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Warriors “Hedgehogged” in Arrows: Crusaders, Samurai, and Wolverine in Medieval Chronicles and Popular Culture¹

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For over four decades, comic book writers and filmmakers have found creative ways to torture Marvel Comics’ Wolverine. One method that has evolved since Frank Miller tackled the character in 1982 is filling his body with arrows. The mutant’s metallic skeleton coupled with his quick-healing superpower make him the ideal pincushion for these ancient projectiles in comic books and film. However, the image of a living human covered in arrows is medieval. Furthermore, the image of a living *warrior* covered in arrows is an image almost entirely relegated to Muslim and Christian chronicles of the Crusades, in which the writers typically associated the spectacle with a hedgehog. This paper examines medieval accounts of armored warriors likened to hedgehogs covered in arrows throughout the Crusades and how Wolverine has been the bridge for such a spectacle in popular culture, extracting it out of obscure medieval chronicles and proliferating it through comic books, film, television, and beer commercials.

Medieval Images of Humans Covered in Arrows

The image of a person covered in arrows is a distinctly medieval image. St. Sebastian survived an attempted martyrdom in the third century and throughout the Middle Ages was depicted with arrows miraculously protruding from his living body, or as the *Golden Legend* labeled him—a “hedgehog.”² The image of St. Sebastian is still common today and it has been satirized as recently as 2015 via DC Comics’ Joker, who poses with suction-cupped arrows over his near naked body (Figure 1).³ Another famous medieval hedgehog figure is that of Edmund the Martyr (ninth century), but, unlike St. Sebastian, he did not survive. He too spent the rest of the Middle Ages depicted as a hedgehog full of arrows (Figure 2).⁴ His brutal death was recently featured in the first season of BBC’s *The Last Kingdom* (2015).⁵ Then there is the so-called “Wound Man,” a cadaver found in

¹ Concepts from this paper were originally presented at the 2017 Mid-Atlantic Popular & American Culture Association Conference in Philadelphia. The feedback from fellow panelists, area chairs, and attendees was overwhelming, and I want to explicitly thank Mary Behrman, Angela Jane Weisl, Martha Oberle, and AJ DeLong for their encouragement and feedback that were crucial to honing this into a finished paper.

² “They hit him with so many arrows that he looked like a hedgehog, and they left him there for dead.” Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Selections*, trans. Christopher Stace (New York: Penguin, 1998), 53.

³ “The Night Birds: Part 1 of 3,” *Green Arrow* 5, no. 41 (DC Comics: August 2015).

⁴ For an example, see the miniature from British Library, *Psalter and Canticles*, Royal 2 B VI, f. 10: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8793&ColIID=16&NStart=20206>.

⁵ *The Last Kingdom*, season 1, episode 2, directed by Nick Murphy, aired October 10, 2015, on BBC. Thanks to fellow medieval enthusiast Kyrie George for pointing me to this episode.

medieval medical manuals with instructions on how to operate on wounds that include an assortment of swords and knives, as well as arrows.⁶



Figure 1: Bill Sienkiewicz's variant cover for *Green Arrow* 5, no. 41 (DC Comics, August 2015)

⁶ For example, see the "Wound Man" image from Wellcome Library, Pseudo-Galen, *Anatomia*, MS290, 53v: <https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b1964601x#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=113&z=-0.4728%2C0%2C1.9456%2C1.2222>.



Figure 2: Miniature of Edmund martyrdom from British Library, *Psalter and Canticles*, Royal 2 B VI, f. 10

The anonymous author of *The Song of Roland* took the arrow-riddled image one step further by depicting the poem's tragic hero surviving an onslaught of arrows by way of his armor:

So they did this with a rain of darts and wigars,
 Spears, lances, and feather mizraks.
 They pierced and punctured Roland's shield,
 And shattered and broke the metal links of his hauberk,
 But not a spear entered his body.
 However, they wounded [his horse] in thirty places
 Under the Count, and they left him dead.
 The pagans flee, thus letting him be.
 Count Roland now remains on foot.⁷

But while St. Sebastian's story relies on the miraculous and Roland's on the imagination, tales of crusaders covered in chainmail with thick undergarments provide similar, albeit plausible depictions of armored warriors bristling with arrows and surviving.

⁷ Gerard J. Brault, trans., *The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 2155-2163.

The Crusader as a Hedgehog of Arrows

In surviving accounts of the First, Second, and Third Crusades—between 1099 and 1191 AD—nearly a dozen chronicles recount crusaders covered in arrows and surviving. These accounts remain disconnected and inaccessible to the non-specialist.⁸ Like the *Golden Legend*, most of these chronicles associate the crusaders' appearance with "hedgehogs." These include a mix of Christian and Muslim chronicles, five of which are eyewitness accounts of the battles, while others had access to eyewitness accounts.

For example, Ambroise tells us in Old French how at the Siege of Jaffa (1192), King Richard I ran too far ahead, but "thanks be to God, he returned without harm. However, his body, his horse and his trappings were so covered with arrows which that dark race had shot at him that he seemed like a hedgehog."⁹ Ambroise likely draws from the same eyewitness accounts as the author of *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, which describes in Latin a similar scene where "the king's body was completely covered with darts, which stuck out like the spines of a hedgehog. His horse was also bristling with countless arrows which were stuck in its trappings. Thus this extraordinary knight returned from the contest."¹⁰

Odo of Deuil, an eyewitness to the Battle of Mount Cadmus (1148), does not use the hedgehog descriptor, but tells us in Latin that "the more distant rabble shot arrows at [a crusader]. But by the will of God his cuirass protected him from the arrows, and to keep from being captured he defended the crag with his bloody sword."¹¹ Similarly, Albert of Aachen tells us in Latin how one crusader named Gerard was tied up on the walls of Arsuf to dissuade the crusaders from assaulting the city (1099). Undeterred, the crusaders "assaulted the city's defenders on all sides with arrows and slings and mangonels. And now, among the very great number of arrows heedlessly released, the body of that same

⁸ Although several military historians provide examples and even quote some of these chronicles, most are content to mention offhand that there are examples in medieval chronicles of crusaders being likened to hedgehogs or porcupines while surviving arrow wounds, and then simply list citations in a footnote. For example, R. C. Smail acknowledges the phenomenon and provides other examples in *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 81n3, n4; Aya Sakkal likewise provides several examples. See "Muslim Visions of the Battlefield of Hattin: Cavalry Symbols and Images," in *Battle and Bloodshed: The Medieval World at War*, ed. Loma Bleach and Keira Borrill (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 70n46.

⁹ Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War*, trans. Marianne Ailes (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 11:378-11:620.

¹⁰ *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, trans. Helen J. Nicholson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 368.

¹¹ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem: The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948), 119-21.

Gerard was shot and wounded by ten of them.”¹² Somehow, Gerard lived and was later “cured of all his wounds.”¹³

It is deceptively easy to dismiss these accounts, as they are from the Christian perspective and they had reason to prop up their heroes with feats of strength and miracles while disparaging Muslims as “the enemy,” “that dark race,” and “distant rabble.” Yet, similar images come through Arabic texts as well. Bahā’ al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād, who was an eyewitness to the Battle of Arsuf (1191), tells us,

The enemy army was already in formation with the infantry surrounding it like a wall, wearing solid iron corslets and full-length well-made chain mail, so that arrows were falling on them with no effect. I saw various individuals amongst the Franks with ten arrows fixed in their back, pressing on in this fashion quite unconcerned.¹⁴

‘Imād ad-Din al-Kātib al-Isfahānī, another Muslim eyewitness, this time describing the Siege of Acre (1189-1191), tells us,

It was said that one part of the [Crusader] defense was held by a Frank who seemed like a *jinni*, very agile and confident in the devil’s help . . . [his shield] became a target for arrows so that he soon resembled a hedgehog covered in spikes. The arrows remained stuck in his protection but could not penetrate it.¹⁵

Elsewhere, he uses the term “hedgehog” to describe the crusaders at Hattin (1187), but they did not fare as well, “As the arrows struck them down those who had seemed like lions now seemed like hedgehogs.”¹⁶

The description from Hattin is an example in which the writer’s comparison between the crusader and the hedgehog is disparaging as opposed to simply visually aiding the reader. Similar uses come through in other accounts to describe fallen warriors, their horses, and equipment. Although not an eyewitness, William of Tyre describes in Latin how, at the Siege of Ascalon (1153), “Showers of arrows rained upon the advancing

¹² Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, trans. Susan B. Edington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7:2.

¹³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 7:15.

¹⁴ Bahā’ al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, trans. D. S. Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 179.

¹⁵ ‘Imād ad-Din al-Kātib al-Isfahānī, *al-Fath al-Qussī fi’l-Fath al-Qudsī*; translation available in David Nicolle, *Essential Histories: The Crusades* (Oxford: Osprey, 2001), 48.

¹⁶ Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E. J. Costello (New York: Routledge, 2010), 79.

troops until all the baggage bristled with darts like a porcupine.”¹⁷ Ibn al-Qalānīsī described the Battle of Ager Sanguinis (1119) in Arabic where “some who were there said that they had walked over the battlefield, to witness the splendid miracle sent by God, and had seen dead horses bristling like hedgehogs with the arrows sticking out of them.”¹⁸

As for the living warriors fighting on while hedgehogged with arrows, historians and experimental archaeologists have explored this phenomenon in detail.¹⁹ Some of the answers are in the medieval accounts already provided, as one side employed composite bows while the other side wore the right combination of armor. A prime example of the latter is visible at the Cloisters Museum in New York. There, visitors can see the Effigy of Jean d’Alluye—built in 1248 France—which sports the typical armor of a crusader, matching sketches and descriptions from this period (Figure 3).²⁰ The effigy features a hauberk, or chainmail, which also extends to form a hood, or coil. The hauberk also drapes down past his waste. Over the hauberk there is a surcoat, which was predominantly for decoration, made of cloth. Finally, underneath it all, there is a gambeson, which was made of thick leather, sometimes covered in silk. This protected the crusader’s skin from the chainmail while also providing extra protection from penetration. Thus, it was possible for an arrow from a composite bow to penetrate the chainmail, but not pierce the gambeson deep enough to wound the warrior.²¹ The diverse accounts spread across nearly 100 years of warfare, coupled with a clear understanding of the armor employed, are convincing evidence that the spectacle of these hedgehogged warriors did exist. They were shocking to those who saw it and those who heard it secondhand, so that chroniclers described them in detail.

¹⁷ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York: Octagon, 1976), 2: 210-12.

¹⁸ Gabrieli, *Arab History of the Crusades*, 24.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis and description of the armor during this period that resulted in the hedgehog phenomenon, see Adrian J. Boas, *Crusader Archaeology: The Material Culture of the Latin East* (London: Routledge, 1999), 173.

²⁰ For example, the famous image of a crusader, added to the *Westminster Psalter* c. 1250, also sports the same components as the Effigy of Jean d’Alluye. See David Nicolle, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era, 1050-1350: Western Europe and the Crusader States* (London: Greenhill Books, 1999), 75-6, figure 190.

²¹ Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, 173.

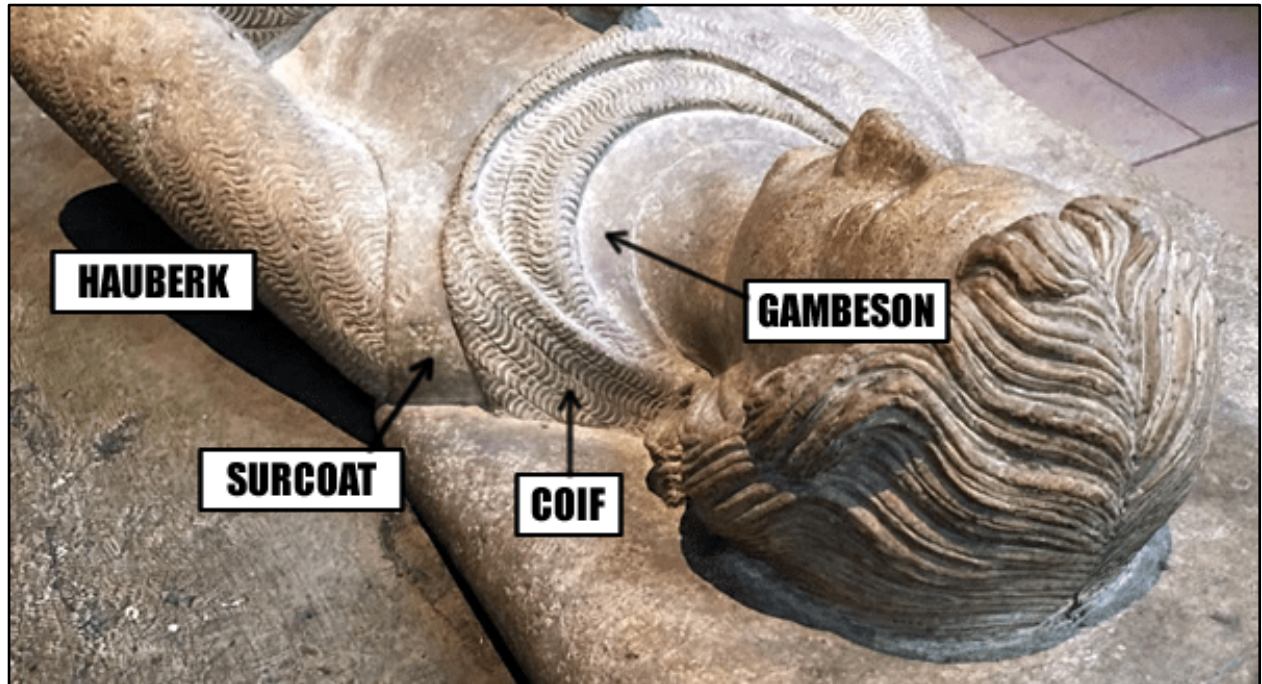


Figure 3: Effigy of Jean d'Alluye at the Cloisters Museum, highlighting the hauberk, surcoat, coif, and gambeson. Photograph taken by author on May 24, 2016

Examples of hedgehogged warriors also exist outside of the Crusades. Lodewijk van Velthem's Middle Dutch account of the Battle of Courtrai (1302), for instance, tells us how the Flemish "from their heads to their feet there were arrows, in their equipment and in their clothing."²² However, the evolution of armor from silk-covered gambesons and chainmail to plate armor ensured such scenes were simply not readily available for future chroniclers. Thus, the depiction of a hedgehog warrior was seemingly relegated to medieval chronicles, known mainly to specialists, until its recent reemergence in popular culture.

Wolverine as a Hedgehog of Arrows

Today, a medievalist can simply turn to Marvel's Wolverine to see depictions of the hedgehogged warrior pierced with arrows. Nowadays, most are familiar with Logan, his alternative name, via Hugh Jackman's portrayal of the character in nine movies since 2000. Through these films and the comics, fans learn that Logan is a mutant with fast-healing powers that enable him to recover, seemingly, from any wound. For example, moviegoers can see Logan kicking back on a recliner, drinking some hard liquor while his chest is healing from bullet wounds in the 2014 film *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (Figure

²² Lodewijk van Velthem, *Voortzetting van de Spiegel historiael (1248–1316)*, ed. Herman Vander Linden, Willem de Vreese, Paul de Keyser and A. van Loey, 3 vol. (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1906–1938); Translation available in J. F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai, 11 July 1302)*, trans. David Richard Ferguson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 107.

4).²³ A turning point in Wolverine's storyline is when his skeleton becomes surgically enhanced, covered in adamantium, a fictitious metal that is indestructible in its solid state. The 2000 film *X-Men* illustrated this point through a life-size x-ray, which shocked the X-Men.²⁴ This metallic skeleton coupled with his quick-healing superpower has made Wolverine the ideal pincushion for sadistic comic book writers for decades. For example, creative teams have had the mutant survive being shot by the Punisher, crucified by cyborgs, electrocuted by Thor, and even eaten by the Hulk.²⁵



Figure 4: Still from *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, directed by Bryan Singer (20th Century Fox, 2014)

One of the more medieval forms of violence comes through the trope of Wolverine being shot with arrows. Given that Wolverine's story is typically set in modern times, writers must find creative ways to place him in situations where he faces opponents who still use bows and arrows, such as the African bush. For example, the cover of a 2006 issue of *Wolverine* depicts the mutant hunched over and cradling a baby, using his own back as a shield against arrows (Figure 5).²⁶ In this issue, Wolverine finds himself in the middle of

²³ *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, directed by Bryan Singer (20th Century Fox, 2014).

²⁴ *X-Men*, directed by Bryan Singer (20th Century Fox, 2000).

²⁵ Numerous comic book examples of these moments exist. For Wolverine being shot by the Punisher, see "Endangered Species," *The Punisher: War Journal* 1, no. 7 (Marvel Comics, July 1989); for Wolverine being crucified, see "Fever Dream," *The Uncanny X-Men* 1, no. 251 (Marvel Comics, November 1989); for his electrocution by Thor, see "Wolverine vs Thor: Part Two," *Wolverine vs Thor* 2 (Marvel Comics, October 2009); and for his ingestion by the Hulk, see "Old Man Logan: Conclusion," *Wolverine: Old Man Logan* 8 (Marvel Comics, November 2009).

²⁶ "The Package," *Wolverine* 3, no. 41 (Marvel Comics, June 2006).

two warring tribes. The mutant endures several hails of arrows that look more akin to a depiction of Agincourt than a superhero comic book. Across several pages, he casually walks around, negotiates with a tribe, and eventually kills the main antagonist, all while arrows protrude from his back. Without removing the projectiles, he walks off into the sunset, and, as Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād describes such scenes, “press[es] on in this fashion quite unconcerned.”



Figure 5: Cover for *Wolverine* 3, no. 41 (Marvel Comics, June 2006)

Such a hedgehog spectacle was made more accessible in the 2013 film *The Wolverine*.²⁷ Again, the writers found a creative way to pit the mutant against bows and arrows by having him fight ninjas in Japan, yet another modern-day scenario in which the opponents prefer old-school weaponry. The ninjas fill up Wolverine’s back with arrows, each with a rope tied to the end (Figure 6). While this may seem like a poor method to corral a quick-healing mutant with metallic bones, these ninjas employ poison-tipped arrows. This is not

²⁷ *The Wolverine*, directed by James Mangold (20th Century Fox, 2013).

enough to kill Wolverine, but it is enough to render him unconscious. At the end of the scene, he falls face first in the snow with a back full of arrows.



Figure 6: Still from *The Wolverine*, directed by James Mangold (20th Century Fox, 2013)

On the commentary track of *The Wolverine* home release, the filmmakers admit Frank Miller's work on *Wolverine* inspired the scene.²⁸ In 1982, Miller was the first artist to depict Wolverine surviving a hail of arrows from ninjas.²⁹ Miller's inspiration came from Akira Kurosawa's 1957 film *Throne of Blood*, a retelling of *Macbeth* set in medieval Japan that climaxes with the protagonist's death.³⁰ After facing a hail of arrows that penetrate his armor from all sides (Figure 7), he collapses face first in front of his assailants, providing the template for *The Wolverine*. Images of warriors filled with arrows in medieval Japan were not new to Kurosawa. He was well aware of the popular legends surrounding Benkei, a twelfth-century warrior who purportedly fought to the death in the face of arrows, and he featured the legendary figure in his film *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail* (1945).³¹ Although there are many romanticized versions of Benkei's story, one version

²⁸ "Audio Commentary," Disc 1 of *The Wolverine: Unleashed Extended Cut*, directed by James Mangold (20th Century Fox, 2013).

²⁹ "Loss," *Wolverine* 1, no. 3 (Marvel Comics, November 1982).

³⁰ *Throne of Blood*, directed by Akira Kurosawa (Toho, 1957).

³¹ *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail*, directed by Akira Kurosawa (Toho, 1945).

depicts him dying upright, bristled with arrows, scaring away opponents who still think he is alive.³²



Figure 7: Still from *Throne of Blood*, directed by Akira Kurosawa (Toho, 1957)

It is tempting to stop the analysis of Wolverine covered in arrows with *Throne of Blood*, but the key difference is that Wolverine survives his wounds. Wolverine's metallic skeleton coupled with his quick-healing superpower provides an inverse version of the crusader's silk-covered gambeson beneath the chainmail. Thus, Wolverine not only becomes the perfect pincushion for sadistic writers and filmmakers, but also he has illuminated an obscure image once prevalent in medieval chronicles.

The Medieval Hedgehog Warrior Fighting on in Popular Culture

One prime example of the hedgehog warrior in popular culture comes from the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. In the immensely popular 2016 episode "Battle of the Bastards," viewers witness a giant wearing thick cloth armor hedgehogged in arrows, but he is still knocking down gates and fighting (Figure 8).³³ Although he eventually dies in combat, it

³² Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai: A Military History*, 2nd ed. (Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon, 1999), 74; For the complications around the many versions of Benkei's story, see Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha: Monastic Warriors and Sōhei in Japanese History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 117, 182n1.

³³ *Game of Thrones*, season 6, episode 9, "Battle of the Bastards," directed by Miguel Sapochnik, aired June 19, 2016, on HBO.

is not due to the arrows protruding out of his body. Another example is the recent Japanese film *Blade of the Immortal* (2017), also released in the U.S., for which a promotional poster features the main character appearing ready for battle with arrows protruding from his torso (Figure 9).³⁴ Based on the manga series, novel, and anime by the same name, the title character is literally immortal and able to withstand all sorts of wounds, including arrows.



Figure 8: Still from *Game of Thrones*, season 6, episode 9, “Battle of the Bastards,” directed by Miguel Sapochnik, aired June 19, 2016, on HBO

³⁴ *Blade of the Immortal*, directed by Takashi Miike (Warner Bros. Pictures, 2017).



Figure 9: Promotional poster for *Blade of the Immortal*, directed by Takashi Miike (Warner Bros. Pictures, 2017)

Arguably the most prominent example of the hedgehogged medieval warrior comes from Bud Light's 2018 series of commercials depicting medieval-fantasy battles during Super Bowl LII.³⁵ The final installment features the arrival of the "Bud Knight," who interrupts the battle to pick up some beer. The characters stop mid-battle to plead for the knight's help. While still in character, they comically appear as actors who broke mid-scene, as one warrior remains composed with his arm on fire and another warrior delivers calm dialogue while arrows protrude from all sides of his body (Figure 10). The estimated viewership for

³⁵ "Bud Light – The Bud Knight," directed by Jim Jenkins (Wieden + Kennedy, 2018), accessed December 28, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zr4md5OqL60>.

the game that year was 103.4 million, giving the hedgehogged medieval warrior its most prominent stage.³⁶



Figure 10: Still from “Bud Light – The Bud Knight,” directed by Jim Jenkins, (Wieden + Kennedy, 2018), which first aired during Super Bowl LII

Other examples are just as tongue-and-cheek. The first episode of Starz’s *American Gods* (2017) depicts a Viking riddled with upwards of several hundred arrows in a matter of seconds, covering him from head to toe, not even one missing its mark.³⁷ He halts briefly before collapsing backwards, and then his comrades ponder their next move while his corpse bristles with arrows. In the comic book world, artist Rob Liefeld employed the image through a 2017 cover of *Deadpool* that features the protagonist covered in arrows and swords with a quote bubble saying, “It tickles” (Figure 11).³⁸ Deadpool, also known as Wade Wilson, is another mutant who, like Wolverine, has quick-healing superpowers. Other artists have followed suit. For example, on the cover of *Deadpool* 4 (2018), Nic Klein depicts Deadpool with a back full of arrows, comically shot by cupid, as he stares into the eyes of a love interest.³⁹ That same year, in two separate comic book issues featuring both Deadpool and Wolverine, Mike Henderson depicted flashbacks of the latter

³⁶ Joe Otterson, “TV Ratings: Super Bowl LII Slips 7% From 2017 to 103.4 Million Viewers,” *Variety*, February 5, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/tv/news/super-bowl-lii-ratings-1202687239/>.

³⁷ *American Gods*, season 1, episode 1, “The Bone Orchard,” directed by David Slade, aired April 17, 2017, on Starz.

³⁸ “Deadpool Kills Cable—Part One: Take Two,” *The Despicable Deadpool* 1, no. 287 (Marvel Comics, December 2017). Variant cover by Rob Liefeld.

³⁹ *Deadpool* 6, no. 4 (Marvel Comics, September 2018).

filled with arrows while fighting ninjas, reiterating the image. Both scenes feature narration boxes where another character describes Wolverine, first simply as “violent” and then later recognizing, “You can take *punishment*.”⁴⁰



Figure 11: Rob Liefeld’s variant cover for *The Despicable Deadpool* 1, no. 287 (Marvel Comics, December 2017)

Outside of Deadpool and Wolverine, writer Peter J. Tomasi presented the aptly titled “Medieval” storyline in several 2019 issues of *Detective Comics*. The storyline pits Batman against new enemies including Arkham Knight, complete with armor, sword, and shield. In two issues, Batman’s armor is penetrated with a hail of arrows, a remarkable feat as his suit is made of a special fabric that can typically withstand standard knives and arrows. Brad Walker’s cover for *Detective Comics* 1002 (2019) depicts Batman covered in 14 visible arrows. The “caped crusader,” as Batman is often called, is in pain, but

⁴⁰ Emphasis my own. *Deadpool* vs. *Old Man Logan* 2 (Marvel Comics, November 2018); vs. *Old Man Logan* 3 (Marvel Comics, December 2018).

manages to fight off Arkham Knight. Afterward, he can only make it to his Batmobile with the help of Commissioner Gordon. Safely in the Batcave, Bruce Wayne is shown shirtless and covered in bandages while his butler, Alfred, attends to his wounds. While examining the arrows, Wayne explains that he “got a little lucky,” as “the suit fabric stopped the arrows from penetrating too deeply.”⁴¹ Where Wolverine and Deadpool gave us superpowered mutants that used their own bodies as the penetrable armor, Batman has now presented a modern depiction of an armored warrior whose cloth armor is penetrated just enough to wound, but not kill him, allowing the Dark Knight to fight on.

The spectacle of a hedgehogged warrior is emerging in popular culture and we can expect to see more occurrences of it in film and television, especially in worlds where padded armor and chainmail are prevalent, namely, anything medieval and particularly in fantasy worlds. These images, regardless of how fantastical, anachronistic, or comical, provide medievalists with an opportunity to connect popular fiction with the medieval world. From the gritty realism of *Game of Thrones* to the comical slapstick of Deadpool and beer commercials, viewers can easily relate to medieval chroniclers who leapt at the image of a hedgehog to describe the scene. Remarkably, the spectacle of a hedgehogged warrior is just as striking today as it was to those who witnessed and wrote about it during the Crusades, ensuring that artists and filmmakers will continue to proliferate the trope. Wolverine has been the unwitting bridge for that image, extracting it out of obscure medieval chronicles and Samurai movies, and embedding it into popular culture.

⁴¹ “Medieval,” *Detective Comics* 1002 (DC Comics, April 2019).