Foreword and Acknowledgements

What is the face of war? That is the question we attempted to ask with the title of our second issue, War(fair?). The modern European might think of the shocking images of the war in Syria on TV, for example. But war is not a new phenomenon – it was just as much (or even more) a part of life in the ancient world.

The contributions in this volume illuminate what “war” can mean both now and in older times: dying before one’s time, grief, but also everlasting fame. Families and friends can be at strife; even a single person can be divided against himself. War is not only fighting and bloodshed: it is also those left behind, waiting for their loved ones to return; and it is warfare in the service of love. From early Greek poets like Archilochus and Simonides to Italo Calvino in the 20th century, the form of war is ever changing and yet alike.

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**Temporary Like Achilles #2 (Thomas Palaima)**
(for Leon Golden)

Inspired by Achilles’ own words

*Iliad* 1.149-171, 1.365-392, 9.308-429.

‘Rage,’ Homer sings.
‘Sing the rage of Achilles.’
Twenty-three raids,
twenty-three sieges of cities,
all taken,
feeding soldiers
and the pride-lust of commanders.

A true shepherd of the forces.
Unique in speed afoot,
strategic brilliance,
endurance and making men endure
and save themselves from themselves.
Noble,
caring even of spear captives.

Briseis loved him.
Phoenix and Patroclus, too.

Good sound moral character.
Knowing in the ways of war
and what war does
to hearts and souls.
Respectful of the gods.
Attuned to justice.

Nine long years.
And in the tenth
He took her.
Agamemnon did.
And with her his honor.
And all those men,
high-ranked and low,
whom he had kept from death
nurtured, protected,
guided, led
out and back,
rescued from plague, spears and arrows
and their own weaknesses,
fatigue,
blindness,
stupidity,
despair,
they let her be taken.
She was his medal of honor,
his war prize,
Briseis.

‘Rage’ the poet
asks the goddess to sing.
Not the rage of the hand
that grasped, but did not draw
the sword.
The rage that spoke
and walked away.

Postscript Dedication:

This poem deals with what finally broke Achilles and what is lost in the focus of the Iliad on one aspect of his anger for having been publicly dishonored by Agamemnon, who took from Achilles the spear-captive Briseis.

Looking at the Iliad with too narrow a focus, all of Achilles’ stellar acts as a field commander fall away. His good moral character gets lost. But it is there in his care for his men. It is seen in his consideration in raising the issue of Agamemnon’s sacrilege against the priest of Apollo by doing so in a formal assembly and having a prophet speak to the background. It explains his restraint in not drawing his sword and slaying Agamemnon when he could have. In point of fact, no one “stood behind him when the game got rough.” Not one voice was heard in support of the truths Achilles was proclaiming judiciously in the
assembly. Yet Homer tells us that all the soldiers knew what the source of the plague was—Agamemnon’s dishonoring of the priest of Apollo—and what harm it caused.

Achilles withdraws from savage fighting that had long past in duration and losses the tipping point that led Siegfried Sassoon to issue his "Non Serviam" in World War I. He withdrew not just because Agamemnon insulted him and threatened to strip him of his war-captive Briseis, but because no one among the soldiers whom he had long protected and supported through his courage and leadership or among the other leaders who led troops from their regions to Troy stepped forward to back him up.

Leon Golden was, during his active scholarly career, a superb interpreter of the epic hero and of works of war, ancient and modern.
Contributors

Valerio Caldesi Valeri works as Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of Kentucky. Originally trained as an ancient historian, he has broadened his interests to encompass literary studies and classical mythology. Dr. CV is currently working on the construction and reception of the myths surrounding the king of Crete and first conqueror of the Aegean sea, Minos. He teaches courses in Greek composition and prose authors, mythology, and ancient warfare.

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Arabella Currie is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Exeter, studying the influence of Classics on William Golding. Her first collection of poems, The Divers, was published by Hurst Street Press in 2016, and she is currently working on a series of translations of Greek lyric, exploring how ancient appreciations of nature might help us articulate the value of the earth in contemporary times.

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