



The Society of Ancient Military Historians

President: Prof. Jonathan P. Roth, Vice-President: Dr. Benjamin M. Sullivan, Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Dr. Ioannis Georganas, Book Reviews Editor: Prof. Lee L. Brice

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Message from the President

It seems that there has been another remarkable and game-changing discovery in ancient Military History. In 1996, in Germany's Tollense Valley near the Baltic Sea, an amateur archaeologist came across a human bone, with a flint arrowhead embedded in it, protruding from a riverbank. The University of Greifswald and the Department of Historic Preservation of the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania undertook to excavate what turned out to be the site of a battle fought between two armies in 1250 BC, during Europe's Bronze Age. The archaeologists uncovered wooden clubs, in addition to bronze spearheads, axes, and both flint and bronze arrowheads.

Such a find would have been exciting if it had been located in the Near East, where armies of thousands had been fighting for centuries. Northern Germany, however, had no large cities, and only scattered villages. Surprisingly, the evidence shows that this was no small skirmish between a few dozen warriors: forensic anthropologists have identified at least 130 different remains, almost all men and most of warrior age. These remains were found in what appears to have been a mass grave, and most probably represents only some of the casualties on the losing side. Indeed, there may have been as many as 4,000 men fighters, in the two opposing armies.

This find has shocked archaeologists, and turned our idea of Bronze Age Europe upside down. There is another element of this mysterious battle that is amazing to the military historian: there were at least five mounted warriors present. While there is some evidence for horseback riding in the Second Millennium in the Near East and Egypt, it is always associated with the chariot. Previously the earliest direct evidence for cavalry per se are the Assyrian reliefs of the 9th century BC. This

pushes the date back centuries, and moves the location hundreds of miles.

This find shows the value of the growing field of conflict archaeology, and will keep ancient military historians busy as we work out, and argue over, the details and their significance. If I could offer an idea based only on the press reports, it is probably not a coincidence that this site lies on, or very near, the Amber Road, which brought this valuable fossilized resin from Scandinavia through Western Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. For more information about the Tollense Valley battle go to:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/03/slaughter-bridge-uncovering-colossal-bronze-age-battle>

Jonathan P. Roth

President, Society of Ancient Military Historians

Message from the Secretary

Once again, it is my pleasure to present the latest issue of *Res Militares*, which includes a very interesting comment by our President, Prof. Jonathan Roth, on the extremely important prehistoric battlefield at Tollense Valley (Germany), as well as eight very informative book reviews.

I am also very happy to report that our official website has now a new URL (please update your bookmarks!): <http://www.ancientmilitaryhistorians.org/>

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



Books Available for Review

Res Militares, Society for Ancient Military Historians, Books Received, Spring 2016

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.

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

Chrystal, Paul. *Wars and Battles of the Roman Republic: 753 BC-100 BC the Bloody Road to Empire*. UK: Fonthill Media, 2015. Pp. 6, 176; ISBN 9781781590881, \$32.95.

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.

Harl, Orto. *Hochtor und Glocknerroute: Ein Hocalpines Passheiligtum und 2000 Jahre Kulturtransfer zwischen Mittelmeer und Mitteleuropa*. Wien: Osterreichisches Archaologisches Institut, 2014. Pp. 348; ISBN 9783900305680, 98,00 € , hdbk.

Heckel, Waldemar, Sabine Müller, and Graham Wrightson, eds. *The Many Faces of War in the Ancient World*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. Pp. vii, 327; ISBN 9781443877688, \$52.99, hdbk.

*Holt, Frank L. *The Treasures of Alexander the Great: How One Man's Wealth Shaped the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 295; ISBN 9780199950966, \$29.95, hdbk.

Hubbard, Ben. *Gladiator: Fighting for Life, Glory and*

Freedom. London: Amber Books Ltd, 2015. Pp. 6, 224; ISBN 9781782742524, hdbk.

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

Lee, Geoff, Helene Whittaker, and Graham Wrightson, eds. *Ancient Warfare: Introducing Current Research, Volume 1*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. Pp. viii, 361; ISBN 9781443876940, \$52.99, hdbk.

*Matthew, Christopher Anthony. *On the Wings of Eagles: The Reforms of Gaius Marius and the Creation of Rome's First Professional Soldiers*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. Pp. vii, 102; ISBN 9781443817424, \$58.99, hdbk.

Pelling, Christopher and Maria Wyke. *Twelve Voices from Greece and Rome: Ancient Ideas for Modern Times*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. vii, 274; ISBN 9780199597369, \$29.95, hdbk.

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

Santangelo, Federico. *Ancients in Action: Marius*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pp. viii, 124; ISBN 9781474214711, \$29.95.

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, Michael. *Antiochus the Great*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2013. Pp. xvii, 183; ISBN 9781848844636, \$39.95, hdbk.

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

Rusch, Scott M. *Sparta at War: Strategy, Tactics, and Campaigns, (550-362 BC)*, rev. ed. London: Frontline Books, 2011. Pp. 242; ISBN 9781783030118, \$24.95, hdbk.

Reviewed by David Harthen,
david_harthen@yahoo.co.uk

The review copy received was actually the paperback 'Revised Edition' published in 2014. The book consists of a List of Illustrations (Plates, Figures, and Maps); a Foreword to the Revised Edition; Acknowledgements; Twelve Chapters; An Appendix on Spartan Army Organization; Abbreviations; Endnotes; Bibliography; and Index. Rusch's narrative spans Spartan military history from c.950-195 BC, with the main detailed focus of the work being the period 550-362 BC. Rusch uses his Foreword to neatly summarize his awareness of relevant scholarship that has appeared since the book's original publication in 2011.

Two conflicts within the period covered by Rusch's work, get the lion's share of attention: the Persian War (Chapters Three and Four), and the Peloponnesian War (Chapters Six to Eight inclusive). Chapters One and Two chart Sparta's conquest of Messenia, and Sparta's rise to becoming the dominant power in the Peloponnese respectively. Chapter Five covers the *Pentecontaetia*; Chapter Nine focuses on Sparta's Imperial ambitions and adventures and Chapter Ten, the Corinthian War. Chapter Eleven, 'Nemesis' examines the period 385-371 BC, culminating with the Spartan defeat at Leuctra; whilst Chapter Twelve takes the form of a summary of Sparta's decline during the period 371-195 BC.

The book is clearly aimed at the interested general reader and students rather than academic scholars, though Rusch presents his material suitably backed up with scholarly endnote citations to support his arguments. It is perhaps worth noting however that no Greek script is used either in the text or in any of the endnotes. To take one example; there is no citation of the original Greek text either using Greek script or in transliteration of the dedicatory inscription on the Spartan shield captured at Pylos-Sphacteria and found in the Athenian Agora (mentioned on page 95 and note 54 on page 229), just an English translation. Elsewhere (page 15) Rusch remarks about the uniformity of the Spartans' appearance during the later fifth and fourth centuries BC including the famous lambda shield motif, but cites only modern works (note 60 on page 219), rather than the supporting fragments of Eupolis and Theopompos as cited by Photius in his *Lexicon*, in support of his statements.

The Spartan military-messes (*syssitiai*) barely get a

mention except when Rusch informs his reader that a Spartan's failure to pay his mess dues would result in loss of citizenship (page 21). Nor is there any corresponding mention of Thomas J. Figueira's article "Mess Contributions and Subsistence at Sparta" (*TAPA* 114 (1984), pp. 87-109).

Noticeably absent from Rusch's bibliography is any mention of Kromayer and Veith's (1903-1931) *Antike Schlachtfelder* (in particular Volumes 1 and 4), nor is Duncan Campbell's (2012) *Spartan Warrior 735-331 BC* included in Rusch's bibliography either. That journal articles are relegated to abbreviated citations in the 'Notes' section and not included in full in the 'Bibliography' is somewhat irritating. However, it should be stressed that this does not appear to be the fault of the author but rather due to space constraints imposed by the publisher of the work.

The thirty-five maps included in the book are very well placed; being either next to, or at the very least as close as possible to, the passages of Rusch's narrative to which they relate. The ten Figures (consisting of matte monochrome photographs, line drawings, and sketches), included in the book are likewise well placed close or next to their related passages of text. The Plates, consisting of twenty-five glossy monochrome photographs, are gathered together in the middle of the book meaning that bookmarks or sticky notes come in handy when cross-checking the plates with their corresponding text. Once again this is probably the fault of the publisher rather than the author himself.

Rusch writes in a lively, engaging, and lucid style. The text of his narrative rattles along briskly with scholarly endnotes employed for those who wish to check the validity of his statements and lines of argument. Taken as a whole, *Sparta at War: Strategy, Tactics, and Campaigns, (550-362 BC)* is a good and highly readable introduction to anyone interested in ancient Greek warfare and the Spartan army in particular, however, that is not to say it is the definitive work on the subject by any means.

Philip Matyszak, *Cataclysm 90 BC: The Forgotten War That Almost Destroyed Rome*. South Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword, 2014. Pp. 256. ISBN 9781848847897. £19.99/\$34.95.

Reviewed by Andrea D. Moore, Northern Illinois University, amoore21@niu.edu.

Matyszak's comprehensive analysis of Rome's Social War is presented in a tone and format that appeals to a variety of readers. The author's work focuses on a relatively short historical period not often singled out for its own coverage until recently (C. Dart, *The Social War*



91-88BCE, 2016; S. Kendall, *The Struggle for Roman Citizenship*, 2015). The Social War has more frequently been covered as a subtopic in larger volumes on ancient Rome. Matyszak offers a unique emphasis on the war alone, placing it into context within the broader spectrum from Rome's founding to the formation of its emerging empire. While readers can consult primary works such as Plutarch's *Lives* for coverage of notable individuals such as Sulla, Marius, or the Gracchi, Matyszak appropriately includes and links details of all such notable individuals.

Cataclysm 90 BC is written in the same vein as Matyszak's previous works aimed at a general readership audience. His new book is similar to his other works such as *The Enemies of Rome: From Hannibal to Attila the Hun* (2004) and *The Greek and Roman Myths: A Guide to the Classical Stories* (2010). Much like these books, he has written *Cataclysm* in a non-academic tone that is simultaneously informative and entertaining while maintaining accurate history.

Matyszak provides an informative buildup to the main action of the Social War. Within his introduction, he borrows from Polybius to establish how Rome tumbled down the path to war and the impact that war would have on its future. He defines cataclysmic adjustment, from which he draws his title, as an extreme realignment of an unbalanced situation or sequence of events. Chapters one through three provide the background context on how Roman citizenship and relationships with its colonies and allies pitted Romans against its neighbors. Matyszak's third chapter, appropriately titled "The State of Italy" does an excellent job in describing the physical and social geography of the Italian peninsula. It is a critical chapter in which the reader can ascertain how Rome's alliances with its allies and colonies would be tested in conflict.

With a foundation for war established, the author then discusses the resultant conflict. Chapters four through five highlight the reform efforts of Livius Drusus and end with Rome's preparations for civil war against enemy combatants who were once allies of Rome. The eventual clash between Sulla and Marius is also introduced in chapter five as war on the Italian peninsula looms. The sixth chapter describes the start of the war, making numerous comparisons back to Rome's battles with Hannibal, and emphasizing the gravity of the current situation as each side was similarly trained for battle.

Matyszak closes his book with a discussion on the conclusion of the war. Chapter seven features the end of the war between the Romans and Italians through the actions of Sulla. In chapter eight, Rome still struggles with final skirmishes in the east, but Sulla's march on Rome in 88 BC and its resulting chaos and final clashes

with Marius are the main focus. In chapters nine and ten, Sulla prevails at the Colline Gate and declares himself dictator, afterward targeting his enemies with his infamous proscription lists. The author's epilogue provides an excellent conclusion, elaborating on how the Roman republic essentially collapsed after 88 BC and set precedents that would be taken advantage by others in the future, including Gaius Julius Caesar.

The author's work is well constructed, with only minor flaws. Matyszak often refers back to specific page numbers throughout the book, serving as effective reminders to readers who may have forgotten key information. Additionally, he notes material that historians continue to struggle with or where sources are lacking. To his credit, Matyszak does not make unfounded assumptions in such instances. However, improvements can be made in editing as numerous typos and misspellings are found throughout the book. These errors are sloppy, but do not affect the overall narrative. Finally, more detailed explanations of magistracies, such as aedile or quaestor, would benefit general readers who may not have much academic background.

Overall, Matyszak's effectively engages as well as entertains readers. His target audience is general interest readers, but it would be a smart choice for students as well. Undergraduates especially will appreciate the distraction from the average textbook. The history is accurately presented in a flowing, easily read narrative. The history will likely not be new to academics, but most would find it to be an entertaining read. His introduction and conclusions are especially effective in placing events within his book in context of one another and within Roman history as a whole. He successfully demonstrates the significance of the Social War and how it had a critical impact on the end of the republic and the build-up of the empire. This book is a pleasant addition to a suddenly popular topic.

Michael Pitassi, *The Roman Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 350BC-475AD*. Barnsley, UK: Seaforth Publishing, 2012 Pp. 171. ISBN: 9781848320901. £25.00 (Hb).

Reviewed by Rob Ramaker, Texas Southmost College,
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The Roman Navy does not get much love. Frequently it is a sideshow to the legions with their striking colors, interesting symbols, and colorful commanders. In many textbooks the navy performs roles similar to the auxiliaries in that their principal role is to support the army. Michael Pitassi decided to challenge this notion and



the lingering perceptions about a misunderstood military force that granted the Romans one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen. In his thesis, Pitassi is clear about the navy's importance stating, "(the navy) was the instrument by which Rome achieved domination of the western Mediterranean, which enabled her expansion into lands surrounding it and the foundation of her empire" (vi). He argues largely that the preservation of that empire came at the hands of the brave men who crewed the ships of Rome's fleet (vi). The book includes a detailed look at Rome's fleet, operations, strategy, construction, navigation and a bottom-up view of what life was like for the Roman sailor. Designed for an undergraduate audience, Pitassi's book contains interesting strategy and some fresh arguments which could change scholarly perceptions. On the less noteworthy side, it also features some organizational and anachronistic errors.

The work is divided into ten parts consisting of 3-5 sub chapters (each about 15-25 pages each), an appendix and a preface. Part I focuses on a brief history of the Roman Navy from its first recorded warships to its end. The second part focuses on how the ships were constructed, weapons used, and how the ships evolved over time through the Republic into the Empire. Part three focuses on command and control in the fleet and how the navy was organized. Sections four and five feature a bottom-to-top approach illustrating the daily lives of the average sailor including equipment, training, religion and terms of service while on the boat. The sixth section features a treatise on navigation and the limits on speed and endurance of Roman ships and crews. Parts seven and eight consist of operations including strategies for defeating enemies, the roles of the fleet in broader campaigns and tactics for individual battles. Part nine focuses on how non-Romans contributed as allies providing assistance to the main Roman fleets. The final section features information on enemy navies and how to create model ships.

On the positive side, the author's work contains many strengths including original arguments, great images, and an expert knowledge of strategy and operations. Pitassi is proficient in analyzing the strategic factors that made the navy effective in its battles. During a discussion of the Punic Wars he breaks down the reasons that made the Roman Navy superior to the Carthaginian fleet including determination, discipline, ingenuity, training and Punic instability (6). The work also makes original arguments that will may stimulate scholars rethink current perspectives. Although modern scholars associate victories with the land armies, Pitassi argues that it was the navy that saved Rome from annihilation in the Second Punic War. Hannibal was unable to acquire supplies or allied armies because of "an aggressive policy by the Roman navy that the Romans

could always hold the initiative and dictate the course of the war" (6). The author makes extensive use of models to demonstrate many of his points visually. These can be helpful for undergraduates and those not well versed in naval terminology. Many helpful diagrams and pictures also help to illustrate the equipment, weapons and techniques used by the fleet. He also breaks down the armor, weapons and conditions of the average soldier, something that often gets neglected in many works which focus just on the commander, overall picture and tactics.

The weakness of Pitassi's work is a lack of evidence, a problem he never sufficiently overcomes. The chief weakness of any Roman naval study is a lack of evidence. Some evidence exists in the form of votive offerings, ship sheds, archaeological remains of bases, and coinage but certainly not enough to create such a sufficiently detailed picture as the author claims. Pitassi works around this problem by using sources on maritime commerce or general shipbuilding practices of the time. This can be problematic when naval practices would be different from conventional military or civilian ones.

The work also suffers from anachronistic comparisons to the modern world and some organizational issues. Part ten reads as a hobby section that appears tangential in terms of the author's overall scope. This section reads as an introduction to a follow-up book on Hellenistic navies, or possibly Carthage. Finally, it features information on how to construct Roman ship models. Some typos demonstrate that the book could have benefited from more thorough editing (3).

Due to the lack of scholarly works available, Pitassi's volume certainly will drive the debate forward about Roman naval topics. This work certainly fits with other volumes produced by the author such as *Roman Ships* (2011), and *The Navies of Rome* (2014) and his earlier chronology of the Roman Navy. Considering the lack of scholarship, Pitassi's volume will definitely move the debate forward about a less understood part of Rome's greatness. Some will criticize the need for this volume as it does not necessarily say anything substantially different from the previous editions, but the work is accessible, interesting, and provides much food for thought.

Mayor, Adrienne. *The Amazons: Lives & Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World*, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Pp. 536; \$29.95, ISBN: 9780691147208, hdbk.

Reviewed by Kristian Lorenzo, LorenzoKL2@hollins.edu

Mythic figment, artistic topos, social inversion or powerful symbol—are by now some of the standard



descriptions many Classical scholars use to explain Amazons, the renowned warrior women of Greek myth. In her book Mayor offers a refreshing challenge to these descriptions. In a lively and engaging manner, she argues that for the ancient Greeks Amazons were the imaginary counterparts of the historical Amazon-like Scythian warrior women of the nomadic horse-centered cultures of the Eurasian steppes. To do this Mayor marshals an impressive Encyclopedia Amazonica (her term) of literary and archaeological evidence for Amazons (13). In doing so she has produced an excellent example of well-researched popular history that presents a wide-ranging synthesis. Her book focuses much-needed attention not only on the beliefs Greeks and Romans actually held about Amazons but also on the traditional and dominant interpretations of the history of Eurasia. Attention on the former allows certain modern accretions such as violence against men to be thrown into stark relief and successfully filtered out. Attention on the latter provides an interesting view of Eurasia as neither culturally marginal nor downright backward, but actually as a place where so-called “barbarians” lived in societies that practiced an alternative gender equality, more civilized in our terms. Mayor’s approach argues persuasively for the “reality” of Amazons based on her belief that Greek stories and images of those warrior women reflect a great deal of cross-cultural knowledge, and is one more valid way of examining ancient Amazons.

Mayor’s book does possess some drawbacks. It presents Amazons to the reader as one large, homogenous, hugely complex group of both real and imaginary figures. But one and only one “Amazon” never existed. Instead, males from many different cultures have created and re-created multiple “Amazon types” for thousands of years across thousands of miles, for often-inscrutable reasons. The necessary rigor is lacking when it comes to setting out the difficulties and limitations of the evidence. Fragments of lost works (e.g. the Arimaspea) appear alongside more fully preserved ancient literary works, without explaining the problems of either transmission or fragmentary preservation. Stories from Herodotus and Pomponius Mela or Herodotus and Orosius are used together, without regard to cultural differences or an examination of the relative trustworthiness or value of each source. Material from oral traditions such as the Nart sagas of the Caucasus—not written down until the 19th century but which may indeed have ancient roots—are treated alongside traditions written down in antiquity. When this happens there is no discussion about the complications that arise when using material from oral traditions. The archaeological evidence the book relies on is limited and needs to be brought up-to-date with ongoing research projects in Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Bulgaria, and the Ukraine. Despite these drawbacks,

Mayor’s book is a worthy read, which will appeal greatly to laypeople, undergraduates, and those looking for a good reference work.

Four main sections preceded by a prologue comprise Mayor’s book. The Prologue sets forth the general subject as a mission to sort fact from fiction, showing that the Amazons of Greek mythology are the imaginary counterparts of the historical Amazon-like Scythian warrior women of the nomadic horse-centered cultures of the Eurasian steppes.

Part one dispels the misconceptions of Amazons as a hostile gynocracy of man-haters and/or same sex lovers, the latter a particularly “20th c. twist,” based on the lack of any ancient account stating so (25). Instead, the word Amazons was an ethnonym Archaic Greeks used to designate mysterious steppe peoples who included warrior women and lived around and beyond the Black Sea.

Part two surveys the evidence, both archaeological and literary, but mostly archaeological, for Amazon-like warrior women amongst the ancient Eurasian nomadic peoples. It also covers to what extent the ancient Greeks may or may not have come into contact with these peoples, their portrayals, and customs, including sexual, recreational, religious, etc. Part three synthesizes the major Greek myths about Amazons (Heracles vs. Hippolyte, Theseus and Antiope, Achilles vs. Penthisilea, and the Amazons vs. the Athenians). It argues that these stories grew out of facts, half-truths, and believable theories, as well as speculations and fantasies, based upon poorly understood customs, hearsay, imagination, and romantic notions.

Part three also discusses “historical” encounters between important Greek or Roman figures and Amazon-like women, focusing especially on those of Alexander the Great with Thalestris and King Mithridates VI of Pontus with Hypsicratea. Part four moves out of the Hellenic world to discuss mythical and historical Amazon-like women from the Caucasus to Egypt, Persia, Central Asia, and finally China. After part four a thorough appendix adds to this book’s value as a useful reference work by providing a collection of the names of Amazons and warrior women in ancient literature and art from the Mediterranean to China.

Lindsay Powell, *Germanicus: The Magnificent Life and Mysterious Death of Rome’s Most Popular General* (UK: Pen and Sword, 2013), 219 Pages + notes and appendices. Forward by Philip Matyszak.

Reviewed by Gaius Stern, University of California Berkeley, gaius@berkeley.edu



Germanicus follows Powell's biography on Drusus, also published in the Pen and Sword series. *Germanicus* warmly treats the prince in a thorough study that is strongest on the military details of his campaigns in Illyria and Germany, but less fulfilling in its treatment of his early life and his relationships with Tiberius and Livia. Armchair historians will learn from and enjoy this study, but academics will find it sometimes falls short of its potential and is not the substantial work of scholarship needed on this life. Powell at times deviates from the subject on long digressions of limited relevance and on multiple occasions cites modern scholars instead of primary sources for facts, such as citing modern works for the birth date of Augustus instead of Suetonius.

Chapter one, covering Germanicus' early domestic life, opens like a novel. The next chapter includes the book's most valuable digression, the hazards of living in Augustan Rome and wanders through gladiatorial games. Some readers will appreciate the detail of these off-topic explorations, but scholars may find they explain the obvious and can be skipped. In chapters three and four, Powell moves to the strongest part of the book, the discussion of the wars in Illyricum and Germany. Powell's reliance upon primary sources brings to life the challenges the Romans faced in suppressing the revolt. Nine maps help plot the progress of the campaigns. Chapters five through seven regard Germanicus in the East. Here Powell again addresses the crucial issue of the relationship of Tiberius and Germanicus and the true cause of Germanicus' death (disease).

Scholars will note that this book often reads like a historical novel. The factual errors, matched with some inaccurate footnotes, can impair Powell's credibility, especially early in the book. The consulships of M. Agrippa are incorrectly listed on a family tree entitled "The House of Germanicus" as 37, 33, 31 BC for 37, 28, 27. Octavia is called the aunt of Drusus, rather than his mother-in-law (page 6). Footnote 51 on page 9 cites Livy 11.29 (book 11 does not survive). Livia is named as a member of the *Claudii Drusi*, but no such family existed (10). Antony's wife, Fulvia, is misidentified as his sister (10). Inexplicably, Powell misrepresents Augustus's well documented birthdate (24, and 68 n. 152) and more bafflingly, that of Germanicus to 24 May 16 BC, instead of 15 (4 n.24, 13, and 152). After stating that Germanicus appears on the Ara Pacis as the nearly two and a half year-old boy holding his mother's hand, Powell fails to apply this fact to determine Germanicus' age (6-7). Footnote 39 (on page 6) on the Ara Pacis, cites only articles from 1903-22, as if there were no new excavations and scholarship on this topic ever since. Powell thus incorrectly claims that Augustus appears as

the *Pontifex Maximus* (he was not elected until March 12 BC), that Agrippa may be veiled because he died soon after (he is veiled as an officiating priest), and that a (foreign) boy is a girl. By failing to fix this, Powell has missed a number of important and germane facts to his study.

The book will certainly appeal to some general readers, Powell is best when examining warfare, but is not as satisfying on the politics of power. His mild defense of Tiberius is noteworthy, but not properly verified, even though he may be correct. If this book encourages other scholars to study the also-rans of the imperial court such as Postumus Agrippa, Drusus the Younger, Statilius Taurus, Octavia, Antonia, and the sisters of Agrippina, it will perform a service. Germanicus never suffered from neglect, but the need for a more scholarly biography remains.

Sampson, Gareth C. *The Collapse of Rome: Marius, Sulla & the 1st Civil War (91-70BC)*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2013. Pp. 284; ISBN 9781848843264, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Juan Strisino, JStrisino@aol.com

There has been a proliferation of books published recently which examine the military, political and social impacts that contributed to the demise of the Roman Republic, notably: Seth Kendall's, *The Struggle for Roman Citizenship* (2013), Christopher Dart's, *The Social War 91 to 88 BCE* (2014) and Philip Matyszak's, *Cataclysm 90 BC* (2014) to name but a few. Sandwiched amongst these is the publication of Gareth Sampson's *The Collapse of Rome*. Sampson's other works, *The Defeat of Rome* (2008) and *The Crisis of Rome* (2010) place him in a good position to undertake an examination of the first Civil War. *The Collapse of Rome* is an ideal continuation to the latter and prelude to the former.

Arising from the author's 2001 master's thesis and subsequent articles, the book contains eleven chapters, ten maps, sixteen plates, four tactical diagrams, three appendices, a timeline, notes on Roman names, endnotes (including ancient references), bibliography, and an index. In the introduction, Sampson points to the modern orthodoxies about the period based on separate studies of the events (Sertorian War or Social War etc.), the over-emphasis on individuals (Marius, Sulla, *et al*) and seeing two specific sides in the conflict (*optimates v populares*) and contends that these approaches are too "compartmentalised." His contribution is to move to a wider approach where Rome, in two decades, experienced "crises that were all interlinked and overlapping, forming into one whole... [thus the traditional views fail] to



appreciate the whole picture of the ‘collapse and recovery’ of the Republic” (2).

His methodology is chronological with some overlap. Chapters one and two set the scene with neat and informative discussions about the events leading to Civil War. Sampson examines the political and military roles of the significant players (from the Gracchi onwards), the shift in politics away from senatorial control into the hands of the Tribunate, the rise of powerful individuals, domestic murder and violence, and access to Roman citizenship by those with Italian citizenship. It was factors such as these that, according to Sampson, were current, on-going, and waiting “in the background, a powder keg in need of a spark to explode” (10). Sampson goes on to detail the repercussions, listing and discussing numerous battles, many of which are unnamed concluding that the situation remained volatile in spite of Roman military successes.

Chapters three to eleven describe events down to 70 BC. The majority of known/unknown battles, political and social themes, and individuals, are scrutinized: including the Marsic and Samnite campaigns, the Thracian, Mithridatic, Transalpine Wars, conflicts in the streets of Rome, the sack of Rome, the Cinnan regime and the wars in Italy, Spain (the Sertorian War) and Asia. Key to all this conflict are the personalities and their failure, in an uncompromising system, to accommodate individual or group needs. This can be seen, according to Sampson, on two fronts: the incapacity to deal with the citizenship issue; and by the contending aspirations of leading men in a world where progression was attained by soliciting alliances, violence and/or manipulation. Yet Sampson (with acknowledgement (216) to Flower, *Roman Republics*, 2010) points to a “new Republic” emerging in 70 BC, one, that in spite of all the, political, military and social commotion, “continued to function” at its core (217). This was due to those hidden from the sources, the “neutrals” as Sampson calls them. They worked scrupulously to administer the mechanisms of the Republican system which enabled it to continue for another 40 plus years, but do not get the credit as the historical accounts, patchy though they are, focus on the main characters.

Appendixes I to III detail Rome’s growth abroad (Cilicia, Pontus, Bithynia, etc) whilst concurrently fighting a civil war in Italy, the overthrows of 65 and 63 BC and a useful list of purported Roman senatorial casualties of the Civil War and how, when, and where they met their deaths.

Sampson has consolidated the political, social and military events of 91 to 70 BC in a comprehensive,

balanced, well-referenced (ancient and modern) and accessible account of a multifaceted period of history. In conclusion, there remain a few weaknesses: the title may be misleading as Rome continued for centuries as did its wars; there are speculative views, which, although cautious, are inevitable when the evidence is so limited (as he acknowledges); some omissions in the bibliography include García Morá’s two-volume study on Sertorius (1992); Ballesteros Pastor’s, *Mitridates* (1996); Mayor’s, *The Poison King* (2010); the reviewer’s article on Sertorius’ capture of Suessa (Latomus, 2002); Perhaps written for the general public with an interest in the Late Roman Republic, this work should not be ignored by the scholarly fraternity.

Nic Fields, *AD 69: Emperors, Armies & Anarchy*, Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2014. Pp. 256, \$34.95, ISBN 9781781591888, hardback.

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The intended readership is evidently novices and military buffs. A Prologue, Introduction, nine chapters, and an Epilogue rush through the tumultuous “game of thrones” (used six times) from the end of Nero’s Principate in the spring of 68 to the establishment of Vespasian’s in December 69 in 110 pages. This rapid pace prohibits analysis of the motives and character of the imperial candidates or the shifting sentiments of the armies. The Romans were a violent, barbarous people with a penchant for war (xix-xx). Eleven appendices (58 pages) offer basic information on a variety of topics, but only two belong to the book: imperial succession (including Galba’s effort to establish security through the adoption of Piso), and the sources. The 25 b&w plates are clear. Fields is good in discussing the military mentality and, with the assistance of maps and personal photos, the effect of the low-lying terrain on the decisive battles east of Cremona. Many entries in the bibliography do not appear in the notes.

Fields meticulously traces the movements of the legions but frequently wanders off into digressions which hinder comprehension of events. Vitellius’ gluttony leads to a treatment of banquets and a menu (46-48); the necessity of physical fitness precedes Civilis’ revolt (76); a vitriolic attack on current politicians in the UK is admittedly “political grandstanding” (xxiii and 151-54). Far better to assess the inadequacies of our knowledge. To what extent did Flavian propagandists influence treatment of the defeated rivals? Was Otho scarcely more than a Neronian playboy partially redeemed by his suicide? Was Vitellius no more than the piggy caricature of Suetonius and others? Flavian scheming to promote the candidacy of Vespasian begs for careful analysis.



The minimally relevant appendices survey the composition of the army and the military diet. In the discussion of the sources (app. 11) Fields never assesses the significance of Suetonius, Plutarch, Dio and Josephus. Tacitus' artful account deserves closer attention. The pinnacle of his career was not under Domitian (147), as the consulship in 97 and proconsular governorship of Asia in 112 were more prestigious. The author's casualness ("gentle reader" twice; "O yes, I forgot to tell you..." [44]) is irritating. Anyone who reads a fuller account will discover the multitude of omissions, most conspicuously perhaps the devastation of Rome in the fighting between Flavians under Antonius Primus and the loyal Vitellians who refused to quit even when Vitellius had abandoned hope.

An abundance of errors of varying degrees of seriousness prove inexcusably sloppy proofreading. Two genealogical mistakes might trip the unwary. Claudius and Nero were not cousins (vi): Claudius' brother Germanicus was Nero's grandfather, so Claudius was Nero's great-uncle. Nero was a descendant not an ancestor of Mark Antony (20). Legionary fortresses were not "generally" double prior to Domitian (39). Only three permanent fortresses held two legions: Vetera, Moguntiacum and Nicopolis. Bonna is more like 80 than 20 miles from Moguntiacum (39). The legate of III Gallica is Aurelius Fulvus, not Fulfinius (51, also wrong in Index); and the governor of Asia is a *proconsularis*, not *proconsulare* (148 twice, and 156).

Incorrect words and bad Latin: a "pretty tyrant" (20); not "moral" but "morale" (twice, 28-29); "scrounge", not "scourge" (72); a climate is "debilitating", not "deliberating" (74); "elude" should be "allude to" (148); "*eminence grise*", not "*eminent*" (151); and "bowel" not "bowl" (178 n.44); legion I is *Germanica* (79); *imperium*, not *imperio* (80); *contubernium* (115) should be *contubernales*, as the reference is to the men not the unit; the plural of *clipeus* is *clipei* (118). The discussion of types of *lorica* on 126 gives *segmentata* twice and skips *squamata*.

In short: there is nothing here for the specialist and the beginner must read with care.

Godfrey Hutchinson, *Sparta: Unfit for Empire 404-362 BC*. London: Frontline Books, 2014. Pp 1, 296. ISBN 9781848322226. £25

Reviewed by Dirk Yarker, Rose State College, dyarker@rose.edu

Sparta has long been a fascination for historians and history enthusiasts alike. In recent years interest in Sparta

has grown whether it be covering their political, economic, or military history. Hutchinson aims to shine the light on the military history of Sparta after the Peloponnesian War to explain why despite their strong position, they failed to permanently cement their domination over Greece. Hutchinson clearly caters this study towards those familiar with military history and ancient Greece, however, general readers of history would likely struggle with some aspects of this text.

Hutchinson investigates the military tactics, strategies, and leadership of Sparta in comparison to its competition in order to explain its downfall. Hutchinson demonstrates the failure of Sparta to adapt its social institutions and military tactics contributed to its gradual downfall. Throughout the text there is heavy use of both primary and secondary sources. The main primary source is Xenophon since he had a great deal of surviving material, but also he lived during the period of time in question. He references Plutarch and Diodoros as well since they write heavily on the people and events of the topic. Many readers might find the Appendix useful for understanding Sparta's ancient military history. This particular study provides a balanced picture addressing the problems of leadership, military strategy, and state institutions explaining why these factors contributed to the decline of Sparta.

While Hutchinson provides a great deal of information on ancient military history in relation to ancient Greece after the Peloponnesian War, his presentation of the material could be improved. He states this is a study of the military history of ancient Greece from the end of the Peloponnesian War to the Battle of Second Mantinea. He goes on to write that the military history of Sparta, Athens, and Thebes will be explored at length. Gradually, he argues that the focus will ultimately be on Sparta and how through a series of events became a second rate power. Hutchinson goes on to write that the topography, leadership, and military tactics will be the focus of the study with some aspects of diplomacy. Within the introduction the goal is not entirely clear, and seems to be attempting to cover a lot of ground on many topics. Through the process of reading through the text you can piece together this main goal of Sparta not being able to maintain its power. The remaining chapters are a narrative of the military history of this period of time with some discussion of diplomacy. Furthermore, Hutchinson doesn't bring the points made in the introduction to the chapter narrative in a clear and concise manner. The information offered is good information, but connecting this information to the themes of his objective could have been improved.



Hutchinson has provided a complete study of Sparta after the Peloponnesian War in regard to its military history. The evidence used is likely the closest we can get to the Spartan perspective due to the current lack of surviving evidence. The goal of the study is to connect the military history of Sparta during this period to the bigger picture of Sparta's overall history. The political and social make up of Sparta along with the State institutions of the Agoge and helots certainly contributed to the decline. However, the lack of adaptation by Sparta with its contemporaries both militarily and socially had harrowing consequences. Hutchinson looks in depth into the leaders of Sparta, Thebes, and Athens to track their accomplishments, motivations, and failures. He follows

this same formula to dissect the military strategy and tactics of each city-state. By the end it becomes quite clear that Sparta was reduced through attrition. Sparta did not move away from the helot system or even relax their society from the period of the Lycurgus reforms. Additionally, they did not adapt their military to include more missile troops or adjust their equipment. While Sparta was feared militarily and won many battles, eventually fighting too many wars and its inability to recruit more men led to its decline. Hutchinson demonstrates how interconnected military history is to the broader elements of its history.

Book Announcement

Lee L. Brice announces the publication of *Brill Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean. Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, vol. 1*. Eds. Tim Howe and Lee L. Brice. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

To have your event or news included in the next issue of *Res Militares*, please contact Dr. Ioannis Georganas: 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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