



*The Society of Ancient Military Historians*

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**Message from the Secretary**

It is a great pleasure to present the latest issue of *Res Militares*. The current volume features a very interesting report by Josh Brouwers (Editor, *Ancient History* magazine) on the International Ancient Warfare Conference held at Gothenburg University in June 2016, and thirteen 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

**Conference Report: International Ancient Warfare Conference 2016 (June 2016, Gothenburg)**

This was the fourth time that the conference has been organized in just as many years, and the third time in a row that I've attended it. The conference was spread out across three days, with parallel sessions on every day. As far as conferences go, I think it's fairly sizeable without being too big. The people attending the conference – speakers and listeners alike – have so far proven to be among the friendliest academics that you'll ever meet.

Most of the speakers tend to be PhD students or people who recently finished their PhDs, with a few graduate students and more seasoned researchers sprinkled in between. As a result, the participants tend to be fairly young – I'd guess the average age being somewhere mid- to late twenties – which perhaps helps explain the energy and enthusiasm that emanates from the conference as a whole. If you ever have a chance to attend the conference, I heartily recommend that you do so.

**Day 1: kickoff**

Tuesday started with a very interesting lecture by Jorit

Wintjes (University of Würzburg) entitled 'The command

and control conundrum, or why we believe we understand ancient naval operations, but don't.' Wintjes showed the problems that arise when we try to figure out what ancient naval operations were really like: what was the spacing between ships, how did command function, and so forth.

The problems are similar to what we face when we try to reconstruct land battles, except that the scale at sea is generally even bigger. Wintjes suggested that ancient commanders were able to get signals out to change tactics midway through a battle, but I and several others were sceptical about this, believing instead that ancient battles were planned beforehand, with little control exercised by commanders once battle had started.

I next attended the lecture by Margaretha Kramer (Indiana University) entitled 'Of ships and shields: the Dipylon shield and the Mycenaean galley at the Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition.' This was somewhat of a disappointment to me. Kramer's ideas – that shields and ships were linked and part of a contemporary lifestyle – were too limited, covering ground that Paul Treherne did years ago (*Journal of European Archaeology* 3.1, published in 1995), and that I myself expanded upon in my PhD thesis and *Henchmen of Ares*. And yes, I am fully aware that writing this has earned me even more 'conference bingo points' (for those in the know).

Moving swiftly on, Yasmina Benferhat (University of Lorraine) next spoke on Roman sources dealing with sea blockades, which was interesting, but a little hard to follow, seeing as the lecture was essentially an academic article read out loud, complete with a handout offering very detailed quotes from ancient sources in the original languages. The naval theme was continued by Amy Down (University of Exeter), who talked about 'Rhodes as a significant power in the Early Hellenistic period.' This was a very interesting paper, combining as it did literary accounts with archaeological evidence (ship sheds), and I hope that Amy will find the funding necessary to do a PhD in this field.

I switched rooms to attend the paper delivered by



Jeroen Wijnendaele (Ghent University), entitled ‘Kingship in the Late Antique West (ca. 400–500 CE): ethnic leaders, territorial rulers, or military managers?’ Delivered with quite some gusto and humour, Jeroen managed to insert four – if I recall correctly – Brexit jokes, much to the chagrin of those who are directly affected by the outcome of the recent UK referendum. Knowing little about the subject itself, I asked a few questions concerning the connection between Late Antique kingship and religion, which Jeroen answered with patience and insight.

I stuck around to listen to Kyle Shi-Cong Fan Chaing’s ‘Virgins and the Persians: sexual violence against the captured Roman women in the Romano-Persian Wars.’ This was an interesting talk, especially since there the treatment of women offers something of a throughline across antiquity. Already Herodotus framed the Persian Wars as the result of generations’ worth of tit-for-tat raiding of women between ‘Europeans’ (e.g. Greeks) and ‘Asians’ (e.g. Trojans, Phoenicians).

Returning to the other room, I listened to Aimee Schofield (University of Leicester)’s paper, ‘Women waging war: women’s roles in Classical Greek siege warfare.’ Aimee is an expert in ancient Greek catapults and has read the writings of Aeneas Tacticus in detail. It was fun hearing the various tasks that women were supposed to perform during sieges, from outright fighting against the enemy to smuggling notes hidden in earrings.

## Day 2: all Greek, all the time

Ioannis Georganas gave today’s keynote lecture with the title, ‘How militaristic were Aegean Bronze Age societies?’ His talk focused on recent research, such as that conducted by Barry Molloy, which has shown conclusively – if such proof was needed – that the Minoans were as warlike as any other ancient people, even if they did not express it in such forthright manner as the Mycenaeans did, for example. It offered a good overview of the role of warfare in the Bronze-Age Aegean.



Foto: Jenny Höglström Berntson  
**Dr Georganas delivering his keynote lecture**

The rest of the day I was confined to room D411 at the university where I chaired most of session 4. The first lecture was delivered by Fernando Echeverría (Computense University, Madrid) on ‘Epistrateia; rethinking Greek siege warfare in the pre-artillery era.’ Fernando argued that contrary to most modern commentators, ancient Greek siege warfare should be regarded as part of land warfare. This was an interesting talk, and Fernando put forward a number of issues that would be touched upon again in the Greek siege warfare panel this afternoon.

First, though, was Birgitta Leppänen Sjöberg (Uppsala University) with ‘Wars and gendered voices’. Like Aimee’s paper the day before, this focused on the role of women in warfare and especially in how movement for women became limited during warfare. She also touched upon changes across time, as women in the Iliad appeared to enjoy more freedom of movement in times of peace than women did in Classical Athens.

After lunch, the next four lectures were part of a panel that I had organized on ancient Greek siege warfare. The first lecture was delivered by Roel Konijnendijk (Institute of Historical Research, London): ‘Playing dice with the city at stake.’ Roel’s main point was that while modern commentators focus on pitched battles, these were actually the least desirable types of confrontations, since the outcome depended as much on luck as anything else. If possible, ancient Greeks preferred to wage wars where they would enjoy some kind of advantage, including hiding behind the safety of a city’s walls.

Next up was Owen Rees (Manchester Metropolitan University) with ‘Resurrecting the Classical Greek siege.’ Like Fernando and Roel, Owen argued that ancient Greek siege warfare deserves a better reputation in modern scholarship. Unlike what most people assume, the ancient Greeks were actually quite adept at besieging cities, even before the invention of machines such as the catapult. If you want to learn more, check out Owen’s article on Greek siege warfare in Ancient Warfare issue X.3.

After the coffee break, Jeroen Wijnendaele took over as chair as I had to deliver the next two papers (despite my cold and slight fever!). Matthew Lloyd sadly couldn’t attend the conference and so I – as one of the few archaeologists present who also happened to know about this particular subject – read his paper, ‘Walls comes tumbling down! The destruction of settlements in early Greece.’ Matt’s point is that the destruction of settlements – a phenomenon that appears in the eighth century BC – is a significant development in Greek social and military history.

My own paper was entitled ‘Fear and fortifications in ancient Greece’. While inspired by my



blog post with the same title, it was really an excuse to show that fortifications are important beyond their strictly military aspects. I pointed out that fortifications are among the earliest and largest public building projects undertaken by ancient communities and that they are not only symbolic of, but actually constituent to, e.g. the creation of communal identities. Essentially, this lecture was a plea to examine fortifications as more than just things to hide behind.

To wrap up, a reception was organized in the small Museum of Antiquities that was located not far from the building where the conference was organized. Wine flowed freely – since it's fairly expensive in Sweden! – and it was a good opportunity to catch up with people, including a few whose lectures I was unfortunately not able to attend.

### Day 3: something of everything

The third and final day featured an odd mix of papers, essentially offering something for everyone. There was no keynote lecture today, but I think Cezary Kucewicz (University College London) was an excellent choice to start off the day. His lecture was entitled ‘The rise of the Greek citizen army or the real “hoplite revolution”’. Cezary discussed archaeological and epigraphical evidence to offer a much more nuanced view of the so-called ‘hoplite revolution’.

I next attended Wawrzyniec Miścicki (Jagiellonian University in Krakow)’s paper, ‘Hoplite warfare in the city of images: representations of the phalanx in Archaic Greek iconography.’ This paper was a bit confused in places, making use of rather overcomplicated theory to show that supposed depictions of ‘phalanx warfare’ on ancient Greek pottery tell us more about the preconceived notions of modern authors than that they reflect historical situations in ancient Greece.

Switching rooms, I next listened to Alessandro Brambilla (Università degli studi di Roma)’s ‘How to shape a federal army: variety of methods in the historical and socio-political frame.’ Alessandro argued that most modern commentators have focused on ancient Greek poleis. In this paper, he tried to show the varied mechanisms by which federal armies – such as those of the Boeotians and the Thessalians – were organized, and that federations were just as varied and interesting as poleis.

Tine Scheijnen (Ghent University), as one of the conference’s few Classicists, delivered a paper entitled, ‘Pictures of death in ancient Greek epic.’ This was a talk laced with readings of poetry, ancient and modern, drawing parallels between images of death, especially with regards to flowers and other plants (e.g. Homer’s simile in which the generations of men are compared to

leaves).

After lunch, I listened to Stephen O’Connor (California State University, Fullerton)’s ‘Military rates of pay and food prices in the Classical Greek world.’ In modern scholarship, there is an assumption that military pay rates kept in step with local or expected food prices, especially concerning grain. Stephen, however, demonstrated that this wasn’t the case at all: military pay was largely determined by what someone thought mercenaries and soldiers were worth, and pay was increased whenever a leader needed to muster more men than his rival.

Jesse Obert (University of California, Berkeley), who’s contributed to *Ancient Warfare* magazine, next gave a lecture on ‘The role of attendants in Classical Greek combat.’ This was an interesting talk, in which Jesse argued that attendants would fight alongside their masters in battle as skirmishers or archers, forming a ‘cloud’ of light-armed men between the core heavy infantry and the camp. I’m not wholly convinced by this hypothesis, but it’s definitely an intriguing idea that deserves to be examined in further detail.

After the coffee break, I listened to Hilary Becker (University of Mississippi), who talked about ‘Inscribed Etruscan helmets: mapping function and meaning for the Etruscan soldier.’ Some Etruscan helmets feature numerals inscribed along the edge, the meaning of which isn’t particularly clear. Do these numbers refer to workshops, to army units, to particular leaders, or something else? No answers were offered, but it was intriguing none the less.

I then switched rooms to attend Anna Busetto’s lecture on ‘Strategies and functions of military emulation between the Greek and Roman worlds’ (though the final title was a little different). Anna showed that throughout the ancient world, it was important for leaders to be seen giving a good example, as this in turn inspired their men to excel. At least, this is what the written records claim. A good example would be Julius Caesar, who – according to his own writings! – supposedly wore a bright red cloak so that his soldiers could see him as he rushed about in the front lines, fighting the enemy.

### Closing remarks

The end of the conference is always a little bittersweet. It’s a good place to catch up with old friends and meet some new ones, but most of the people here I get to see in person only once a year. (And matters weren’t made any easier with my cold, which caused me to miss what I’ve heard was a pretty remarkable evening out on Wednesday!)

Next year, the conference will again be organized in Aberystwyth and I hope to attend it again, though I will



probably not be presenting any fresh research, since I haven't really been keeping up with that on account of my actual job as editor! I'm thinking of talking about Ancient Warfare magazine or, more broadly, on presenting ancient warfare to a wide audience.

Josho Brouwers  
Editor, *Ancient History* magazine

### **Books Available for Review**

#### ***Res Militares, Society for Ancient Military Historians, Books Received, Winter 2017***

The following books have been received for review (those with an asterisk are already assigned to reviewers). Qualified volunteers should indicate their interest by sending a message to ll-brice@wiu.edu, with their last name and requested author in the subject line. They should state their qualifications (both in the sense of degrees held and in the sense of experience in the field concerned). Volunteers are expected to be familiar with the topics and will submit reviews of no greater than 800 words within 120 days. Graduate students are welcome to volunteer, but should contact their supervisor to ascertain that a review is appropriate.

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

Clunn, Tony. *The Quest for the Lost Roman Legions: Discovering the Varus Battlefield*. New York: Savas Beatie, 2009. Pp. xi, 371; ISBN 9781932714081, \$61.70, hdbk.

Coombs-Hoar, Adrian. *Eagles in the Dust: The Roman Defeat at Adrianople AD 378*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2015. Pp. vii, 180; ISBN 9781781590881, \$32.95, hdbk.

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; ISBN 9781473826984, \$32.95, hdbk.

Fratantuono, Lee. *The Battle of Actium 31 BC: War for the World*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. ix, 194; ISBN 9781473847149, \$34.95, hdbk.

Harl, Ortolf. *Hochtor und Glockneroute: Ein Hochalpiner*

*Passheiligtum und 2000 Jahre Kulturtransfer zwischen Mittelmeer und Mitteleuropa*. Wien: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 2014. Pp. 348; ISBN 9783900305680, 98,00 €, hdbk.

Kleinreesink, Esmeralda. *On Military Memoirs: A Quantitative Comparison of International Afghanistan War Autobiographies, 2001-2010*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2016. Pp. xvi, 386; 9789004322530, \$174, e-book.

Macdowall, Simon. *Conquerors of the Roman Empire: The Vandals*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. vii, 190; ISBN 9781473837706, \$34.95, hdbk.

Melville, Sarah C. *The Campaigns of Sargon II, King of Assyria, 721-705 B.C.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. Pp. ix, 300; ISBN 9780806154039, \$32.95, hdbk.

Roberts, Jennifer T. *The Plague of War: Athens, Sparta, and the Struggle for Ancient Greece*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. vii, 416; ISBN 9780199996643, \$34.95, hdbk.

Sadler, John and Rosie Serdiville. *Caesar's Greatest Victory: The Battle of Alesia, 52BC*. Oxford: Casemate Publishers, 2016. Pp. vi, 210; ISBN 9781612004051, \$32.95, hdbk.

Sampson, Gareth C. *Rome Spreads Her Wings: Territorial Expansion Between the Punic Wars*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. vii, 278; ISBN 981783030552, \$39.95, hdbk.

Steinby, Christa. *Rome Versus Carthage: The War at Sea*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2014. Pp. vii, 228; ISBN 9781844159192, \$39.95, hdbk.

Taylor, Don. *Roman Empire at War: A Compendium of Battles from 31 BC to AD 565*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. vi, 215; ISBN 9781473869080, \$34.95, hdbk.

Whately, Conor. *Exercitus Moesiae: The Roman Army in Moesia from Augustus to Severus Alexander*. Oxford, BAR Publishing, 2016. Pp. iii, 124; ISBN 9781407314754, \$84.04.

Publishers interested in submitting books for review should send them to the book review editor: Lee L. Brice, History Dept. MG438, Western Illinois University, 1 University Cir., Macomb, IL 61455.



## Book Reviews

**John D. Grainger, *Roman Conquests: Egypt & Judaea*.**  
Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2013. ISBN:  
978-1-84884-823-8; \$39.95, hardback.

**Reviewed by Kenneth Atkinson, University of Northern Iowa, [Kenneth.Atkinson@uni.edu](mailto:Kenneth.Atkinson@uni.edu)**

Grainger's book examines the history of the Roman conquests of Egypt and Judea from Pompey's mid-first century B.C.E. campaigns in the Middle East until 72/73 C.E., the period shortly after the Roman suppression of the First Jewish Revolt. He groups these countries together to highlight the similar difficulties the Romans faced in conquering them. Grainger proposes that events in neighboring lands, and the Republic's transformation into an Empire, delayed Rome's final conquests of these countries for nearly 170 years. He also suggests that the continued existence of a semi-independent Judean state helped to maintain other Syrian kingdoms. The destruction of Judea, Grainger believes, allowed the Romans to annex several of these other realms. Grainger documents Rome's interactions with Egypt and Judea in sixteen chapters. The book includes several maps and a few color drawings that depict historical events. Grainger has an engaging writing style that makes the book assessable for laypersons. It is suitable as a textbook for graduate students and undergraduate seminars. It also offers an excellent overview of the subject for scholars unfamiliar with the histories of these countries.

The introduction briefly highlights the problems the Romans faced in trying to expand to the east to keep other nations, particularly the Parthians, from conquering Egypt and Judea. Chapter one recounts the Middle Eastern campaigns of Pompey, which Grainger believes were successful largely because the Seleucid Empire's civil wars, and the recent submission of the Armenian monarch Tigranes, had weakened the entire region. This made smaller nations, particularly Judea, unable to repel Pompey's legions. Unfortunately, Grainger does not mention several Dead Sea Scrolls such as the *Nahum Pesher* (4Q169), which documents Pompey's capture of Jerusalem. Another (4Q333) of these texts records two previously unknown massacres in Judea by M. Aemilius Scaurus. These Dead Sea Scrolls show that none of our extant sources fully documents the tumultuous events of this time. Chapter two highlights the role that Syria's governor, A. Gabinius, played in maintaining Roman control over Egypt and Judea. Chapters three through six describe the careers of Antipater, Kleopatra VII, Herod the Great, and their relationships with the Roman

Republic. Chapters seven through ten document Rome's transformation into an empire, and related events that took place in Egypt and Judea. The remaining chapters, eleven through sixteen, offer an account of the First Jewish Revolt of 66-70 C.E. that culminated with the 73/4 C.E. Roman siege of the Jewish rebels at the fortress of Masada and its aftermath.

Grainger's book is largely a recounting of materials in Josephus and a variety of classical authors, but overlooks some important historical documentation. His chapters on the First Jewish Revolt could have benefitted from a discussion of the papyri discovered in the Wadi Murabba'at (e.g., P.Mur. 22, 25, 29, and 30), formerly linked to the Bar Kochba Revolt, which have now been assigned to the First Jewish Revolt. These documents reveal that the Jewish rebels proclaimed an independent state that neither Josephus nor any other source mentions. What is ultimately lacking in Grainger's book is an explanation as to why Judea posed so many problems for the Roman Empire. Although Josephus fails to provide an adequate reason why the First Jewish Revolt occurred, he suggests that messianism was largely responsible. He writes that an "ambiguous oracle in their sacred writings" (*War* 6.312-3) incited Jews to revolt against the Roman Empire. Grainger overlooks the extent to which the Jewish faith in antiquity inspired Jews to take up arms against Imperial Rome. By ending his book with the First Jewish Revolt, Grainger implies that the Romans had subdued Judea. Yet, the Romans fought a major war nearly seventy years later known as the Second Jewish Revolt (132-35 C.E.), which was led by the messianic pretender Simon bar Kokhba. This demonstrates that, despite the title of Grainger's book, Judea had yet to be conquered. Revolts occurred on a frequent basis between the First and Second Jewish Revolts, which shows that Judea's population continued to resist Roman Imperial rule for over two centuries after Pompey's capture of Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence also reveals that Jewish resistance was highly organized, as evident by the continued discovery of vast networks of tunnel complexes in Judea that were constructed and designed to resist Roman rule from the first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. By ending with the First Jewish Revolt, Grainger's volume offers an incomplete account of the Roman Empire's involvement in the Middle East that does not adequately discuss the continued problems the Romans faced in trying to pacify Judea's population. The book should have ended with the aftermath of the Second Jewish Revolt when the Romans actually conquered Judea.



Taylor, Michael. *Antiochus The Great*. South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2013. Pp. 190; \$29.95, ISBN: 9781848844636, hdbk.

Reviewed by James Bowden, M.A.,  
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The book, *Antiochus the Great*, by Michael Taylor is a narrative history of the life of Antiochus III, also known as Antiochus the Great, and his activities in solidifying the Seleucid Empire. Taylor is clear in his preface that the book is not an academic history nor is it a detailed biography of the life of Antiochus. The book is meant to be an introduction to Antiochus and serves mostly to recapitulate the narrative of Polybius. The book certainly has many fine qualities but it also has its key drawbacks. One of the chief drawbacks is that, by its nature, it is hard to place within the scope of current scholarship on the topic of the Seleucid Empire and Antiochus III. There have been far more detailed, academic approaches and, though many of these are older, they have not been significantly surpassed or questioned by new research. Indeed, it appears that Seleucid studies have never really broken out and been as popular or academically pursued as other imperial periods or events in the Middle East. Taylor's book is not based on new research, archival searches, or creating a new synthesis of existing material. Thus, the presentation is more akin to Polybius and an update in terms of language and form. The author's acknowledgment of its non-critical role is welcome, however, it immediately reduces the value of the text for more serious readers.

The book includes ten chapters that span the life and reign of Antiochus and are laid out in chronological order. There are two chapters, one and three, that are the best of the book and I detail them below. Taylor follows Polybius in his narrative structure and anyone who has read Polybius will recognize how much Taylor owes to that narrative. Taylor does not explore complex issues of Antiochus nor of his reign and there is no attempt to seriously unwind motivations, personality flaws, or plumb the depths and consequences of events. Taylor does make some slight references to these, however, they never venture much deeper than the surface. The book covers its topic reverentially and its tone of respect and lack of snark is invaluable. Within the text there are at least two instances where the author appears to have contradicted himself and measurements for the Sarissa are given as two different lengths within the space of two chapters. Although these types of contradictions may not be noticed by an antiquarian, the more astute reader will pick it up immediately. Two chapters stand out above the rest.

The first chapter contextualizes the events by describing the ancient world at the time of Antiochus III and gives a cursory history of the Seleucid Empire up until that time. This set-up enables the reader to more fully grasp the historical continuity and also highlights what was at stake during the reign of Antiochus. In a manner that surpasses Polybius, the chapter demonstrates how the events of Antiochus' life were an integral part of other historically significant conflicts raging at the time. During the height of Antiochus' activities Rome was fighting, and losing, the war with Hannibal and the Greek city-states were also mired in their own internal conflicts. Thus we understand why the initial period of Antiochus' reign was much better than the end.

The third chapter details various aspects of Seleucid imperial structure and its institutions, as the chapter title suggests. The chapter sheds light on how the court functioned and how war was conducted. This allows the following chapters to have better narrative flow and the reader is able to appreciate the action that is described without the detailed explanation intervening in such a way as to distract from it. There is also brief discussion of the economy and how the empire was administered on its various levels. Again, each of these enables the reader to approach the text in a manner that is more accessible without the narrative being seriously interrupted.

*Antiochus the Great* is a fine book for those interested in being introduced to Antiochus the Great and this era in Middle East history. Although the book is not significantly different than Polybius this book would be more appropriate for the historical enthusiast, antiquarian, or the mildly interested reader who may be turned off or intimidated by the Polybius text.

Nordling, John G. *Religion and Resistance in Early Judaism: Readings in First Maccabees and Josephus*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010. Pp. 384; \$29.95, ISBN: 978-0758626677, pbk.

Reviewed by Honora Chapman,  
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John G. Nordling has created a remarkably useful text, which he encapsulates in the first sentence of his preface: *Religion and Resistance in Early Judaism* introduces advanced level Greek students to the selections drawn from 1 Maccabees and Josephus and enables them to read this literature with interest and appreciation" (xiii). By "advanced," he means a student who has acquired the basics of Greek grammar and has read at least one semester of Greek prose. This book, therefore, is perfect for intermediate students of Greek who have already read



selections from the New Testament or Xenophon, since it has the many things these students need in order to improve their reading skills while becoming familiar with the cultures that influenced and produced these texts, including: a bibliography of modern scholarship; an Introduction with clearly demarcated subsections ranging from “Israel’s Involvement in International Affairs” from the time of Alexander the Great to “Flavius Josephus (AD 37/38–100)”; the Greek text of 1 Maccabees 1:1–4:61, with short explanations prefacing major events in the narrative; Text Notes for 1 Maccabees; Josephus Selections, with short introductions; Text Notes for Josephus; a Greek-English Vocabulary, “unusual forms of verbs...to help students with the acquisition of principal parts”; and finally, Credits and Acknowledgments that list works used, including Rahlfs’ edition of the *Septuaginta* and the Loeb Classical Library for Josephus. Already, any classicist can see that Nordling’s text goes beyond the standard for student texts in the field (such as Bryn Mawr and Cambridge), in which Josephus and 1 Maccabees are rarely taught in a Greek class, thus making it a desirable addition to the repertoire.

What our students need at this stage in their development is engaging material with helpful grammar and syntax notes, and Nordling has successfully provided both. Beyond making accurate sense of the Greek in a lucid fashion, Nordling highlights themes encountered previously in the text, while often providing classical and biblical literary parallels. The value of this cannot be overstated, especially since this is the first student reader of its kind to do so—and in such an accessible way. Even the Greek and English fonts are easy to read, making the learning experience all the more pleasant.

The Josephus selections, however, merit further consideration (and should have been laid out in the Table of Contents). Nordling has woven together sections from Josephus’s *Life*, *Judean War*, and *Judean Antiquities*, but the selections and their ordering seems a bit confusing. For instance, after presenting *War* 3.392–408 for Josephus’s capture at Jotapata in 67 CE, he doubles back chronologically to John the Baptist, Jesus, and James the brother of Jesus, all of whom died before the war broke out and Josephus was captured. This temporal dislocation only would make sense if students were directed in the introductions to these three *Antiquities* passages to consider the question of character portrayal: instead, with the first, Nordling states, “sometimes Josephus offers interesting tidbits on well-known persons presented differently in the NT” (74); this underestimates the importance of the Josephan texts for later Christians, who transmitted his works *in toto* precisely because they provide a rich historical context for the New Testament

works. Leaping in this text from the deaths of John, Jesus, and James to the next section on the destruction of Jerusalem mirrors the horrible connection made by Christians in Late Antiquity who justified this destruction (and the suffering of all Jews) as rightful punishment for the death of Christ. This textbook needs to make this very clear for students who may not understand the hideous ramifications of Christian hermeneutics, including that regarding the episode of the mother’s cannibalism during the siege from *War* 6, which Nordling includes. Also, complete omission of any portion of Josephus’s elaborate description of the Temple in *War* 5 undermines the supposed focus of this entire book, since it is where both Jewish sacrifice took place and resistance was centered in Jerusalem. Military scholars, however, will be especially pleased to find excerpts from *War* 7 on the capture of Masada (text: 91–106, notes: 209–288). Also, if cleverly asking students to consider “modern conflicts that occur, for example, in the Middle East” (xiv), the text should include at the end *Against Apion* 2.165, where Josephus discusses the Jewish “*theokratia*.” What could be more timely?

Religion and resistance are themes that make for a catchy title, and Nordling’s text should compel both students and their professors to continue their studies by consulting scholarship published since 2010. First of all, “religion” itself is a contested category when discussing ancient “Judaism”, as discussed in Barton and Boyarin’s *Imagine No Religion* (Fordham University Press 2016); to his credit, Nordling does note a number of Josephan passages in relation to Jewish *thrēskeia* mentioned at *War* 6.442 (209). For the most recent scholarship on Josephus’s four texts, major themes therein, and the reception of his works, scholars should delve into *A Companion to Josephus* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016); here one can find, for instance, a very helpful chapter on the archaeology of Galilee by Zeev Weiss, which could provide a material context that readers truly need in order to understand both religion and resistance in the first century. Furthermore, beyond volumes of the *Brill Josephus Project* and books and articles by Martin Goodman (omitted from Nordling’s bibliography), one should also consult Gil Gambash’s *Rome and Provincial Resistance*, (Routledge, 2015), which relies in part on Goodman’s analyses of the Roman treatment of the Druids on Mona and of the Jews around the empire, but especially with respect to the First Jewish Revolt. Finally, historians should ponder Steve Mason’s exhaustive new treatment, *A History of the Jewish War: A.D. 66–74* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Overall, Nordling’s text is an excellent teaching tool and should excite a new generation of students



wishing to learn more about religion and resistance under the Roman Empire.

**Howe, Timothy and Lee L. Brice, eds.** *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xvi, 370. ISBN 9789004222359.

Reviewed by Gabrielle Filipink, [gcfilipink@wiu.edu](mailto:gcfilipink@wiu.edu)

Ever since the attack against the United States on September 11, 2001, a flood of literature has been written and published about the subject of terrorism. However, the authors of the majority of these works tend to limit their focus to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is likely due to the belief that their target audience has a better concept of the modern definition of terrorism. Also, a fair number of books about terrorism and insurgency are written by non-historians. *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean* provides twelve intelligent and well-researched chapters written by historians who have a wealth of knowledge about ancient civilizations. This book is successful in proving to the reader that insurgency and terrorism are concepts that originated back in ancient history, and that they are not unique to modern times.

Following the introduction, the book is divided into three parts covering the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome respectively. In the introduction, Brice provides universal definitions for insurgency and terrorism that are used for the remaining eleven chapters in this book. He also discusses the background of the study of terrorism and insurgency, and the slow but steady pull that ancient historians have felt to cover these areas as well. By giving the definitions of the two words as well as a thorough history of their origins, Brice successfully provides for the reader a foundation for the following chapters.

Part two contains chapters two through four. Chapter two, by Seth Richardson, is about the difference between rebellions and insurgencies and which term is better to use in relation to Mesopotamia. Richardson concludes that since fear and terror were central in maintaining a legitimate government at the time, it is almost impossible to differentiate between rebellion and insurgency. In chapter three, Sarah Melville examines the use of modern discussions of insurgency and counterinsurgency to understand incidents during the Neo-Assyrian empire. She concludes that an examination of sources reveals these kinds of tactics were often used by and against the empire. Josef Wiesehöfer focuses the

fourth chapter on the Sidonian Rebellion as an example of the Persian response to insurgency. All three historians in this section provide coherent and strong arguments in their respective chapters, as well as a thorough historiography of the areas and issues that they discuss.

Chapters five through seven cover the Classical and Hellenistic Greek world. Ellen Millender uses her chapter to examine the relationship between the Spartans and their labor force through the new perspective of state terrorism. Her chapter does not fit cohesively with the others, as her example does not fit the definition of terrorism that was provided in the introduction. In chapter six, Timothy Howe questions the validity of the recent theory that Alexander the Great used COIN to combat the insurgency of what is today known as Afghanistan. Howe concludes that the Afghan campaign was no different than any of Alexander's battles, and that since he was a foreign invader, his tactics should not be considered counterinsurgency. Chapter seven, by Paul Johstono, discusses rebellion in Egypt during the Hellenistic age in terms of insurgency. He discovers that using this viewpoint allows certain details that had previously been ignored to come to light. Howe and Johstono's chapters are well-written, and provide the reader with a new way to view their topics.

The fourth and final section focuses on the Roman world, which concludes with Jonathan Roth's epilogue as an adequate wrap up of the book as a whole. In chapter eight, Francisco Marco Simón concludes that the actions Rome took during the Hispanic Wars of the second century BCE were more representative of state terrorism than insurgency. Frank Russell's focus throughout chapter nine centers on the Great Revolt of the Jews and refining a reader's views of the use of insurgency and counterinsurgency during the first century of imperial rule. Brian Turner uses chapter ten to reexamine the Batavian Revolt, concluding that it was the Rhenish Insurgency. Turner argues that this reinterpretation offers a more nuanced view of the incident as a whole, and allows historians to spread their focus beyond a single motivation. In chapter eleven, Grant Couper argues that the Gallic people labeled Bagaudae should not be viewed as insurgents. All four of the historians make strong arguments.

The intended audience for this book is difficult to determine, as it appears to be written more for scholarly research than for history students. Though Howe states in the preface that the book was written with the intention of being used in classrooms, certain elements of the chapters following contradict this statement. For instance, the use of multiple languages in



both the bibliographies as well as untranslated passages within the chapters may prove difficult to many undergraduate history students. It is true that ancient historians are perfectly capable of reading Latin, but the majority of undergraduates would need to be provided with the English translation in order to understand what was being discussed.

Regarding visuals, every section of the book is filled with maps to help the reader better conceptualize the locations that are described in each chapter. An abbreviations guide for lesser-known journals and works is also provided at the start of the book to help the reader better locate the sources that have been cited.

In conclusion, this book provides well-written examples of the presence of insurgency and terrorism throughout ancient history. The authors have thoroughly researched their respective topics, and each includes current bibliography. Scholars and graduate students will find in this book new treatments of these topics and opportunities for further investigation.

*(This review was sent out to an external editor to avoid conflict of interest.)*

**Wijnendaele, Jeroen W.P. *The Last of the Romans. Bonifatius – Warlord and Comes Africae*.** London: Bloomsbury, 2015. Pp. 182; \$88.00, ISBN 9781780937175, hdbk.

Reviewed by Robert Flierman, [r.flierman@let.ru.nl](mailto:r.flierman@let.ru.nl)

According to the East-Roman historian Procopius, the fifth century produced two men worthy of the epithet 'last of the Romans': Flavius Aëtius and Bonifatius. This study is devoted to Bonifatius, the more obscure and less-studied of the two. His main claim to fame is the allegation - also put forward by Procopius - that he invited the Vandals into Roman Africa in 429. The last in-depth study of his life dates from 1941, a doctoral dissertation by Johannes de Lepper published in Latin. An accessible biography in English is thus much-needed and Wijnendaele's slim but elegant volume delivers just that. Wijnendaele shares de Lepper's favourable impression of Bonifatius, but deviates from his predecessor by arguing that he was not the last of the Romans at all, but rather the first of a new fifth-century phenomenon: that of the 'imperial warlord', i.e. a Roman officer who relied on private forces to establish local dominance, but who nevertheless continued to operate within a Roman imperial framework.

A major difficulty with a figure like Bonifatius, and indeed the fifth century at large, is the scantiness of

the source material. No detailed contemporary history has survived from this period. Information has to be pried from a jumble of letters, minor chronicles and later histories. Wijnendaele mentions new numismatic evidence from Roman Africa in his introduction, but ends up using it only sporadically (62-63). De Lepper made substantial use of the so-called Pseudo-Bonifatian letters, which he considered the work of a contemporary partisan of Bonifatius. Wijnendaele follows a more recent suggestion that ties this forgery to Ostrogothic Italy, weakening its link to the historical Bonifatius (5-6). Methodologically, Wijnendaele approaches his sources mainly with an eye to recovering facts. He seems less interested in exploring how these texts were themselves used as instruments of communication and manipulation. Though a defendable position for a biography, this sometimes results in promising lines of inquiry being abandoned prematurely, as happens for instance with Wijnendaele's brief discussion of the motives behind Prosper of Aquitaine's positive portrayal of Bonifatius (55, 117). On the whole, however, Wijnendaele shows himself a subtle reader of the sources, who manages to wring a surprising amount of relevant information from the scanty and contradictory evidence at his disposal.

We thus learn that Bonifatius was probably of African origins (29-30). He soldiered in Gaul against the Gothic king Athaulf in 413, before becoming a tribune of the *foederati* on the borders of Numidia. Here, he came into contact with Saint Augustine, who sent him several letters. One of these saw Augustine responding to a query about the difference between Arianism and Donatism, a relevant issue for Bonifatius because of the Gothic soldiers under his command. Another letter suggests that Bonifatius was anxious about the compatibility of his military and his Christian duties, and may even have expressed the wish to become a monk at some point. Wijnendaele's discussion of these letters is highly relevant, reminding us that fifth-century military men also moved in a world of Christian devotion and theological debate. In the early 420s, Bonifatius advanced further through the ranks, marrying a Gothic princess and being appointed *comes Africae*, one of the foremost military positions in the West. Wijnendaele makes a compelling case for seeing the hand of Galla Placidia behind both developments (50, 55) and goes on to sketch the repercussions of Bonifatius' ties to the plot-ridden Ravenna court: his political enemies had him branded Enemy of the State in 427 and tried to dislodge him from his African stronghold by dispatching several armies. It was at this point, according to Procopius, that Bonifatius appealed to the Vandals for aid and invited them to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. Modern commentators have long held this claim in suspicion and Wijnendaele too



dismisses it as retrospective East-Roman polemic, though he adds that Bonifatius may in fact have looked for military assistance among the Goths (74-78). Wijnendaele also discounts Procopius' insinuation that Aëtius was the master-mind behind Bonifatius' falling out with the Ravenna court in the late 420s. The two men only really came to blows in 432, when Galla Placidia offered Bonifatius the supreme command of the western armies, dismissing Aëtius in the process. Bonifatius won the ensuing Battle of Rimini - a small-scale encounter between the two men's personal retinues, according to Wijnendaele (101) - but died soon thereafter from a wound, possibly inflicted by Aëtius himself.

The book concludes with the argument that Bonifatius represented a distinct and novel type of *generalissimo*. Because of his personal army of Gothic retainers, Bonifatius was able to rule more or less rule autonomously in Africa, defying the imperial agents and armies sent to dislodge him. Yet unlike earlier strongmen, who either took the imperial title themselves (Constantine III) or acted as emperor-makers behind the scene (Arbogast), he never challenged the imperial dynasty itself. This seems a fair assessment of Bonifatius' career, though I was left wondering how exactly this career would have "paved the way...for the demise of usurpation of the imperial office and the disintegration of the western Roman army in the second half of the fifth century," as the author boldly asserts on the final pages (120-21).

As it stands, this is a careful study of one of the lesser-known generals of late antiquity and a solid contribution to our understanding of the complex and often confusing events of the early fifth century.

**Heckel, Waldemar, Muller, Sabine and Wrightson, Graham, eds. *The Many Faces of War in the Ancient World*.** Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. Pp.340; \$52.99, ISBN: 9781443877688, hdbk.

Reviewed by Kathryn H. Milne, [milnekh@wofford.edu](mailto:milnekh@wofford.edu)

*The Many Faces of War*, originating from a 2012 conference of the same name, is a collection of eleven chapters by different authors, which the editors explain are intended to "show the importance and actuality of the research on the history of war and the diversity of the approaches to this task as well as the different angles from which to look on it." (xiii) It is divided into three parts: Archaic and Classical Greece, the Age of Alexander the Great, and War in the Time of Imperial Rome.

In the first section, Heinrichs discusses an Arkadian inscription that he shows must come from the Lykaion and highlights passages that concern the military training of Arkadian youths. In Chapter Two, Raaflaub argues that in our earliest evidence for *polis* structures, citizens' political and military roles are connected, and that hoplite development runs in parallel with political development. Despite its title, Trible's Chapter Three, "Laughter in Battle" is a serious and sometimes saddening look at a phenomenon which is likely far from the experience of the majority of his readers. He is able to demonstrate that laughter directed at the horrific or the stressful is a coping mechanism that occurs in both ancient and modern warfare.

In Section Two, Müller's chapter on Poseidippos of Pella addresses the epigrams found in the Milan Papyrus, which date from the Ptolemaic court of the 3rd century BCE. Müller argues that although war is a central theme in the epigrams, it is a kind of war represented only in the sanitized symbols of "spoils, booty, omens and statues" (157), resulting in a stylized, heroic depiction of warfare. In "Introducing Ptolemy", Howe writes that Arrian's account of the battle of the Persian Gates, the only account in which Ptolemy appears, is derivative of Ptolemy's own histories. This, he argues, is Ptolemy first establishing himself in the Alexander story in a role that will continue to grow in the subsequent narrative. Chapter Six by Olbrycht concerns the origins of the *Epigonoi*, the Iranian troops which he identifies as the reinforcements that Alexander received in 326 BCE. Chapter Seven, Anson's "Shock and Awe à la Alexander the Great" returns to the technique of using modern terminology and concepts as a tool for examining the ancient world. The author points to the examples of Thebes, Tyre, and Gaza as places where the destruction of one population led to the submission of others. In Chapter Eight, Heckel attempts to put real numbers to Alexander's massacres and enslavements, laying out the claims of the sources and providing minimum and maximum numbers for each event. McLeod's appendix describes physical and psychological responses to combat trauma.

Section Three, Chapters 9-11, turns to the Late Roman Empire. Vanderspoel assesses the Emperor Jovian by carefully reading through the mostly hostile account of Ammianus Marcellinus, highlighting that although the loss of Nisibis and surrounding satrapies was Jovian's great failure, his negotiation of the mass emigration of Nisibis' people back to the Empire was a hard-won concession. Whately's Chapter Ten examines the finds from the fort of el-Lejjün in Jordan for evidence of the presence of women. Finding nothing conclusive, he turns to the comparative evidence from similar



communities that suggests that the presence of women was quite usual. Chapter Eleven considers a previously unpublished inscription from the Roman city of Lambaesis in Algeria, which commemorates the death of the soldier Aurelius Marcinus.

As the editors hint, there is more diversity than common ground in the volume, which thrives on difference- in subject matter, time, place, and even article length, which varies from eighty-nine pages in the first chapter to a mere twelve in the last. It is therefore hard to pinpoint one group to which the whole collection might appeal. It is however possible to highlight areas of interest: for example, Trible's contribution followed by Müller's suggests a strong theme here and throughout the volume of who is, and who is not a participant in warfare, and more pointedly, who is privy to warfare's unpleasant realities and who is the recipient of an idealized image filtered through a sanitizing medium. From a teaching perspective, scholars responsible for an Age of Alexander class will see the utility of Chapters Five to Eight immediately, which go straight to the heart of subjects that often turn up as loose ends in an Alexander classroom. Some speak to the character of Empire, like the significance of the *Epigonoi*, while others speak to broad, reflective themes, such as how we understand and come to view ancient atrocities. Scholars of the ancient world will also find good examples of the different tools now used to address gaps in our knowledge, from the appeal to comparative evidence in Whately, to the effects of battle on the human body by McLeod.

**Powell, Lindsay. *Marcus Agrippa: Right-Hand Man of Caesar Augustus*, rev. ed. Barnsley UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2015. Pp. xxxiv, 344; \$39.95, ISBN: 9781848846173**

Reviewed by François Porte, Université Paris-Est Créteil, [francoisporte@free.fr](mailto:francoisporte@free.fr)

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa certainly deserved a new biography in English. Following his biographies of Drusus and Germanicus, also published by Pen & Sword, Powell's new book intends to present a study of the life and works of the "right-hand man of Caesar Augustus", as he calls him. In his Preface, the author acknowledges that Agrippa's life is hard to separate from his powerful friend's destiny. Powell offers us a pleasant book to read with 216 pages of main text, 60 pages of notes and several appendices, as long as useful maps, various figures and 16 pages of colored plates.

After a useful chronology of Agrippa's life and times, a list of consuls, an explanation about Roman names and the "family tree" of Agrippa, the first chapter

covers the early years of his life and reviews the limited sources. The second chapter follows the rise of the young Caius Octavius. Powell chooses to call him Caesar, despite the risk of confusion with his adoptive father and the scholarly tradition of using the name Octavian. The early history of Agrippa is sparsely documented and his friend retains most of the author's attention. The third chapter, covering the years 39 to 33 BCE, shows the political and military career of Agrippa, particularly his first consulship and his important role during the war against Sextus Pompeius. The fourth chapter focuses on the war against Cleopatra and Mark Antony (spelled "Antonius and Kleopatra" here) and the final victory at Actium. The next chapters, following Agrippa through the early years of the Principate are better documented. The fifth chapter presents Augustus' rise to power and emphasizes the role of Agrippa in the transformation of Rome's cityscape, as the "Architect of the New Rome". The sixth chapter describes the military and diplomatic actions of Agrippa in the provinces, while the next chapter deals with the zenith of his career, as Augustus' colleague, until his death. The eighth chapter presents the aftermath of the death of Agrippa and the fate of his descendants, and the ninth chapter concludes the book and focuses on his personality and achievements.

Despite the lack of information, Powell's book brings as much light as possible on Agrippa's life, using all the sources available, from the ancient literature to archeology and numismatic. This biography leads the reader through the most challenging years of Rome's history, from the end of the Republic and the Triumvirate to the building of the Principate. The actions and career of Agrippa allow the author to review the many aspects and phases of these crucial times. These digressions about political, social or religious context are valuable as an introduction to these critical years of Roman history. Nevertheless, the book shows some weaknesses.

Often written as a historical novel, it contains some anachronistic terms, as Powell calling Cicero a "patriot" (25). Furthermore, the author proves himself a comprehensive reader of ancient literature but often takes these sources at face value. His reliance upon literary sources can even be naive sometimes, as in the depiction of the relation between Agrippa and Herodes, following the text of Flavius Josephus without any questioning (171-177). Moreover, Powell fails to consider scholarly debates about key subjects such as the powers of Augustus, missing the real importance of the tribunician power for him and his successors (102). His bibliography, though mostly of English language works, omits or neglects recent and useful books of Italian or French scholars as well as some important English works. For



instance, we can wonder about the relevance of using the aged work of Emile Espérandieu about the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, neglecting more recent research invalidating his conclusions.

Powell portrays Agrippa in a vivid way, bringing this key figure of the Principate out of the shadow. His book is a fine and original introduction to these troubled years of historical transition, leading the reader through the end of the Republic, the Civil Wars and the birth of the Roman Empire. Nevertheless, as with Powell's previous biographies and Pen & Sword's productions, this book clearly appeals to general readers. The relevance of the many digressions, valuable as an introduction to the times of Augustus, is limited for scholars. Jean-Michel Roddaz's *Marcus Agrippa*, published in French in 1984, remains the most useful scholarly biography of the "right-hand man" of Augustus.

**Strudwick, Helen.** *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt.* Amber Books, 2016. Pp. 512; \$40.00, ISBN: 9781782744368. pbk.

Reviewed by Karl Randall, [kcrandal@hotmail.com](mailto:kcrandal@hotmail.com)

Strudwick's *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* is visually stunning, containing hundreds of high quality, glossy, full color images. In this regard it is equal parts encyclopedia and coffee table book on ancient Egypt. Entries are lavishly illustrated with photos of artifacts, and architectural close-ups supported by illustrations detailing re-enactments, cut-away details and reproductions of artwork done by early explorers and archaeologists. Each image is individually described, with notable details pointed out with separate captions. For those interested in experiencing ancient Egypt visually, the work is to be highly recommended.

The smooth progression of images is in large part supported by the book's choice of arrangement, which lists topics thematically rather than alphabetically. Each "entry" within a given theme takes up either a two or four page spread, with more than half of the space on each page taken up by artwork and/or illustrations. The progression of topics is surprisingly smooth, starting with a history timeline from the pre-dynastic era through the end of the Ptolemaic period. The work then shifts to religion before covering art, everyday life, science and technology and ending with writing. For the casual reader, the overall effect is exemplary, and includes entries on social topics overlooked by other works, such as fashion, hygiene and the associated meanings of different colors found in Egyptian art.

Entries, while short, are well-written, factually correct, and flow smoothly from entry to entry – an unexpected treat in an encyclopedic work. A reader needing a specific entry however would likely need to refer to either the table of contents or the index (or both). Also, depending on the topic of interest the thematic arrangement can lead to disappointment. The topic of "weapons" for example receives a two-page spread, and "warfare" another two pages (bolstered by a third two page spread on the war chariot which is tucked into the thematic section detailing everyday life for some reason). With half of the space taken up by images this leaves precious little room for detail. Additionally, while topics such as cities and individual sites are smoothly woven into the thematic narrative, the arrangement precludes the possibility of separate entries for these and many similar entries that one would expect to see in an alphabetic listing, with the thematic arrangement and extensive artwork further cutting into the amount of written detail presented for these items. Finally, while the work contains a small handful of minor typographical errors, they remain cosmetic in nature and have no meaningful impact on the understanding of a given topic.

Taken as a whole, the quality and quantity of the visual presentation alone makes the work a worthy addition to anyone interested in ancient Egypt. I would not however suggest that it be used as the sole encyclopedic reference in a collection. Combined with a more traditionally organized work that typically is light on imagery, or as a standalone work for artwork for the coffee table, library, artist's studio or younger readers though it is well worth the investment.

**Hughes, Ian.** *Imperial Brothers. Valentinian, Valens and the Disaster of Adrianople.* Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2013. Pp. vi, 282; ISBN: 9781848844179, \$50.

Reviewed by Davide Salvo, SUNY at Buffalo, [davidesa@buffalo.edu](mailto:davidesa@buffalo.edu)

In his fourth book Ian Hughes analyzes the reigns of Valentinian I and Valens and the battle of Adrianople. The narrative is divided in seventeen chapters. The first two chapters survey the events of the eighty years prior to Valentinian I and Valens' accession. The third describes the circumstances of the election of the two brothers in early 364 CE and their first year of ruling. From chapter four to seventeen the author analyzes the events from 365 to August 378, organizing the account in an annalistic format that has each of the chapters cover a single year. In the conclusions, the author discusses the aftermath and outlines very briefly the events up to the death of Theodosius in 395.



By narrating in parallel and comparing the achievements of the two brothers, the author attempts to give a balanced view of the personality and reign of these two emperors and to assess whether they deserve the reputations handed down by the biased ancient historians. There are recent works about Valentinian's and Valens' reigns but few treat them in conjunction. In this regard, Hughes' work is somehow original. However, it should be noticed that Hughes' analysis of Valens greatly borrows from Lenski's *Failure of the Empire* (UC Press, 2002) which is abundantly used and quoted throughout Hughes' book. The treatment of Valentinian's Alammanic Wars, instead, seems to be inspired by, and be in accord with, Drinkwater's conclusions in *The Alamanni and Rome: 213-469* (Oxford, 2007). In addition to these two studies, the bibliographic references comprise almost exclusively works of Anglo-American scholars. Contributions by French, Italian and German scholars seem largely to be ignored.

Hughes' specialization in military history is reflected throughout his book. He makes clear that the focus of his analysis is on military matters. The strongpoint of the book is the chapter devoted to the battle of Adrianople that has a careful analysis of the tactics employed in the battle and includes five tactical diagrams. In a few points the author speculates and disagrees with common interpretations of the events in the battlefield adducing persuasive reasons for alternative interpretations. For example, he assumes that the Gothic cavalry led by Alatheus and Saphrax first attacked the Romans' right flank and not the left as believed by many scholars.

Another valuable part of the work is the final chapter, with the conclusions and analysis of the aftermath. Here Hughes correctly points out that it is difficult to assess the importance of the battle and its effect on the "Fall of the West." He follows recent scholarship that has downplayed the consequences (seen as catastrophic in the past) of the defeat and puts forward convincing reasons for a more nuanced view of the consequences of this battle.

Other aspects, such as religion and society, are not treated and analyzed in the same way. In the chapter devoted to the Gothic campaigns, for example, the author simply sketches out the social organization and the Christianization of the Gothic tribes so that a (general) reader has a basic idea of the problem.

The organization of the narrative is a weakness. The author describes Valentinian's and Valens' reigns in parallel, dividing the narration of most of the chapters between West and East. Added to the annalistic division

of the content, this regional approach makes the reading a little challenging. The narration of events, that took place in several years, straddles several chapters. For example, the narration of Valentinian's military campaigns against the Alamanni spans from chapter 3 to chapter 12, Valens' Gothic War of 367-369 is broken up in chapters 5-7, etc. These interruptions break the continuity of the narrative and require the author to sum up what was narrated in the previous chapters, recalling it with expressions like "as previously noted" (89), "as was noted in the previous chapter" (91).

A bibliographic list of primary and secondary sources and three appendices close the book. The first appendix discusses Ammianus Marcellinus' chronology of the first phase of the Alamannic Wars and proposes an alternative chronology. The second provides a chronology of relevant events in Late Antiquity (284-395CE), and the third contains succinct biographies of important individuals mentioned in the book. Maps, black and white pictures of coins, monuments, and imperial portraits and nineteenth-century depictions supplement the account.

In the end, the book is accessible to those who have no insightful knowledge and familiarity with the fourth century Roman Empire. While an academic reader will find several glitches in it, the general reader will value this book as an enjoyable and fascinating read, an introduction to the period and to the imperial brothers.

**Hubbard, Ben. *Gladiator: Fighting for Life, Glory and Freedom*. London: Amber Books Ltd, 2015. Pp. 224; ISBN: 978-1-78274-252-4, hdbk.**

**Reviewed by Jeffrey Stevens, University of Missouri, [StevensJef@missouri.edu](mailto:StevensJef@missouri.edu)**

Ben Hubbard's *Gladiator: Fighting for Life, Glory and Freedom* attempts to bring the world of the Roman gladiator to the public at large by presenting a vivid vision of what life and service in the arena might have been. The book uses a wide array of ancient written sources, combined with extensive pictures, illustrations, and modern drawings, to explore the many facets of gladiator culture from the early origins of the games in the third century BCE to end of the games in the fifth century CE. The book is a stylistic and expansive collection of the standard sources intended to provide an entertaining glimpse into what the Roman games might have looked like. Spread throughout its 224 pages, the book contains nearly two hundred images that include some of the highest quality pictures of ancient material evidence related to gladiators, supplemented by numerous drawings and illustrations of relatively high aesthetic quality that are designed to appeal to a mass popular audience.



The strength of Hubbard's work lies in its visual appeal and overall presentation of diverse source material for a general reader. While there is some value to the scholarly community in the high quality of the visual representations in this collection, Hubbard is not a classical scholar and his use of the standard translations for his source selections lacks the necessary historical or philological context for a comprehensive interpretation of the evidence he is presenting. The result of this limitation is that Hubbard's representation of the world of the gladiator recycles many of the traditional characterizations about ancient Roman society that have been challenged by scholars in recent decades.

In his 'Introduction', Hubbard characterizes the decadence and eventual decline of gladiatorial sport as a natural consequence of an assumed spiritual deficiency within the populace of the Roman Empire. For Hubbard, even the relative peace and stability the empire maintained at the height of its power could not provide the people with the spiritual and moral guidance they craved. To Hubbard, this lack of spiritual fulfillment would only be addressed with the emergence of Christianity throughout the empire, eventually leading to the decline of the Roman games. This perspective has a long tradition, rooted in the ancient Christian sources that so often decried the popularity and savagery of the games, but in many ways this legacy has resulted in modern views that distort the complicated place of the games within Roman society. Hubbard's extensive collection of evidence provides the broad outlines of a complex gladiatorial world for the general reader, but such a book lacks sufficient context for what the games truly meant to Roman society.

In the 'Origins' section, Hubbard includes appropriate evidence that frames the typical debate involving the origins of gladiatorial combat, between the Etruscan and Campanian influences on Roman funerary traditions. Some of this section is underdeveloped, however, as Hubbard ignores much of the relevant scholarship, notably Futrell (1997), involving ritual and religious functions versus entertainment-oriented interpretations. Hubbard effectively outlines the growth of the games and their increasing role in the politics of the Republic, however, there is an error where "Equestrians" is used in place of "Patricians" to characterize centuries of control over the Senate and the conflict with the "Plebeians." In 'The Emperor's Games' section, Hubbard's representation of the gladiatorial world seems overly reliant on Suetonius, often emphasizing the most scandalous, bloodthirsty, and morally degenerate aspects of Rome's most notorious emperors, from Tiberius' lurid behavior on Capri and Caligula's subsequent cruelty, to

Nero's degeneracy and his savage treatment of the Christians. Such a choice is to be expected in enhancing the salacious appeal of this type of book, but the biographies composed by Suetonius tend to give a distorted view of imperial Rome. Accordingly, some context should be given with these scandalous accounts in framing the games. For 'The Gladiators', 'Types of Gladiators', and 'A Day at the Games' sections, Hubbard's descriptions of the backgrounds and typologies of gladiators are similar to other works on the subject by Nossov (2009) and Dunkle (2008). There are some descriptive differences regarding gladiatorial equipment based on interpretive inconsistencies. Hubbard's book is superior in its presentation of numerous images, which has significant value, whereas Nossov provides a more detailed vision of typology, equipment, and gladiatorial pairing specifics. Dunkle remains preferable in outlining the brief history and organizational aspects of the games.

Overall, the strength of Hubbard's *Gladiator* rests in its collection, organization, and visual display of extensive source material on gladiators for a mass readership. This stylistic exhibition of such diverse materials in a single work is a worthy accomplishment that has some value. The limitation, however, is that it does not add to the current state of scholarship on gladiators or the distinctive position the games occupied within Roman society.

**Santangelo, Federico. *Marius. Ancients in Action*.** London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. xii, 124 p. \$29.95. ISBN 9781474214711. pbk.

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

"Ancients in Action" is a series of overviews about important characters from the ancient world designed to show the prominent features of an individual's life. Santangelo adds to the series with *Marius*, the first new treatment in English since R. J. Evans' *Gaius Marius: A Political Biography* (U of South Africa, 1994) and C. Matthew's specific study relating to Marius' army reforms, *On The Wings of Eagles* (Cambridge Scholars, 2010). There is no doubting Marius' importance. He was afforded a biography by Plutarch and his Numidian campaign is outlined in Sallust's *Jugurthine War*. Marius also forms part of the voluminous modern literature relating to the period with useful specific works available in, English, French, Italian and German. Santangelo sets his stall out by stating that the book is "to be used (though by no means exclusively) in the classroom" and that it is a "sketch...setting Marius in context" (1) with "The brief...to discuss the role that Marius played in that process [the end of the Roman Republic] of change" (4).



Santangelo sticks to this statement and Bloomsbury's series criteria.

The book starts with a chronology of events from 188 to 58/57 BCE, a map of Italy, five chapters (each sub-headed), a further reading essay, references to ancient sources and an index. The introductory chapter gives a succinct overview of Marius' significance, politically and military, and is set against the tumultuous backdrop of the late Republic. His Italian origins, modest upbringing, education, the beginning of his military career and recognition thereafter, are all highlighted. Finally, a contextualization of the events from 133 onwards is presented in order to give some indication of Marius' future plans.

In chapters two through five, Santangelo considers all the usual military, political, individual and social situations of the late Republic placing Marius in that milieu, ending with a discussion about his legacy. The one noticeable feature of the book is how the author carefully analyzes the primary evidence to present his argument. Readers are introduced to Marius' rise from humble childhood, to his unfavourable start in politics, his military career, his connections with the Iulii Caesares, his army reforms (which he rightly admits, should not be overestimated) and his unprecedented consulships. Having highlighted Marius' successful military campaigns, Santangelo neatly moves on to the political arena where Marius needed to continue his accomplishments. However, the author shows how circumstances proved otherwise as Marius made dubious alliances and choices. With hindsight, Marius' political and military impact was substantial to the late Republic and to posterity; as Santangelo notes, he is "...a focus of serious and rewarding historical study" (103).

Santangelo has written a concise and pertinent account of Marius' life. His style is fluent with the ancient evidence sensibly analyzed. The sources are unreliable, biased, and written long after the events, but the author vigilantly pieces the life together. The book is also commendable in the way it covers challenging issues. Some may quibble about the omission of notes and cross-referencing modern views. Also, the more well-informed reader may regard the contextual method as weakening the debate. However, these minor differences in approach should not be seen as a criticism. This accessible little book, is a fine starting point for anyone wishing to read about Marius and the world in which he lived.

**Chrystal, Paul. *Roman Military Disasters: Dark Days & Lost Legions*.** Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2015. Pp. xxvi, 310; ISBN 9781473823570, \$39.95, hdbk.

Reviewed by Korneel Van Lommel, University of Antwerp, [korneel.vanlommel@gmail.com](mailto:korneel.vanlommel@gmail.com)

Chrystal discusses sixty military defeats in Roman history, spanning a period of eight centuries from 390 BCE to 410 CE. He not only intends to examine and analyze the history, politics or strategies which led to each conflict, he also aims to focus on the aftermath, consequences of defeat, and the Roman ability to learn lessons of failure and adapt. Especially the latter is important as Chrystal describes it as the unique and crucial element of the book (xxv). Unfortunately, the result does not reflect the book's intentions.

The book is divided into two parts (Republic and Empire) and is chronologically structured. Part one contains eight chapters of which the first three chapters provide background information. Part two follows with seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the Early Republic and the expansion of Rome on the Italian peninsula during which, as Chrystal argues, Rome developed its belligerent mind set. Chapter two, 'The Roman War Machine', summarizes the evolution of the Roman army in the context of socio-political changes throughout the Republic and Early Empire. It also touches on themes like war as an element of *Romanitas*, the baggage and atrocities on and off the battlefield. There are some flaws in this chapter. First, the period of Late Antiquity is not discussed, whether it be in relation to the evolution of the Roman army or the concept of just war. *Spolia opima* is wrongly explained and *dona militaria* lacks sufficient explanation. The third chapter, 'The Sources', discusses mainly Livy, his sources and the problems of interpretation. Other authors are briefly mentioned as are other types of sources. Again, Late Antiquity is underrepresented and Christian sources are absent in this discussion.

The most noticeable shortcoming of this book is the lack of consistency and transparency. First, the scope of the book is not properly defined as it only refers to the definition of disaster according to *The Oxford Concise Dictionary*. Chrystal should be aware of the difficulties surrounding the meaning of disaster as he refers to Toner's *Roman Disasters* (Polity, 2013), which deals extensively with this issue. Is a military setback the same as a disaster? Which point of view is chosen in assessing a disaster, the Roman or the modern historian? Second, Chrystal has selected sixty disasters as case-studies. On what basis he chose these and excluded others is not explained. Most questionable is the inclusion of Cleopatra and the Theban Legion Massacre. Third, the treatment of the disasters varies in regard to length, focus, and



historical insight. Chrystal explores some disasters in just a few sentences and others over multiple pages.

By far the best part of the book is his treatment of the battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE. Chrystal gives a good overview of the history which led to the conflict, the course of the battle, and the factors responsible for Crassus' defeat. Only here the text is clarified by diagrams which depict the troop movement during the different stages of battle. Nonetheless, the crucial element of the Carrhae disaster, i.e. the lessons learnt by the Romans, falls short: "[The Romans] learnt the benefits and value of the fleet, mobile Parthian cavalry and adapted it to their own needs" (126). This conclusion is problematic as Chrystal does not explain how the mobile Parthian cavalry influenced the Roman cavalry. Other battles in the book are only explained in text. The reader is often not informed how battles were fought as Chrystal provides little information on the strategy and describes the battle in general terms like 'they surrounded', 'they outflanked' etc. and the reported number of casualties.

Readers of this book will learn that the history of Rome is not one of merely successes and they will become acquainted with both famous and lesser known military defeats. In current scholarship, there has been renewed interest for military reverses in Roman history. Some important works are missing from the bibliography like Clark's *Triumph in Defeat* (Oxford 2014) or the special edition of *Classical World* (2003) "Roman Military Disasters and their Consequences." Notwithstanding, the exclusively English bibliography with many relevant works is a great resource for further reading but they are not all referred to or used to their full potential, Toner's *Roman Disasters* being an obvious example of the latter. The maps of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the book are not dated, and therefore of little use.

In conclusion, this book's merit is that it brings military defeats under attention while most books deal with the successes. Unfortunately, readers will not gain a deeper understanding of Roman resilience due to the lack of a methodological framework. The unique and crucial element of this book, i.e. the lessons learnt after each defeat, is not properly addressed.

**Revell, Louise.** *Ways of Being Roman: Discourses of Identity in the Roman West*, Oxford: Oxbow, 2015. Pp. 144. ISBN 1842172921, \$33, Pbk.

Reviewed by Anna H. Walas, [ahw9@le.ac.uk](mailto:ahw9@le.ac.uk)

Louise Revell's most recent offering presents an in-depth and captivating account of the impact of Roman

imperialism on the creation of social identities in Western provinces. With a comprehensive review and critique of recent approaches to Roman identities, and with case studies to illustrate the point, the book is a worthwhile read to anyone wishing to update their knowledge of recent work on the subject.

The value of the book lies in the contribution to the understanding of forms of identity not commonly studied in the field, and particularly unpacking the concept of "non-elite" identities - especially those other than adult, elite male. Roman military identities are not one of Revell's case studies, but for anyone working within recent theoretical debate on military communities, the book provides food for thought and helps set the debate on military identities in the context of work on civilian identities. The book is suitable for both students looking to familiarise themselves with the study of identity in the Roman Empire, and for more experienced readers, seeking to find a new and challenging approach to the old material.

Following a review of the history of studying identity in Roman provinces, Revell tackles the theme of ethnicity and the questions of to what extent ethnicity intersects with other aspects of identity. Revell raises interesting points, including the difficulty with trying to define Roman imperial ethnicities according to definitions coined for modern nation-states. On the local level, the case studies present some of the ways in which local ethnic identities were transformed, and in some cases completely reinvented as a result of the contact with Roman imperial structures.

Where the author excels is in the interpretation of her specialist material. Louise is known for her work on tackling the relationship between public architecture, social practices and the transformation the introduction of urban amenities to local provincial communities. Her interpretation of how urban social practices bound up the city and countryside with the Roman way of being prompts parallel questions about the role of military public architecture and the role of social practices in the transformation of recruits into imperial agents.

Following the footsteps of Martin Millett, Revell offers an interesting re-evaluation of the degree to which urban magistracies were used in Britain by elite individuals (as opposed to groups) to emphasise their status. The author extends the analysis to the impact of urban structures onto the non-elite population and assesses when and in what context they would have had a chance to participate in the new urban set of practices.



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Most interestingly, the author spends good half of the book exploring the variety of non-elite identities and the practices that defined them. The example of gladiator figurines explores the potential of non-elite to subvert dominant identity narratives, while the exploration of social practices that might have defined mining communities throws light on a group that has traditionally been only discussed from the point of view of their economic use for the imperial systems. Other chapters explore female identities through drawing attention to female priestesses in temples, who subverted the dominant ideology of the non-active female and the economically active male. The closing chapters explore the social framing of age, which as the book explains, lies at the intersection of physical age, changes to the human

body and socially constructed rites of passage celebrated locally at different points in life in different parts of the Empire.

Overall, rather than being theory heavy, the book presents a pleasant and thought-provoking read that is well illustrated with examples throughout. It is a very welcome contribution that instead of following clichés, offers a fresh narrative on the variety of identities under the Early to High Empire and the transformations these identities underwent with the advent of Roman imperialism.

To have your event or news included in the next issue of *Res Militares*, please contact Dr. Ioannis Georganas: [i\\_georganas@yahoo.com](mailto:i_georganas@yahoo.com) with details. If you have any suggestions or feedback on this issue of *Res Militares*, please send it to Dr. Georganas.



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