

REVIEWS

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Wheeler, Everett L. (ed.) (2007) *The armies of classical Greece*. Aldershot etc: Ashgate. (*International library of essays on military history*.) LXIV, 528 p. ISBN 978-0-7546-2684-8.

The military history of antiquity has fascinated many researchers, which is why the compilation *The armies of classical Greece* by Everett L. Wheeler, published in the Ashgate Publishing series *The international library of essays on military history* is definitely a very useful volume for everyone engaged in studies of antiquity or military history. The book consists of 24 articles by various authors, divided into five larger sets, and an introduction by the compiler of the work. The articles cover the period from the Archaic period to the Battle of Mantinea in 362 BCE and have been written at different points of time: the volume contains articles from the beginning of the 20th century as well as from the 21st century.

In the voluminous introduction the compiler of the book provides an overview of the development of the historiography of the military history of antiquity and the newest trends, commenting on the details and bringing out the positive and negative aspects of research in the field. Wheeler discusses the most common research problems and terminology and gives a short synopsis of military development during the period described in the book, while also providing short comments on all of the articles.

The first part of the book concerns the military history of the Archaic period (750–500 BCE) and begins with the article “The hoplite reform revisited” by A. M. Snodgrass, where the author discusses the origin of the phalanx and disputes the researchers who already recognize the phalanx in the works of Homer, arguing that the development of the phalanx was a long-term process and that this process definitely lasted past the time of Homer and the time covered by his works.

The article “Ephorus and the prohibition of missiles,” by E. L. Wheeler deals with the agreement concluded between Chalkis and Eretria and reported by the 4th century BCE historian Ephorus regarding the prohibition of the use of missiles in warfare. The author concludes, however, that such an agreement probably did not exist.

In the article “The Zulus and the Spartans: A comparison of their military systems,” W. S. Ferguson compares the societies and military organization of the Zulus and the Spartans, concentrating more on the Zulus.

The article “Early Greek land warfare as symbolic expression” by W. R. Connor draws parallels between religious practices and warfare before the Greco-Persian Wars.

Connor is contradicted by P. Krentz in his article “Fighting by the rules: The invention of the hoplite *agon*,” who claims that connections between religious rituals and warfare became apparent only during the 5th century BCE. The articles of Connor and Krentz provide excellent material for further discussion.

The second part of the book concentrates on the religious, social, economic and legal aspects of warfare. In their article "Religious scruples in ancient warfare," M. D. Goodman and A. J. Holladay analyze the effect of the religious taboos of Greeks, Romans and Jews on warfare.

R. T. Ridley's article "The hoplite as citizen: Athenian military institutions in their social context" discusses the military organization of Athens, trying to find answers to the following questions: How did the military system work? Was there any military training?, etc.

A thorough treatment of the effect of war on economy is provided in the article "Warfare and agriculture: The economic impact of devastation in classical Greece" by J. A. Thorne. The author analyzes the methods used in plundering raids and the extent of damage done by plundering, as well as possible countermeasures to plundering. He comes to the conclusion that regardless of opposite views presented by some researchers, plundering was a very efficient way of waging war.

In the article "Akeryktos Polemos" by J. L. Myres, the author discusses the unconventional form of warfare that could be termed "undeclared war."

D. J. Mosley's article "Crossing Greek frontiers under arms" deals with the rules and practices that applied when crossing the territory of a neutral state in order to reach the enemy and the rules of conduct followed in order to avoid going to war with a third country while gaining access to their territory in order to cross it.

The third part of the book, which concerns the hoplite battles of the Classical Era, begins with an article by the editor of the compilation titled "The general as hoplite," where the author discusses and provides an overview of the role of the generals in battle and their location on the battlefield at different times and consequently also general developments in the fields of tactics and insignia.

D. Whitehead's article "ΚΛΟΠΗ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΥ: 'Theft' in ancient Greek warfare" discusses the use of stratagems, the rules governing in Greek warfare and the concept of "fair victory."

In the article "On the possibility of reconstructing Marathon and other ancient battles," N. Whatley considers the problems that arise when historians attempt to reconstruct a battle. The author gives a brilliant overview of the different methods used and their positive and negative aspects. The second half of the article is devoted to commenting on the reconstructions of several researchers, and the author comes to the conclusion that the reconstruction of all the nuances is impossible. The methodological discussion presented in this article is especially useful.

The researchers disagree on the interpretation of the word *othismos*, which occurs in the sources and should mean "to shove." Some argue that this term should be interpreted figuratively, but the traditional view holds that the hoplites pushed each other in battle and this led to the break-up and escape of one of the phalanxes. In his article "Othismos: The importance of the mass-shove in hoplite warfare," R. D. Luginbill debates this subject, favouring the traditional view.

L. A. Trittle discusses the mutilation of enemy corpses in the wars of ancient Greece and the Vietnam War in his article "Hector's body: Mutilation of the dead in ancient Greece and Vietnam," and he attempts to find psychological explanations for such behaviour.

Military historians have always been interested in the number of casualties in one battle or another. In his article "Casualties in hoplite battles," P. Krentz analyzes the data presented by various authors of antiquity regarding the number of fallen in battles and offers the average ratios of the number of fallen on both the victorious and losing armies.

The fourth part of the compilation is devoted to the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE). It begins with I. G. Spence's article "Perikles and the defence of Attika during the Peloponnesian War," in which the author examines the defensive strategy of Athens during the Peloponnesian War and argues that the use of mobile cavalry units against the plundering Peloponnesians was effective only until the latter established a permanent base in Attica.

The article by H. D. Westlake titled "The progress of Epiteichismos" discusses the establishment of military bases on enemy territory and is thus connected with the previous piece. The author provides an overview of how the practice originally used in civil wars came to be used in wars fought between states, how long it was used effectively and how the term *epiteichismos* acquired a much broader meaning over time.

In his article "Thucydides and Spartan strategy in the Archidamian War," T. Kelley points out that the data provided by Thucydides on Spartan strategy that concentrates solely on land operations must be reviewed and that naval operations were very important to at least a certain faction among the Spartans. Furthermore, on several occasions Spartan land and naval operations were synchronized, thus complementing each other.

One of the favourite military leaders of Thucydides in the Peloponnesian War was the Spartan Brasidas. G. Wylie's article "Brasidas – great commander or whiz-kid?" gives a picture of the life and activities of Brasidas and also contemplates whether Brasidas was in fact a genius on the battlefield or if some of his fame can be attributed to the sympathy Thucydides felt for him.

The fifth part of the book is dedicated to the time of Xenophon and Epameinondas. Xenophon is known as a historian and soldier. In the article "Xenophon's theory of leadership," N. Wood also points out Xenophon's widely overlooked talents as a military, social and economic theoretician. Xenophon's ideas are compared to other thinkers of his time and his thoughts on leadership are also discussed.

Greeks were also highly valued mercenaries. Who became mercenaries, how they were recruited, what was their everyday life like, what kind of social stratification existed among the mercenaries and what shaped the identity of mercenaries are discussed by M. F. Trundle. In his article "Identity and community among Greek mercenaries in the Classical world: 700–322 BCE," he points out that while Greek mercenaries often fought other Greeks, their national identity was an important connecting factor between men from various areas of Greece.

According to common theory, scythed chariots were first adopted in India. A. K. Nefiodkin presents convincing arguments in his article "On the origin of the scythed chariots" regarding the original adoption of these chariots not by Indians but by Persians during the 5th century BCE specifically in order to scatter the compact formation of the Greek phalanx.

The article by V. Hanson titled "Epameinondas, the Battle of Leuktra (371 B.C.), and the 'revolution' in Greek battle tactics" challenges the position of Epameinondas as the great tactical innovator in Greek warfare. The author brings many examples of the innovations attributed to Epameinondas, such as the use of a greater number of lines in the phalanx, the positioning of stronger units on the left flank instead of the traditional right flank, etc., being employed by earlier generals. Hanson is of the opinion that the myth of Epameinondas is largely the result of later authors sympathetic to Thebes.

All in all, the compilation comprises valuable material and its articles are interesting and contribute to the objective set by the compiler in the introduction, providing many opportunities for discussion by contradicting traditional ideas and at times presenting two contrasting views within the book itself. The selection of articles also provides a good overview of the development and different aspects of the Greek military system. The book gives different opinions about the development of the Greek ritualized warfare – the *agon*. We also get a picture of the development of battle tactics (how light troops became more and more important in warfare) and strategy (occupying part of other city states' land and establishing a stronghold there was not part of Greek warfare until the Peloponnesian War). Thanks to several articles one can get a pretty good overview of differences and similarities in, for example, Spartan and Athenian military systems, and some unconventional opinions are introduced (see for example T. Kelly's article). The introduction in itself gives a very good survey of warfare in Greece and the circumstances related to its study.

One potential fault in the volume might be the distribution of the articles between the five parts of the book, which is to say that an article or two might have fit more in some other part of the book (e.g. the article on mercenaries by M. F. Trundle which would have been more suited for the second part). This criticism is, however, rather insignificant.

The book is bound in hard covers, the print and paper quality are good, but the articles are in different formats, as it seems that the works used have been printed on the basis of unaltered PDF-scans. This does not affect the legibility of the volume and the quality of the contents, of course.