

Caesar in Gaul, the Romans became better acquainted with the northern Atlantic coast (116), much more so than as a result of the expedition which took place half a century earlier. The disaster of Germanicus' navy, which followed two other maritime incidents that took place during the thirty years before that disaster, discouraged further Atlantic exploration (Tacitus, *Germania* 34). Later on, C. Julius Agricola's fleet established that Britain was an island and reached the Orkneys.

In the 'Epilogue' (125-127), R. shows how pessimism grew, and by the second half of the first century CE, with the Elder Seneca and L. Cestius Pius, a reluctance to explore far-away places replaced an earlier confidence in setting forth into the Ocean. An 'Appendix' (129-132) contains Hanno's *Periplus* in Greek, translated into English. It is followed by the bibliography (133-147) and a 'List of Passages Cited' from Greek and Latin sources (149-153) and very few biblical, Indian, Irish, and Nordic sources (153). There is also a thorough index (155-162).

R.'s footnotes abound and are invaluable. He usefully marshals information other than on the Atlantic, when it can clarify his discussion. For instance, metal resources as a possible motive for Carthaginian exploration are considered in footnotes on page 42, which discusses the question how ancient the exploitation of West African metal resources is, and the controversy about whether the trans-Saharan gold trade occurred before the late third century CE. There are almost no typos or misspellings: all of those I spotted, except one, are in bibliographic entries. R. does not mention the Roman *Tabula Peutingeriana*, but this is rather unsurprising because the westernmost of its twelve segments was missing when the map was discovered. The missing part is the one corresponding to Britain and Spain. Therefore, the *Tabula Peutingeriana* is rather unhelpful for the Atlantic. Moreover, its focus on land routes is reflected in the seas being drawn as narrow lines.

In conclusion, R. is to be congratulated for his important contribution to our understanding of Graeco-Roman maritime explorations.

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Philip Sabin, Hans Van Wees and Michael Whitby (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, Vol. 2: *Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 663 pp. ISBN-13: 9780521782746.

The origins of war are mysterious. Archeological and anthropological studies suggest that war emerged with the formation of human societies: there is evidence of fortifications from the Neolithic age (c. 8500 BCE) and archeological digs in various sites reveal tombs of warriors, suggesting that mass battles had taken place. These findings show that mankind was engaged in warfare long before turning to agriculture, founding permanent settlements or inventing the first systems of writing.

Human society and warfare developed side by side and mutually influenced each other. Shortage in natural resources caused by the growth of population was one of the main causes for war in pre-agricultural and agricultural societies.¹ Once social structures became more sophisticated, more complex military systems developed because advanced social systems, urban and literate, which were based on economical, political, and social hierarchies, required an

¹ L.H. Keeley, *War before Civilization* (Oxford, 1996), 117-121.

efficient device to protect their interests, and this was the regular army. Military force became essential not only for protection, but also for potential expansion in order to acquire more natural resources to provide for the growing population. Such an expansion brought changes also in the tactical and operative complexity of the battlefield.

The present two volumes survey the creation and development of western warfare during a period of 1,500 years, from early Greece to the fall of the Roman Empire in the west. The books summarize about forty years of modern research of the topic, and also offer fresh interpretation of the relevant ancient sources while considering the ample archeological evidence revealed in the last four decades.

Each volume is divided into two chronological sections reflecting both change and continuity in warfare of the societies under discussion. Part One of the first volume deals with archaic and classical Greece, Part Two — with the Hellenistic world and the Roman Republic until the beginning of Augustus' principate. The second section compares the two worlds, but does not distinguish between the two cultures. Rather, it emphasizes the aspects of warfare shared by Greece and Rome, particularly at the time of the Roman conquest of the Hellenistic world.

Part One of the second volume explores military history from the beginning of the Principate and onwards, emphasizing the continuity of Republican military norms that were maintained despite the political change. Part Two of the second volume deals with the late Empire, from the time of Theodosius I until the fall of the Empire in the west, a period which was influenced by two processes: (1) the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the state and the theological disputes that ensued; (2) the invasions of the barbarian tribes who came from the eastern side of the river Rhine. These invasions required a new political arrangement which significantly influenced social, economical and, naturally, military institutions.

Each chronological section of the volumes is divided into parts, and each part deals with an issue related to war: the international system, the nature and status of the various armed forces, the actual operation of armies in wars and battles, naval and siege warfare, political and economical aspects of war and the social and cultural dimensions of war. All six themes are discussed in each of the four chronological sections in both volumes, thus enabling the reader to compare thematically between the different periods, and to detect both change and continuity. The volumes conclude with a detailed bibliography, a chronological table and a glossary of Greek and Roman military terms. There is also a comprehensive list of ancient authors who wrote on military matters.

The first volume opens with three essays offering a wider historical framework for the military history of the ancient world. Victor D. Hanson's essay, titled 'The Modern Historiography of Ancient Warfare' (3-21), surveys studies of ancient warfare from the beginning of the modern era until today.² The following two essays discuss the nature of evidence and some methodological problems. These issues are highly essential for a better understanding of the ancient world in general and of its military history in particular.

Simon Hornblower's 'Warfare in Ancient Literature: The Paradox of War' (22-53) reviews ancient writings on war. Since war was a chief component in ancient life, many Greek and Roman authors discussed this phenomenon extensively. The *Iliad*, for example, includes military descriptions which may be combined with archeological evidence to supply information — even if less ample than for other periods — about war and warfare in early Greece.³ Hornblower suggests that there is a cultural paradox in ancient writing on war: despite the fact that war and warfare are extensively discussed in ancient sources, war was not celebrated as such, but rather warriors and particularly victors (clearly demonstrated in the Roman triumphs). War itself was grasped as an essential evil and writers were simultaneously appalled and fascinated by it. According to

² See also Victor D. Hanson, 'The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and Ongoing Controversies', *The Journal of Military History*, 63 (2) 1999, 379-414.

³ See Michael M. Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece* (London, 1996), 3-18.

Hornblower, this attitude was responsible for another paradox: the copious writing about wars is in reverse proportion to their historical frequency.

In my opinion this is hardly a paradox. Some ancient wars gained much attention because of their total character. The wars of the Greek poleis and the Punic wars, for example, were total wars, that is they were wars for political, and possibly physical, life or death. Modern research speculates in various ways on the possible outcome of ancient total wars, but the Greek cities and Republican Rome undoubtedly grasped these wars as a threat to their very existence. This may be compared to writings on modern wars: the American civil war, for instance, occupies scholarly literature and narratives more than any other American war, including the American Revolution. The twenty years of the Napoleonic wars are represented on library bookshelves more than all wars that took place in the 150 years before Napoleon. Other examples are the First and Second World Wars. Numerous violent conflicts occurred in the 19th and the 20th centuries and yet ten years within the latter violent century occupy most of the historical writing on modern wars. These two wars were no doubt total wars which caused massive cultural, political, social and economical changes, and this explains why they are the focus of most modern research.

The survival of the Greek poleis in the earlier chronological period covered in these volumes, and Rome becoming a super-power at the end of the time span discussed in these volumes, were closely connected with wars. This is clearly manifested in ancient writings even if war was grasped as a bad or an unnatural phenomenon. Thus, the ancient attitude to war may be summed up by Polybius' words: 'War is terrible, but not so terrible that we should put up with anything to avoid it' (4.31.3).

The third essay is Michael Whitby's 'Reconstructing Ancient Warfare' (54-81). Whitby offers a methodological system for the assessment of the reliability of ancient sources and for understanding their main issues. In sum, these three essays present a general framework for the following chapters in both volumes.

From my perspective as a military historian, what I find missing in these two volumes is a chapter on the long-term cultural influence of ancient warfare on western warfare.

Greek and Roman warfare, which are described well enough in these two volumes, undoubtedly influenced medieval and modern western armies. Many historians claim that the military history of Greece and Rome as well as ancient military writing was very important in the formation of western military thought and military art from the end of the 15th century, as is particularly apparent in the military history of the 16th and 17th centuries.⁴ The classical heritage formed an intellectual background and a source for historical reference in military thought at least until the end of the 18th century, and on some matters — up to the present. Works of ancient authors were sources for the study of the formation and activation of military power. Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus and Plutarch were authorities concerning military actions, while Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Caesar, Arrian, Frontinus and Vegetius were consulted on other military aspects. These works were widely read and frequently interpreted throughout the 15th to the 18th centuries.⁵ As the historian Henry Guerlac phrased it: 'Antiquity was still the great teacher in all that concerned the broader aspects of military theory and the secrets of military genius ... the most popular book of the [17th] century ... was an adaptation of Caesar's Gallic Wars.'⁶

⁴ See, for instance, John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, (London, 1976), 62.

⁵ Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought* (Oxford, 2001), 9.

⁶ Henry Guerlac, 'Vauban: The Impact of Science on War', in: Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton, 1986), 71-72. See also: Charles R. Shrader, 'The Influence of Vegetius' *De Re Militari*', *Military Affairs* 45 (4) 1981, 167-172; Neal Wood, 'Frontinus as a Possible Source for Machiavelli's Method', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 28 (2) 1967, 243-248; Donald A. Neill, 'Ancestral Voices: The Influence of the Ancients on the Military Thought of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Military History* 62 (3) 1998, 487-520.

In sum, these two volumes are most welcome. They comprehensively examine the military history of the ancient world and discuss a variety of issues beyond the theme of war, thus stressing the fact that military history is more than the research of battles and wars. The result is a full picture of the military history of an age that formed the cultural basis of western civilization.

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