

RES MILITARES

The Official Newsletter of the Society of Ancient Military Historians



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The Society of Ancient Military Historians

President: Prof. Jonathan P. Roth
Vice-President: Prof. Jennifer Finn
Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Dr. Ioannis Georganas
Book Reviews Editor: Prof. Brian D. Turner

<https://www.ancientmilitaryhistorians.org/>

Message from the Secretary

It is my great pleasure to present the latest volume of *Res Militares*. As you are going to see, the current issue does not only feature the usual book reviews (which are now also available on our website) and the catalogue of books available for review but also a very informative report on the presence of ancient historians at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Society of Military History, as well as a very helpful guide of how to organize a panel on the aforementioned conference. Moreover, we are introducing a new feature, the **Five Books**; a series in which experts will offer brief descriptions of their top five publications in a specific sub-field of ancient military history.

As always, we are more than happy to receive any inquiries and/or feedback, as well as information about upcoming conferences, events, CFPs, books, and so forth (email: i_georganas@yahoo.com).

Happy reading and Happy Holidays!

Ioannis Georganas

Ancient Historians at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Society of Military History

The Society for Military History held its annual meeting in Mobile, Alabama in March 2025. Several members of the Society of Ancient Military Historians participated by organizing and chairing panels, presenting papers and commentaries, attending discussions, and serving the Society in various positions.

A roundtable devoted to the question of “What is Discipline in Ancient Militaries” was organized by the participants, Lee L. Brice (Western Illinois University and Illinois Wesleyan University), Jessica Clark (Florida State University), Paul Johnston (Air Command and Staff College), and Rosemary Moore (University of Iowa). The inspiration for this panel has been an ongoing conversation among several of the participants and within our field generally on how we define and discuss military discipline. In addition to the presenters, Bret Devereaux (North Carolina State University) and Brian D. Turner (Portland State University) attended and contributed to the conversation. The topic attracted a large audience of specialists in the military history of America, Europe, and Asia and stimulated vigorous and useful discussion.

Among the important points were 1) we should consider whether our authors who are writing in Greek – Polybius, Arrian, Josephus, etc. – have a different understanding of military discipline than our Roman authors; 2) our definitions need to make a distinction between discipline as practice vs as outcome; 3) many societies that did not have the word discipline in their military vocabulary still relied on a form of it, which we could perhaps consider in terms of order and disorder. These were just some of the numerous key points that emerged in an extremely fruitful session to which all the presenters and much of the audience contributed. The conversation will contribute to a planned volume on Discipline/Order and Indiscipline/Disorder in ancient militaries planned for Brill’s *Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World* series.

A panel on “Command and Leadership in the Ancient Roman World” was organized by Lee L. Brice (Western

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Illinois University and Illinois Wesleyan University) and chaired by Paul Johnston (Air Command and Staff College). The panel featured four papers, brief comments, and audience questions. In “Learning *Imperium*: Command and Preparation in the Middle Republic,” Bret Devereaux (North Carolina State University), recognizing Rome’s lack of formal military instruction, showed how senatorial careers and political competition served as institutions of military education for Roman commanders. Rosemary Moore (University of Iowa), in “Gaius Marius’ Reception in Valerius Maximus and Plutarch,” explored the presentation of the republican general’s military leadership in two imperial authors, ultimately revealing changing attitudes towards military command. In “Leading Revolts in the Reign of Emperor Tiberius,” Brian D. Turner (Portland State University) employed a model of multi-polar insurgency to consider leadership and command among Rome’s enemies, specifically Tacfarinas, one of the leaders of the African revolt during the reign of Tiberius. Finally, Lee L. Brice stirred the audience with his paper, “Client Armies in Roman Military History: An Obsolete Concept.” Describing the so-called late republican army as an “historiographical zombie,” Brice not only challenged long held assumptions about Rome’s military mobilization in the first century BCE, but also set the stage for future work critiquing some of the more enduring myths still prevalent in ancient military history. Graduate student Ryan Hom (University of South Florida), presented a paper, “A Martial Analysis of the Indigenous Populations of Sicily during the Ancient Greek Archaic and Classical Periods,” in interdisciplinary panel on “Indigenous Societies and War.”

Although modern (nineteenth to twenty-first century) history continues to dominate the SMH, these panels and presenters illustrate a growing concern to incorporate more pre-modern (and especially) ancient history into the broader field of military history. If you are member of the Society for Ancient Military Historians, consider joining colleagues at the 2026 SMH in Arlington, Virginia or organizing a panel for a future meeting. See also Jessica H. Clark’s contribution to this newsletter.

Lee L. Brice, Brian D. Turner

Submitting a Proposal for the Society for Military History Annual Meeting

The Society for Military History (smh-hq.org/) holds its annual meeting in the spring of each year, with the Call for Papers generally publicized over the summer. While the focus of most talks at the SMH’s annual meeting is on the modern era, the program – which includes sessions on professional matters and employment opportunities, publishing, and developments in the field – regularly includes panels on ancient and other premodern military-historical topics.

If you’re interested in appearing on the program, note that the SMH gives preference to fully-formed panels in its selection process (which is outlined in the annual CFP). Panel submissions should offer a clear and compelling rationale for their scope, content, and speakers (generally limited to a panel chair, three papers, and an optional respondent). The process is not anonymized: panel organizers are asked to explain the selection of speakers as part of a panel’s rationale, and all participants submit one-page CVs. Abstracts for the SMH do not include citations or bibliography and, without oversimplifying their subject or arguments, should be written for an audience without a background in ancient history. That is, an abstract for the SMH generally looks quite different from one you might submit to another professional association.

SAMH officers are happy to help connect people looking to build panels, so reach out next year if you’re interested. And, if you’ve never attended an SMH meeting and it’s practical for you to think about doing so, be sure to look out for more information about the 2026 meeting in January.

Jessica Clark

Five Books

Ancient Military History remains a vibrant field with several popular sub-specialties. Borrowing from a popular online concept, the editors of *Res Militares* are announcing the start of *Five Books*, a series in which experts will offer brief descriptions of their top five publications in a specific sub-field of ancient military history. Each of the five books

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on the list is accompanied by a 100-word summary, a sort of mini-review that explains the value of the book to the field. Each *Five Books* publication allows authors to highlight recent scholarly developments and remind readers of older but still influential publications. *Five Books* is not meant to be a final word; rather, it is an entry point for readers to begin their study. Keep an eye on the website for new lists throughout the year.

Jenn Finn, “Five Books on Achaemenid-Persian Military History”.

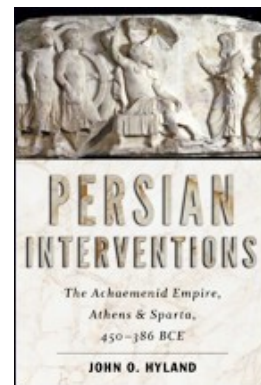
Our first *Five Books* list comes from Jenn Finn, associate professor and chairperson of Classical Studies at Loyola University Chicago. She has published widely on all aspects of Mediterranean history, including cross-cultural contacts, Roman reception of the Classical Greek world, and ancient military history. Her first book, *Much Ado about Marduk*, was published with de Gruyter in 2017. Her second book, *Contested Pasts: A Determinist History of Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire*, was published in 2022 with the University of Michigan Press. She has recently edited *Brill’s Companion to Courage and Cowardice in Ancient Mediterranean Warfare*, to be published with Brill/de Gruyter in December 2025. She teaches courses on ancient military history; the Ancient Near East; and power, historiography, and revisionism in the ancient world. Her top five books are presented in no particular order.

1. Manning, S. (2021). *Armed Force in the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire: Past Approaches, Future Prospects*. Stuttgart. [\[link\]](#)



In this revised PhD dissertation, Sean Manning begins his thorough investigation of the Achaemenid army in the 6th-4th centuries BCE by providing an extensive evaluation of the historiographical history of Achaemenid military studies, as well as the Near Eastern precursors to the Achaemenid project. Through a laudable reliance on material records and the synthesization of previous scholarly summaries, Manning provides a good overview of the field and suggests new directions for research.

2. Hyland, J. (2017). *Persian Interventions: The Achaemenid Empire, Athens, and Sparta, 450-386 BCE*. Baltimore. [\[link\]](#)



Hyland’s work in this monograph serves as a revisionist history of previous scholarship on many aspects of 5th and 4th century Achaemenid military affairs. The most important aspect of the work is a reevaluation of Persian diplomatic and military relations during the fifth and fourth

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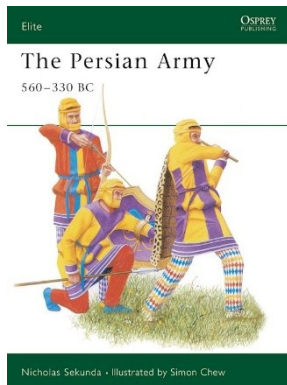
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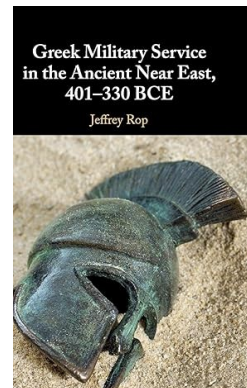
centuries. It views Achaemenid interactions with Greece as a part of a global grand strategy (with a heavy emphasis on financial interventions) to establish the truth of Achaemenid world domination and minimize Greek political disturbances to Persian affairs inside of the empire. This book is of exceptionally high quality and will be aptly paired with the same author's new work, *Persia's Greek Campaigns* (to be published by Oxford in December 2025).

3. Sekunda, N.V. (1992). *The Persian Army, 560–330 BC*. London. [\[link\]](#)



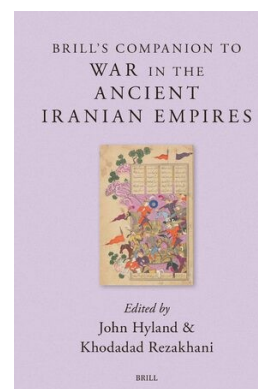
While now outdated by more recent research, this volume does just what one might expect an Osprey volume to do: present a useful introduction to the nuts and bolts of Achaemenid warfare, including its development early in the reign of Darius I; the unique nature of the Achaemenid national professional army; and its attempts to adapt and change in the face of the campaigns of Alexander the Great. It provides easily digestible illustrations that bring Persian weaponry—and particularly uniforms—to life.

4. Rop, J. (2019). *Greek Military Service in the Ancient Near East, 401-330 BCE*. Cambridge/New York. [\[link\]](#)



This is an incredibly important book in that one of its main goals is to deconstruct the so-called “Greek Thesis,” which argues that the Persians recruited Greek soldiers when in military need because of the perceived superiority of their training, tactics, and weaponry. Through case studies of the March of the 10,000 and Greek interventions in Persian Egypt and Anatolia in the 4th century BCE, Rop argues against a devaluation of Persian military ability in favor of a more balanced and realistic approach where ancient armies are understood in their own cultural, geographical, and political contexts.

5. Hyland, J. and Rezakhani, K. (eds.) (2024). *Brill's Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*. Leiden/Boston. [\[link\]](#)



This new edited volume is a welcome addition to scholarship on warfare in ancient Iranian empires, compiling contributions from experts on the forefront of

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Persian military research. The volume contains 7 chapters specifically pertaining to the Achaemenids, with topics ranging from military ideology, campaign logistics, grand strategy, and diplomacy. 13 more chapters cover later periods but many also develop their argument by demonstrating the evolution of military affairs from the Achaemenid to the Sasanian empires.

New Book Series Announcement

De Gruyter Brill is pleased to announce a new series devoted to **Global Ancient Military History**. The series seeks monographs and edited volumes on any topic connected with ancient military history or warfare set anywhere in the world. Volumes on ancient Chinese history, or Ancient India, or Africa, or the Americas are welcome as are traditional western topics in Classical, Persian, or Egyptian history. Proposals may include a mixture of regions. Published volumes will receive blind peer review and there are no subvention fees.

If you have questions or to seek clarification on your topic or proposal contact the Series Editor, Lee L. Brice (llbrice@wiu.edu).

Books Available for Review, 2026

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 brian.turner@pdx.edu, with a subject line formatted as follows: "SAMH-[Reviewer last name] on [Book author's last name]". They should state their qualifications (in the sense of degrees held, experience in the field concerned, and any potential relationships with the authors). Volunteers are expected to be familiar with the topics and will submit reviews of no more than 800 words (unless arranged by the editor) 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.

In order to facilitate the timely dissemination of our colleagues' work, pre-publication copies of Book Reviews are also presented online via this [link](#). These digital reviews also include Tables of Content for edited volumes.

* Anson, Edward M., ed. *Brill's Companion to the Campaigns of Philip II and Alexander the Great*. Brill's Companions to Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, 10. Brill, 2024.

* Biglino, Fabrizio. *The War Economy of the Roman Republic (406-100 BCE)*. Mnemosyne Supplements: History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity, 487. Brill, 2025.

* Brice, Lee L. and Elizabeth M. Greene, eds. *Women and the Army in the Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press, 2024.

Carney, Elizabeth, D. Carney and Sabine Müller. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Women and War in the Mediterranean World*. Brill's Companions to Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, 11. Brill, 2025.

* Eberle, Lisa Pilar and Myles Lavan, eds. *Unrest in the Roman Empire: A Discursive History*. Campus Verlag, 2024.

Fields, Nic. *Leuketra*. Helion, 2025.

Finn, Jenn, ed. *Brill's Companion to Courage and Cowardice in Ancient Warfare*. Brill's Companions to Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, 12. Brill, 2025.

* Hyland, John, O. and Khodadad Rezakhani, eds. *Brill's Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*. Brill's Companions to Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, 9. Brill, 2024.

* Kvapil, Lynne and Kim Shelton, eds. *Brill's Companion to Warfare in the Bronze Age Aegean*. Brill's Companions to Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World, 6. Brill, 2023.

Loschiavo, Luca, ed. *The Civilian Legacy of the Roman Army: Military Models in the Post-Roman World*. History of warfare, 144. Brill, 2024.

Taylor, Richard. *The Army of Alexander*. Helion, 2025.

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Publishers and Authors

If you have book available for review, please contact the Book Reviews Editor, [Prof. Brian D. Turner](#), with

Book Reviews

Nikoloutsos, Konstantinos P., ed. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare on Film*. Leiden: Brill, 2023. ISBN: 9789004686816.

Reviewed By Darel Tai Engen, California State University San Marcos, dengen@csusm.edu

Studies in classical reception have appeared with increasing frequency in recent years, covering a wide variety of popular media, topics, and themes. However, as emphasized by editor Konstantinos Nikoloutsos in his introduction to this extensive collection (576 pages of text) featuring chapters by 20 authors, a surprising omission from this scholarship has been a book devoted specifically to the cinematic depiction of warfare in the classical world. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare on Film*, which is part of the Brill's Companions in Classical Studies series, helps to fill this gap. Some readers might feel misled by the term "warfare" in the title since few chapters focus narrowly on the depiction of battles and fewer still devote much space to the fraught issue of "historical accuracy". However, the chapters, whose target audience is classicists and ancient historians, represent the cutting edge of classical reception studies, treating a wide selection of movies through a variety of approaches on the depiction of warfare in its broadest sense. Altogether, the collection is a stimulating and valuable addition to the corpus of classical reception studies on an essential topic by some of the best scholars in the field.

The book is divided into eight thematic parts, containing from one to five chapters each. Part 1 consists of an introduction by the editor that situates this book within reception scholarship, stresses how films in this genre often represent receptions of earlier receptions of the ancient sources, and explains how recent studies typically go beyond questions of historical accuracy to consider the artistic, technical, commercial, and political aspects of these films.

Part 2 contains the books only sustained analysis of the historical accuracy of cinematic depictions and ancient

information, including publication details and available formats. After we have identified a reviewer, we kindly ask publishers to send the book directly to the reviewers.

Greek and Roman warfare. Jeremy Armstrong's chapter shows that movies depicting the Roman army in battle have straddled a fine line between historical accuracy and artistic license to create stereotypes to serve modern agendas that glorify "uncivilized" yet natural and free rebels against "civilized," well-organized, machine-like, and oppressive Romans. In Chapter 3 Elias Koulakiotis argues that Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (2004) depicts warfare both from a historical birds-eye view of the Battle of Gaugamela, which emphasizes the ordered formations and strategy described in ancient sources, and from a heroic perspective in the midst of the Battle of the Hydaspes River, which portrays the great leader in hand-to-hand combat. This progression in battle perspectives visually expresses Alexander's spiritual journey from naïve idealism and personal ambition to an understanding of the harsh realities of war and its demand for self-sacrifice.

Part 3 approaches cinematic depictions of warfare in ancient Greece and Rome through the lens of the film industry's star-making machine. In Chapter 4 Michael Williams uses *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) and *Cleopatra* (1934) as case studies to show that Hollywood studios and the fan press tied movie stars and the Roman military commanders they portrayed to contemporary ideas about leadership, politics, gender, and sexuality to attract audiences back into movie theaters during the Great Depression. Chapter 5 by Djoymi Baker compares stars Brad Pitt in *Troy* (2004) and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson in *Hercules* (2014) to illustrate shifting audience tastes concerning the physiques of Hollywood leading men, how digital enhancement complicates audience demands for authenticity, and the impact of these phenomena on the filmic depiction of ancient Greek martial heroes.

The four chapters of Part 4 investigate the subject of women in ancient Greek and Roman warfare on screen. In Chapter 8 Irene Berti surveys depictions of women warriors in film since 2000 and concludes that they betray a distinction between American and non-American



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productions. The former, such as *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014) and its depiction of the warrior queen Artemisia, reflect modern gender norms such that even females who “fight like men” must also be hyper-feminine vixens who manipulate men with their sexual charms. On the other hand, non-American productions depict female military leaders, including the title characters in *Boudica, Warrior Queen* (2003, UK), *Boudica: Rise of a Warrior Queen* (2019, UK), and *The Legend of Tomiris* (2019, Kazakhstan), as liberated, feminist, national icons. Anastasia Bakogianni’s Chapter 10 focuses on the impact of warfare on non-combatant women in modern Greek cinema through a comparison of the films of Michael Cacoyannis (*Electra* [1962], *The Trojan Women* [1971], *Iphigenia* [1977]) and Theo Angelopoulos (*Reconstruction* [1970], *The Traveling Players* [1975]). She shows how both filmmakers use the Trojan War as a vehicle to promote anti-war agendas through the perspective of women but in different cinematic ways. Whereas Cacoyannis maintains the ancient Greek settings of his sources, Angelopoulos sets his movies in modern Greece while drawing on the Trojan War as inspiration for his plots and characters.

Part 5 contains two chapters on Western colonialism and racism, including Arthur Pomeroy’s study of three Italian films that reveal how reception of Salgari’s 1906 novel about the Punic Wars, *Cartagine in fiamme*, changed over time. Although Pastrone’s *Cabiria* (1914) glorifies pre-WWI Italian imperialism and Gallone’s *Scipione l’africano* (1937) promotes the ideology of unity through a supreme leader during the Fascist period, Gallone’s post-Fascist *Cartagine in fiamme* (1960) rejects notions of Italy’s imperial greatness and opts for an intimate story of a doomed romance with the Punic Wars only as a historical backdrop. In Chapter 12 Sean Easton argues that the depictions of the Battle of the Hydaspes River and the subsequent mutiny of Alexander the Great’s army in Modi’s *Sikander* (1941) and the various iterations of Stone’s *Alexander* (2004-2014) illustrate how the two directors used cinematographic experimentation to express contrasting themes. Modi reused violent battle scenes from Gallone’s *Scipione l’africano* (1937) to make a statement against both Fascist and British colonialism. Stone uses color coding, including infrared film stock, to emphasize the brutality of battle and align the audience’s perception with that of the wounded Alexander, whose ambition and

disregard for danger cannot be matched by his army, whose mutiny figuratively kills him and his dream of world conquest.

The longest section of the book, Part 6, includes five chapters on the impact of modern politics on depictions of ancient warfare in film. Robert Rushing takes a unique approach in Chapter 14 by considering how sound, particularly the musical score, serves as a subliminal political signifier in 1950s-1960s peplum films. These films promote a populist, peaceful, and benevolent authoritarianism by accompanying scenes of legitimate monarchies with soundtracks of sweeping melodies and rich harmonies, while employing cacophonous noise and exotic music to accompany scenes of the warfare and decadent palace life associated with illegitimate tyrants. Italian films remain the focus of the next chapter by Renata Senna Garraffoni, who examines *Fellini-Satyricon* (1969) and argues that the famous director created a metahistorical film that reflects the anti-military zeitgeist of the 1960s. Drawing inspiration from such earthy ancient sources as Petronius’ *Satyricon* for storyline and Pompeian wall paintings for visual cues, Fellini imagines the private lives and loves of ordinary ancient Romans that have been overshadowed by the glorification of warfare and military leaders that dominates most ancient sources and their epic film receptions.

Twenty-first century films portraying the brutality of war, the impact of war on veterans, and asymmetric warfare and counterinsurgency are the subject of Part 7. In Chapter 18 Hannah-Marie Chidwick investigates the increasingly graphic depiction of violence in scenes of warfare in post-*Gladiator* (2000) films set in ancient Rome, including *Centurion* (2010), *The Last Legion* (2007), and *The Eagle* (2011). Approaching these films through the lens of violence studies and critical military studies and analyzing viewer comments on YouTube clips, she argues that these movies’ hyper-violent depictions of battle follow recent trends in cinema to convey a ready-made sense of authenticity that upholds viewers’ expectations of what Roman warfare “should” look like, thereby perpetuating film-industry and ideologically driven myths at the expense of historical reality. Brett Ratner’s *Hercules* (2014) features again in Chapter 19 by Owen Rees, this time in an examination of its portrayal of military veterans. Rees argues that Ratner simplifies and de-mythologizes



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Hercules' story to present the hero as a veteran of war in a manner that upholds audience expectations of the veteran experience based on earlier film traditions, while acknowledging society's ambivalent attitude toward such men.

The entire collection is concluded in Part 8 with an epilogue by series editor Lee L. Brice, who summarizes common themes running through the chapters and offers suggestions for further research on the depiction of ancient Greek and Roman warfare in film. *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare on Film* is a stimulating and useful book on an essential aspect of classical reception. Well-edited with a minimum of errors, each chapter contains thorough bibliographies and filmographies, and the entire collection is covered by a short index, making this book a valuable resource for those doing research in the field. Its score of chapters by some of the most prolific scholars in the field covers a wide range of films and themes. Moreover, the authors employ various approaches that treat warfare in its broadest sense, going well beyond narrow studies of combat or questions of historical accuracy and authenticity. Thus, the book is a welcome addition to the field of classical reception studies and is highly recommended for advanced students and specialists, even as it remains accessible to all who are interested in film and the classical world.

Lee L. Brice and Timothy M. Roberts, eds. *The Boundaries of War: Local and Global Perspectives in Military History*. Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2024. x + 284 Pp. ISBN: 9798987336144.

Reviewed by Charles C. Kolb, Ph.D. National Endowment for the Humanities, retired.

Lee L. Brice and Timothy M. Roberts (co-editors, conference organizers, and colleague at Western Illinois University) are highly-recognized scholars of military history; Brice is also a moving force of the Society of Ancient Military Historians and the former Book Reviews Editor for *Res Militares*. The Introduction subtitled "A Spectrum of Local and Global Perspectives in Military History" presents dialogues on whether the transnational turn in historical scholarship suggests that all warfare is derivative of larger global patterns, and if there are local,

regional, or national 'ways of war' that differentiate conflict within that certain geographical space, which historians should acknowledge.

The editors characterize the post-1945 concepts of "The New Military History: as Local History, and "The Ways of War as Local History," and organize the book into two parts. The first group (Chapters 1- 5), localized perspectives, is followed by global approaches (Chapters 6-11). The speakers and contributors are an international group of scholars, PhD candidates, and master's degree students. The volume is dedicated to students of history at Western Illinois University. The book also showcases military history scholarship in the American Midwest.

Res Militares Book Reviews Editor, Brian Turner, requested a focus on the "ancient contributions." Moore in "Nihil mitius superiore Africano (Valerius Maximus 2.7.12): Political Image and Military Discipline in the Middle Roman Republic" takes a localized cultural approach to assess ancient authors' reports on aspects of the career of Scipio Africanus during the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE). Scipio's reputation among Romans was complicated. Moore uses these ancient accounts to explore Roman attitudes toward officers' severity and generosity toward their soldiers. In so doing, her discussion treats the complexities of Roman military discipline, how their work informs us about discipline in the Roman army of the late third century BCE, and why sources treated Scipio the way they did. Hom's chapter, "Gelon's Hippeis and the Battle of Himera, 480 BCE: Origins and Developments of Cavalry Traditions in Archaic Sicily," overlaps the division between local and global perspectives. He uses the term glocal to refer to a perspective in military history. His local perspective examines the difference in Sicilian cavalry tactics versus those of Greek mainland cavalry. Demonstrating that the Sicilian's tactics were influenced by groups outside the island (likely Italy or as far away as the Iberian Peninsula). Hom makes a strong case, based in part on the archaeological excavations and material culture, that there were external military connections among western Mediterranean cavalries.

Brice in "Military Provisioning in the Glocal Greco-Roman World" focuses on the topic of logistics in ancient contexts. Commencing with an historiographical consideration of

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the place of logistics in military history, he demonstrates how its lack of drama and other biases have contributed to inattention by ancient and many modern authors. In the course of reviewing ancient logistics of diet (food and drink), he contends correctly that in early Greek and Roman history provisioning should be approached from a local perspective, focusing on each region separately as they expand territorially. Historians must take a more global approach to appreciate the difficulties and adaptations required to maintain military campaigns. Brice examines aspects of ancient provisioning that need further study and validates the importance of being open to a mixture of local and more global or local approaches to the topic.

A splendid volume important to pedagogy and members of the armed services.

Quesada Sanz, F. *Weapons, Warriors & Battles of Ancient Iberia*. Trans. By E. Clowes and P.S. Harding-Vera. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword, 2023, ISBN: 9781781592755.

Reviewed by James Bowden, M.A. Near East Observers/PhD student james.bowden5@gmail.com

There are an increasing number of academic studies focusing on the connection between peoples and their weapons. Such works explore the connections between a weapon's design and use, as well as its connections to defined geographic regions, specific groups, and even within military organizations. The volume under review appears to have been inspired by this academic trend and thus it comes with the opportunity to enhance that discussion and add weight to these arguments; alas, this book has missed this opportunity.

The book *Weapons, Warriors, and Battles of Ancient Iberia* is an examination of the titular items and generally follows that pattern within its presentation. The book highlights the distinctive weapons, tactics, and some of the root philosophies of the combatants, variously designated as either warriors or mercenaries. The book does not advance a single narrative or thesis, but rather covers a wide number of topics primarily aimed to tie the various Iberian peoples to the various weapons recovered archaeologically and

then to illustrate various applications that the weapons had in combat. The author does argue in the latter portion of the book that Iberians fought as organized units and in regular formations, rather than as guerrillas and he uses solid historical sources for this line of argument. Again, this is a part of many different lines of argument and not one single narrative extending through the whole.

The book is explicit in stating that it is not academic, but rather aimed at popular, amateur-level audiences and that this is meant to foster a sense and desire for further research. In this it achieves its goal. There were a few instances in which there was some fresh scholarly material which I had the pleasure of flagging for follow up, but only to a degree. For a non-academic reader, someone not versed in the minutiae of the topic, it likely will prove to be of great interest and spur further inquiry.

There are some criticisms of the book's organization and presentation. The first four chapters are an examination of the historiography of weapons research in Iberia and explore some of the issues with the archaeology of the topic. The use of weapons in ancient Iberia is still an emerging discipline in Spain, and there are efforts to discard erroneous and false conclusions allowed in through poor research methodology. Then the text shifts rapidly, chapters suddenly become presentations of individual weapons. Each weapon (e.g. sword, dagger, sling, and shield) is broken down in terms of vital statics. The author includes some preliminary comments on each item as to its role and value. Each of the chapters is only about ten pages in length, some fewer. This provides adequate introductory material for each weapon, offering some limited commentary on the item's use and special notes but nothing greatly in-depth. The individual chapters do not strongly reveal their connections to warfare, the society, or key themes introduced in the first chapter which sets the stage for how important these items were to the warriors.

The first chapter broaches the idea that to have been parted from their weapons was the most painful element of any surrender to foreign forces. Yet, in the presentations, this connection, and which of these weapons was the most important, seems to be missing.

The final seven chapters switch to argument and fuller

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discussion. It is here that we are introduced to the argument regarding fighting style, guerrilla versus organized combat. Presenting this idea earlier in the text could have enabled opportunities to discuss how a specific weapon reflects the organized use of warfare as opposed to guerrilla warfare as weapons used for one or the other are clear, mostly due to their shape, size, and carrying method. A well-organized approach may have been to present all of the narrative and argumentative chapters as one whole block and then to launch into the catalogue style approach for the remainder.

While lack of depth was worked into the presentation, it is also possible because the book was originally authored in Spanish in 2010 and translated into English for this edition. The text may have benefited from a secondary translator polishing the English and strengthening elements of sentence structure. Language difficulties require slow and cautious reading in order to receive the full benefit of understanding. The primary sources that were cited in the book could have been taken directly from English translations and inserted but the author translated them from the Spanish resulting in a clunky translation.

This book has some limited value: it may serve as a primer for lower-division classes at a college or university but supplemented by other, more detailed readings which can provide the student with less challenges. My strongest recommendation is a second edition that addresses the issues be produced as soon as possible, making the content clearer and thus more valuable.

Kathryn H. Milne, *Inside the Roman Legions: The Soldier's Experience 264-107 BCE*. Philadelphia: Pen & Sword Military, 2024, Pp. vi, 252. \$42.95, (hardback) ISBN 978-1-3990-7066-9.

Reviewed by Lee W. Eysturlid, leysturl@imsa.edu

What could there be left to say in the field of Roman military history? While this reviewer would not attempt to answer that question definitively, there is clearly room for works that make use of the primary and secondary sources to present what we do know in a deeply informative and eminently readable narrative. Professor Kathryn H. Milne's *Inside the Roman Legions* does just that. By

focusing on the period of the "Middle Republic," roughly 264-107 BCE, the reader will come away with the clearest available picture of the military life of a Roman citizen. This is also enlivened by the use of Livy's probable, if possibly apocryphal, legionary Spurius Ligustinus, who served from 200-171 BCE. Ligustinus becomes a touchstone that the author returns to, making the numerous faceless examples more human. The critical and well-cited sources of Livy, Polybius, Appian, and Dionysius, to mention just four, make evident the depth of the author's research and her thoughtful consideration in what she can say with confidence. The reader will appreciate Milne's willingness to engage them in careful historical suppositions.

The book itself is broken into a short introduction, twelve numbered chapters and a thoughtful conclusion. Also usefully important is the glossary of terms and the excellent bibliography, which contains much of the currently available scholarship. The chapters can be bundled in fours, the first four taking the reader from a Roman youth's education through their joining of a legion. The next quad sees the legionary army on the move, in camp, and in preparation for battle. The last four are the before, during and after battle, and a final chapter examines discharging from service. Each chapter leads neatly and thoughtfully to the next, at times even creating a bit of tension as to what will follow.

For anyone not intimately familiar with Roman army life in this period, there are numerous insights to be had. Why did the Roman's seem so keen to serve? This is evident in the acculturation of the young man in the glorifications of service, not necessarily killing, that surrounded him. Returning from a successful campaign, a soldier could place a slain opponent's armor on their doorframe for all to see or tell stories of great exploits. While the various ranks of the army – including the *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii* – are explored, Milne regularly returns to Ligustinus' early if imagined career as one of the *velites* in an effort to show readers what life in the legions was like for a new soldier. This seems a result of the available sources, and therefore the ability to construct details of the life lived on campaign.

Two examples from the book are useful, the details of the Roman camp when on campaign and the disciplinary

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practice known as the *fustuarium*, a punishment that involved the violent killing of a comrade. Milne creates a wonderfully lively image of the famously organized nature of the Roman fortified camp, with the reason for its layout and how that expressed the ratings of the different legionary and the Italian allied troops. The deeply important place given religion comes through here in that even the camp had a central space for religious ceremony, or divining. The importance of the commander to “divine” omens on a given day, or even hour, and his instructions to the army on whether it was auspicious to move or fight is well covered. It would have been fascinating to know what the average legionary, like Ligustinus, thought of these auguries, but that information is lost to history. The *fustuarium*, or the communal punishment of a legionary would seem to fit with our general knowledge or assumptions about Roman ferocity. The offending man was to be beaten or stoned by his fellows. Seen by ancient sources as something that had existed, Milne thoughtfully brings forward that she can find no evidence it was ever used during the period of the Middle Republic.

The only disappointment, if it can be called that, is the absence of images or pictures of the weapons and formations that are mentioned. This was clearly possible as a single, and excellent image of a campaign camp is given, but it is the only one. One suspects this is the publisher’s effort to save on expense as opposed to a choice made by the author. Assuming the primary audience is made up of non-experts, that would have been a real help. That said, the overall quality of the copy-editing and appearance of the book are good.

In conclusion, *Inside the Roman Legions* should be seen as an excellent addition to the existing literature on the Roman military experience during the Republic. Any reader looking to gain a greater understanding of the time would do well to read it. Milne does the best that can be achieved with the sources that remain, almost bringing a legionary like Ligustinus to life.

Sänger, Patrick and Sandra Scheuble-Reiter, eds. *Söldner und Berufssoldaten in der griechischen Welt: Soziale und politische Gestaltungsräume. Historia Einzelschrift 269. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2022. ISBN: 9783515133128.*

Reviewed by Paul Johstono, Air University,
paul.johstono@au.af.edu

This volume grew from a conference held at Halle in 2016 to explore the sociocultural history and mentalité of mercenaries, reckoned omnipresent in the Greek world. It comprises fourteen papers in four sections, as well as an introduction. Half the papers are in English, five in German, and two in French. With a few exceptions, the volume focuses on the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods. The volume concludes with an impressive and useful set of indices, containing sources, personal names, places, and Greek terms (with two demotic Egyptian expressions). Its breadth of coverage, incorporation of much new evidence, and numerous compelling arguments assure this volume will be an important resource for anyone working historical problems related to mercenaries in ancient Greece.

The introduction begins with Isokrates’ polemic in 355 BC against Athens’ reliance on mercenaries, presented as proof that the reputation of mercenaries (and, by extension, professional soldiers, or *berufssoldaten*) was “already, like today, remarkably bad” (11 – “wie auch heutzutage – denkbar schlecht”). The editors identify—and perhaps overstate—an ancient and modern stereotype that contrasts “homeless” mercenaries, who shift loyalty for pay like a flag in the wind, with patriotic citizen-soldiers ready to die for their country. In fact, the thematic areas of study are plainly valuable contributions with or without the mercenary’s terrible reputation.

The fourteen chapters are grouped around these themes, addressing the tension between the idea and the reality, the political and legal status of mercenaries, their social status and activity, and the entanglements of “mercenaries” with other types of military service. The critical question for work on Greek mercenaries is definitional. The last page of the volume reiterates a narrow definition of the mercenary: military specialists recruited for a particular cause and specific military operation of a correspondingly limited time (288 – “eine Anwerbung militärischer „Sonderkräfte“ für einen speziellen Anlass und einen konkreten kriegerischen Einsatz von entsprechend begrenztem Zeitraum”). But



Klinkott's definition fits few of the cases studied in the rest of the book and differs from other definitions offered therein, like Tuplin's: "A mercenary promotes the interests of a state/individual, is paid to do so, and is not compelled, prompted, or qualified by other considerations of ethnicity or community affiliation" (235 n.4). The volume would have benefited from adopting a common definition, or common methodology for handling the nomenclature of paid military service. The inconsistency in definition and thus in nomenclature disrupts the social historical approach because the subject, their subjectivity, and mentality are unstable across contributions (23).

The first section of the volume, *Ideologie oder Wirklichkeit*, offers three chapters that interrogate the dichotomy between citizen soldiers and mercenaries. First, Bettali focuses on Demosthenes, whose oratory, like Isokrates', contains numerous criticisms of mercenaries. Bettali argues that Demosthenes' rhetoric was driven by his philosophy of state power, which idealized citizen-soldiers serving in field armies and winning decisive battles. Mercenaries, for no outstanding fault of their own, suffered polemical assaults as Demosthenes tried to convince the Athenian assembly to mobilize their own citizens. Next, Burckhardt takes up Xenophon's view of mercenaries, as a counter to the more caustic positions of Isokrates or Demosthenes. In Xenophon's *Anabasis* Burckhardt finds mercenaries that maintain cohesion under stress, engage in political activity, and build community despite their heterogeneity and distance from home. While Burckhardt's work agrees with Bettali's that Attic oratory attacked mercenaries as part of a rhetorical strategy, he also finds the political mentality of the Ten Thousand was limited by the resilience of their ancestral, local identities. In the last chapter of Part I, Scheuble-Reiter shifts the focus to the families of mercenaries. After challenging a historiographic tendency to describe mercenaries as rogues and womanizers, Scheuble-Reiter's study considers the evidence for mercenaries' families and Hellenistic states' care for the families of mercenaries, even after their death. Provision for mercenaries benefited the Successor kingdoms as they sought to induce mercenaries and their families to settle permanently and enter professional military service (72).

Part II, "Politische und rechtliche Implikationen" contains

four chapters that explore the political and legal implications of mercenaries as residents or even citizens of communities in the lands where they soldiered. Péré-Noguès examines the patterns of mercenary settlement in Sicily's comparatively early "golden age of mercenaries" under the Deinomenid tyrants, down to the Dionsyiads and their competitors. These patterns include colonial (re)foundations and expansion of citizen rolls, patterns familiar in the Hellenistic era, but also serial disenfranchisement, redistribution, and violence from recurring failures to coalesce. Chrysafis takes up the range of interactions mercenary garrison commanders and members had with the local population in the Antigonid garrison system across Greece. Chrysafis impressively pulls together epigraphic evidence and little-known anecdotes from the likes of Plutarch, Polyaeus, and Diogenes Laertius. The discussion of garrison members' residence and activity in urban spaces (95-98) makes up a very small portion of the chapter but suggests potential for a larger, compelling study. Zimmerman makes good use of recently published epigraphic texts regarding Lycia, the Attalid Asklepiastai, Toriaion, and Kleonnaeion. He considers the political, social, and religious ways and means that military populations—ambivalently mercenary, professional, or settler—embedded in, came to the center of, and even transformed communities where they were stationed. Then, van Regenmortel describes an economic approach to the status and impact of increasing mercenary service. This chapter contains an excellent evaluation of the historiography of the mercenary-citizen soldier dichotomy (123-126). She deflects the elite critiques of mercenaries that appear in Isokrates, Demosthenes and elsewhere by pointing to plentiful counterevidence for the increased acceptance of different types of mercenary service at Athens and by Athenians, as well as the socioeconomic benefits that mercenary service introduced.

Part III, *Die Söldner als soziale Individuen und Gemeinschaften*, offers four chapters that interrogate the individual and corporate identities of mercenaries. Dana questions the tradition of barbarian mercenaries "sans attaches" by revisiting a now-expanded dossier of texts dealing with Thracian mercenaries from Thrace. Dana concludes that the Thrales, although "barbarian" mercenaries, likely settled, associated, and acculturated within the broader Hellenistic military milieu. Sängner



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considers the several references to *politeumata*, or political associations, among the numerous soldier stelae found at Sidon in Phoenicia. Sanger convincingly argues against the common association of the *politeumata* of Kaunos, Termessos Minor, and Pinara with the ethnic *politeumata* that appeared in the Ptolemaic space by the mid-second century. Fischer-Bovet analyzes the ways that military contingents in the Ptolemaic state sought social capital by communicating trustworthiness in dedications. Most dedications honored the royals and/or senior officials, and Fischer-Bovet argues these practices aimed to build trust and create a stable presence in local communities where soldiers were stationed. Last, Vandorpe covers the rise of the “Persian” “man-receiving-pay” or *misthophoros* in the Thebaid in the Late Ptolemaic dynasty. Counterintuitively, the Persian *misthophoroi* were local Egyptian soldiers with Greek nouns de guerre who formed the largest standing and reserve contingents of the Ptolemaic army in the Thebaid.

The fourth and final section of the volume, *Grundsatzliche Perspektiven bzw. Perspektivwechsel*, contains three chapters that grapple with historiographic problems around identifying mercenaries and ancient states’ attitudes toward employing mercenaries versus other types of soldiers. First, Sekunda tackles the rather difficult distinction between allied (symmachic) contingents and mercenary contingents retained as a permanent force in Hellenistic dynastic armies. Sekunda’s study, focused mostly on Cretans, attempts to mine the available evidence to distinguish paid allies from mercenaries but also offers some unconvincing conjectures: for example, that Boeotian symmachoi formed the contingent of peltasts in the Ptolemaic army at Raphia (223-225). Tuplin’s is the first of two concluding contributions that explore mercenary service in Achaemenid armies. Tuplin’s detailed

and lengthy appendix (247-255) will be an excellent resource for anyone working in this arena. In the volume’s final chapter, Klinkott argues that the Achaemenid military was not a force that normally employed mercenaries as mercenaries. He argues, referencing the Legion Etrangere, that foreign troops do not have to be mercenaries, nor do paid troops, and in particular those troops incorporated into relatively permanent structures of the host military ought not be labeled mercenaries. His engagement with documentary evidence from Babylonia and Elephantine highlights these attempts to integrate mercenaries permanently to become something else.

The volume’s breadth is a great asset, spanning from 5th century Sicily and Mesopotamia to the twilight of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the 2nd century BC. For example, Klinkott’s contribution provides excellent comparative material with those from Pere-Nogues and Zimmerman. So is its authors’ incorporation of newer sources and careful readings of older sources. A frequent theme is the efforts by states and mercenaries to see the latter integrated into the former through settlement, often with accompanying rights, privileges, and land. An under-developed problem that runs across many chapters is the prevalence of standing soldiers, the *berufssoldaten*, who fall in the gap between the citizen-soldier and mercenary.

This volume should help others connect disparate sub-fields to their own projects and challenge scholars to contemplate further the social history of Classical and Hellenistic military personnel.



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Chidwick, Hannah-Marie, ed. *The Body of the Combatant in the Ancient Mediterranean*. London: Bloomsbury, 2024. ISBN: 9781350240858.

Reviewed by Debby Sneed, California State University, Long Beach, debby.sneed@csulb.edu

This volume, edited by Hannah-Marie Chidwick, opens with its main point: “War is about bodies” (1). Despite the impression that we may get from some ancient textual sources and modern scholarship, the human body is the essential element of ancient warfare; it is the human body that enables warmaking, not just as an instrument but indeed as a conduit for conflict between states (5). The authors who contributed to this volume use a variety of sources—literary, material, and bioarchaeological—to re-humanize and re-incarnate ancient warfare, broadly conceived to include preparations for war, active combat, and second-phase warfare, as well as military communities not actively engaged in conflict.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first section, “Brutality in the Field,” begins with artwork and photographs created by Helen Snell. Snell combined her artworks with excerpts from Vegetius’ 4th century CE Roman military manual, and the pieces set the tone for the rest of the volume, foregrounding as they do bodies at war and the effects of war on bodies. The second chapter in this section, by Fiona McHardy, explores representations of mutilation, especially decapitation, in ancient Greek texts. By focusing on the figures of Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetae, and Achilles, McHardy explains when and why mutilation occurs and shows one way that we can trace intense emotions in warfare scenes. Closing out this section, Rebecca Redfern and John Pearce use epigraphic evidence alongside skeletal remains, identified through the concept of injury recidivism, to offer a more nuanced perspective on the lives of soldiers in Roman Britain from the 1st through 4th centuries CE. Where epitaphs that detail rank and years of service elide or erase the trauma of war, the skeletal remains remind us of the realities of military life.

The second section, “Embodying Soldierly Identity,” considers the ways that soldiers identified themselves and were identified by others. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones focuses

on clothing worn by Parthian mounted archers, exemplified by bronze statue known as the Shami Prince. He uses the concept of a body schema to argue that ancient Parthians were deliberate in designing their clothing to optimize functional mobility, tactile sensitivity, and protection. Danijel Džino and Ewan Shanks Coopey likewise address military clothing in their chapter. Through archaeologically recovered objects and sculptural depictions of particular items of military dress, including belts and brooches, associated with the Roman garrison at Tilverium (Dalmatia), the authors argue that dress and ornament helped assimilate soldiers from across the Empire into a unified military community. Finally for this section, Hannah-Marie Chidwick approaches the question of gender norms in ancient Roman warfare. She argues that the figure of Camilla in Virgil’s *Aeneid* embodies traditional military virtues typically attributed to Roman males and that Camilla is a paradoxical figure because of just how clearly she exposes the expectations to perform that are imposed on soldierly bodies. More than any other figure, Chidwick suggests, Camilla shows how bodies both make war and are themselves made in war.

Opening the final section of the volume, “The Post-Combat Body,” Lucia Nováková looks at heroic bodies on Greek military monuments. A change occurs in such representations, Nováková argues, during the Peloponnesian War, when Greeks did not fight non-Greeks, but rather each other. While these depictions often show fighting bodies, the bodies can be understood at the same time as representations of the landscape in which the fighting took place: like the bodies of warriors, nature is bloodied and scarred by warfare. Next, Hannah Sorscher presents inconsistencies in the imagined fates of Astyanax in Homer’s *Iliad*. The divergent fates spoken—and some left unspoken—by the boy’s parents in the poem expose the risks of second-phase warfare, include systematic rape, murder, and enslavement of conquered peoples. Sorscher reminds readers that soldiers are not the only people affected by combat, as women and children, among other members of an ancient community, likewise experienced the transformative bodily violence of war. Finally, Jane Draycott discusses bodies fundamentally physically altered by war and the use of prostheses to repair and reconstruct them. Such prostheses, rare though they are, highlight the potential for ancient combatants to create new

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narratives for themselves and their bodies after war.

In the conclusion to the volume, Annemarie Ambühl summarizes the question at the heart of these essays: how was war embodied in the ancient world? Altogether, the authors provide models for understanding the practice and effects of war on individuals, including not just their physical bodies, but also their mental faculties, families, and communities. War may be declared between states, but it is fought by humans, whose bodies enact war and live—or die—by its effects. Given my own specialization, I was

surprised that disability and disability theory were not more prominent in a collection of essays dedicated to the topic of the body. Disability as a subject is largely relegated to Draycott's chapter, where it appears only as a feature of the post-combat body; all other chapters seem to assume able-bodiedness in their combatants and noncombatants alike. Nevertheless, the volume provides an important foray into the task of showcasing the role of the body in ancient warfare and shining new, embodied light onto old conflicts.

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