

My Father the Hero?: Veteran memory in Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*

In the mid-14th century, the veteran Sir Thomas Gray (*d.* 1369) wrote about warfare under England's kings in his work *Scalacronica*, begun while he was imprisoned in Edinburgh following his capture by the Scots at Norham Castle. It was unusual for a veteran to write about warfare in this way, but though he recorded details about Anglo-Scottish wars, he did not write about his own role in the battles of 1340-55, the period of his own military service. Instead, he devoted more energy to his memories of the actions of another veteran, his father (*d.c.* 1344), who fought in the earlier Scottish Wars of Independence. The *Scalacronica* provides rare evidence of the medieval veteran's attitude to the experiences of warfare but at one remove, as Gray merged his attitudes to warfare with the experiences of his father. The fact that he idolised him, and sought to portray him as a heroic figure, in part to rehabilitate his reputation following capture at the Battle of Bannockburn (1314), influenced his attitude to, and portrayal of, his veteran father.

This paper draws on my AHRC-funded doctoral research on the depiction of veterans in medieval English chronicles to show how Gray remembered his father's military career, and examines how Gray's own status as a veteran influenced his attitude to the experience of warfare in the fourteenth century. The paper explores this unique medieval source – a veteran writing not about his own experience, but of his memories of another veteran – to see what impact memory, family pride, and personal experience had on the portrayal of veterans in the middle ages.

Brief bio

Katrina Ingram is an AHRC funded doctoral student in her second year at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research is on the depiction of veterans in English medieval sources encompassing the wars under Edward I, the Hundred Years War and the War of the Roses.