

Preface

The contributions assembled in this volume grew out of papers that were presented by scholars from numerous disciplines in the humanities and social sciences at the international conference “Tracing the Heroic Through Gender”, hosted by the Collaborative Research Center 948 “Heroes – Heroizations – Heroisms” in February 2015 at the University of Freiburg. With varying historical and thematic foci, they explore the potential and the possible applications of the category of gender within heroism research.

In nearly all societies, the heroic is manifoldly gendered. The connection between heroes/heroines and gender lends itself to diverse transdisciplinary research approaches, not least because of the broad historical dimensions involved and the current relevance of the topic. Nevertheless, gender is excluded as a category of analysis in many studies informed by general heroism research and theory that explore the heroic in concrete historical and socio-cultural contexts. At most, the masculinity of the hero seems to be of interest. The present volume attempts to confront persisting shortcomings in heroism research, using various approaches and topics from humanities disciplines to investigate both masculine and feminine types of the hero and the victim as well as the interrelationship between them. The premise of the volume is that gender can serve as a central category for analyzing the heroic once the predominance of one gender over another becomes evident in a process of heroization. The point is to take seriously the relational character of the category of gender, thereby attenuating the current ‘division of labor’ between gender studies and heroism research with regard to the topic of heroism.

The editors would like to thank the participants of the conference “Tracing the Heroic Through Gender”, both for their papers and for many vigorous and gripping discussions. We would like to extend special thanks to those participants who expanded their conference papers, in some cases substantially revising them for publication here. Furthermore, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Collaborative Research Center 948’s head office which did the lion’s share of the editing, especially Sebastian Meurer, Andreas Friedrich, and their excellent student assistants Daniel Hefflebower, Philipp Mulhaupt, Chris Reding, Julia Rosenfeld, and Brendan Ryan. Thanks are also due to Hans-Jürgen Dietrich and Thomas Breier at Erگون Verlag for their support and patience. Finally, we would like to thank the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Ralf von den Hoff on behalf of the Collaborative Research Center for supporting and funding the publication.

For the editors, Carolin Hauck and Thomas Seedorf

Freiburg, December 2017

