Art and Violence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

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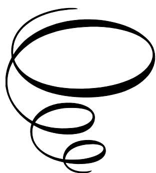
Edited by

Robert G. Sullivan and Meriem Pagès

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT G. SULLIVAN AND MERIEM PAGÈS

The essays here, in this our second volume of selected proceedings, provide a good representative selection of the many papers offered at two consecutive meetings of the Medieval and Renaissance Forum, held at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire in April 2017 and April 2018. Inaugurated at Plymouth State University in 1980, the Forum moved permanently to Keene in 2015. Now in its forty-first year, the Medieval and Renaissance Forum remains one of the oldest and largest regional conferences on the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period in the United States. Each year, a leading scholar in the field of Medieval or Early Modern Studies is invited to the Forum. Past speakers have included Stephen G. Nichols, Joan Ferrante, Debra Higgs Strickland, Thomas Forrest Kelly, Carolyn Dinshaw, Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Richard W. Kaeuper, Jeffrey Hamburger, and Margot Fassler. In addition to the invited scholar's keynote address, about sixty papers are presented at the Forum by professors, graduate students, and independent scholars, and special sessions are dedicated to undergraduate presenters, including a yearly contingent of Dartmouth College students presenting under the guidance of Professor Thomas Luxon.

The Forum has been known for decades as a site of meaningful intellectual discourse as well as one especially welcoming of emerging scholars, and many are the attendees — now professional academics — who can tell nervous, first-time presenters over lunch that the Forum was their first professional conference. The Forum remains open to new debates on topics as diverse as the use of digital tools to map historical data and the application of queer theory to medieval Irish works while also offering more traditional fare focusing on Chaucer, Malory, and Milton.

Although spread over the period of two years and two conferences with very different themes, the essays that follow are complementary in their approach to medieval and Early Modern art, culture, history, and literature. The theme for the 38th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum, "Culture and Violence," and that of the 39th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum, "Image and Visual Experience in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,"

at first seem unlikely to converge. Yet, when we looked more closely at the essays produced for these two gatherings, we soon realized the extent to which these two seemingly unrelated themes were, in fact, connected and that artistic expressions — verbal, visual, or written — often address traumatic experiences such as death and loss.

The papers included here, all thoroughly revised and rewritten for this volume, describe some of the myriad ways in which human beings turn to art for relief, either from loss or to express forbidden desires and longings. In their treatment of the intersection of art and violence with medieval and Early Modern culture and society, three pieces focus on the depiction of violence in art. In "From History to Legend: The Battle of Crécy and the Cult of Knighthood at Gloucester Cathedral," Netta Clavner examines the echoes of the Battle of Crécy and its representation in the Crécy Window at Gloucester Cathedral. Doot Bookelman and Sara Connor in "Late Medieval Franciscan Ideology Embodied in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Martyrdom*" and "*Turkish Oracle*: The Prophetic Imagery of Universal Monarchies and the Apocalypse" treat more specifically the representation of the Muslim Other in medieval European art. While Bokelman argues that the Muslim Other is depicted as barbaric in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Martyrdom*, Connor presents the Ottoman Turks as the ultimate threat to Europe in the Early Modern period.

Three other art history essays shed much needed light on fascinating, yet little known examples of medieval and Early Modern art. In "The Holy Land of Hoṙomos: Landscape, Liturgy, and Architecture," Whitney Kite imaginatively recreates the partially-ruined Armenian monastery of Hoṙomos as a place of haunting and majestic beauty meant to imitate the holy buildings and atmosphere of Jerusalem. Marisa Žele's "The Embodiment of the World in the Allegorical Subject: Rethinking Medieval Cartography through the Images of Opicinus de Canistris" argues that Opicinus's often bizarre anthropomorphic maps lie at the intersection between the late medieval and Early Modern periods, capturing the medieval individual's sense of the world and his/her place within it just before the advent of the Renaissance. The last art history piece included here, Alexander Rhodes's "Heraldry and Religious Symbolism in a Seventeenth-Century *Carta Ejecutoria*," explores the relationship between text and image in a *carta ejecutoria*, one that utilizes unusually elaborate illuminations to emphasize the Christian pedigree of the family whose noble credentials it serves to establish.

The remaining six essays focus primarily on medieval and Early Modern European literature, with three of them addressing the manner in which literature negotiates the violence inherent to medieval and Early

Modern European societies. In "After the Horror: Traumatic Loss and the Search for Meaning in Alcuin of York's Writings about Lindisfarne and Northumbria," for example, June-Ann Greeley explores the work of the eighth-century scholar and poet Alcuin and his response to the traumatic Viking destruction of his former monastery of Lindisfarne. Similarly, Peter Schwartz highlights the repercussions of the murder of Lamerok, a beloved knight and hero, in Thomas Malory's late fifteenth-century *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Meanwhile, Frank Hugus approaches violence with more levity, examining the importance of often harsh comedy in Icelandic sagas in "How to Make a Viking Laugh: Humor in the Icelandic *Sagas of Ancient Time*."

Since we do not require Forum participants to present on a topic related to the annual conference theme, three other essays deal with neither "Culture and Violence" nor "Image and Visual Experience." Of these independently-themed essays, Peter Cocozzella's "The Theatricality of the Narrator-Expositor in Two Exemplary Monologues of the Renaissance in the Catalan Domain" argues for the existence of an alternative theatrical tradition in Catalan literature as early as the fifteenth century. In the second such essay, "Pronoun Usage and Personal Forms of Address in *The Nun's Priest's Prologue* and *Tale*," Thomas J. Napierkowski sketches the use of formal and informal pronouns in one of the most applauded of Geoffrey Chaucer's tales. Finally, Jim Slocombe returns us to late medieval England with his piece on Thomas Malory's use of humor and comedy, "Mirthful Malory: Comic Relief in *Le Morte d'Arthur*."

We are delighted to be able to include in this volume a number of papers by some of our long-standing supporters, some of whom have been regularly attending the Forum for over thirty years. These scholars and friends have told us that the spirit of community and openness that they have found at our sessions has inspired them to return every year. We are profoundly grateful to them for their knowledge, their wisdom, their wit, and, above all, their continued dedication to the Medieval and Renaissance Forum. It was with profound sadness that we cancelled the 2020 meeting of the Forum because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we look forward in hope to welcoming our friends back to Keene and to receiving new friends in the near future.

MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ART

CHAPTER 1

FROM HISTORY TO LEGEND: THE CRÉCY-CALAIS CAMPAIGN AND THE GREAT EAST WINDOW OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

NETTA CLAVNER

The Great East Window of Gloucester Cathedral (an abbey church until 1541) has long been celebrated as "a landmark in the history of English glass-painting" (Fig. 1).[1] Owing to its unique bowed construction, the window is often described as resembling a monumental triptych, rising from behind the high altar with side panels pitched forward slightly.[2] The

[1] Gordon M. Rushforth, "The Great East Window of Gloucester Cathedral," *The Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archeological Society* 44 (1922): 294; Charles Winston, "An Account of the Painted Glass in the East Window of Gloucester Cathedral," *Archaeological Journal* 20 (1863): 239-53, 319-30; T. D. Grimké-Drayton, "The East Window of Gloucester Cathedral," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 38 (1915): 76; David Welander, *The Stained Glass of Gloucester Cathedral* (Frome: The Dowland Press, 1985); Jill Kerr, "The East Window of Gloucester Cathedral," in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester and Tewkesbury*, eds. T. A. Heslop and Veronica Sekules (London and Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1985), 116-29. The most recent study on the state of the stained glass is Leonie Seliger, "A History of Repairs to the Stained Glass in the Great East Window of Gloucester Cathedral" (master's thesis, University of York, 2001), http://www.cvma.ac.uk/GloucesterCathedralEW.pdf.

[2] Rushforth, "Great East Window," 294-97. On the curved design in relation to the architectural foundation of the east wall, see Kerr, "East Window," 120; David Welander, *Art and Architecture of Gloucester Cathedral* (Stroud: A. Sutton 1991), 182-92; Christopher Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral: The Architecture of the Great Church, 1130–1530* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 204-5, 208; Christopher Wilson, "'Excellent, New and Uniform:' Perpendicular Architecture c.1400-1547," in *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*, eds. Richard Marks and Paul Williamson (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2003), 98-103.

similarity to an altarpiece triptych is further enhanced by the imagery of the stained glass, which presents a vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem in a tiered arrangement of large-scale figures of ecclesiastics, kings, saints, and Apostles, with the Coronation of the Virgin in the center.[3] An array of coats-of-arms is exhibited across the tier below, of which only ten belong to the original scheme (Fig. 2). The four lights of either side remain largely intact, but much of the medieval glass from the middle section has been lost and with it, all but two of the original arms.[4]

Since a contemporary account of the construction of the window does not exist (as far as is known), its dating relies mostly on stylistic analyses of the glass and stone framework. Based on his examination of pigments and glazing techniques in 1861-62, Charles Winston determined that the window was produced between 1340 and 1350. Examining the glazed shields, he then narrowed the timeframe, estimating that the work was commissioned around 1347-48 and completed by 1350.[5] From his close examination of the window's original coats-of-arms, Winston concluded that the English military expedition of 1346-47 culminating in the Battle of Crécy is the main common denominator for the knights they represent. He, therefore, proposed the armorial sequence to be a celebratory display of "some of the heroes" who fought alongside King Edward III in the campaign that saw England's legendary victory at Crécy and the siege of Calais, an association that earned the window its moniker — the 'Crécy Window.'[6]

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[3] Wilson, "An Account," 240-53; Rushforth, "Great East Window," 296; Kerr, "East Window," 120-5; Welander, *Stained Glass*, 11-26.

[4] Winston, "An Account," 319-27; Grimké-Drayton, "East Window," 82-87. The four shields on either side of the window are generally regarded as part of the original scheme and are even argued by some to be in situ. But inconsistencies exist regarding the extent of the original glass across the entire window. Leonie Seliger's research determines the extent of original glass to be far greater than what was previously thought, the great majority of it being still in situ. Seliger, "History of Repairs," 128-31.

[5] Winston, "An Account," 322, 327.

[6] Ibid., 234. The remaining original shields depict (left to right): Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; Thomas, Baron Berkeley; Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; William Bohun, Earl of Northampton; Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince; Henry, Earl of Lancaster; Laurence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke; Richard, Lord Talbot; Sir Maurice Berkeley; and Thomas, Lord Bradeston. On the coats-of-arms and their identification, see Grimké-Drayton, "East Window," 319-27, 78-92; Kerr, "East Window," 125; Welander, *Stained Glass*, 19-23; Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 223. For a fourteenth-century delineation of the English

The window's association with the military campaign of 1346-47, however, has been in doubt since the publication of Jill Kerr's study in 1985.[7] The connection among the various individuals represented by the coats-of-arms is argued by Kerr to be feudal rather than military due to the presence of two shields that belong to men who participated in the Siege of Calais rather than at the battle of Crécy as well as the involvement of some of these men in contemporaneous military affairs against Scottish forces.[8] Only some of the represented men claimed local lordship, while all are distinguished for their commitment to Edward III and their devoted military involvement in the king's pursuit of the French crown, the majority holding key roles at the battle of Crécy.[9] For this reason, the heraldic glass is still occasionally seen as possessing military resonance.[10] The window is even suggested by Richard Barber to be "the nearest approach to what the glass of the original Garter chapel might have been like," a royal commission that in itself strongly relates to the military events of 1346-47, particularly to England's victory at the battle of Crécy.[11] Despite the repeated association of the window with Edward III's military triumphs, the window's function

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army at the Battle of Crécy see, for example, the excerpt from Saint-Omer's *Chronicle* in *The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook*, eds. Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 103-5.

[7] Kerr, "East Window," 125; Welander, *Stained Glass*, 24. Although Richard Marks agrees that Gloucester's heraldry could be interpreted as corresponding to an Occasional Roll, depicting the participants in Edward III's military campaigns, he also supports the possibility that it may have been intended as a hierarchical social display equivalent to a General Roll of Arms. Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993), 87-88, 165.

[8] Kerr, "East Window," 125-26.

[9] Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England, The Battle of Crécy and the Company of the Garter* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), esp. 213-56; Hugh E. Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 34-85.

[10] Peter Coss, "Knighthood, Heraldry and Social Exclusion in Edwardian England," in *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England*, eds. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 67; Allison K. McHardy, "Some Reflections on Edward III's Use of Propaganda," in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. James S. Bothwell (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), 186-87; Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066-1500* (London: The Bodley Head, 2011), 288-89; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 223.

[11] Barber, *Edward III*, 286. The East Window's correlation with the work commissioned by Edward III in the late 1340s and early 1350s is discussed in my previous publication: Netta Clavner, "The Great East Window of Gloucester Cathedral and its Heraldic Glass," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 171, no. 1 (2018): 116-17.

as a commemorative monument has yet to be explored, and the context in which its coats-of-arms have been viewed remains uncertain.

For a better understanding of the historical relevancy and visual impact of its heraldic glass and painted imagery, I would like to reconsider the window's proclaimed association with Edward III's military victory in France. I will first compare Gloucester's stained glass with contemporary works that explicitly convey military ideas to establish the presence of common motifs and a shared visual approach. I will then discuss the emblematic significance of the heraldic shields and review its devotional implications in the fourteenth century. Finally, I will explore contemporary discourse about the battle of Crécy and England's triumph and demonstrate how the East Window communicates similar ideals. I will argue that the importance of England's victory at Crécy at the time of the window's construction means a direct association with the battle is unlikely to have escaped a fourteenth-century viewer. I suggest further that the window's didactic message may have served to enhance the memory of the battle and shape the way its fourteenth-century audience experienced the victories of Edward III.

The Heraldic Glass and the Heavenly Kingdom

Jill Kerr describes the glazed sequence of figures and shields as a delineation of "a specific, formalized hierarchy: the derivation of authority from heaven to earth."[12] The stained glass harmoniously links the earthly company of lords temporal and lords spiritual that occupy the bottom half of the window with the heavenly orders of saints, apostles, and angels depicted in the upper tiers. Situated at the foot of the window, the king and his lords are positioned as the pillars of the celestial kingdom, and, like the figures above, they are proclaimed the earthly administrators of God's will.

The monumentality, composition, and imagery of Gloucester's Great East Window additionally recall the screen-façade design of church exteriors such as the west front in the cathedrals of Wells, Salisbury, and Exeter.[13] Comparable to the thematic layout of the west facade of Wells cathedral, the Coronation of the Virgin at Glastonbury appears on the central axis of the stained glass, symbolizing, like its stone counterpart, broader

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[12] Kerr, "East Window," 120-21.

[13] Ibid., 117-18; J. Philip McAleer, "Particularly English? Screen Façades of the type of Salisbury and Wells Cathedrals," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 141, no. 1 (1988): 124-58; Pamela Z. Blum, "Liturgical Influences on the Design of the West Front at Wells and Salisbury," *Gesta* 25, no. 1 (1986): 145-50.

theological notions of the Church and the Kingdom of God (Fig. 3).[14] In addition to its use as a metaphor for the Heavenly Kingdom, the Coronation of the Virgin is also interpreted as an allegorical image for the Church Triumphant.[15] In this symbolic representation of the celestial realm, the Virgin Mary acts as a personification of the *ecclesia*, and her crown (or crowning) signifies the triumphal and eternal reign of the Christian Church.[16] The theme of triumph is further developed in the tier above the Coronation, where angels appear carrying 'palms of victory,'[17] and higher still in the roof bosses where Christ in Majesty appears flanked by angels carrying the Instruments of the Passion (Fig. 4).[18]

The armorial glass of the lower tier seems to echo the window's triumphal theme by emphasizing England's military victories. Just as the Passion emblems signify the narrative of Christ's Passion and His triumph over death, the heraldry in the lower tier indicates the means by which England was saved from the French through the heroism of Edward III and his army. This positioning of the knights under the guardianship of the Virgin and as the pillars of the Church Triumphant promotes the idea of a triumphal celebration that acknowledges God's approval of the knights' earthly accomplishments and portrays the knights as crucial figures in the celestial realm. This notion is strengthened by the presence amongst the saints and martyrs in the tier below the Coronation of St. George who was viewed in the Middle Ages as a symbol of victory and as "the saint that challenges the heathens on behalf of Jesus and Mary."[19]

By the mid-fourteenth century, the motif of St. George as Our Lady's Knight became very popular and reverence for the saint grew considerably

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[14] Carolyn M. Malone, *Façade as Spectacle: Ritual and Ideology at Wells Cathedral* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 43-53.

[15] Malone, *Façade as Spectacle*, 43-53. M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "The King of France and the Queen of Heaven: The Iconography of the Porte Rouge of Notre-Dame of Paris," *Gesta* 39, no. 1 (2000): 58-72 (esp. 58, 61-62); Rachel Fulton, "Mimetic Devotion, Marian Exegesis and the Historical Sense of the Song of Songs," *Viator* 27 (1996): 85-116; T. A. Heslop, "The English Origins of the Coronation of the Virgin," *The Burlington Magazine* 147, no. 1233 (2005): 790-97.

[16] Malone, *Façade as Spectacle*, 45.

[17] Rushforth, "Great East Window," 297.

[18] Charles J. P. Cave, "The Roof Bosses in Gloucester Cathedral," *The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 53 (1931): 102-6.

[19] David A. L. Morgan, "The Banner Bearer of Christ and Our Lady's Knight: How God Became an Englishman Revisited," in *St. George's Chapel: Windsor in the Fourteenth Century,* ed. Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 54-55, 58-59.

when he was adopted as the patron saint of the Order of the Garter.[20] Like St. George, the Knights of the Garter were perceived as knights in the army of the Virgin Mary, fighting for her as expressed by the medieval maxim: "Christian authority is at once always triumphant and always to be struggled for."[21] This spiritual connection between knights and St. George is illustrated in the monumental brass of Sir Hugh Hastings, dated to or soon after his death in 1347 merely a week after his return from Calais.

In the small, armor-clad figures flanking the image of Sir Hastings, the earthly achievements of the deceased as a knight devoted to his king are commemorated. In the ornamented gable above the effigy appears an equestrian image of St. George, positioned as the mediator between the knight's soul and the enthroned figures of Christ and Mary above (Fig. 5). The overall message of the brass, as argued by Nigel Saul, is twofold: It imparts "the triumph of the English in arms over the French" in the images of the weepers, and it conveys "the triumph of the Christian faith" through the iconography of the monument's upper half.[22] Furthermore, the heavenly portion of the brass celebrates Hugh's eternal place in the kingdom of Heaven, where his helm is situated between the enthroned figures of Christ and Mary. Setting aside obvious dissimilarities, Hugh's brass and the East Window correlate in the thematic content and hierarchical arrangement of their imagery, with St. George and the Coronation of the Virgin set above a heraldic display of the king and his knightly companions. Gloucester's East Window expresses a dual message akin to Hugh's brass: The window honors knightly solidarity through its armorial display and celebrates the knights' role as the defenders of the *ecclesia*.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, heraldic displays had become a ubiquitous feature in English churches and were frequently found emblazoned in stained glass. The main purpose of these displays — beyond their possible eschatological significance — was to provide a visible sign of patronage and convey an individual's social status.[23] Furthermore, armorial stained

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[20] Morgan, "Banner Bearer," passim.

[21] Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27-36.

[22] Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 216; Nigel Saul, *Death, Art, and Memory in England: The Cobham Family and their Monuments 1300-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 160.

[23] Michael A. Michael, "The Privilege of 'Proximity': Towards a Re-definition of the Function of Armorial," *Journal of Medieval History* 23, no. 1 (1997); Marks, *Stained Glass*, 85-90; Ann Payne, "Medieval Heraldry," in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200-1400*, eds. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), 55-59. For a more general discussion on knightly

glass series generally proclaimed local jurisdiction through the demonstration of hereditary rights and social hierarchy, as if the glass display served a function similar to a Local or General Roll of Arms.[24] The heraldry of Gloucester's East Window, on the other hand, demonstrates an authoritative power that depends on institutional alliances. Rather than portraying a social hierarchy per se, the shields of Gloucester's East Window foreground prominent individuals who participated in a military event.

A precursor to Gloucester's glazed heraldry that also displays military associations may be seen in the shields emblazoned across the clerestory windows in the nave of York Minster from the early fourteenth century (Fig. 6). Distributed across the lights of each of the clerestory windows, the armorial series is subdivided into groups of five, corresponding to the number of lights in each window. Rather than forming a single hierarchical progression like the carved heraldry in the spandrels below, each window follows the same hierarchical rationale that guides Gloucester's East Window, with the center constituting the apex.[25] Accordingly, the royal arms are emblazoned in the central light of each clerestory window and repeatedly flanked by the coats-of-arms of soldiers that fought alongside the king, in this case in Edward I's Scottish campaigns. These coats-of-arms coincide with the shields in the Falkirk Roll — the Occasional Roll for the

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representations in fourteenth-century England, see Peter Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England, 1000-1400* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1993), 72-99. In the fourteenth century, heraldry was a common form of individual representation, and it is interpreted by Hans Belting and Stephan Perkinson as a type of likeness. Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body,* trans. Thomas Dunlap (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 62-65; Stephan Perkinson, "Rethinking the Origins of Portraiture," *Gesta* 46, no. 2 (2008): 135-57; Stephan Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 20-23, 295.

[24] Payne, "Medieval Heraldry," 57; Coss, "Knighthood, Heraldry and Social Exclusion," 58-68; Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, 75-85.

[25] The format is also found in the east windows of St. Mary's at Madley, St. Mary's at Selling and Bristol Cathedral. Sarah Brown, "The Fourteenth-Century Stained Glass of Madley," in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Hereford*, ed. David Whitehead (London and Leeds: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 1995), 124-25; Anya Heilpern, "The East Window of St. Mary's Church, Selling, Kent: A Royal Window in the Shadow of Canterbury," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 165, no. 1 (2012): 122-52; Arthur Sabin, "The Fourteenth-Century Heraldic Glass in the Eastern Lady Chapel of Bristol Cathedral," *The Antiquaries Journal* 37, no. 1-2 (1957): 54-70.

battle of Falkirk (1298).[26] Like the heraldry at York Minster, Gloucester's East Window may also be viewed as a monumental and public equivalent to an Occasional Roll of Arms — the roll of honor at Crécy.[27]

The image of the knightly arms in a religious framework is also strongly associated with the crusading ideals of the *miles Christi*, the soldier of Christ, and is often theologically allegorized.[28] The *miles Christi* 'identity' was ingrained in the depiction of knighthood by the fourteenth century, and the compelling impression of the knight as a holy warrior was well established in Western Europe.[29] The most remarkable example of such a display in the fourteenth century is the stained glass series at Tewkesbury Abbey, constructed some years prior to the East Window at Gloucester Cathedral (Fig. 7). Here, the eight figures of the lords of Tewkesbury appear in a "panoply of war," demonstrating their submission to Christ and their eternal readiness to fight for the Christian faith.[30] This symbolism is extended to the shields displayed below the figures and is connected to the allegorical illustration of the knight in the *Peraldus Summa of Vice*, where an "emphatic opposition is established" between the knight's emblematic armor and the vices (Fig. 8).[31] Like the symbolic shield in the *Summa of Vice* and the armorial displays at Tewkesbury Abbey, the shields at Gloucester Cathedral declare the knight's social position as a fulfillment of his spiritual duties and are, therefore, declarations of the knight's social status as a holy warrior.[32]

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[26] Sarah Brown, *Stained Glass at York Minster* (London: Scala Arts, 2017), 44-46; Coss, "Knighthood, Heraldry and Social exclusion," 67.

[27] Payne, "Medieval Heraldry," 57.

[28] Coss, "Knighthood, Heraldry and Social exclusion," 49-53; Michael, "The Privilege of 'Proximity,'" 58. For the theological interpretations of the shield, see Michael Evans, "An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's *Summa of Vice*: Harleian MS 3244," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): 14-68, esp. 21-27.

[29] Evans, "Illustrated Fragment," 17; Rachel Ann Dressler, *Of Armor and Men in Medieval England: The Chivalric Rhetoric of Three English Knights' Effigies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 79-97. For a comprehensive study of the knight as a holy warrior, see Richard Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). For the concept of the *miles Christi* in medieval literature and its significance in the evolution of medieval knightly ideals, see Jack A. W. Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 62-84.

[30] Gordon M. Rushforth, "The Glass in the Quire Clerestory of Tewkesbury Abbey," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 46 (1924): 309-14.

[31] Evans, "Illustrated Fragment," 23, 30.

[32] Ibid., 58.

Exhibited at the pinnacle of the church's spiritual layout, the coats-of-arms in Gloucester's East Window are immersed in the sacredness of their location. The dual presence of the politically-charged quartered royal arms of Edward III, echoed in the arms (with label) of the royal heir, connote the Anglo-French struggle, reinforcing Edward III's divine and hereditary right to the French throne.[33] Although the patronage of the Great East Window remains a mystery, Thomas Bradeston is generally presumed to be the window's commissioner because his arms are located in the purported donor position at the extreme right,[34] a credible argument considering Lord Bradeston's local ties.[35] It has been suggested that Gloucester's East Window may have been intended by Lord Bradeston as a homage to his brothers-at-arms and was perhaps dedicated to the memory of his close friend and neighbor, Sir Maurice Berkeley, who died shortly after the Siege of Calais.[36] A similar gesture is on display in the monumental brass of Sir Hugh Hastings, attesting to a shared sense of solidarity and pride amongst the veterans of the French wars.[37]

The Window's juxtaposition of the warrior's coats-of-arms with triumphal and salvific motifs accords with the contemporary celebration of knightly kinship. But for its intended medieval audience, Gloucester's East Window may have signified much more than a visual affirmation of institutional alliance or a display of social knightly ideals. For its fourteenth-century viewer, the coats-of-arms likely conjured the memory of England's recent victory in France. Within this frame of reference, the entire Window

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[33] Adrian Ails, "Heraldry in Medieval England: Symbols of Politics and Propaganda," in *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display*, 87-91; Elizabeth Danbury, "English and French Artistic Propaganda during the Period of the Hundred Years War: Some Evidence from Royal Charters," in *Power, Culture, and Religion in France,* ed. Christopher Allmand (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 75-97.

[34] Kerr, "East Window," 125-26.

[35] Roland Austin, "Notes on the Family of Bradeston," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 47 (1925): 279-86; Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 65-81; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Thomas Bradeston (d. 1360)," accessed June 8, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/50139.

[36] Kerr, "East Window," 126; Welander, *Stained Glass*, 21; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 223-24.

[37] Henry of Grosmont, Hugh's commander in 1347, may have been the commissioner of the brass. Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 216-18; Anne McGee Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, the Low Countries, and England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 105-7.

reverberates with the Battle of Crécy, at the time seen as nothing short of miraculous.

The Battle and its Legend

That England's military success of 1346-47 was a sign of divine approval became a central theme in the celebration and recollection of Edward III's defeat of the French. The remarkable triumph at the Battle of Crécy, in particular, generated an outpouring of heroic tales that presented the battle as a momentous event in England's history, a battle that saved the English nation from its impending destruction by the French.[38] The victory at Crécy quickly became the core of national and individual identities and, in the words of Juliet Vale, "its psychological impact can hardly be exaggerated."[39] As in most medieval accounts of warfare, England's victory at Crécy was consistently attributed to the intercession of God. But what is interesting to note in the English discourse on the battle of Crécy is how divine protection progressed to the active participation of God, not just in securing England's triumph, but also in conceiving the military engagement.

The 'Victory Sermon' ascribed to Thomas Bradwardine and preached in the weeks following the battle of Crécy, gives us a sense of how the battle was publicly portrayed to the wider population, presumably in both France and England.[40] The sermon opens with a scriptural quotation from Paul, declaring the victory divinely gained, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ."[41] In another quotation from Paul, Bradwardine reminds his audience — which would have included Edward III and the

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[38] William R. Jones, "The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War," *Journal of British Studies* 19, no. 1 (1979): 18-30; Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 269-71; David Green, "National Identities and the Hundred Years War," in *Fourteenth Century England VI,* ed. Chris Given-Wilson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 119.

[39] Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context, 1270-1350* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1982), 82-83.

[40] Heiko A. Oberman and James A. Weisheipl, "The *Sermo Epinicius* Ascribed to Thomas Bradwardine (1346)," *Archive d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 25 (1958): 295-329; Catherine Royer-Hemet, "Thomas Bradwardine's Victory Sermon during the Hundred Years War," in *War Sermons*, eds. Gilles Teulié and Laurence Lux-Sterritt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 16-27; Hilary S. Offler, *Church and Crown in the Fourteenth Century: Studies in European History and Political Thought* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 1-37.

[41] Cor. 2:14; Royer-Hemet, "Victory Sermon," 22.

knights who served in the battle — that their actions and accomplishments on the battlefield were not their own, "It is God who worked in you, both to will and to accomplish."[42] Bradwardine seemingly dismisses the prowess of the English army as the reason for victory — the sermon glorifies the knight not as a fighter, but as a divine instrument.

Bradwardine's sermon additionally creates a parallel between the battle of Crécy and the Passion of Christ, portraying the battle as a decisive moment in the history of the Christian Church. Directly quoting from Psalm 2, traditionally associated with Christ's Passion, the sermon reads, "Just as it was, thus it was then: the king of the earth stood up, and the princes came together against the Lord and against the anointed of the Lord: our lord the King."[43] In this passage, the event at Crécy is seen as a type of Passion, a pre-ordained event in which men rise together against Christ's successor and are struck down by the Lord's wrath. Thereby, this passage "implies a messiah-like status for the English king," positioning Edward as the Lord Savior of God's people.[44]

In the *Chronicle of Lanercost*, this portrayal of the English king as a Christ-like figure — and the English nation as God's chosen people — is reiterated. Here, the victories at Crécy and Calais are interpreted as salvific events in which God demonstrates his love for the English. Moreover, the text identifies Edward III as a Christ-like king, positioning him as heir to Jesus and thereby acknowledging his rule as sacred, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel! Who hath visited and redeemed his people and raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, from our enemy!"[45] Livingston and DeVries see this passage as consciously citing Zechariah's prophecy upon the birth of his son, John the Baptist,[46] an interpretation that further promotes the prophetic value given to Edward III's wars.

The account of the Battle of Crécy in the *Chronicle of Lanercost* similarly alludes to the Passion of Christ, as the battle is said to have ended on the ninth hour of the day, which, as noted by Livingston and DeVries, echoes the hour of Christ's death.[47] A less direct allusion to the last hour of the Crucifixion also appears in the later *Chronicle of Jean Froissart*, which

[42] Phil. 2:13; Royer-Hemet, "Victory Sermon," 22.
[43] Livingston and DeVries, *Battle of Crécy*, 67, 346. This passage also appears in Acts 4:26.
[44] Andrea Ruddick, "National Sentiment and Religious Vocabulary in Fourteenth-Century England," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 6, no. 1 (2009): 15.
[45] Sir Herbert Maxwell, trans., *The Chronicle of Lanercost 1272-1346* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1913), 330.
[46] Luke 1:68-71; Livingston and DeVries, *Battle of Crécy*, 350.
[47] Livingston and DeVries, *Battle of Crécy*, 87, 349.

tells of a knight sent to Edward III to request aid for his son, Prince Edward. To this, the king replies, "let the boy win his spurs."[48] This plea for help brings to mind Christ's cry to God, his father, at the ninth hour of the Crucifixion.[49] Prince Edward, like Christ, is seemingly left to overcome his adversary on his own. He faces death and emerges unscathed, proving through his victory to be a true son and a worthy ruler.[50]

In a more popular, secular form of literature, the narrative poem by Laurence Minot, the Battle of Crécy is presented as an ominous event. Minot sets — with a sense of patriotism — the English victories over the Scottish and the French in the literary mode of the chivalric romance.[51] The hero-king, assumed to portray Edward III, remains a distant and impenetrable character throughout the poem, despite being the object of adoration.[52] Minot sees Edward III's role as the fulfilment of Arthurian prophecy, referring to the king as 'the boar.'[53] The poem continues with an explicit juxtaposition of the Battle of Crécy and the Harrowing of Hell, thereby identifying the battle as the fulfillment of a prophecy that is part of a larger Christian narrative:

> hende God that heried hell,
> for France now es he entred in,
> and thare he dightes him for to dwell.[54]

English fourteenth-century accounts of the Battle of Crécy and references to the war against France in general regularly set the English and the French in the opposite roles of Good and Evil.[55] In the thanksgiving procession for

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[48] Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, trans. Geoffrey Brereton (1968; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1978), 92.
[49] Mat. 27:46.
[50] Froissart, *Chronicles*, 93.
[51] Thomas Beaumont James and John Simons, eds., *The Poems of Laurence Minot: 1333-1352* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1989), 13; Richard H. Osberg, ed., *The Poems of Laurence Minot 1333-1352* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), 8-12.
[52] David Matthews, *Writing to the King: Nation, Kingship and Literature in England, 1250-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 148-55.
[53] Osberg, *Poems*, 51-56. On Edward III and the Arthurian prophecy, see Mark W. Ormrod, "For Arthur and St. George: Edward III, Windsor Castle and the Order of the Garter," in Saul, *St. George's Chapel*, 13-34, esp. 22-23.
[54] Laurence Minot, Poem VII, lines 34-36, as quoted in Osberg, *Poems*, 52.
[55] This was particularly stressed by the Church, which was heavily involved in royal propaganda during the Hundred Years War. Herbert W. Hewitt, *Organization of War under Edward III, 1338-62* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966),

the triumph at Crécy, held in London in 1346, Archbishop Richard FitzRalph clarifies, as noted by Andrea Ruddick, “that the victory was a sign of God’s favor towards Edward III,” and Philip’s defeat was a “divine judgment on his excessive pride.”[56] In an earlier sermon from 1345, FitzRalph based Edward III’s claim to France exclusively on his hereditary right. But following the victory at Crécy in 1346, the king’s right is expressed through rhetoric that relates to the medieval theological debate over dominion and grace.[57]

According to FitzRalph’s 'Victory Sermon,' Edward III’s triumph in France was proof of the king’s divine favor. This perception gained momentum in the chronicle accounts, which often contrast Philip’s tyranny with Edward’s purity as a sign of the latter’s heavenly right to the French throne. This contrast between good and evil is noticeable in the chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker and even more so in the chronicle of Jean le Bel, in which the French army is described as impulsive, chaotic, and driven by pride and envy, while the English army is depicted as patient, submissive, and organized.[58] The attributes accorded to the French are those associated with sin, and it is because of their sinful nature that God has sent the English to punish the French. As described in Giovanni Villani’s *New Chronicle*, “those less powerful defeat the great armies to show His power to strike down pride and arrogance, and to clean the sins of the kings, the lords and the people.”[59]

The Chronicle of Pseudo-Adam Murimuth also employs biblical material, painting England’s victory as a miraculous and fateful event. The account emphasizes that the English army did not rest after the battle, “since the crown is promised to the vigilant.” They kept on in pursuit of the enemy who were “like straying sheep.”[60] The promised crown may be a reference

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154-79; Alison K. McHardy, “The English Clergy and the Hundred Years War,” *Studies in Church History* 20 (1983): 174; Allan James Doig, “Political Propaganda and Royal Proclamations in Late Medieval England,” *Historical Research* 71, no. 176 (1998): 235-80.

[56] Ruddick, "National Sentiment,” 11.

[57] Katherine Walsh, *A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate: Richard FitzRalph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 227-31.

[58] Geoffrey le Baker, *The Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker of Swinbrook*, trans. David Preest, ed. Richard Barber (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 72-75; Jean le Bel, *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 179-83. For the relevant excerpt from the chronicles of Geoffrey le Baker and Jean le Bel, see Livingston and DeVries, *Battle of Crécy,* 159-65, 183-89, respectively.

[59] Livingston and DeVries, *Battle of Crécy,* 120-21.

[60] Ibid., 143.

to the "crown of life" mentioned in James 1:12, "for, having been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which He has promised to them that love him."[61] The persistence of the English army demonstrates the knights' relentless strength to continue fighting against the enemies of God's chosen kingdom, and the victory provides a confirmation of English righteousness.

The pattern of discourse on the Battle of Crécy, as demonstrated here, sets the English king and the English army as the agents of a "God-directed destiny"[62] and the Battle of Crécy as a decisive event that secured the salvation of God's earthly kingdom and purified it from sin. Along with these clearly expressed parallels between the Passion of Christ and the Battle of Crécy, I would argue that there exists an implied analogy between the English army and the *arma Christi*, the tools used by the Lord in his battle for salvation. Like the *arma Christi*, the knights who fought in the Battle of Crécy were portrayed to the English public as sacred tools of defense, as shields that protect the faithful, and as weapons that attack the enemies of the Lord.

Divine Instruments of Salvation

In the Middle Ages, the *arma Christi* were a subject of widely popular devotion.[63] By the fourteenth century, the *arma Christi* had acquired a semiotic flexibility that combined their early medieval symbolism with their thirteenth-century theological interpretation. The instruments of the Passion were regarded in the early Middle Ages as the weapons with which Christ heroically defeated death and would often appear as the attributes of the *Majestas Domini*.[64] In *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, the Cross, the central

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[61] After the Douay-Rheims Bible. This comparison is made by Livingston and DeVries. Ibid., 362.

[62] David Matthews, "Lawrence Minot, Edward III, and Nationalism," *Viator* 38, no. 1 (2007): 283-84.

[63] Thomas H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 26-68.

[64] Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, "Introduction," in *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, With a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle,'* eds. Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 1-20; Rudolf Berliner, "Arma Christi," *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 6 (1955): 35-152; Robert Suckale, "Arma Christi: Überlegungen zur Zeichenhaftigkeit mittelalterlicher Andachtsbilder," *Städel-Jahrbuch* 6 (1977): 177-209. The *arma Christi* often appear in medieval representations of the Last Judgment, for example in French church portals. Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Dora Nussey (1913; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 2000), 286, 366, 370-72; Peter K. Klein, "Introduction: The Apocalypse

instrument of the Passion, is viewed as a trophy of victory and a sign of ultimate power, "Lord, set the sign of the victory of thy cross in hell, that death may have dominion no longer."[65] The theology of the thirteenth century, on the other hand, considered the *arma Christi* a stimulus for compassion and a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and pitiful death, a concept that became clear in the fourteenth-century iconography of the Man of Sorrows.[66]

Despite the prevalence of the mendicant interpretation of the *arma Christi* in the later Middle Ages, the *arma Christi* retained some aspects of their earlier medieval meaning as a sign of Christ's victory, notably in the allegorical narrative of Christ as the lover-knight.[67] According to this conceit, the Crucifixion of Christ is likened to a battle, and Christ takes on the role of a chivalric knight with allegorical armor made up of the instruments of the Passion. True to its name, the *arma Christi* began to appear in the fourteenth century as an actual heraldic shield, holding the same connotations as the shield in the chivalric society.[68]

From the second half of the fourteenth century, variations of the *arma Christi* shield regularly appeared in different decorative schemes and, much

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in Medieval Art," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 159-99; Yves Christe, "The Apocalypse in the Monumental Art of the Eleventh through Thirteenth Centuries," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 234-58. For the early medieval iconography of the *arma Christi,* see Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. Janet Segilman (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 2:184-89.

[65] *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, 19:10, as quoted in William Hone, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being all the Gospels, Epistles and other Pieces Now Extant* (London: William Hone, 1820), 75.

[66] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 6-13, 134, 181-82; Caroline Walker Bynum, "Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 30 (2002): 3-36, esp. 18-31; Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 44-56; Douglas Gray, "The Five Wounds of Our Lord," *Notes and Queries* 208 (1963): 84-87.

[67] Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature," *The Review of English Studies* 13, no. 49 (1962): 1-16; Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion,* 68-70.

[68] Evans, "Illustrated Fragment," 25-27; Ann W. Astell, "Retooling the Instruments of Christ's Passion: Memorial Thechnai, St. Thomas the Twin, and British Library Additional MS 22029," in *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, with a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle,'* eds. Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 173, 182, 197-98.

like knightly heraldry, were emblazoned in the stained glass of the church (Fig. 9). This amalgamation of religious and secular icons conforms with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Passion poetry, which frequently includes martial metaphors, substituting the instruments of the Passion with the armor and weaponry of the knight. Likewise, the knightly exemplum itemizes the armor and the arming of the knight "in terms of individual acts of Passion," transcribing the components of the armor into "weapons against the devil." [69]

The dramatization of the allegory in *Piers Plowman* demonstrates how the chivalric emphasis on the theme developed in the second half of the fourteenth century. In a description of Christ's arrival in Jerusalem and his subsequent Crucifixion, Langland employs the literary language of the secular romance, portraying the salvific event as a tournament that culminates in Christ mounting the cross to joust against the devil.[70] In this combat scene, the self-sacrifice of Jesus for the redemption of the human soul correlates with the knight's moral obligations and imperilment in battle.

Prayer and meditation on the *arma Christi* served several functions, one of which was to shield and defend the faithful from human vice by contemplating the metaphorical combat between Christ and the sins of mankind.[71] The *arma*, accordingly, are comparable to the allegorical knight in the *Peraldus Suma of Vice*, used against the enemies of the soul, including Pride, Envy, Anger and Hate — sins continuously attributed to the French king and his army in the narratives of the Battle of Crécy. Similar to the *Peraldus* knight, the English army was confronted on the battlefield at Crécy with human vice that threatened to bring ruin to the Christian

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[69] Evans, "Illustrated Fragment," 25, 31; Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion,* 63-84.

[70] Wilbur Gaffney, "The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in Piers Plowman," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 46, no. 1 (1931): 155-68; Emily Steiner, *Reading Piers Plowman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 78-80, 182-83.

[71] Mary Agnes Edsall, "The *Arma Christi* before the *Arma Christi*: Rhetoric of the Passion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, With a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle,'* eds. Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 26; Evans, "Illustrated Fragment," 36; Flora Lewis, "Rewarding Devotion: Indulgences and the Promotion of Images," in *The Church and the Arts*, ed. Diana Wool (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 181-83. Devotion to the *arma Christi* was often manifested in the form of private meditation, though the late fourteenth-century "*Arma Christi*" Rolls suggest a congregational practice. Rossell Hope Robbins, "The 'Arma Christi' Rolls," *The Modern Language Review* 34, no. 3 (1939): 415-21.

Kingdom, and, similar to God's use of the *arma Christi*, God used the English knight to demonstrate his love of the faithful.

In the context of the narratives written about the Battle of Crécy and the increased popularity of the representation of the Passion shield in the fourteenth century, Gloucester's armorial display could potentially have been associated with the images of the *arma Christi*.[72] Corresponding to the allegorical armor of Christ, the shields of the knights of Crécy stand as an indication of divine intercession and as symbols of justice, peace, and victory. In a non-narrative image, the coats-of-arms would have reminded medieval viewers of the battle and encouraged them to feel and express gratitude for the salvation it offered.

Conclusion

When considering the entire East Window as a single composition, the lower and the upper halves complete and complement each other. The theme of triumph and redemption is conveyed both by the heraldry and by the figural display and again resonates in the vault bosses. The image of the Church Triumphant is supplemented by the recollection of England's victory through the shields, thereby presenting Edward III's battle as divinely ordained and endorsing the English king and army as the earthly protectors of God's realm. Corresponding to this narrative about the Battle of Crécy, the Window visually proclaims the battle to be an event that parallels the victory of Christ over death. In this interpretation, the English king fulfils the role of Christ in securing the salvation of the faithful and fighting for the eternal reign of the *ecclesia*.

The painting and size of the window clearly attest to the designer's consideration of the "distanced viewpoint of his audience,"[73] its details remaining conspicuous from the direction of the Cathedral's crossing, the center of daily worship. Looming over the church's choir, the window stands as a type of retable in which the heraldry is appropriately arranged and designed in a predella-like fashion.[74] Accordingly, while the imagery of the Great East Window stands as a reminder of the miraculous victory God bestowed upon the English at the Battle of Crécy, its liturgical setting would have encouraged late medieval worshippers to recognize the role of the

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[72] Curiously, a sixteenth-century *arma Christi* shield was, in fact, inserted into Gloucester's armorial display in the nineteenth century. Welander, *Stained Glass*, 23.

[73] Kerr, "East Window," 119-20.

[74] Rushforth, "Great East Window," 294.

English knight in securing their own faith and to direct their devotion and prayers towards the knightly shields. The window thus memorializes not just the triumph of English knights, but the extensive conception of the Battle of Crécy as a heroic legend and Christian exemplar. The knights who fought alongside the Christ-like king function as God's instruments: Rather than being glorified for their strength and valor, they are revered as manifestations of divine power.

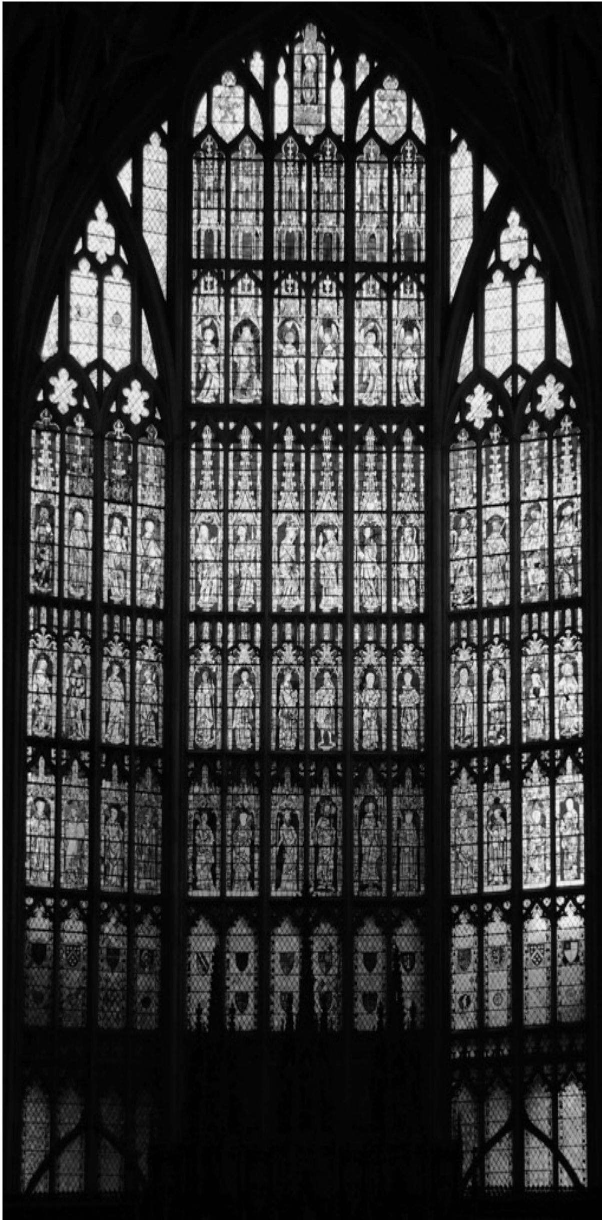

Figure 1. East Window, c. 1350, Gloucester Cathedral (photo: author).