



The Society of Ancient Military Historians

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Message from the Secretary

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

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, 2019

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 at this time in their studies.

Barnett, G. *Emulating Alexander: How Alexander the Great's Legacy Fueled Rome's Wars with Persia*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp. 232; ISBN: 9781526703002, hbk.

Bishop, M.C. *Lucius Verus and the Roman Defence of the East*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2018. pp.176;

ISBN: 9781473847606, hbk.

Elliott, S. *Septimus Severus in Scotland: The Northern Campaigns of the First Hammer of the Scots*. Barnsley, UK: Greenhill Books, 2018. pp.208; ISBN: 9781784382049, hbk.

Farrokh, K. *The Sassanians*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp. 504; ISBN: 9781848848450, hbk.

Fratantuono, L. *Lucullus: The Life and Campaigns of a Roman Conqueror*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.208; ISBN: 9781473883611, hbk.

Frantantuono, L. *Caligula: An Unexpected General*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.240; ISBN: 9781526711205, hbk.

Gabriel, R.A. *Great Generals of the Ancient World: The Personality, Intellectual and Leadership Traits That Made Them Great*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. Pp.327; ISBN: 9781473859081, hbk.

*Gils, Lidewij van, Irene de Jong, and Caroline Kroon, eds. *Textual Strategies in Ancient War Narrative: Thermopylae, Cannae, and Beyond*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Heath, J.M. *Warfare in Neolithic Europe, An Archaeological and Anthropological Analysis*. Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.168; ISBN: 9781473879850, hbk.



Heather, P. *Rome Resurgent: War and Empire in the Age of Justinian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. pp.408; ISBN: 9780199362745, hbk.

Hughes, I. *Gaiseric: the Vandal who Destroyed Rome*. Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.304; ISBN: 9781781590188, hbk.

Hyden, M. *Gaius Marius: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Saviour*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.344; ISBN: 9781526702333, hbk.

MacDowall, S. *The Goths*. Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.184; ISBN: 9781473837645, hbk.

McHugh, J.S. *Emperor Alexander Severus: Rome's Age of Insurrection, AD222-235*. Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.352; ISBN: 9781473845817, hbk.

Roberts, M. *Hannibal's road. The Second Punic War in Italy 213-203 BC*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.288; ISBN 978147385595, hbk.

Roisman, J. *The Classical Art of Command: Eight Greek Generals Who Shaped the History of Warfare*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.392. ISBN: 9780199985821, hbk,

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

Syvanne, I. *Caracalla: A Military Biography*. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2017. pp.368 ISBN: 9781473895249, hbk.

*Tritle, L.A and Warren, J.W., eds. *The Many Faces of War*. Los Angeles: Tsehah Publishers, 2018. pp.412; ISBN: 9781941392188, hbk.

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

Naiden, F. S. *Soldier, Priest, and God: A Life of Alexander the Great*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2019. Pp. 417; \$27.95, ISBN: 9780190875343, hdbk.

Reviewed by Edward M. Anson, emanson@ualr.edu

In Professor Fred Naiden's *Soldier, Priest and God: A Life of Alexander the Great*, Alexander's campaign is presented from a religious assessment. While Alexander's personal religiosity and his quest for a "special" status have been examined, his priestly role has been mostly neglected. The most interesting part of this analysis concerns Alexander's interaction with the various religious traditions that he encountered before and on his conquests. These sections contain elaborate explanations of both these traditions and Alexander's responses to them. Each of the eleven chapters presents Macedonian traditions and Alexander's conquest from a clearly religious perspective. For Naiden, Alexander saw his campaign as a personal Holy War; the Hetairoi, the Companions, as a religious fraternity; Babylon surrendered to Alexander in part because he agreed to become their sacral king; the rebellion in Bactria and Sogdiana resulted from Alexander not respecting certain religious norms of the population; part of Alexander's conflict with his Macedonians was due to his religious policy toward foreigners conflicting with the "cult of the companions." Scholars will especially appreciate the appendices found at the end of the text. These list references in the Alexander historians and certain other authors to "Occasional Acts of Sacrifice, including Libations," "Omens and Oracles," "Acts of Supplication," and "Formal Meetings of Alexander's Companions." These are all broken down into subcategories. For example, the appendix "Omens and Oracles" lists these by source, time and place, interpreter/source, type, interpretation; and the appendix "Formal Meetings," source, Date/Place/Issue, Summons; Question, Speakers, Response, and Results. The book also includes a chronology of events and a "Glossary of Gods and Lesser Beings," which will be useful to general readers.

One difficulty with the text comes from its intended audience. As Professor Naiden states, his book is meant for an educated lay audience which excuses some of the objections that scholars may raise with respect to this work. It does often elaborate on our source material without, or with little, argumentation or evidence, and many controversial issues are presented with the existence of these controversies only noted in brief footnotes. Some of the religious connections also appear a bit forced. However, despite these objections the value of *Soldier, Priest, and God: A Life of Alexander the Great* far and away outweighs these apparent efforts to make the narrative more acceptable to a more general audience.



Sampson, Gareth C. *Rome Spreads Her Wings: Territorial Expansion between the Punic Wars*. Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2016. Pp. vii, 278; \$39.95, ISBN: 9781783030552, hdbk.

Reviewed by Cary Barber, barberc@wfu.edu.

For Gareth Sampson, the decades between the First Punic War and the war with Hannibal represent “a critical period in Roman military history” “usually passed over” by modern scholars (xvi). Sampson aims to fill this gap – primarily for a popular audience – through his analysis of the Republic’s diplomatic and military engagements from 241-218 BCE. Overall, Sampson is successful in constructing colorful and accessible narratives from the meager source record for Roman military activity in these years. But for those looking for a coherent explanation of the Republic’s policy decisions in light of Rome’s political, social, economic, military, and religious institutions, Sampson’s work is likely to uncover more gaps than it fills.

The work is divided into four sections. Part I offers a conventional narrative for Rome’s Italian expansion down to the First Punic War (Chapter 1) and describes the Republic’s conquest of Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily (Chapter 2). Sampson posits a potential Roman “grand strategy for Roman expansion” (24) in Sardinia: rather than a defense against Carthage, the island would serve as a launchpad for campaigns into northern Italy (though without citing Feig Vishnia’s arguments to this effect). But the chapter ends with an argument for a more traditional ‘defensive imperialism’ wherein Rome’s buffer-zone expanded alongside its Italian holdings as a reactive strategy of self-protection.

Part II surveys Roman expansion in Italy and the East (238-228) (Chapters 3 and 4) and Rome’s reactions to Carthaginian expansion in Spain (Chapter 5). Sampson lays out Romano-Gallic interactions down to 230 and argues persuasively that Rome defeated Gauls in these years primarily due to divisions within and between Gallic groups. Chapter 4 offers an excellent narrative for Roman and Greek encounters before 228 and highlights the Senate’s commitment to protecting trade alongside Illyrian piracy as the principal motives for Roman involvement in the region (but again without acknowledging Feig Vishnia’s similar arguments). Chapter 5 examines the build-up of Roman tensions with Carthage in Spain and argues that the Ebro treaty was a Roman response to fears of a Gallic invasion. Once that fear was resolved, Sampson argues, Rome would inevitably turn attention back to Hispania as “factions in

the Senate would never be comfortable with a Carthaginian Empire...” (109). What these factions entailed – and how their disagreements were resolved – go unexplained.

Part III (Chapters 6-9) covers Roman expansion in Italy and the Gallic War (228-218). In Chapter 6, Sampson describes the Senate’s sophisticated defensive strategy of spreading Roman forces across the empire. But the Republic’s weak point is northern Italy, and in 225 the Gauls maraud south to sack Rome once again. Chapter 7 narrates the Battle of Telamon, which Sampson rightly identifies as a watershed moment. Chapter 8 describes the successful Roman counterattack against the Gauls, particularly by the controversial consuls of 223. Chapter 9 focuses on Roman strategy in northern Italy aimed at establishing natural defensive borders along the Alps and on the Isthrian peninsula.

Part IV (Chapters 10-11) covers the consequences of Roman expansion (225-218). Chapter 10 on the Second Illyrian War is one of Sampson’s best, and lays out well the complex, overlapping, and conflicting relationships between Rome, the Illyrians, the Macedonians, and the confederations of Greek poleis. Chapter 11 argues that Rome fought Carthage in 218 because it wanted to, and not out of obligation. Importantly, Rome’s confidence derived in large part from the Republic’s string of victories from 241-218, which established Italy as a secure Roman base.

There are moments that experts and non-experts alike will find admirable, particularly Sampson’s smoothing out of the difficult chronology for these years. But the work is nevertheless uneven. Confusions arise at times due to technical ambiguities. Missing, for instance, is a meaningful description of any specific political body that could devise either aggressive or defensive strategies or under whose authority plans might be executed. Thus, when Sampson claims that “in 241 the Romans took the fateful, and some would say inevitable, step and sent a Consul... to establish Rome’s permanent control of [Sicily]...” (18), it is unclear who exactly ‘the Romans’ are and how they determined where ‘Consuls’ were sent. This lack of clarity is likely to be unsatisfying for both experts and non-experts alike. Nor does Sampson name the “some” who claim Roman expansion into Sicily was inevitable – indeed, he often fails to cite ancient and modern authors and to engage meaningfully in field-wide debates (such as the nature of Roman imperialism) that are relevant to his argument and potentially useful for non-expert readers.



But as a work intended primarily for a popular audience, Sampson is successful in presenting a vivid narrative of Roman expansion from 241-218. The jacket illustrations are striking, and readers are aided by several good maps. Unfortunately, the work suffers from misspellings and grammatical errors that sometimes lessen the impact of Sampson's prose.

Christa Steinby, *Rome versus Carthage: The War at Sea*, Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Maritime, 2014. Pp. 228; \$39.95, ISBN: 9781844159192, hdbk.

Reviewed by Joshua R. Hall,
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"Why another book about the Punic Wars?" are the first words one reads under the heading of Steinby's Introduction. Although she does not answer this question directly, through the rest of this readable and interesting volume an explanation is not needed. With *Rome versus Carthage*, Steinby has produced an engaging introduction to the naval aspects of the Punic Wars, one which will benefit anyone who acquires a copy.

The book opens with two introductory chapters, a good general introduction to the topic and then a look at the history of Rome and Carthage before the First Punic War. Steinby clearly sets out her goals in the first of these, saying "one of the objectives of this book is to demonstrate that it was not a case of the agrarian Rome vs. the seafaring Carthage, as has sometimes been presented" (2).

The second chapter is a fairly broad historical introduction. It covers the history of Carthage from its foundation onward, paying particular attention to the state's expansion and conflicts with Greeks. This chapter also traces Rome's growth from a central Italian city to a major power by the time of Pyrrhus' expedition to the west. Most of this discussion is straightforward and uncontroversial, although there are two exceptions. Firstly, she states without comment that "Roman ships participated in the siege of Fidenae in 426" (31). This is based on a notice in Livy (4.34) which is often considered to be a misinterpretation of the word *classis* by his sources. I think that this point needed to be defended. The second interesting point to note is that Steinby argues in favor of the so-called Philinus treaty (41-3).

The first 2.25 pages of the chapter on the First Punic War are used to rightly (in my mind) dismiss the idea that the Romans were "landlubbers" before this conflict. Steinby

confronts Polybius' (1.20.8) statement that this was when they first took to the sea, though she could have dug deeper into the topos of Roman military adaptability. The rest of this chapter provides a thorough overview of the war. Of note, Steinby argues that the *corvus* "should not be seen in the context of the Romans' inexperience in maritime warfare" and points to it having a place in a much wider history of grappling/boarding tactics used in the eastern Mediterranean (68-9).

Chapter 4 looks at the period between the First and Second Punic Wars. It includes a brief overview of a number of events during this time: the Truceless War, Rome taking Sardinia, Roman campaigning in Illyria, and the rise of Barcid power in Spain. The last of these is an interesting discussion which astutely intertwines the affairs in Iberia with the Roman dealings with the Gauls.

The fifth chapter covers the Second Punic War. Steinby's angle for analyzing this conflict is given away in the third paragraph, in which she notes that "naval history cannot, however, be written based on sea battles and other spectacular events: the lack of battles does not make the navies insignificant" (121). Examining the war primarily from this point of view, Steinby comes to a number of conclusions, such as asserting that Hannibal had no intention of investing Rome after the Battle of Lake Trasimene. She says, "from the naval point of view, I find it implausible," going on to make a believable argument that maintaining a naval blockade of the Italian coast would have been difficult and outside of the overall Carthaginian strategy (131). Her narrative of the Second Punic War is a distinctly "naval" one and provides a view of events that other authors do not. This is refreshing in many ways.

The sixth and final chapter provides an overview of Rome and Carthage in the years after the Second Punic War, up to the destruction of the latter in 146 BC. In this, Steinby provides a succinct overview of Roman war-making in the east, to Hannibal's flight to the court of Antiochus, to the siege of Carthage.

Overall, Steinby's book provides a naval-centered view of the conflicts between Rome and Carthage, giving readers a perspective that is not common in modern treatments. The value of this volume should not be underestimated. It is to be recommended to lay-readers as well as to students, both of whom will no doubt find it very helpful; and to academics, too, there is value in seeking out Steinby's views on these ever-important wars. The text is thoroughly cited, helpful for all readers. Superficially, the publication quality is very high, with the text set in a



readable font and size, and bound in a sturdy feeling hardcover.

Hyland, John. *Persian Interventions: The Achaemenid Empire, Athens & Sparta, 450 – 386 BCE*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2017: Pp. 272; \$54.95, ISBN: 9781421423708.

Reviewed by Nikolaus Leo Overtoom,
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Traditionally, scholars have viewed the Persians' geopolitical activity as passive and reactive following their failed invasions of Greece. The Persians established a defensive policy to balance the powerful poleis of Greece (namely Athens and Sparta) in fear of their joint threat to Persian interests in the eastern Mediterranean. John Hyland's book calls these assumptions into question, emphasizing the importance and continued focus of the Persians' considerable agency in their interactions with the Greeks as the Persians endured as unrivaled hegemons.

Hyland rejects that the Persians desired primarily to reclaim and defend western Anatolia from Athenian and Spartan aggression by prolonging Greek conflicts. Instead, he argues that the Persians' claims to universal supremacy and their emphasis on universal order motivated them to act more ambitiously throughout the Aegean world, where they remained the unrivaled power and acted as such. The Persians pursued diplomatic influence over Greek states to reinforce their hegemony and bring Persian order to the Greek world. The prevailing appearance of Persian weakness and indecisiveness in the post-war decades is a legacy of the Hellenocentric historiography and practical limitations (especially economic, political, and military) forced upon Persian ideological goals. The picture that emerges is a refreshing reconsideration of the agency of eastern powers, admittedly still primarily through the lens of Greek sources, but with a careful consideration of the quite different perspective of the Persians. Ultimately, the Persians continued to view the Greeks as subordinates, utilizing diplomatic influence in the Aegean and beyond to establish a favorable relationship where "Persia could view Greek states as beneficiaries of imperial order until the coming of Alexander (168)."

The book has eight chapters with a brief conclusion. Chapter One succinctly introduces the difficulties of the available sources and traditional interpretations of Persian interactions with the Greeks. Here Hyland presents the continued relevance of Persian royal ideology to dominate and control the world and the mistakes, rivalries, and

economic considerations that served as obstacles to ideological goals. Chapter Two argues that by 450 the Persians favored lucrative peace with Athens over a continuation of costly conflict. Economically, the renewal of trade and reduction of military costs balanced the temporary loss of direct control over western Anatolia. Politically, Artaxerxes I could claim to have restored universal order, while forging a new relationship with Athens as an assumed imperial client. Chapter Three discusses the decline of friendly relations between Athens and Persia under Darius II during the Peloponnesian War. By 413 Darius decided to reclaim Ionian tribute directly through his new satraps, Tissaphernes and Phranabazos, who established Sparta as Persia's new assumed imperial client as news of the Sicilian Disaster made the defeat of Athens appear eminent. Chapter Four argues the local rivalry of Tissaphernes and Phranabazos paired with Athenian resilience in the war encouraged the Persians to make unrealistic geopolitical goals and overly generous offers of aid to the Spartans. Tissaphernes' desire to end the war as quickly and efficiently as possible, rather than balancing strategies, explains his shortsighted decisions to reduce funding to the Spartans and begin negotiations with Athens. Chapter Five rejects arguments that Darius recalled the Persian fleet from aiding the Spartans in 411 because of balancing policy. Instead, the missteps of Tissaphernes in western Anatolia made the recall necessary. Chapter Six investigates the Persians' decision to back the Spartans financially, rather than militarily, for the remainder of the war, the relative success of Darius' son, Cyrus, in acting as the Persians' paymaster in Anatolia, and the importance of Persia's financial contribution to Sparta's ultimate victory. Chapter Seven discusses the continued failures of Tissaphernes and the successes of Pharnabazos and the new Persian king, Artaxerxes II, in countering Ionian resistance and Spartan invasion in western Anatolia, concluding that Persia's aggression should have stopped after its victory at Knidos had the defense of western Anatolia been the primary policy. Chapter Eight emphasizes that the Persians were not pursuing balancing policy in their interventions during the Corinthian War (395-387). The King's Peace in 386 extended far beyond Ionia and did not balance the Greek states, favoring the position of Sparta as assumed imperial client. It was a strong message of continued Persian agency and hegemony.

Hyland should be commended for a well-written, well-argued, and engaging read. His fresh perspective on the important role and continued activity of the Persians in the rapidly evolving geopolitics of the eastern Mediterranean creates a much-needed counterbalance to Hellenocentric concepts of Greek history. My major



concerns were the regrettable use of endnotes (a choice of the press) and the lack of a chapter detailing the thirty years between the end of the Greek-Persian wars (479) and the Peace of Kallias (449). That said, although speculation is unavoidable and disagreements are inevitable, Hyland's efforts to bring the agency of the Persians into the conversation is perhaps the book's greatest value to students and scholars.

Ulanowski, Krzysztof, ed. *The Religious Aspects of War in the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome*. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. 419; \$189, ISBN: 9789004324756, ebook.

Reviewed by Isabelle Pafford, isabelle.pafford@sjsu.edu

Assyria, Sparta, Macedon, Rome. For the general public, the mere mention of these places conjures a vaguely colorful, video-game saturated vision of chariots, plumed helmets, and very sharp spears. The religious beliefs of Ashurbanipal or Alexander the Great seem to have little relevance to modern life. It's ancient history, after all. However, anyone who has been deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan knows that the relics of past religious experiences can reverberate even today. Saddam Hussein was obsessed with Gilgamesh as a personal role model, while ISIS destroyed the Roman temples at Palmyra precisely because they embodied an alternative religious ideology. If past events are "like a giant's dead body," defunct religious beliefs are a bit like the detritus from the cataclysm that felled him.

The Religious Aspects of War in the Ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome, edited by Krzysztof Ulanowski does not present the past as a video game, and none of the collected articles could be considered seductive or sensational. They do, however, give the reader a crash course on how certain religious beliefs influenced the military decisions of ancient commanders and combatants, depending on location, historical circumstances, and preserved evidence. For the specialist, the voluminous footnotes and bibliography in this volume are reason enough to give it a look, but a number of contributions challenge conventional interpretations or point the way to new avenues of inquiry. A more general reader can profit from the essays too.

As the first in the series: *Ancient Warfare*, edited by Anthony Spalinger and Davide Nadali, the present volume stems from a conference held in Gdańsk in May, 2014. The nineteen articles are all in English, and are organized by region, with relevant bibliography printed with each contribution. The text is cleanly laid out and well-edited, barring some minor infelicities of English

prose style. Contributors are based in Europe, Russia, Israel, England and Taiwan.

In Part I, both Mander and Sazonov explore the role of the Sumerian kings in restoring cosmic order following battle, and integrating conquered territories into new administrative structures. Sazonov emphasizes that theologically, the king personifies the will of the patron divinity, thus providing justification for warfare. Fink reviews formulaic battle narratives in Sumerian inscriptions. Ulanowski considers battlefield divination, noting the esoteric training of the Mesopotamian *bārû*, vs. the more general skills of the Greek *mantis*. The *mantis* could express opposition to the actions of the general, while the *bārû* could not. Ross also compares Mesopotamian attitudes with Greek, exploring how an eclipse can either trigger or delay battle in both cultures. All five contributions provide extensive textual references and translations.

In Part II, Parker asserts that "leading" questions to an oracle reflect sincere belief in divine power rather than a decline in piety, and points out that although we have many examples of a polis going to war to punish the pillaging of a temple, religious war to impose belief was unimaginable. Both Rung and Antela-Bernárdes consider this point as well in reviewing Alexander's religious justifications for war against the Persians. Ladynin also focuses on Alexander, or rather the religious response of the Egyptians to Alexander's assumption of the pharaonic role. Bruzzone sees a subtle religious subtext in the Plataean narratives of Thucydides, while Agrimonti extensively explores the practical military applications of piety in Xenophon's cavalry manual, the *Hipparchikos*. Jędraszek presents terracotta figurines of the Egyptian divinities Harpocrates and Bes. Macedonian armor links this iconography with the increasing importance of Egyptian auxiliary forces under the Ptolemies. Burliga assesses how the Greeks used mythology to process the moral and ethical dilemmas of warfare. Sekunda attempts to explain the lack of documentary evidence for the cult of Bendis by suggesting that the torch race described in Plato's *Republic* was a venue for radicalizing the ephebic ranks, and was therefore suppressed following the restoration of the democracy at Athens.

In Part III, Hall provides a brief review of military aspects of Etruscan religion. Ionescu, in a very long contribution, analyzes the iconography of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*. Heller elegantly reexamines the military career of Antoninus Pius, emphasizing the connection of the *fetiales* with the concept of the just war (*bellum justum*). Dziurdzik effectively explores the limited evidence for



personal religious experience among soldiers in the Roman Imperial army. Finally, Zissu and Eshel discuss the possibility that the Bar Kokhba revolt was triggered by the Emperor Hadrian's plans for urban renewal, the renaming of Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, and plans for a Roman temple on the Temple Mount.

This is a book written by specialists and aimed at specialists. However, all military historians will find something here that resonates.

Tempest, Kathryn. *Brutus The Noble Conspirator*. Yale University Press, 2017. Pp. xiv, 314. £25.00. ISBN: 9780300180091

Reviewed by Juan Strisino, JStrisino@aol.com

Studies about the Late Roman Republic continue to gather pace and over the years a number of biographies have been published that deal with the leading political and military figures of the period. However, there has, until now, only been sporadic works devoted to Marcus Brutus who is best remembered as playing a part in the lives of other leading political figures and as a character in Shakespeare's tragedy, the main protagonist in the murder of Julius Caesar. However, he did not go unnoticed by ancient authors, notably Plutarch of Chaeronea who afforded him a *Life* there is also Cicero's correspondence with him and the dialogue *Brutus*. Snippets of modern scholarship devoted to Brutus appeared in the 20th century (particularly in German, eg. Gelzer, 1917, Bengston, 1970, Gotter, 1996 to name but a few). Tempest's study is the second thorough examination of Brutus to appear in English in the last few years (along with Kirsty Corrigan's, *Brutus: Caesar's Assassin*, Barnsley, 2015) both of which supersede, Max Radin's, now old-fashioned, *Marcus Brutus* (1939) and M. L. Clarke's fine but limited study *The Noblest Roman – Marcus Brutus and his Reputation* (1981). Tempest sets out to, "...examine how Brutus' life has been transmitted from antiquity to today", by scrutinizing "the sources we use, to understand who is speaking and why", thus making "a significant contribution to the way we think about Brutus' life" (xi). Tempest has stuck to plan.

Tempest begins by considering the sources followed by a review of the various aspects of the Late Republic particularly its political and social systems during the reign of Sulla (the time of Brutus' purported date of birth). Attentively, she weaves through the available evidence (meagre as it is) for Brutus' early life, highlighting the importance to him of his ancestry, image, early life and education, thus setting the scene for Brutus' forthcoming endeavors.

Next, Tempest concentrates on Brutus' political place in the turbulent 50s BCE. He is reported to have chopped and changed allegiance between Pompey and Caesar in the First Civil War, there is his disillusionment with the First Triumvirate and so on. In the 40s, he took advantage of his security under Caesar by enhancing his credentials first as governor of Cisalpine Gaul and then by marrying Porcia, daughter to his uncle Cato the Younger. He also attempted to settle the differences between Pompey and Caesar. Brutus was hopeful, that when Caesar returned from war in Hispania in 45, his objectives would be honorable. The question is: what went wrong? Tempest plays it safe and deliberates over some potential incentives. With Caesar defying Republican conventions coupled with the profuse tributes that were being paid to him, some in the Senate became anxious. For Brutus, his foiled political advancement perhaps was a strong factor. Tempest also emphasizes Brutus' philosophy, particularly the Greek treatises' that influenced his thinking on the dangers of tyranny which, with his strong held Republican traditions, may have provoked the frantic act of assassination.

Tempest then moves on to the much better sourced period following the death of Caesar. Notably, the communications and disparities between himself and Cicero. On the one hand, Cicero criticized him and his associates on their handling of the repercussions of Caesar's murder, particularly handing any advantage to Mark Anthony. Brutus, similarly, was dubious of Cicero's backing of Octavian. In the end, the seeds for disaster had been sewn. In the following several months, Brutus and his followers had been exiled. A Second triumvirate had been established and war was looming. After Philippi in 42, Brutus was dead.

In the final chapter, Tempest considers the differing views, historically, of Brutus' standing following his death. Thus, from Plutarch, who noted Brutus was respected, even by his enemies, through to Dante, who labelled him a traitor and Shakespeare, who used Plutarch for his play, to James Mason's tender portrayal of Brutus in the 1953 film, *Julius Caesar*, there is no escaping the fact that all viewpoints have been and are still guided by his role in the killing of Caesar.

In sum, the writing of ancient biography is faced with the major constraint of the restrictions of the sources. From the outset, Tempest is extremely aware of the limitations of the contemporary material (as she often reminds the reader) and her refusal to offer a complete biography of Brutus is sensible with her response throughout being practical and shrewd. She has used the resources



available prudently to highlight how Brutus has been perceived through time, concluding that he was a mystery then and continues to be now. This is a scholarly, well-written and methodically researched study (as seen in the two detailed and informative appendices, endnotes and bibliography) and will be the standard reference point for further debate as well as our knowledge about him.

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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