Visualising War On and Off the Page:
Interplay between Battle Narratives across Antiquity

International Conference, June 14th-15th 2017: Byre Theatre Studio, St Andrews

About the Project

Battle narratives are a crucial element of ancient and modern cultural and literary traditions. Cutting across boundaries of genre and media, they link historiography, poetry, oratory, drama and technical writing with non-literary forms of representation such as sculpture, cartoons, epitaphs, music and anecdote. They also connect different communities and periods with each other: later depictions of battle invariably respond to the earlier models on which they draw. The aim of our project is to explore these interconnections, while developing new methodologies for 'reading' multimedial, cross-cultural and diachronic interplay.

The premise of our project is that individual battle narratives have always been constructed in dynamic relation to each other, and that a proper understanding of the battle narrative as a complex cultural phenomenon requires interaction between different genres, media, historical periods and communities to be placed at the heart of discussions. *Visualising War* brings together experts from a range of academic fields to explore such interplay from multiple angles. The collective expertise of our contributors covers all historical periods (from ancient Greece and Rome, through Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, to the First and Second World Wars and the present day) and many different media and genres (including literary texts, theoretical treatises, epigraphy, journalism, art, drama, and music). This interplay between such a diverse range of scholars will prompt important reflections on the tensions and overlaps between different 'visualising' methodologies, ancient and modern, and on intertextuality and interdiscursivity more broadly.

The representation of battle is as powerful a social, cultural and political phenomenon now as it was when ancient Greek poets first began to narrate the sack of Troy, as is amply documented by coverage of the recent capture and recapture of ancient Palmyra, for instance. In taking a deliberately long view of the representation of battle, we aim to come to a fuller understanding of the evolution of battle narratives across time and space. In that respect, our project looks forward as well as back: we hope that broad engagement with the results of our research will lead to an enhanced awareness of the mechanisms and 'poetics' of battle narratives and prompt critical reflection on contemporary and future representations of warfare.

At this conference, researchers from different specialisations within Classics will examine dialogue between battle scenes from different genres, media and cultures across antiquity (8[th]c. BC-4[th]c. AD), probing lack of interplay as well as interactivity. Reaching beyond the traditional parameters of ancient warfare studies, we have commissioned papers that pair well-known, 'canonical' works with more marginal (e.g., technical, 'foreign', inscriptional, anecdotal) representations. Some will look at clusters of works produced within a short time of each other; others will take a more diachronic view, looking at the ways in which interplay builds up over time.

All contributors have been challenged to reflect on the ways in which we visualise and articulate different forms of interplay. By combining close analysis with methodological reflection, the conference will 1) produce novel insight into already well-known battle depictions in individual works; 2) explore systematically, for the first time, the evolution of 'the battle narrative' in antiquity as a multi-faceted, interactive network of ideas; 3) initiate fresh dialogue on methodologies of reading interaction between different periods and art forms.

PROGRAMME

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International Conference, June 14th-15th 2017
Studio: Byre Theatre, St Andrews

(N.B. the Studio is on the top floor of the Byre Theatre)

JUNE 14th

9.45:	coffee, tea
10.00:	Welcome

10.30-12.00: Chair: Alice König
Lisa Hau (University of Glasgow): Visualising battle in Hellenistic inscriptions and historiography
Nicolas Wiater (University of St Andrews): The Art of the Battle Narrative: Representations of Battles in Hellenistic Prose, Art and Poetry

1.00-2.30: Chair: Nicolas Wiater
Courtney Roby (Cornell University): Model wars: theorizing war in Greek and Roman tactical manuals
Marco Formisano & Paolo Felice Sacchi (University of Ghent): Out of Target. Text and Photography

3.00-4.30: Chair: Jon Coulston
John Oksanish (Wake Forest University): All the war's a siege: spectacle, engagement, and detachment
Serafina Cuomo (Birkbeck, University of London): 'Innovation in military technology'

5.00-5.45: Chair: Emma Buckley
Alice König (University of St Andrews): Battles between Narratives: interplay between battle narratives in Frontinus' *Strategemata* and Marius d'Assigny's 1686 translation

6.00:	drinks reception, School of Classics, Swallowgate
7.30:	conference dinner, at the Swilcan Restaurant, St Andrews Links

JUNE 15th

9.00-10.30:   Chair: Jon Coulston
                Andrew Riggsby (University of Texas at Austin): Divide and Conquer
                Bettina Reitz-Joosse (University of Groningen): Geographies of Defeat: The
                Romans in Parthia

11.00-12.30:   Chair: Alice König
                Hannah-Marie Chidwick (University of Bristol): Multiplicity in Lucan's *Civil War*
                Helen Lovatt (University of Nottingham): Battles in pieces: Fragmentation,
                bodies and narrative in Flavian art and text

1.30-3.00:   Chair: Nicolas Wiater
                Zahra Newby (University of Warwick): Rewriting the Trojan War for the
                Roman dead: tales from Troy on Roman sarcophagi
                Emma Buckley (University of St Andrews): Homer's Theatre of War: Vision
                and Violence in Gager's (1592) *Ulysses Redux*

3.30-4.30:   Alice König and Nicolas Wiater (chairing): Closing Discussion, with expert
                contributors Jon Coulston (Classics) and Peter Mackay (English)

ABSTRACTS (in programme order)

Lisa Hau, University of Glasgow
Visualising battle in Hellenistic inscriptions and historiography:
In the Hellenistic period, the similarities between narrative inscriptions and historiography are striking. This paper will examine some inscriptions which include narratives of battle (*OGIS* 765, *Syll.*³ 398, *Syll.*³ 709) and compare them with battle narratives in Polybius and Diodorus. The focus will be on techniques of visualisation and immersiveness, and on the different approaches to battles between Greeks on the one hand and battles between Greeks and barbarians on the other. In conclusion, we shall try to answer the questions arising from the similarity: what medium inspired the other? Why did the author of one medium imitate the other? Is it significant that the inscriptions are civic texts with theoretically communal authors while the histories are – theoretically – mono-authored and meant to increase their author's prestige?

Nicolas Wiater, University of St Andrews
The Art of the Battle Narrative: Representations of Battles in Hellenistic Prose, Art and Poetry
This paper attempts to understand battle narratives as multi-generic art forms in Hellenistic culture by bringing Hellenistic prose narratives, especially Polybius, poetry and art into dialogue with each other. I am particularly interested in contextualising Polybius' battle narratives (which are too often simply read as artless, more or less factual accounts which merit no literary attention) within the larger discourse of representations of battle across different literary and visual media in the Hellenistic period. In so doing, I also hope to lay the foundations for a more general 'poetics' of Hellenistic battle narrative in an attempt to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the role of representations of battle and the discourse of war and battle in the Hellenistic world more generally.

Courtney Roby, Cornell University
Model wars: theorizing war in Greek and Roman tactical manuals
Ancient tactical manuals (and their near relations in manuals of siege warfare strategies and military machinery) inhabit a prospective, generalizing narrative space quite different from that created by retrospective battle narratives (both verbal and visual) of past engagements. Rhetorically, tactical manuals often invoke a particular kind of prediction: their task is not to foresee specific details of upcoming engagements, but to provide a "model space" of sufficient predictive power that their advice will be applicable in a wide range of real situations whose particular details may nevertheless vary considerably.

To provide a model of events in the real world which must be flexible enough to remain applicable in many possible eventualities, yet also include sufficient specificity in key "invariant" details to give it reliable explanatory and persuasive power: this is the challenge for authors of tactical manuals. Recent scholarship in the philosophy of science suggests that similar challenges are faced in constructing scientific models, which likewise must persuasively explain complex phenomena in the natural world through analogies, generalizations, approximations, simplifications, and "data" shaped formulaically or visually. The resulting models are in some sense "fictional," and yet they prove useful tools for scientific explorations and applications.

In this paper, I will apply the analysis of this kind of fiction to the technical context of Greek and Latin manuals of tactics and military technology. I will focus on the techniques used by Aelian, Asclepiodotus, Apollodorus, and the anonymous author of the *De rebus bellicis* to make their "model wars" persuasively vivid while maintaining a sufficient economy of information that the situations

the texts describe remain comprehensible and generalizable. I will consider crucial verbal elements of these texts (in particular the language of possibility, paradigm, and persuasion) as well as their visual components (ranging from Aelian's sparse top-down formation diagrams, which mirror the top-down organization of the table of contents he proudly claims as a textual innovation, to the elaborate images in the *De rebus bellicis*, which the author lauds as presented in lifelike color and detail). Finally, I will compare the verbal and visual "modeling" strategies in these works to those of a few key Renaissance and early modern authors who translated them or used them as a basis for their own.

Marco Formisano and Paolo Felice Sacchi, University of Ghent
Out of Target. Text and Photography
This paper consists of two interwoven parts, devoted to *text* and *photography* respectively.
We will focus on their nature as *media* and draw attention to the challenges they pose when called upon to represent the (controversial) reality of war.
In the first part, the traditional dichotomy between theoretical and practical texts will be addressed on the basis of some ancient and late antique military treatises (namely Onasander's *Strategikós*, Flavius Arrianus' *Téchne taktiké*, Vegetius' *Eptioma rei militaris*). Here we attempt to bypass the polarity between theory and practice, predictability and unpredictability, abstraction and experience, by arguing that the very act of ordering and conceptualising implies *violence* and, in so doing, seems to replicate the deep dynamic of war, even as it apparently erases it.
In the second part, a similar epistemic instability will be discussed drawing on photography theory. Photography will not, of course, be considered as historical evidence but as a comparandum for the kind of knowledge it produces.
We will conclude by discussing the relevance of these two representational impasses for the debate on ancient war and its representability.

John Oksanish, Wake Forest University
All the war's a siege: spectacle, engagement, and detachment
This paper compares three, Roman accounts of the siege at Massilia in 49 BCE: Caesar's own account of the siege at which he was not in fact present, *BC* 1.34-2.22; the dramatic and gory narrative of Lucan *BC* 3; and the highly compact narrative which concludes Vitruvius' treatise on architecture, Vitr. 10.16.11-12. Although I will address some intertextual relationships among these accounts (with emphasis on the chapters in *De architectura*), my larger aim is to place these passages within the wider context of siege-narratives as a literary type-scene, beginning with the originary instance of western war-literature, the *Iliad*. In particular, I suggest that siege-narratives are characterized by paradoxes: action and inaction; spectacular engagement and clinical detachment; presence and absence; domination and liberation. These paradoxes are exacerbated by the increasing role given to war-machines and technology, prompting comparison with the rise of so-called drones in modern warfare. Special consideration will be given to Massilia's status as a Greek city participating in Rome's civil conflict.

Serafina Cuomo, Birkbeck, University of London
'Innovation in military technology'
The issue of 'new' versus 'old' technology has recently been a matter for debate. Traditionally, 'old', even 'outdated', technology was supposed to be replaced by 'new' technology almost automatically - for instance, non-torsion catapults being replaced by torsion catapults, but recent studies have pointed out the persistent survival of old-fashioned devices even when technological progress appears to have moved on. This paper will explore how these themes pan out in the context of late

Republican and imperial Roman depictions of, and reflections on, war. In particular, I will juxtapose descriptions of military technology in Caesar's De bello gallico, Frontinus' Stratagemata, and Trajan's column, and try to tease out explicit and implicit discourses about innovation and expertise.

Alice König, University of St Andrews
Battles between Narratives: interplay between battle narratives in Frontinus' Strategemata and Marius d'Assigny's 1686 translation
Frontinus' *Strategemata* brings several hundred battle narratives – from lots of different times and places – into one textual space. It thrusts them into interplay with each other, and alters their interaction with the source texts and wider frameworks from which they have been excerpted. Interplay between the individual battle stories gathered together within the treatise builds into macro narratives (about the conduct of war, cultural identity, Mediterranean history and historiography, inter alia) which bring whole genres and cultural discourses into dialogue (and tension) with each other; it also exposes The Battle Narrative as a recurring phenomenon to all sorts of scrutiny. The interplay between Frontinus' battle narratives (and wider texts) can be brought into sharper relief by consideration of later re-workings of the *Strategemata* for different audiences. My paper will focus on one in particular, the translation dedicated by Marius d'Assigny in 1686 to 'All Military Souls of the English Nation'. D'Assigny did not just reproduce Frontinus' treatise in its entirety; he added a short 'discourse' on engines of war, and a supplementary collection of 'brave exploits and subtil stratagems of several famous generals since the Roman empire'. Exploring the collocation of this later collection with Frontinus' original offers further opportunity to put The Battle Narrative itself under the microscope, as well as unpicking the peculiar characteristics of Frontinus' original collection. It offers more insight into the nature of narrative interplay, across time and cultures; and it exposes some of the ways in which battle narratives get sucked into wider battles *between* narratives.

Andrew Riggsby, University of Texas at Austin
Divide and Conquer
The "division" my title refers to is not of the enemy, but of the (Roman) army itself. I examine the segmentation of the army as represented in several different media and contexts: historical narrative (principally Caesar and Livy); sculpture (main evidence already collected in Taylor, *MAAR* 2014/5); and more or less official internal army documents (unit rosters on papyrus [Fink 1971]; inscribed *laterculi* [cf. Benefiel *ZPE* 2001]; note that the less official documents demonstrate the cognitive penetration of the official forms). The three show strikingly (almost suspiciously so) different concerns from one another (social status according to both internal and external metrics; ideologies of discipline); interaction between the various models appears to not occur so much in the form of influence, but in choice of which to deploy.

Bettina Reitz-Joosse, University of Groningen
Geographies of Defeat: The Romans in Parthia
My paper focusses on the role of landscapes in literary representations of Roman military experiences in Parthia, analysing the way in which Roman authors created emotional and memorial geographies of the strange and hostile country that saw several painful Roman defeats. I would like to relate these literary landscapes to Roman ethnographic and geographic knowledge of Parthia in the early empire. It has been noted that Roman understanding of the Parthian people and their territory for a long time remained somewhat limited. While direct influence of geographic or ethnographic 'sources' on literary texts (or vice versa) is difficult to pin down, I will argue that narrative accounts of the disaster at Carrhae and of subsequent Roman policies engage precisely with the question of the 'unmappability' of Parthia (e.g. Prop. 4.3), and problematize the Romans' (lack

of) specific knowledge about the Parthian terrain and people (e.g. Plutarch's *Life of Crassus*). I will conclude with some thoughts about the relationship between the geographic and ethnographic challenges posed by Parthia and the conception of Parthia as an *alter orbis*.

Hannah-Marie Chidwick, University of Bristol
Multiplicity in Lucan's *Civil War*
This paper will read the depiction of the military in Lucan's *Civil War* through the philosophical framework of twentieth-century thinkers, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The aim is to explore how Deleuze and Guattari's theory of 'multiplicity' can facilitate the interpretation of battle narratives, by encouraging a reading practice which embraces the post-humanism and subverted boundaries which permeate depictions of war, ancient and modern.
Multiplicity conceptually opposes the reductive nature of the 'singular' being (as contended by psychoanalysis). In multiplicity theory, all beings are irreducibly multiple, dynamically bound to their environment, and lacking individual agency. My work builds on that of scholars of Classics and military theory who have so far utilised Deleuze and Guattari's multiplicity (notably Klaus Theweleit's study of pre-Nazi German soldiers); I do so with a more detailed dissection of Latin literature. In his choice of content and poetic techniques, Lucan's notoriously violent and subversive portrayal of the civil war between Julius Caesar and the Republic especially lends itself to a 'multiplicitous' interpretation. I will traverse passages from Lucan's epic to introduce the ways in which Deleuzean philosophy advances an intertextual study of war narratives, and how, particularly, *civil* conflict prompts us to think beyond borderlines 'too familiar'.

Helen Lovatt, University of Nottingham
Battles in pieces: Fragmentation, bodies and narrative in Flavian art and text
In *The Epic Gaze* I explored the possible effects of an aesthetic of fragmentation on epic battle scenes: the focus on body parts rather than people with agency flattens and fetishizes epic narrative. I take this further in this paper by exploring epic in relation to other genres and media. Starting from Flavian epic (Statius *Thebaid* 8 and Silius *Punica* 9 and 10), I will compare incidences of battle description in Martial, explore fragmented mentions of battle in love elegy, and look at art, particularly Roman sarcophagi and the column of Marcus Aurelius. I might also compare the more connected narratives of body parts in civil war in Tacitus *Histories*. I will address questions such as: how do allusions to battle narrative compare to connected narratives? How do fragmented genres compare to connected genres in their treatment of the visuality of battle scenes? How do continuous narratives connect narrative elements together? What are the similarities and differences between visual fragments in art and text?

Zahra Newby, University of Warwick
Rewriting the Trojan War for the Roman dead: tales from Troy on Roman sarcophagi
This paper will consider the ways that narratives of the Trojan War were represented on Roman sarcophagi in the second and third centuries AD. It will explore the varieties of Trojan War narratives presented on Roman metropolitan, Attic and Asia Minor sarcophagi, considering both how they interact with the visual traditions of battle narratives in art, and with oral and literary traditions about the Trojan War. Through selection and adaptation, these ancient tales of death and heroism were refashioned to serve the needs of different audiences within the funerary sphere.

Emma Buckley, University of St Andrews
Homer's Theatre of War: Vision and Violence in Gager's (1592) *Ulysses Redux*
In 1592 William Gager, Oxford's pre-eminent academic playwright, brought Homer to the stage,

debuting his *Ulysses Redux* in front of Queen Elizabeth. This neo-Latin play, a *nova tragaedia* based on Ulysses' return to Ithaca, his reunion with his family, and his vengeance upon the suitors, is in many ways a remarkable work, offering sustained and close reworking of Homer's *Odyssey* at a time when no English translation of the poem existed (Chapman's *Odyssey* would be published first in 1616). In its final act, it also offers a fascinating, visually and aesthetically challenging transformation of Odysseus' slaying of the suitors into dramatic spectacle for the stage.

This paper will use the re-visualisation of the *Odyssey* as a fresh route into the challenging aesthetic, emotional and ethical questions already posed by Odysseus' 'solution' to the problem of the suitors. Beyond simply the technical issues of translating epic into on-stage action, I will argue that in putting Odysseus' vengeance in front of our eyes, he offers a powerful challenge to the 'cultural-conditioning' associated with ancient battle-narrative, forcing us to us re-examine whether this is an *aristeia* within the conventional boundaries of Homeric 'battle narrative', bringing *kleos* to Odysseus and his son Telemachus, or simply a murder-plot, unworthy to be on display before our eyes. And as an academic play, I will suggest, *Ulysses Redux* asks us more broadly to consider the ethical differences between reading and viewing violence, the potential dangers but also value in *seeing* slaughter (albeit on-stage), and the evolving social value of the 'noble death'.