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## Transcultural Warfare – The Later Middle Ages

A heavily armoured knight, equipped with shield, lance and sword, riding out from a well-defended stone castle, in fulfilment of a vow made to his lady-love, epitomizes one concept of late medieval warfare. This figure fits a model of development which has proved very attractive to medievalists, that of core and periphery, put forward above all by Robert Bartlett. The thesis, in a simplified form, as far as military history is concerned, is that the characteristic features of medieval warfare, with well equipped mounted knights and strongly defended castles, moved outwards from the European heartland, as colonisation proceeded. 'As the military aristocracy of western Europe extended its lordship outwards in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, its members created not only conquest states and colonial enterprises, but also representations of themselves and their enterprises.'<sup>1</sup> There was a European cultural coherence, expressed both in methods of fighting and in the chivalric code which provided a well-defined set of conventions governing conflict. Conflicts within the lands of the core, between opponents such as the French and English in the fourteenth century, who shared a common culture of chivalry, and accepted a well-defined set of military conventions, fit a model of intra-cultural conflict. Warfare on the expanding periphery, in contrast, was likely to take an inter-cultural form. Crusades directed against Moslems, and defensive wars fought against the Mongols can be classified as inter-cultural. So too can German expansion into the Baltic, which combined a crusading ideology with colonisation. Classification is not always easy; the wars of the English against the Welsh and the Scots, it can be argued, fit the pattern of the expansion of the core into the periphery, but became increasingly intra-cultural.

A supplementary model may be suggested, which emphasizes the change and development that took place at the cultural interfaces. This can be termed the border region model. At the periphery where war was often endemic, new developments might take place. Thus in Britain the people of the Welsh and Scottish marches developed

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe* (London, 1993), p. 85.