

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Emily K. Grandstaff  
434.982.2932 / egrandstaff@virginia.edu

“This is a very substantial and original piece of work, which makes a striking contribution to the history of epic in the modern world and extends the significance of its topic in ambitious ways—indeed, way beyond the ‘Victorian’ era signified in its title. . . .

Such a project requires a massive extension of the canon of ‘epic’ to include not only those extended narrative poems that have traditionally earned the title but also all the great historical narrative accounts of wars and warfare.”

—**Simon Dentith, University of Reading**

## **LIBERAL EPIC**

### **The Victorian Practice of History from Gibbon to Churchill**

In **LIBERAL EPIC (September 2011; UVA Press)**, Edward Adams examines the liberal imagination’s centuries-long dependence on contradictory, and mutually constitutive, attitudes toward violent domination. Combining an analytical history of liberal ideology—especially its political and economic theories of war and heroic agency in the modern world—with a critical account of epic poetry and epic history, Adams contextualizes contemporary attitudes toward war and violence and compares the real-world law of war to the refined modalities of poetic diction.

Adams centers his analysis on a series of major epic poems, histories, and historical novels, including Dryden’s *Aeneid*, Pope’s *Iliad*, Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Byron’s *Don Juan*, Scott’s *Life of Napoleon*, Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Macaulay’s *History of England*, Hardy’s *Dynasts*, and Churchill’s military histories—works that rank among the most important publishing events of the past three centuries yet that have seldom received critical attention relative to their importance.

In recovering these works and placing them in the dialogue between “epic” and “liberalism,” Adams provides an archaeology that sheds light on contemporary issues such as the relation of liberalism to war, the tactics for sanitizing heroism, and the appeal of violence to supposedly humane readers.

**Edward Adams** is Associate Professor of English at Washington and Lee University.

September 2011 / 336 pages, 6 1/8 x 9 1/4  
\$39.50S cloth ISBN 978-0-8139-3145-6 / \$39.50S e-book ISBN 978-0-8139-3150-0