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**President's Message**

It has been over twenty years since Michael Pavkovic and I founded the Society for Ancient Military Historians as graduate students. Our goal was to raise the profile of those studying warfare among classicists and ancient historians. At the time, a specialty in military history was almost a "kiss of death" for those on the job market—I was advised to make sure I had a more acceptable second specialty to roll out at job interviews. There were excellent monographs and articles being published, but they did not attract much interest outside of a small cohort of scholars and students.

As most of you know, SAMH was moribund for many years, before being resurrected in the past few years, thanks to the hard work of a new generation military historians. Looking back at our origin, I can see much progress. Scholarly work on wars, generals and armies attract wider attention and discussion. Military history is taken more seriously by classicists and ancient historians, though much work remains to be done in this area.

One area that we had not considered in founding SAMH was the place of the study of ancient warfare in the context of the wider world of military history. Here our younger members and officers have led the way. A great example is the recent panels at the annual Society for Military History meeting held in May at Arlington, Virginia. SAMH sponsored two panels, one organized by Lee Brice and focusing on new approaches in ancient military history, and another, put together by Dan Powers on insurgency and counterinsurgency in the ancient world. Both were well attended, and we found common interests and vocabulary with those who study modern warfare.

As we move forward, I hope SAMH can serve as a link to both Classics and Military History. By doing so, we will not only improve both, but also expand our personal and professional horizons.

Jonathan Roth

President, SAMH

Professor and Director of the Burdick Military History Project, San Jose State University

**Introduction from the New SAMH Vice President, Benjamin M. Sullivan**

I am the Miller-Veritas Postdoctoral Fellow in Military History in the Department of History at Cornell. I'm interested in ancient history in a wide sense, but in particular the development of warfare and religion from the beginnings to late antiquity. I'm a student not just of Greece and Rome but also their neighbors, especially those in the Near East, and have a particularly keen interest in the influence of Near Eastern military traditions on Greek warfare in the Greek archaic period (700-490 B.C.). These connections play a large part in the book I'm writing, to be titled *Men of Bronze: Warfare and the State in Archaic Greece*. In it I argue that the impetus for the Greek hoplite phalanx originated in Greek contacts with the established powers of the Near East. The book also makes the case that the phalanx developed prior to and largely

independent of state formation in Greece, and was originally used by elite warlords and their private forces rather than armies of citizen soldiers.

This year I taught a sophomore seminar entitled "Military Campaigns and Military Theory in the Ancient World," in which my students and I examined a wide range of campaigns in antiquity, starting with the Sumerians and ending with Attila's defeat at the Catalaunian Plains. We studied not just the excitement of famous battles, but more mundane aspects of warfare like logistics, which we (or at least I) found were just as interesting as the battles themselves. We also examined ancient thinking about warfare by analyzing documents such as the Hittite-Egyptian treaty, Xenophon's theory of war and the later Roman military treatises.

I am delighted to be a part of SAMH in my new role as Vice President and look forward to taking part in the stimulating new directions the Society is taking.

Benjamin M. Sullivan

Vice President, SAMH

Visiting Assistant Professor, Cornell University

**Notes from the Secretary**

I offer my apologies to all of our members for a number of unexpected technical difficulties through the summer, and for only being able to complete this issue of *Res Militares* now as it was due 3 months ago. Unfortunately our website servers were down unexpectedly due a datacenter move, that we had not been notified of in advance, taking our website completely offline for most of May, June, and July. Just as that problem was solved, a number of malicious virus attacks hit my own computer. During the next two weeks I will be updating the website, as I had to restore an older version because of the virus attack. If you notice things are missing that should be there, please don't hesitate to contact me and let me know. The summer served as a reminder of how important constant vigilance in internet security is.

As the fall begins this year, there are a number of things to reflect on as we begin the new academic year. In May the SAMH panels at Society for Military History conference in Arlington came off quite nicely. As Professor Roth mentioned, our panels were well attended and a number of people told us they were happy that we (SAMH) were able to make a real presence at the conference. We hope that this success will encourage more ancient historians to organize future panels at their meetings.

We have continued to add new members at a steady rate as well as updating former members. I am happy to receive ideas for improvements and suggestions for things that we can add to make the website more useful. If you have the time and ability to help in anyway, I will be very grateful.

With very best wishes for the coming year!

Thank you,  
Dan Powers  
Secretary, SAMH

**Publications NOW AVAILABLE****Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians #10**

paperback 222 p. \$34.95 USD  
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***Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World***

Produced with collaboration between the Society of Ancient Military Historians and the Association of Ancient Historians. *Co-Edited by Lee L. Brice and Jennifer T. Roberts*

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ISSN 1533-4708 Volume 12, Issue 1 March 2012

**Alexander's Veterans and the Early Wars of the Successors (Fordyce W. Mitchel Memorial Lecture Series) by Joseph Roisman ISBN: 978-0-292-73596-5**

From antiquity until now, most writers who have chronicled the events following the death of Alexander the Great have viewed this history through the careers, ambitions, and perspectives of Alexander's elite successors. Few historians have probed the experiences and attitudes of the ordinary soldiers who followed Alexander on his campaigns and who were divided among his successors as they fought for control of his empire after his death. Yet the veterans played an important role in helping to shape the character and contours of the Hellenistic world.

This pathfinding book offers the first in-depth investigation of the Macedonian veterans' experience during a crucial turning point in Greek history (323–316 BCE). Joseph Roisman discusses the military, social, and political circumstances that shaped the history of Alexander's veterans, giving special attention to issues such as the soldiers' conduct on and off the battlefield, the army assemblies, the volatile relationship between the troops and their generals, and other related themes, all from the perspective of the rank-and-file. Roisman also reexamines the biases of the ancient sources and how they affected ancient and modern depictions of Alexander's veterans, as well as Alexander's conflicts with his army, the veterans' motives and goals, and their political contributions to Hellenistic history. He pays special attention to the Silver Shields, a group of Macedonian veterans famous for their invincibility and martial prowess, and assesses whether or not they deserved their formidable reputation.

To order visit: <http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/roiale.html> **website discount: \$36.85**

**The Age of Titans: The Rise and Fall of the Great Hellenistic Navies (Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture) by William Murray Oxford University Press. January 6, 2012 ISBN-13: 978-0195388640**

While we know a great deal about naval strategies in the classical Greek and later Roman periods, our understanding of the period in between--the Hellenistic Age--has never been as complete. When these particular factors disappeared, this "Macedonian" model of naval power also faded away--that is, until Cleopatra and Mark Antony made one brief, extravagant attempt to reestablish it, an endeavor Octavian put an end to once and for all at the battle of Actium. Representing the fruits of more than thirty years of research, *The Age of Titans* provides the most vibrant account to date of Hellenistic naval warfare.

Available from **Amazon.com**. \$45.00

**Books available for Review****Books Received as of September 2012**

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 [li-brice@wiu.edu](mailto:li-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.

Meier, Christian. *A Culture of Freedom. Ancient Greece and the Origins of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 302 p., \$29.95, ISBN 9780199747405.

Murray, William M. *The Age of Titans: The Rise and Fall of the Great Hellenistic Navies*. Oxford: OUP, 2012.

Pitassi, Michael. *The Navies of Rome*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009. 338 p., \$34.95 ISBN 9781843836001.

Pitassi, Michael. *Roman Warships*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011. 186 p., \$90.00 ISBN 9781843836100.

**\*Denotes books already assigned to a reviewer.**

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



To have your event or news included in the next issue of Res Militares, please contact Dan Powers <mailto:dan.powers@utah.edu> with details. If you have any suggestions, or feedback on this issue of Res Militares, please send it to Dan Powers.

**Upcoming Events**

Association	Date	Location	Information
92nd Anniversary Meeting of the CAMWS Southern Section	1-3 November 2012	Tallahassee, FL	<a href="http://www.camws.org/southernsection/index.php">http://www.camws.org/southernsection/index.php</a>
127th Annual Meeting, American Historical Association	January 3–6, 2013	New Orleans, LA	<a href="http://www.historians.org/annual/2013/index.cfm">http://www.historians.org/annual/2013/index.cfm</a>
Joint Annual Meetings of the APA and AIA	3-6 January 2013	Seattle, WA	<a href="http://www.apaclassics.org">http://www.apaclassics.org</a> <a href="http://www.archaeological.org">http://www.archaeological.org</a>
80th Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History “War, Society, and Remembrance”	14–16 March 2013	New Orleans, Louisiana	<a href="http://www.smh-hq.org">www.smh-hq.org</a>
The Classical Association of the Canadian West	22-24 March 2013	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	Steven Hijmans ( <a href="mailto:shijmans@ualberta.ca">shijmans@ualberta.ca</a> )
Classical Association Annual Conference 2013	3-6 April 2013	University of Reading, UK	<a href="http://www.classicalassociation.org/Events/Diary.html">http://www.classicalassociation.org/Events/Diary.html</a>
The 109th Annual Meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South	April 17-20, 2013	Iowa City, IA	<a href="http://www.camws.org/meeting/2013/cfp.php">http://www.camws.org/meeting/2013/cfp.php</a>
Association of Ancient Historians	16-19 May 2013	The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio	<a href="http://www.associationofancienthistorians.org">www.associationofancienthistorians.org</a>
The Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies	12-13 June, 2013	Tel-Aviv University, Israel	<a href="http://www.israel-classics.org/">http://www.israel-classics.org/</a> <a href="mailto:ory.amitay@gmail.com">ory.amitay@gmail.com</a>

**Book Review**

Fred Eugene Ray, *Land Battles in 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Greece: A History and Analysis of 173 Engagements*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2009. Pp. 323. ISBN 9780786467730. \$35.00.

The result of a lifetime devotion to and boyhood fascination with Greek warfare, Fred Eugene Ray’s survey of more than 170 Greek land engagements is an attempt to extend our appreciation of the existing record of Greek warfare throughout the fifth century BCE. Diving into the grit and grime of combat, Ray considers what made the Greeks impressive adversaries and attempts to separate fact from fiction in both ancient and modern perceptions. He compiles a database of military successes and failures, including traditionally “significant” battles such as Marathon and Thermopylae and also the poorly documented and forgotten (perhaps properly so) encounters such as borderland confrontations within the expanding Athenian hegemony. Ray argues these latter engagements have been “taken for granted” in the past. Analysis of texts (historical and mythical), and archeological finds, topographic considerations such as the impact of terrain on the effectiveness of any one tactical unit or maneuver, and assumptions based on identifiable patterns makes this work an enthusiastic exploration of both the shape and the experience of fifth century warfare. Ray’s methodological approach relies heavily upon assumption to “fill-in-the-blanks” and suffers from a lack of familiarity



with ancient languages. The strength of the book, however, is in its accessible narrative, no doubt a reflection of the author's background in English.

Beginning with an overview of the social structure of the Greek city-state and its impact on warfare, which had transformed the earlier warrior-elite combat into the communal-based, hoplite structure, Ray stresses the importance of personal courage in fifth century combat, which he combines with other factors such as strength of numbers and home-soil advantage. Such an introduction provides a general crash-course on the hoplite, the phalanx, and other tactical units, used by some Greek armies. The key players established, Ray's investigation spans the entirety of the century, from the Ionian revolt, through the Persian wars and later Peloponnesian wars, bringing his "forensic" narrative to a close in 401 BCE with the battle of Cunaxa. Throughout the work he focuses exclusively on land engagements, skipping the conflict at sea.

This chronological format lends itself to a clear and traceable line of evolution, painting a picture of a trial and error development as opposed to a static, monolithic engine born into perfection. Such a view is welcome amidst the popular dominance of battle-narratives that have tended to emphasize mono-causal explanations for the complexities of war. Ray gives weight to factors such as fear, surprise, terrain, and experience. These contributing factors are further expressed in a series of tables, following the conclusion, which break down wins, losses, numbers, points of failure, and the decisive factors of each incident discussed in the book. The database is exhaustive and perhaps useful, but one is inclined to wonder if we have sufficient evidence for some of these incidents to create trustworthy tables. The table also, in a way, undermines its approach by trying to narrow down its evaluation to the single "decisive factor," i.e. *phalanx*, cavalry, etc., in Table 3. This table is paramount to his final conclusion that the hoplite was paramount to Greek success even considering its shortcomings.

That being said, this seemingly scientific approach to the past is flawed. The work lacks consistency in regards to evidence, comprehensible logic, and ultimately, credibility. The parenthetical citations, which disrupt the smooth and much appreciated flow of the narrative, are sporadic at best and rarely appear when they are needed most, particularly regarding his conclusions. The author assumes much background knowledge on the part of the reader, a fine attribute in a detailed study, but less so in a more general work such as this one. The work, however, advertises itself as a survey, a sourcebook of tactical mechanisms, both effective and unsuccessful, prominent in the fifth century BCE. The audience thus being the novice student or enthusiast, it is expected that such a work would include accessible citations, providing a means of further study, and a traceable process of logic. While there were several instances of step-by-step deduction, the author omitted any analysis, making it difficult to distinguish probable conclusions from descriptive fillers designed to substitute the missing pieces. Thus, this reader was left frustrated and doubtful of the work. Overall, I would have to find that the book has a strong narrative that carries the reader along, but the numerous flaws doom the author's efforts.

Reviewed by Lily A. Blouin,  
Western Illinois University [la-blouin@wiu.edu](mailto:la-blouin@wiu.edu)

## JOIN the SAMH!

Membership in the society is open to anyone anywhere in the world interested in supporting our mission. Dues are the same whether you are renewing or wish to join for the first time. Benefits of membership currently include receiving the newsletter early, either electronically via email or in the mail, and supporting the study of military history, warfare, and related topics of the ancient world. Watch for more benefits in the future.

For those who wish to renew or become a new member and receive the newsletter via email dues are currently \$0, with the option of paying full dues. Anyone wishing to join and receive the newsletter via mail anywhere in the world will need to pay the full \$5 annual dues to cover postal expenses. Of course, we accept donations to cover our web expenses and keep advertising off the webpage. Please send your name, address, professional affiliation if you have any and email to the president's address below. Be sure to indicate whether you wish to receive the newsletter electronically or by mail. Dues and donations can be paid in check or money-order made out to the "Society of Ancient Military Historians" in US dollars.



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