

Lee L. Brice (ed.), *New Approaches to Greek and Roman Warfare*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-118-27333-3.

Despite its brevity and accessibility, this volume offers a wealth of new ways to understand ancient warfare – and the societies that engaged in it – and will be useful to undergraduate and graduate students, teachers, and scholars looking for different ways to approach some old problems. The book’s fourteen chapters, loosely organized into two sections, on Greece and Rome respectively, are provided by a good mix of scholars from a variety of disciplinary methods, from logistics and literature, and archaeology and epigraphy, to sociology and neuroscience. The editor rightly says in the preface that military history can be much more than mere “drums and trumpets,” and this volume lives up to its billing.

The introductory chapter, “Ancient Warfare and Moving Beyond ‘New Military History,’” by Lee L. Brice, surveys the state of the field, offering an updated and expanded version of E. Wheeler’s influential 2011 article “Greece: Mad Hatters and March Hares” (in L. L. Brice and J. T. Roberts [eds.], *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World* [Claremont, CA] 53-104). After summarizing the chapters that follow, Brice concludes that there are many useful approaches to understanding ancient Greek and Roman warfare, including even some old approaches once thought obsolete. Military historians, and students of the ancient world broadly conceived, benefit when those with different perspectives engage with and learn from one another. It does not have to be either/or (e.g., “face of battle” vs. “war and society”).

Chapter 2, “Wealth and the Logistics and Greek Warfare: Food, Pay, and Plunder,” by the late Matthew Trundle, offers a useful survey of logistical considerations in Greek armies, and argues that the development of coinage revolutionized the waging of war and allowed for much longer campaigns much further from home. I was grateful to read this characteristically lucid and insightful chapter by Trundle, who sadly passed away too soon just some months ago.

In Chapter 3, “Early Greek Siege Warfare,” Michael G. Seaman argues against the standard line that siege warfare only really blossomed in the late Classical period and later. Instead, according to Seaman, sieges were very common in the Archaic Period, but our evidence is skewed since there are so few literary sources before the mid fifth century, and historical writing blossomed only later. The literary sources that do survive – some admittedly quite late, such as Plutarch – frequently mention the taking or destroying of towns after a battle, which must indicate a siege of some sort.

John W. I. Lee, in Chapter 4, “Daily Life in Classical Greek Armies, c. 500-330 BCE,” broadens his groundbreaking approach to Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (J. W. I. Lee, *A Greek Army on the March: Soldiers and Survival in Xenophon’s Anabasis*, Cambridge, 2007) to look at the lives of soldiers throughout the Classical Greek world. Touching on topics such as social structures between soldiers, sexuality, garrison life, and even

soldiers' experience in the armies of Achaemenid Persia, Lee forces us to look well beyond the battlefield to ponder what life in Greek armies was really like.

Chapter 5, "Soldiers' Home: Life after Battle," by Lawrence A. Tritle, is a moving meditation on the lasting effects of war on the bodies and minds of soldiers, even well after the war has ended. Championing the position that ancient Greeks had a similar psychological makeup to today's soldiers, Tritle encourages us to think about the full impact of war on those who survive it and return home to try, often unsuccessfully, to return to their previous lives. Given what we now know about conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), we should be able to look at old myths, such as Ajax's suicide and Heracles' "madness," with new understanding.

In Chapter 6, "Greek Cavalry in the Hellenistic World: Review and Reappraisal," Glenn R. Bugh looks at cavalry in the Hellenistic world, when, supposedly, cavalry had lost the luster and importance it had enjoyed during the time of Philip and Alexander. While our sources are frustratingly sparse, Bugh surveys the new types of cavalry that emerged in the Hellenistic period, such as Tarentines, cataphracts, and thureophoroi (these latter visible on the famous monument of Aemilius Paullus at Delphi). While lacking the numbers and dash of Alexander's Companions, Hellenistic cavalry still played an important role.

Maria A. Liston, in Chapter 7, "Skeletal Evidence for the Impact of Battle on Soldiers and non-Combatants," brings an anthropologist's eye to two violent events from antiquity for which we have skeletal remains: the Battle of Chaeronea, and the Herulian sack of Athens. Liston not only illustrates the gruesome and horrifying effects of violence on the bodies of real people – forcing us to be less academically aloof when we consider ancient warfare – she also demonstrates how skeletal remains can answer some longstanding questions about ancient events. For example, the sword cuts on the heads of the slain members of the Theban Sacred Band at Chaeronea indicate that their enemies were slashing at them from above, that is, from horseback. Since some have doubted whether the eighteen-year-old Alexander really did lead a cavalry charge against the Sacred Band (e.g., J. Ma, "Chaironeia 338: Topographies of Commemoration," *JHS* 128 [2008]: 72-91), Liston's evidence provides a compelling case for the orthodox view.

Chapter 8, "Financing Imperialism in the Middle Roman Republic," by Nathan Rosenstein, offers a detailed accounting of several of Rome's wars of the period to show that, more often than not, the booty gained from a Roman victory did not offset the cost of the operation. Therefore, pure greed as a motivation for Rome's wars of conquest must be called into question. Only the financial resources of the *assidui*, those Romans eligible for military service but who chose to pay the *tributum* rather than serve, kept the Republic in the black.

In Chapter 9, "Indiscipline in the Roman Army of the Late Republic and Principate," Lee L. Brice uses a sociological approach to parse the different types of indiscipline seen in the Roman army, including, in descending order from most

serious to least, military conspiracy, mutiny, expression of grievances, and insubordination. As a case study to demonstrate the causes and progress of instances of indiscipline, Brice takes a close look at the crowd dynamics of and institutional responses to the famous mutinies of 14 CE.

Susan M. Heidenreich and Jonathan P. Roth, in Chapter 10, “The Neurophysiology of Panic on the Ancient Battlefield,” employ the recent findings of neuroscience to explain the psychological and physiological responses of soldiers to various events on the battlefield. While even ancient authors commented on the social contagion of panic and the irrationality of panicked flight, neuroscience can help us understand just why such events unfold, even though we still cannot account in every case for why one person flees while another holds firm.

Chapter 11, “Roman Siege Warfare: Moral and Morale,” by Josh Levithan, does not provide a survey of siege warfare in the Roman world. Instead, Levithan offers extended, if sometimes freewheeling, musings on what motivates soldiers to attack a well-fortified position to be first in the breach, and why a defending force might choose to refuse battle and withstand a siege rather than go out into the field. In the end, this chapter amounts to a championing of a “face of battle” approach to military history, rather than a commander’s eye view.

Elizabeth M. Greene, in Chapter 12, “Roman Military Communities and the Families of Auxiliary Soldiers,” combines archaeological and epigraphical evidence, especially from Germany and Roman Britain, to demonstrate that not only were families, including children, a large part of Roman camp life, but that many soldiers’ wives were not taken from the local communities, but rather from the soldiers’ own networks that preexisted military service. Greene stresses that warfare was far from a masculine-only domain, and we will fail to understand what Roman armies and their activities were really like if we do not take into account the material evidence that survives.

In Chapter 13, “Approaching ‘Ethnic’ Communities in the Roman Auxilia,” Alexander Meyer carefully approaches the vexing question of ethnicity and how it was recognized, differentiated, and preserved in Roman armies. Epigraphic and other evidence indicates that even after different ethnic groups were merged together and placed on campaign far from their origins, ethnic ties remained strong. For example, Gauls and Britons continued to express their unique ethnic identities and associations long after they had been serving together.

In the final chapter, “Health, Wounds, and Medicine in the Late Roman Army (250-600 CE),” Philip Rance takes on the daunting task of illuminating the practices and practitioners of field medicine for a period after the archaeological and literary evidence has largely dried up. The evidence that does survive implies a continuity of medical care and treatment in Roman armies, though much more work needs to be done.

Every chapter contains its own unique bibliography and brief suggestions for further reading, which should be especially useful to students. I can envision this book as being helpful to a variety of audiences, from students writing term papers to scholars trying to stay abreast of the state of the field. The editor is to be commended for gathering such a diverse and interesting collection of essays and for breathing new life into a field that too many have thought to be obsolete. Much like the sciences have revolutionized archaeology, the new approaches contained in this volume should spur a great deal of productive and fascinating research into the grim realities of ancient warfare.

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