

**Maurizio Giangiulio, Elena Franchi and Giorgia Proietti (eds.). *Commemorating War and War Dead: Ancient and Modern*.** Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019. Pp.362; 3 b/w ill, 7 b/w photos. ISBN 978-3-515-12175-0 (Paperback) ISBN 978-3-515-12178-1 (E-book) €60.

*Commemorating War and War Dead* is an intimidating volume. The scope is ambitious, offering a theoretical approach that reflects the diversity of fields that have intersected polemology since the 1951 seminal study of Gaston Bouthoul, including sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis, memory studies, literature theory, and postmodernism. The research for the volume was funded by the Department of Humanities at the University of Trento and incorporated into that University's 2015/2016 strategic project "Wars and Post-Wars. States and Societies, Cultures and Structures. Reflections from a Centenary." *Commemorating War* promises to present case studies "from the ancient Greeks and Romans through medieval and modern times to contemporary history." (Foreword) On the cover, dark red title words are superimposed over a grey box framed by a different shade of grey, as if testament to the seriousness of the academia within.

The volume has a preface, a foreword and five sections: An Introductory Section, containing three papers by Giangiulio, Franchi, and Proietti, the volume's editors; Section I, entitled "War Memorials: Objects in Performance"; Section II "War Dead: From Citizens to Symbols"; Section III, "Narratives of War: Historiography, Public Discourse, and Cultural Memory" and a Conclusive Section, with remarks by M. Canevaro, a section of abstracts for each article and keywords related to it, short biographies of the contributors, and an index. Each article has footnotes at the bottom of the page and is followed by its own individual bibliography. The whole volume is in English, and most authors have either elected to present non-English sources in the original with a following translation, or to provide the translation only.

The foreword by the editors (pp.13–14) warns the reader not to expect too much cohesion between the papers to follow. They are to show "through the heterogeneity of their perspectives, how many aspects of the topic remain to be explored." The disclaimers continue, "as Mirko Canevaro shows clearly in his *Conclusions*, the reader is left to trace his or her connections between the essays collected in each section and the different sections themselves" and the volume has "no intention of providing a comprehensive treatment." For most of us this is a familiar drawback of multi-author projects. While collaboration between scholars with diverse skills and perspectives is much to be admired, it is an approach that rejoices in dialogue. There is little conversation between the individual articles here, as the editors have seen fit to warn us.

As an ancient historian reviewing for fellow ancient historians, I hope the authors shall forgive me for concentrating on papers of most interest to our profession. L.G. Canevaro's "Commemoration through Objects? Homer on the Limitations of Material Memory" (pp.95–109), discusses the fragility of memory in Homer, even that

conveyed by material objects, and highlights that objects made by women are portrayed as particularly temporally limited. In “Beyond Victory and Defeat: Commemorating Battles prior to the Persian Wars” (pp.111–129) Bergmann picks carefully through the evidence for a period of history for which we are ill-informed, to discover what strategies of commemoration were used and at what frequency. She is meticulous in cataloguing archaeological and literary attestations and discussing their implications. Baitinger’s “Commemoration of War in Archaic and Classical Greece” (pp.131–145) describes the material culture remains of burial mounds, victory monuments and arms and armor dedications that have been discovered by excavation and includes the author’s own photographs.

In “Memorials of War in Pausanias” (pp.147–156) Roy discusses how the narratives of war had been changed and reshaped by ancient communities by the time Pausanias visited certain war memorials. M. Canevaro’s “Courage in War and the Courage of the War Dead – Ancient and Modern Reflections” (pp.187–205) considers different conceptions of courage and how it has been constructed and ascribed, with particular reference to Athenian War commemoration. Misić’s “Cognitive Aspects of Funerary Commemoration of Soldiers and Veterans in Roman Poetovio” (pp.207–218) argues that funerary ritual practices were transferred in the same way as religious rituals and concepts, via doctrinal and imagistic routes.

Konijnendijk writes that the Spartans converted the memories of encounters with their armies into a tactic, making fear of their prowess in battle work for their overall success, in “Commemoration through Fear: The Spartan Reputation as a Weapon of War” (pp.257–269). In Franchi’s “The Memory of the Sacred Wars and Some Origin Stories” (pp.271–286), she takes the view that the so-called “First Sacred War” was not invented as some have argued but was reconstructed around the time of the Third and Fourth Sacred Wars from the memory of real attacks on Delphi. Three different ethnē, the Phlegyans, Dryopians and Kragallidai, owe their origin stories to these re-imaginings, in which all three are given a connection to Phocians and Locrians in order to implicate them with those peoples’ aggressive actions against Delphi. Lastly, Thorne describes the difficulties of commemorating a victory in war that could not be effectively exploited in his article “Caesar and the Challenge of Commemorating the Battle of Pharsalia” (pp.287–299), because although it was Caesar’s biggest victory and important to his subsequent position, it had been achieved in a civil war.

Since the volume is a collection of case studies intended to stimulate reflection on the commemoration of war, it is also worth highlighting a few papers addressing non-classical subjects that are particularly successful in evoking broadly applicable themes. Historians with a general military interest are advised not to overlook Mondini and Cozzi’s contribution “Brothers and Heroes. Literary Sources on Death in the First World War (the Italian case)” (pp.239–253). This paper takes us to the Italian combatants of the Great War and their concern to reserve the creation of narratives about their experiences to those who had served on the frontlines. For

these men, pivotal moments of fighting and proximity to death separated soldiers from non-soldiers who could never really understand their experiences. Their voices speak to the perennial question of military history, do only soldiers truly understand war?

Similarly, Albertoni's article "*Heroes in aula Dei: Commemorating Wars and the Fallen in the Time of Charlemagne*" (pp.301–317) contributes to the central theme of the volume by detailing an example of an army that could not commemorate individuals at all because their prevailing ideology could not admit of loss. In the Carolingian army, Albertoni writes, the will of the King of the Franks was indistinguishable from the will of God, and so it had to be maintained that any casualty in a war was the result of a perfidious enemy rather than a true combatant death on the battlefield. This rather extreme example will be informative to those with an interest in what happens when rigid ideologies meet military practicalities.

While the volume as a whole contains individual papers that are doubtless of interest to a variety of scholars, it has no one obvious audience. If you are a military historian and the proximity of the words "war" to "theory" prompt you to reach for your De Jomini, you will be disappointed to find that the Frenchman of choice here is actually Maurice Halbwachs. Similarly for ancient historians, while there are individual papers of high quality, in some others the application of memory studies to comparative ancient and modern contexts repeatedly produces conclusions that might be of interest to classical reception, but shed no new light on the ancient world itself, or worse, produce some highly dubious assertions regarding it. A pleasant ending is offered, however, in M. Canevaro's concluding remarks (pp.337–343), where it becomes quickly apparent that the pessimistic mention in the foreword has done him an injustice, and that he has in fact done an exemplary job of considering a number of papers of immense diversity, and discerning themes and drawing links between them.

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