



## *The Society of Ancient Military Historians*

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#### Message from the Secretary

Once again, it is a great pleasure to present the latest issue of *Res Militares*. The current volume features ten very interesting book reviews.

As always, I am more than happy to receive any inquiries and feedback, as well as information about upcoming conferences, events, CFPs, books, and so forth.

*Ioannis Georganas*  
Secretary, Society of Ancient Military Historians

#### Book Reviews

**Armstrong, Jeremy, ed. *Circum Mare: Themes in Ancient Warfare*. Mnemosyne Supplements 388; Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. viii + 320; \$175.00, ISBN: 9789004284845. pbk.**

Review by Carson Bay, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster [carson.m.bay@gmail.com](mailto:carson.m.bay@gmail.com)

This volume pairs scholars of various subfields to expose through comparison six themes in ancient warfare scholarship. Armstrong's introduction positions the volume to showcase via case studies developing approaches to warfare. The first essays address "Narratives of War." Anthony Spalinger makes neglected connection between inscriptional and pictorial war narratives in empire-period Egypt, demonstrating a "parallelism of narrative techniques" (13). David Nolan then shows how centurions function as military exempla in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*: Caesar thought they should

engage in hand to hand combat only as a last, legion-preserving resort, and that their commitment to order/stability was integral to that of the legions. Matthew Trundle's essay, the first on "The Economics of Warfare," shows that the Athenian empire was essentially economic, driven by silver coinage movement among its allies. Nathan Rosenstein's following article demonstrates via estimated demographic statistics and economic math that, rather than ruining Italy's farmers, Rome's late third- and second-century wars stimulated an economic boom by expanding the class of *assidui* who paid *tributum* that financed said wars.

Armstrong's chapter applies conclusions of modern military scholarship—particularly "that [martial] effectiveness is directly linked to cohesion (107)—to the markedly successful campaigns of archaic Rome. He shows that regal period and early Republican Rome's armies enjoyed both vertical/hierarchical and horizontal/comunal cohesion, but not of the civic type generally assumed. He also argues that, given the raiding nature of Rome's early warfare, financial gain was likely a factor in Rome's military success; this jibes with modern military scholarship's conclusion that task-based commitments predict success more than existing social bonds. In practice, Armstrong's chapter shows that the archaic Roman army's social bonds were more diverse than some nationalism; it does not show that existing social bonds were not deciding factors in Rome's military success, nor that task-based cohesion was integral in such success—only that it "should not be discounted" (119). The second "Military Cohesion" chapter, Mark Hebblewhite's examines the Roman military sacramentum between CE 235–395, exposing its significance for soldiers and emperors alike. This was a plastic yet consistent component of late imperial military fidelity, and this essay is one of the only to survey the



subject.

Beginning the section “Military Authority,” Ralph Covino seeks to show, largely through Cicero’s *Verrines*, that transition from inflated military imperium to more circumscribed administrative rule in Rome’s provinces “was not achieved overnight” (163). Covino prefers to take together various legislative limits placed upon magistrates from the fifth century onward as indicative of a broad, consistent concern from early Republican times to curb the power of Rome’s regional rulers. Hereafter, in one of the book’s more theoretically oriented chapters, James Kierstead reframes the Delian and Second Athenian naval leagues within the social-scientific framework of collective action. Kierstead shows convincingly that the dynamics of both leagues conform to certain principles of group theory, and that such a perspective is preferable to traditional accounts of Athens as simply “a contingently predatory hegemon” (181).

The section on “Irregular Warfare” begins with Jeroen Wijnendaele’s argument that the fifth-century Bonifatius was the first “warlord” of the western Roman army. This chapter’s first third is a history of research into the concept of ‘warlordism’ which hardly contributes to the chapter’s putative focus of Bonifatius’ relationship to his *buccellarii*. The chapter actually says little about this relationship, situating Bonifatius rather within a military survey of his time. Louis Rawlings’ following chapter explores the ‘irregular’ nature of skirmish/raiding warfare undertaken by both sides during the Punic Wars. Rawlings argues that such operations provided troop training, logistical support, morale boost, and psychological intimidation. Coupled with standing armies, such warfare provided decisive advantages and, in the end, prolonged the massive Roman-Carthaginian conflicts. The “Fortifications and Sieges” section begins with Brett Heagren’s essay which uses artistic evidence to establish a tentative survey of siege warfare, its weapons and dynamics in ancient Egypt. Finally, John Lee’s chapter illustrates how between 412–395 the Achaemenid Tissaphernes “showed a keen grasp of the strategic realities of the western frontier” by “knowing the geography, understanding local politics, and gathering accurate intelligence” (280). He shows that Tissaphernes’ defense of western Anatolia against Greece was well executed and, until Cyrus’ advent, effective.

Overall, this book’s strengths include its contribution to numerous fields while allowing for comparative analysis via its paired format (although actual comparison is rarely attempted). Its drawbacks are the common pitfalls of case studies, wherein specific arguments forego opportunities to apply larger principles more broadly. Most of these

essays’ perspectives contain methodologies which hold promise for wider application, and many conclusions could fruitfully be expanded into discussions of the types of dynamics that could exist in antiquity. Nevertheless, these essays still contribute to ancient military history—many of them track new directions in the field—and constitute a valuable, diverse resource for scholars.

**Bellón, Juan P., Ruiz, Arturo, Molinos, Manuel, Rueda, Carmen, and Gómez, Francisco, eds. *La Segunda Guerra Púnica en la Península Ibérica. Baecula, Arqueología de una Batalla*. Jaén, España: Universidad de Jaén, 2015. Pp. 7, 687; ISBN 9788484399148, \$69.99, hdbk.**

Reviewed by Jessica H. Clark, Florida State University,  
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Thanks to the survival of Livy’s third decade and large sections of Polybius’ *Histories*, it can be easy to forget how much we do not know about the Second Punic War. The precise locations of some of the war’s major engagements remain uncertain, for example, a particularly important issue for the Iberian Peninsula. This volume represents a major contribution to this subject; earlier publications by the editors and contributors are here expounded in meticulous detail (two synthetic articles, in English, also appeared after the volume). In essence, the book’s purpose is to establish the site of the Battle of Baecula (208 BCE) as el Cerro de las Albahacas de Santo Tomé, in the province of Jaén (approximately fifty miles east of the previous lead contender, Bailén). The book has significant value as an exemplar of battlefield archaeology -- and in particular of the application of digital mapping -- while also presenting a rigorously argued reconstruction of events on the ground.

The issue of site-location is significant for a number of reasons, from our assessment of Roman strategies in Spain to our confidence in our own historical methods. The editors propose that, since earlier identifications relied upon toponymic similarities, flawed translations of ancient texts, and private patronage in support of particular locales, they must be discarded. The principle investigators thus embarked on an extensive survey campaign. The volume’s first section reflects the project’s wide scope and presents discussions of the Hannibalic War more generally, from its literary sources, economic effects, and military engagements north side of the Ebro, to the area of the book’s subsequent focus, the Alto Guadalquivir. Subsequent chapters make the case for the identification of Baecula and other sites of the war, and showcase (with generous color maps, photographs, and illustrations) the distinct tools of battlefield archaeology.



The closing four chapters offer enriching discussions of the broader implications of this project, which they place in the wider contexts of current archaeological theory and practice, spatial analysis, logistics, and, certainly not least, the relationship between material and text in addressing the questions of historical archaeology. The final chapter offers a comparison with the archaeological investigations at the German site of Kalkriese. This makes an interesting note on which to conclude, underscoring as it does the almost incomprehensibly minute scale at which some material finds allow us to reconstruct ancient military engagements -- and the perhaps incomprehensibly vast gulf that remains between us and any satisfying understanding of our subject, when we do not direct equal attention beyond the battlefields.

The volume's value therefore lies not only in its argumentation, but in its unequivocal demonstration of the strength of this project as a model for others. We can see better the desperate importance of the Iberian power structures, populations, and settlement patterns into which the Carthaginians and the Romans successively intervened. We can more clearly relate the specific battle of Baecula to its antecedents (including several major Roman defeats in the Guadalquivir) and to its consequences (chief among them Scipio's continued campaign in southern Spain, while Hasdrubal headed for Italy). And, we can better appreciate Polybius' and Livy's literary choices when we release those historians from the requirements of precise topographic and tactical representations. Thus this book is a significant contribution to the history of the Iberian campaigns of the Second Punic War, and, even more importantly, to the place of a "new" battlefield archaeology in ancient military history. Moreover, as a historian, I welcome the degree of shared methodological vocabulary in the representation of textual evidence and the opportunity to do more than "field test" the veracity of Polybius or Livy on the ground in Spain. That said, the chapters engage with the material at somewhat different scales, and not all contributors agree on all points. The only area in which this detracts from the volume's utility is in this question of the relationship between literary sources and archaeological investigation. No search for the "real" Baecula can claim independence from textual evidence, and while the Introduction deploys the nuanced terms of current historiography, the application of theory to practice varies by contribution. We have not escaped from the debate yet.

To close with the details: the production value of the volume is high, although not all the schematic illustrations added clarity. The chapters are in Spanish except the first (Italian) and last (English); there is a

single bibliography for the volume (useful), but no index (a guide for the thematically-motivated reader would have been worthwhile). Although the technical expositions of field methods and small finds are at times fascinating, some authors assume familiarity with the vocabulary of scientific archaeology. Non-specialists might usefully begin with the Introduction, Chapter 6 (on preceding investigations into the material remains of the Hannibalic War in the region), and Chapter 21 (which unites the preceding discussions and offers a detailed reconstruction of the Battle of Baecula). Those familiar with the project through its English-language publications will find much to reward the more detailed presentations of the evidence contained here.

***Constantius II: Usurers, Eunuchs, and the Antichrist.***  
By Peter Crawford. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2016. ISBN 978-1-78340-055-3.

Reviewed by Lee Fratantuono, Ohio Wesleyan University  
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This richly illustrated and copiously annotated volume is another installment of the ongoing Pen & Sword project to produce biographies of both major and relatively understudied figure of classical military and political history.

Crawford's work is essentially a narrative history of the roughly quarter century between the death of Constantine the Great and the accession of Julian the Apostate. Ostensibly, the justification for the book is the relative dearth of studies of this period of Roman history (at least for anglophone audiences). Pen & Sword titles are always readable and accessible to a wide readership, but Crawford's contribution to the lengthy catalogue is one of the more dense, scholarly treatments of its subject. At well over three hundred pages, it provides one of the more detailed studies of these challenging years for the Empire. That said, the author's writing style will appeal to a wide range of readers.

The fourth century is a complicated morass of rulers and would-be dominators; the table of such claimants to the Roman purple are conveniently catalogued from the start of Crawford's volume. No less valuable is the well-written, briefly sketched yet densely informative précis the author provides of the tumult of the third century, the period of the so-called barracks or soldier emperors that set the stage for the efforts of Diocletian and Constantine to achieve a lasting, more secure future for the empire. While the third century has received significant attention from scholars working in many sub-disciplines of classics



and ancient history, Crawford succeeds in presenting the essential information both succinctly and informatively.

The stage having been set, Crawford proceeds to the life of Constantius. If there is one great virtue of his methodology, it is the author's unfailing attempt to balance different aspects of historical inquiry in a relatively brief compass of narrative. This is particularly true of his attention to religious activity and the development of Christian theology in the years after Diocletian's notorious persecutions and Constantine's cruciform victory and dramatic conversion story. Likewise, matters foreign and domestic are neatly balanced. One reason the quarter century after the death of Constantine has not received much in the way of sympathetic historical analysis is the complicated situation of simultaneous civil war with tensions and outright conflict with a renascent Persian Empire. Crawford moves between the drama of Saint Athanasius and the Arian controversy on the one hand, and the resurgent military force of Shapur II with a thorough command of a challenging bibliography of both primary and secondary sources. It is a riveting story, cast on a broad stage of Sasanian imperial ambitions and debates about the divinity of Christ. At the very least, the author convinces his audience that Constantius is a figure of significant interest in early fourth century Roman history; this is not some study of an emperor undertaken merely out of a desire to provide a modern biography of an understudied figure.

There is an extensive section of plates (including numismatic illustrations); an appendix of the consuls of the reign of Constantius, and a valuable listing of the laws known to have been ratified under his rule. Further study is fostered by an especially detailed bibliography, as well as a copious index.

Crawford succeeds in blending the genre of historical biography with military and political, indeed ecclesiastical history, all in a treatment that will be of use both scholars and general readers. This is a book that will be of interest to anyone seeking insights into a turbulent period in Roman history and early Christendom; the degree to which it is occasionally a dense read is a reflection of the complex web of events and personages that is its subject – a web that Crawford does an admirable job of disentangling.

**Kleinreesink, L. H. E. (Esmeralda). *On Military Memoirs. A Quantitative Comparison of International Afghanistan War Autobiographies, 2001–2010*, Leiden / Boston: Brill (Egdocuments and History Series; vol. 10). Pp. xvi, 386; \$ 99.50, ISBN 978-9004322530.**

Reviewed by Magnus Frisch, Philipps-Universität Marburg, [magnus.frisch@staff.uni-marburg.de](mailto:magnus.frisch@staff.uni-marburg.de)

Kleinreesink's book does not deal with ancient military history, but with literature on contemporary military history. It presents a thorough scientific analysis of fifty-four books written by soldiers from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany having been deployed in Afghanistan, which have been published between 2001 and 2010.

The author's research interest has been motivated by her own experiences as a Dutch air force logistics officer in Afghanistan having written two contributions to the Dutch military anthology *Task Force Uruzgan* (2009) as well as her own book on her deployment in Afghanistan: *Officier in Afghanistan: Achter de schermen van onze militaire missie* (2012).

Kleinreesink has been an Assistant Professor of Economics (2009-2013) and of Military Logistics (2014-2016) at the Netherlands Defense Academy. She earned her PhD in 2014 with the thesis *On Military Affairs: Soldier-Authors, Publishers, Plots and Motives*, from which the present book seems to have emerged. Besides, she has published various papers on different aspects of contemporary military autobiographies. Currently she is a lieutenant-colonel with the Royal Netherlands Air Force and the leader of a veteran program at the statistics department of the Dutch Ministry of Defense.

Recognizing that on the one hand autobiographical reports from the military operations in the beginning of the 21st century are read by a wider public, but on the other hand there is no reliable, quantifiable comprehensive study of contemporary military memoirs (3-8) Kleinreesink decided to fill the research gaps by a "a complete, but also manageable representation of soldier-authors is researched consisting of every military autobiographical book on Afghanistan published between 2001 and 2010, including all publicly available self-published books from five different Western countries 'with the aim' to enhance knowledge about Western soldier-authors of autobiographical books on their deployment to Afghanistan by using qualitative descriptive coding techniques in combination with statistical analysis to compare military background, plots and explicit writing" (8).

She seeks to analyze the authors, publishers, issues of the books, and the motivation of their authors not only to satisfy an academic interest, but also to figure out information directly relevant for defense policy makers as well as for psychologists and social workers who are working with veterans (9). Therefore, Kleinreesink



structures her book into two parts: one part dealing with the underlying theories, applied methods, and political and military background information (3-126), and another part containing the results of her statistical and literary analysis of the fifty-four books (128-327). Additionally, she presents appendices with flow charts of different kinds of literary plots (330), tables with the NATO codes for the different ranks of soldiers (331-332), and a table of motivations and applied categories (333). There is also an extensive list of references (334-363), an author index (364-367, and a subject index (368-386).

Kleinreesink adopts a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods described thoroughly and detailed, yet comprehensible and transparent (60-107) in their presentation. She presents and interprets the results of her analysis just as extensively and comprehensible as her methods using diagrams and tables by way of illustration.

In her conclusion she summarizes the knowledge obtained in the previous chapters to answer her research questions in the form of a profile of “the soldier-author”; their publishers; their topics with a focus on truth and censorship, post deployment disorientation, and the plots of the books; the different motivations to write, such as recognition, change, helping others or self-help (281-291). She also gives a recommendation to military forces, how to “react to the production of books by soldier-authors” (291). Kleinreesink ends her book with personal reflections about the limitations of her research with regard to the restriction of the countries analyzed and the applied methods, about the perception of military memoirs by the public, about trends for military memoirs in the future, about the authors of such memoirs, about the role of military memoirs for history as well as for the people’s attitude toward war and peace, and finally about approaches for further research (292-309). A final synopsis of the fifty-four books analyzed by Kleinreesink, containing title, information about the author, short summaries, and the cover picture gives the reader a clearer insight of Kleinreesink’s object of research (310-327).

Kleinreesink’s book provides an excellent overview over the military memoirs written by US-American, Canadian, British, Dutch, and German Afghanistan veterans between 2001 and 2010. As she admits, it would be interesting to compare her results with analyses of military memoirs from other countries involved in the Afghanistan operations such as France and of the French-Canadian memoirs (294-295). This methodical and thorough survey follows a clear research design and structure and is always comprehensible and clear. Thus, it could be

exemplary for other literary studies on military writing, contemporary as well as historical works.

**Armstrong, Jeremy. *Early Roman Warfare: From the Regal Period to the First Punic War*. Yorkshire, England: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. xvi, 176; \$34.95, ISBN: 9781781592540, hdbk.**

Reviewed by Seth Kendall, Georgia Gwinnett College, [skendall@ggc.edu](mailto:skendall@ggc.edu)

Jeremy Armstrong’s *Early Roman Warfare* is a text which is difficult to describe. On the one hand, it is short (the main text is only 170 pages in length), and it is by its author’s admission more of a “popular” than a “scholarly” text in which “(e)ndnotes and references have ... been kept to an absolute minimum” (p. xvi). Despite this fact, it seeks to argue that much of what is commonly “known” about Roman history is wrong, and it seeks to offer a “revised model for the development of Rome’s earliest armies and the interpretations of the literature, along with the advances in archaeology, which underpin it.” In doing so, it covers much of ground, and is actually a more dense read than expected.

Armstrong’s thesis is straightforward. In the first place, Armstrong asserts that the literary sources for early Rome are practically useless for early history because in their struggle to make sense of their limited sources, they incorrectly assumed that early Rome operated the same way that the later Republic did both in peace and war, and fashioned their narratives accordingly. Chapter one is devoted to discussion of the problems with the literary tradition, as well as to the scant help derived from archaeology, at least for military matters: finds of equipment or depictions of their use in art are practically negligible and furnish almost no conclusive evidence for who made war, why, and how.

Nevertheless, Armstrong continues, anthropological and sociological techniques can help dispel the anachronisms in the sources, and when these are removed, a new picture (particularly Roman warriors and warmaking) emerges. Chapter two postulates that Latium was once dominated by gentes, or “clans”, large, quasi-itinerant families and their satellites who roamed about driving flocks, conducting trade, and making war, which were more often than not raids conducted to acquire moveable spoil. Some of these clans were associated with Rome, but did not necessarily live in the city. The townspeople would, he argues, often form a pact with clan leaders, offering them rudimentary power over the population and whatever military assistance it could provide in exchange for the protection of the clan and the right to lead the community in war. Thus, the gentes fought on Rome’s behalf but



were not answerable to the townspeople for the how and why this fighting occurred. At this time, “Roman” warfare was somewhat separate from the city-dwelling Romans; the gentes largely pursued war for their own ends, bore most of its costs, sustained the majority of its losses, and reaped most of its rewards in terms of glory and spoil. Rome’s early kings were, in fact, leaders of clans, as were the Praetors elected to replace them when Rome replaced its monarchy with a Republic.

Changes in this state of affairs emerged, as discussed in chapters three and four. During the fifth century some of the clans began to settle in Rome, where Armstrong suggests that they became Patricians, bringing about “the Struggle of the Orders” which was actually an attempt to force the clans to conform to Roman standards of civic behavior and established rules for the way they and the townspeople were to relate to each other. Moreover, the townspeople began to take more of an active interest in war, especially in wars in which Rome was directly assaulted. Among the consequences of this interest was the development of the manipular legion, which in Armstrong’s view did not supplant the phalanx (he is skeptical that the Romans ever employed this formation, despite the insistence of the sources that they did) but was rather an attempt to blend those who could only afford lighter armor and weapons alongside the better armed traditional warriors of the clan. Further changes were set in motion by the Sack of Rome by the Gauls in c.390. From that point on, Rome was increasingly concerned with military manpower, and this concern – along with the rising urban population – caused the Romans to make a shift away from wars fought for spoil to wars fought for land and creation of alliances. These new priorities are discussed in chapters five and six.

Armstrong’s text is certainly an interesting and thought-provoking read; its tone is light and occasionally spiced with colloquialism and informality. Nevertheless, it is unquestionably a revisionist history, one which seeks to overturn the history of Rome as it is presented in the sources and replace it with an “alternate” history which is built on practically no solid archaeological or literary evidence. Armstrong acknowledges this both in the introduction and conclusion (p. xv, 170), but his advice that the reader ought to “to look at the big picture and not get caught up in the details” cannot completely wave away the difficulties with his thesis. Furthermore, it suffers from the fact that it does not really have an intended audience in mind: “There is, honestly, not a single group this book is intended for, although if forced to name one it would probably be the ‘educated enthusiast’.” (xv). However, it presumes that this “educated enthusiast” have a greater familiarity with the

intricacies of early Roman history than might be reasonably expected of someone who is not a specialist. Armstrong refers the specialist to another of his more “scholarly” works which treats the same theme, one which contains the many expected references to the secondary literature which this text omits. Ultimately, then, Armstrong’s book is too deep for the generalist and too shallow for the specialist, and, while informative, will probably completely satisfy neither.

**Whatley, Conor. *Exercitus Moesiae: The Roman Army in Moesia from Augustus to Severus Alexander*, BAR International Series 2825, 2016. p, 124. ISBN-10: 1407314750.**

Reviewed by Łukasz Różycki, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań [lukasz.rozycki@amu.edu.pl](mailto:lukasz.rozycki@amu.edu.pl)

Conor Whatley set out to analyze the dislocation of Roman units within the territory of the two provinces that covered the lower stretch of the Danubian limes, i.e. Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, from the moment these units were raised to the date that marks the onset of the 3rd century crisis in 235 CE. It is the author’s second book, following a great first one focused on the military narrative in the works of Procopius of Caesarea.<sup>1</sup> The author’s argumentation is based mostly on military diplomas and epigraphic sources.

The book is divided into six chapters, preceded by an exhaustive introduction and concluding with a summary. Additionally, it includes six valuable appendices. The first three chapters follow a chronological order and are structured so as to present the available sources on the Roman army in Moesia. It is worth noting that the author makes a distinction between the legionary forces and the auxilia, usually describing the two categories of soldiers separately. Chapter four is devoted to auxiliary units around the Black Sea; with much of the narrative focused on units stationed in the Crimea. The fifth chapter is largely a summary of sources used in the first three and a discussion on the placement and functions of Roman units along the lower section of the Danube. The final chapter was conceived as a wrap-up but, notably, it describes the strategy of the Roman armies stationed along the lower part of the Danubian limes (reminiscent of the controversial work by Edward Luttwak), and also provides additional context on how the Moesian limes fit into the situation of the empire as a whole.

Certain reservations may be had about Whatley’s methodology, particularly the category of sources used. One of the main goals of the work was to reconstruct the process of dislocation of Roman forces in Moesia and evaluate its impact in a broader strategic context. The



book was largely based on written sources, mostly military diplomas and inscriptions, supplemented with works by Roman historians in the parts devoted to the empire as a whole. What is missing is a crucial type of archaeological sources that could help trace the movement of individual units within the province, namely stamped utility ceramics (in particular, stamped bricks). The author mentions stamped bricks, but this is always second-hand information, used to supplement and confirm the veracity of information from other sources. The importance of archaeological sources in determining the dislocation of Roman units should be fairly obvious, especially since they allow us to trace back the movement of even smaller legionary *vexillatio*, which are never individually identified in other types of sources. Also, it is surprising that not a single item in the bibliography is written in Bulgarian or Romanian. Granted, this research is referenced in the work, but only those published in English.<sup>2</sup> When discussing the situation in Crimea, the book refers to texts written in congress languages and mostly older works, but there are no sources in Russian and Ukrainian, and no mention of the more up-to-date studies of Roman forts written in English. The author fails to reference other recent non-Anglo and non-German work by T. Sarnowski that deals with precisely the same subject.<sup>3</sup> The site of Novae, is referenced with baffling omissions. The author does not include the works by Piotr Dyczek devoted to the valetudinarium; he makes no mention of E. Gencheva's book on the beginnings of the Novae military camp, which is a seminal work covering the first stages of functioning of Legio I Italica's headquarters, also touching upon the subject of dislocation of forces during the establishment of the province. The bibliography does not include works by Dyczek, Gencheva, Parnicki-Pudelko, or any works from the series *Novae Studies and Materials* edited by A. B. Biernacki. The situation is no better with regard to archaeological studies of other legionary camps.

Despite these criticisms, in scientific terms the book is of good quality. The argumentation is systematic and well-ordered, the narrative flows smoothly, the sources are used correctly and some of the author's conclusions are pioneering in character and should introduce a fresh perspective into the discussion about Roman Moesia. There is a good breakdown of military units stationed in Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior during the studied period, particularly with the reasonably comprehensive description of their relocations. Whatley has collected, systematically arranged, and re-interpreted the data on the presence of auxiliary forces in Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, and presented these within the context of the empire as a whole. This is, without a doubt, the most valuable portion of the book. It is also difficult to argue

with the well-presented interpretation of study results in chapter six, which to a large extent consists of the author's own conclusions regarding Roman military activities along the lower Danube. The book, sadly, does not paint a complete picture of the movement of Roman armies over Moesia, which is a consequence of the sources and the literature used by the author. This work provides a better understanding of the structures and movement of Roman military units in the territory of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior, based on selected types of sources. It is a shame that the author did not take into account more archaeological sources or the research works written in the Balkans. As it stands, Whatley's contribution leaves the reader with a feeling of missed opportunity.

**Taylor, Don. *Roman Republic at War: A Compendium of Battles from 502 to 31 B.C.* Barnsley, UK : Pen and Sword Military, 2017. Pp. 318: ISBN 9781473894426.**

Reviewed by Juan Strisino, [JStrisino@aol.com](mailto:JStrisino@aol.com)

There has been a recent spate of encyclopaedic publications on the subject of ancient war and battles. Notably, these include: *Wars and Battles of the Roman Republic* (2015); *The Encyclopaedia of the Roman Army* (3 vols., 2015); *Conflict in Ancient Greece and Rome*, (3 vols., 2016); and *The Encyclopaedia of Ancient Battles* (3 vols., 2017). The six weighty tomes of the last-named offer expansive studies and references and are better suited for students of ancient warfare to consult in respective university or local libraries, whereas the first, is a less comprehensive study. Expense is where Taylor bridges the gap. Along with his other compendium, *[Roman] Empire at War...31 B.C. – A.D. 565* (Barnsley, 2016), Taylor has produced an inexpensive option for readers wishing to refer to the battles of the Roman world.

This book is split into two parts accompanied by endnotes, bibliography, and an index. The first part comprises twenty-five pages (3-28) that are devoted to giving brief accounts of the Roman Republican army, navy, and the source material. The reader is introduced to the fabric and composition of the Roman legion, (manipular and cohortal), the ala, command configurations and strategies and the castra. In each case, the author supports his descriptions with good schematic diagrams. He then moves on to a brief history of the development and importance of the Roman navy in support of the army followed by its eventual dominance in the Mediterranean basin over the Carthaginians, Greek states, and Hellenistic kingdoms. The final section of part one examines the reliability of the source material. There is a reminder here to remain attentive about the sources, particularly regarding exaggerated battlefield numbers.



This is followed by a precis of individual ancient authors; from Appian to Zonaras. Although nothing striking is offered in this section, it provides context.

Part two starts with a further notice of the limitations of ancient chronology followed by a handy inventory of alphabetically and chronologically listed battles, 31- 41. The rest of the book follows the encyclopaedic layout with over 400 comprehensively examined and dated A–Z entries; from Pometia in 502 down to Actium in 31. Each explanation ends with an ancient source reference and the most salient battles are, again, supported with excellent schematic illustrations. In addition, where appropriate, each individual entry denotes the date and month, the season and the major event in which the hostilities occurred (e.g. 50, Alesia, 52 BC, spring-summer (Gallic War)). As stated by the author, every account is purely derived from the information contained in the specific ancient source, thus giving the readers, not only a succinct synopsis of the evidence, but also pointing them in the right direction if they wish to access and evaluate the material.

On the whole, this is a reasonable effort and the extensive corpus of battles noted adopts a user-friendly approach. There appears to be no battle that has escaped the author's attention (however, due to lack of evidence, he admits to omitting battles (not named) and restricts his entries to the most obvious of the sieges, e.g. from Alesia to Veii). He has also remained steadfast and not got himself bogged down in the detailed analysis of the evidence, thus allowing readers to make up their own mind. Minor cavils include: front cover date shows 502 to 31 B.C., whereas inside the date shows 498 to 31 BC; perhaps a list/glossary of individuals and Roman enemies would have been beneficial for cross-referencing; and, maps of areas of Roman control during this period would certainly have aided this compendium. The bibliography is not exhaustive and there are several major omissions including *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, (2007). Although Taylor pinpoints the ancient reference/s at the end of each battle described, which are predominantly taken from the Loeb, it would have been more convenient for the uninitiated to have had an extended bibliography of ancient sources in the bibliographical section (294-296). In spite of this flaw, along with its companion noted above, this book is a respectable reference and aid to when and where a battle occurred and what the sources reveal about it.

**Melville, Sarah C. *The Campaigns of Sargon II, King of Assyria, 721–705 B.C.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. Pp. 320; \$32.95 ISBN: 9780806154039, hdbk.**

Reviewed by Craig W. Tyson, D'Youville College, [tysonc@dyc.edu](mailto:tysonc@dyc.edu)

Melville's book is a study of Sargon II's reign over the Neo-Assyrian Empire (721–705 B.C.), focusing particularly on Sargon's military leadership. It comprises an introduction, six main chapters, a conclusion, and two appendices. The book also includes two tables, five maps, and thirteen drawings of stone-carved reliefs from Sargon's palace at Dur-Sharrukin. While Assyria's kings are often thought of as being primarily destructive in their military endeavors, Melville argues that Sargon made sophisticated and rationally calculated use of his army, diplomatic personnel, intelligence networks, and economic power to manage his clients and defeat his enemies.

The Introduction and Chapter one provide the background necessary for a full examination of Sargon's reign and military campaigns. The Introduction reviews the political, military, and economic context of Sargon's reign, the written and archaeological sources available for his reign, and issues related to their interpretation. Chapter one describes the types of military units the Assyrian's used, conscription mechanisms, planning and provisions for campaigns, tactics used to cow or defeat adversaries, and religious rituals used to augur propitious battles. Chapters two and three discuss his accession to the throne and his early campaigns that strengthened his hold on trade routes and ports along the Mediterranean and in Iran. They also document his work on a new capital city called Dur-Sharrukin or "Fort Sargon."

Chapter four deals with the years 715–714 B.C. in which Sargon triumphed over Urartu, his major opponent to the north, after a protracted "cold war" that played out through their respective clients. When Urartu and Assyria faced off in 714, Sargon eschewed the typical battle array and made a bold charge that propelled Assyria to victory. After a punitive tour of Urartian territory, Sargon sent his main army home because it was late in the fighting season and his men were depleted (136). With a small, elite force, he pushed on to the wealthy and religiously important city of Muşasir, defeated it, and deported the symbolically important statue of the Urartian national god Haldi, along with people and goods. As Melville argues, this campaign highlights Sargon's daring tactics, as well as his understanding of symbolism and show (136–140).

In the years 713–708 B.C. (chapter five) Sargon continued to deal with unruly clients and put extra effort into securing supplies and laborers for work on Dur-Sharrukin. His effort in 710–707 B.C. to wrest control of Babylonia from Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, was among his most important campaigns and illustrates





Melville's view that he was a highly strategic leader. Knowing that Babylonia consisted of tribal groups that were not always politically aligned, Sargon began a devastation campaign in the east, which successfully warded off the Babylon's frequent ally Elam. In the meantime, Sargon's personnel worked to create defections among the tribal groups and cities of Babylonia. The soft power approach to the Babylonian heartland avoided creating resentment due to destruction and took advantage of the self-interest of elites there. The strategy was effective and Sargon was eventually invited into Babylon as its rightful ruler. The only major siege operation Sargon had to conduct was against Dur-Iakin, Merodach-baladan's home base in the marshy "Sealand" close to the Persian Gulf. This siege successfully obtained Merodach-baladan's surrender and paved the way for Sargon's undisputed kingship over Babylon.

In the last four years of his reign (chapter six), Sargon legitimized his kingship in Babylon by funding public building projects, endowing important temples, restoring tax exemptions for key populations, and scrupulously observing important Babylonian rituals. In 706 B.C., he inaugurated his palace at Dur-Sharrukin to great fanfare, but his rest did not last long. In 705 B.C., he went to Tabal (in southern Turkey) to put down a rebellion. While the details are sketchy, Sargon was killed in battle and his body was not recovered. For the Assyrians, the death of the king in battle "signaled divine anger and abandonment" (188), and led his successor Sennacherib to abandon Dur-Sharrukin as a capital. Sargon's ignoble death was later interpreted in a document called "The Sin of Sargon," as being the result of his disrespect towards the gods of Babylon.

Those unfamiliar with the Neo-Assyrian Empire and ancient Near Eastern history will find Melville's discussion accessible, with technical discussions deliberately placed in the endnotes or Appendix B where specialists can consult them. Melville's prose is clear, interpretation careful, and argument compelling. Specialists might quibble with her chronology, or the extent to which Sargon's actions were rationally calculated, but she demonstrates compellingly that Sargon did not use his military as a one-size-fits-all destruction machine. Sargon applied destructive force when needed, but made good use of softer methods of coercion as well, securing his place in ancient Near Eastern history as "an exceptional military leader and visionary ruler" (20).

**DeSantis, Marc G. *Rome Seizes the Trident: The Defeat of Carthaginian Seapower & the Forging of the Roman Empire*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. xii, 253; \$32.95, ISBN 9781473826984 , hdbk.**

Reviewed by Laura Valiani, [lvaliani1@student.gsu.edu](mailto:lvaliani1@student.gsu.edu)

DeSantis sets out to tell the story of the Punic Wars, and describe the way the Roman navy contributed to the formation of the Roman Empire and ultimately to the modern world. He states in his introduction that if Rome had not won the war with Carthage, the modern world would have been a different place. Rome could not have defeated Carthage in these wars without a Navy. To prove this assertion, DeSantis recounts the story of the Punic Wars with an emphasis on naval encounters.

In a brief 227 pages of text, DeSantis provides an overview of sea power in the Mediterranean, an introduction to Carthage and to Rome, and a retelling of the Punic Wars. This succinct retelling of the wars is based primarily off of evidence from Polybius for the First Punic War, Livy for the second, and Appian for the third war. Though he does occasionally use other ancient authors (such as Thucydides and Diodorus) to explain the players and their background, and occasionally makes reference to secondary literature, his narrative derives predominately from these sources.

DeSantis divides his book into five parts, which are then further subdivided into chapters. Each part builds on the one before it. Part One focuses on setting the reader up to understand the players of the war – the Romans and Carthaginians – and the geography and environment in which they fought. This is necessary background information. However, Part One also somewhat puzzlingly includes a case study of Athens. Presumably, this is included so that DeSantis can note the way the Athenians fought by sea – specifically, their use of techniques which required skilled rowers – so as better to illustrate how the Carthaginians did, which was similar. In fact, however, while there are similarities between what happened with the Carthaginians and the Athenians, these similarities do not really cast light upon Carthage's situation, and it seems that the author uses them primarily to cast judgement on the Carthaginians for having failed to learn the lessons of history. Either way, this section does not really add anything of value.

After part one, DeSantis moves forward into the actual wars themselves. Following the ancient sources, parts two through five mostly read as a narrative with asides in which DeSantis is able to provide his view on what happened. Here a sense of subjectivity and disappointment again comes through, especially in the occasional direct judgement such as, "The Battle of the Aegates Islands should never have been fought. It need never have been fought. Hamilcar's campaigns against the Romans at Eryx now seem like a misguided, quasi-private war that brought no real benefit to his homeland (125)."



Obviously, investigating the “whys” of events is an important step in understanding any historical phenomenon, and DeSantis definitely does that, yet in some places he appears less interested in understanding the wars than in applying his disapproval for the way Carthage conducted them. This tone is off-putting and a flaw in the text. His thesis might be correct, but it could have been made without his views on motives. As he points out in the beginning of his book, the Carthaginians are already perceived in a negative light because almost all of their history comes from what was written by their enemies. Yet it seems that DeSantis himself has a bias against Carthage, which is easily discerned in his writing.

Ultimately, DeSantis achieves his goal in telling the story of the Punic Wars along with the growth of the Roman navy. However, his argument does not really provide a new approach on the struggle between the Romans and the Carthaginians despite its focus on naval encounters instead of on Hannibal. Since it does not really contribute to scholarship of the period this book would be best suited for those readers who are unfamiliar with these conflicts and this period in history. However, if one can get past the disapproving light in which DeSantis paints aspects of the Punic Wars, the book itself is not a bad read, especially if one has not studied the wars. Overall, it serves its purpose and provides a narrative of all three Punic Wars in a succinct readable format.

**Paul Chrystal, *Wars and Battles of The Roman Republic: 753 BC - 100 BC The Bloody Road to Empire*. UK: Fonhill Media Limited, 2015. Pp. 176. ISBN: 9781781553053. \$32.95.**

Reviewed by Dirk Yarker, Texas Southmost College, [dirk.yarker@tsc.edu](mailto:dirk.yarker@tsc.edu)

Generally the focus of Roman army literature has been surrounded the events of the Punic Wars, Julius Caesar, and the Roman Empire. Paul Chrystal recognized that there were plenty of studies on the tactics so he took a different approach, "Each of the one hundred or so battles covered here is placed in its historical, political and social context: why was the battle fought, how was it fought, what was the outcome, and what happened next?" (7). Throughout his study he provides a brief synopsis of the political, social, and military events surrounding each battle. This particular study is intended for an audience who is already familiar with Roman history. He primarily draws upon ancient writers such as Livy, Polybius, and Plutarch to provide context and draws upon modern scholarship for context to the political and social events. While this study does not push the scholarly discussion forward, it does provide a good overview of the many events that took place throughout the Roman Republic.

This study is separated into fifteen chapters with a preface, epilogue, and appendix. The chapters discuss different periods of warfare prior to the Roman Republic to create a foundation before moving into Roman warfare. Chrystal begins with warfare at the time of the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. He then moves onto warfare of the Romans, and its social and political structures that related to the conduct of war. The remainder of the study can be divided into three sections. Roman warfare up to the point of the conquest of Italy, the Punic Wars, and finally the series of wars in Greece and Gaul. These conflicts include the wars with the Etruscans, Latins, Sabines, Gauls, Pyrrhus, Carthaginians, and their allies. He also discusses the changes and adaptations the Roman army would go through with its victories and losses. The study leaves us with the Marian reforms, and the civil wars that led to the Roman Empire.

Chrystal's study provides a comprehensible look into the battles of the Roman Republic. He discusses how interconnected the political, military, and social issues were before, during, and after each conflict. He also includes how these wars shape the Roman Republic as a whole. He does so in a concise and clear manner. The glossary and appendix also provide an accessible background to the general terms, battles, and foundation of Roman politics. The illustrations, images, and maps are of high quality to help the reader have a greater understanding of the situations being described.

There are, however, some disappointing issues with this book. Chrystal sticks to his original goal, but is disappointing in the lack of detail. The book is a brief, synthetic look at the battles of the Roman Republic without a great deal of specifics. Chrystal keeps the series of events he describes quite basic and general, adding nothing new. The information about the political, military, and social events during the Roman Republic can be found in other texts. This study might be best used with other materials. One final issue that needs to be addressed are the images contained within this study. Many of the images are of illustrations from the late 1800s through the 1930s in marketing campaigns. It would be more appropriate to include more archeological finds of the time period.

While this text does not move the scholarly discussion forward, it may be useful to the audience in a variety of ways. To those who want a general overview of the military and its effect on the Roman Republic, this study accomplishes just that objective. The book is also affordable. Chrystal does a good job of keeping a concise overview of the political, social, and military situation during the period of the Roman Republic.



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