire representing an absolutist sovereignty that resembles those developing in Western Europe which threaten the political existence of the knightly classes: "The Ottoman empire, under Western eyes, seems to loom as an absolute state, which it is not, while the regalia of the Christian feudal west increasingly disguises and often abets a radical centralization of power that dissolves both the knightly class and the hope for a universal Christianity." Ganim sees the thrust of the new romances as expressing the clash of nation versus empire, with the Saracen representing the power of the Ottoman Empire, and the knights often conflicted between adherence to an older variant of civilization and the reality of the newer one whose political status is, nevertheless, often indistinguishable from that of the Saracen "other."

Susan Broomhall focuses specifically on place, namely the forests of France ravaged during the course of the sixteenth-century wars of religion between Huguenot and Catholic factions. Looking at three textual sources, horticultural, political, and poetic, she explores the way the ideals of silviculture were systematically ignored and forests destroyed under the guise of expediency, by both warring factions. She writes that "France's forests supplied the firepower for numerous technologies of war, were destroyed in its crossfire, and enlisted as a financial resource to fuel partisan politics." Her chapter takes a fresh look at the complex relationships between faith behaviours and the environments, natural and constructed, in which they were practised. She refers to the works on forestry management by Pierre Belon and Bernard Palissy, the latter a Protestant self-taught natural philosopher and theologian, who stresses the need for productive management of forests in tune with their existence as gifts of God and nature. But the strongest arguments are made by the poet Pierre de Ronsard, who had first-hand experience of his own forests and wrote with scathing satire against the politically motivated destruction of forests sanctioned by the religious leaders. Conceptual notions of "taming" forests for man's needs, the forest as a victim of war, and as a material manifestation of God's design and His providence are explored in this chapter to unlock both the spiritual and physical impact of war on a natural resource.

The final chapter acts as a type of coda, and demonstrates how medieval memories, symbols, and literary genres permeate modern thinking and give scope for creating a retrospective view of history that both romanticizes the medieval past and equally gives rise to nationalistic, ethnocentric, and Christocentric interpretations of the past that continue into the present. Louise D'Arcens explores how the anti-war satirical films of Mario Monicelli present a strong rebuttal to such medievalist triumphalism, offering themselves as "a meta-parody in which medieval chivalry and medievalist representation are lampooned by depicting a Middle Ages that is manifestly not real, but nevertheless aims to be true." Monicelli aims to show the impact of war from the point of view of "the humble people, the little guy."[1] D'Arcens discusses in detail *The Great War* and the *Brancaleone* films. In these, mordant comedy shows the audience world-historical events "as experienced by those who gain little and lose much from the wars waged by authorities and institutions, such as churches, armies, and governments." D'Arcens uses these films to demonstrate how war has, over the centuries and continuing into modern times, exposed to danger and destruction those with little say over the political and economic forces that determine their lives. Her chapter cleverly exposes the medievalist war depicted in the films as "a world which, despite being amusingly distant, was also unsettlingly familiar."

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1 Deborah Young, "Poverty, Misery, War and Other Comic Material: An Interview with Mario Monicelli," *Cinéaste* 29 (2004), quoted on page x.

Conclusion

The collection of essays in *Literature, Emotions, and Pre-Modern War* allows critical exploration of a wide range of textual and historical sources, some widely known and others of a more obscure nature. Under the broad monikers of emotion, voicing, and impact, they examine and explicate the many subtleties of how war and conflict can affect the human condition. The single work of literature that characterizes the dominant influence of Andrew Lynch on studies of war and emotions is Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. This work is referenced by many authors throughout the volume as a work that celebrates courage, heroism, and great love: filial, fraternal, and romantic. Yet it is also a work that evokes immense sadness in the reader who witnesses and shares in the catastrophic destruction of the Round Table and all its lofty ideals.

The chapters in this volume offer reflections on the past, exploring how people's lives and environments have been impacted by battles and war. Taking texts as far apart as the Old English heroic poem *The Battle of Maldon*, and twentieth-century war movies such as the Olivier *Henry V* which sets out to glorify war, and Mario Monicelli's *Brancaleone* films which satirize it, the authors demonstrate the long reach of war. It becomes clear that heroism, grief, politics, and empire are enduring components in war and conflict. These chapters demonstrate that pre-modern texts can give voice to experiences of war which are both culturally distant from the present day, and yet recognizable in their effect on the vulnerable, both lands and people. Following on from recent works on the experience of war, particularly *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, *Emotions and War: Medieval to Romantic Literature*, and *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370–1854: A History of Emotion*,[2] and in line with the sentiments expressed in the Preface, this volume seeks to place experience of the long tentacles of war as a continuum altogether "unsettlingly familiar."

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2 Corinne Saunders, Françoise Le Saux, and Thomas Neil, ed. *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004). Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, and Katrina O'Loughlin, ed. *Emotions and War: Medieval to Romantic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, and Katrina O'Loughlin, ed. *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370–1854: A History of Emotions* (London: Routledge, 2018).

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