

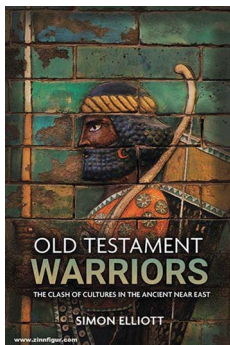


## New Book Chronicle

Marion Uckelmann

For my first New Book Chronicle, I look at a wide range of studies on warfare and weaponry. This field has long been a central focus of scholarship, from antiquarians using classical texts to locate legendary battlefields to modern archaeological research on weapons, warriors, fortifications and landscapes. Yet, it is a field that is currently being re-evaluated, re-imagined and expanded with new theoretical and methodological approaches. Old topics are being given fresh perspectives and new avenues are being explored. Such work is unquestionably relevant to our contemporary world. The following explores a small sample of recent publications.

SIMON ELLIOTT. 2021. *Old Testament warriors: the clash of cultures in the ancient Near East*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-61200-954-4 hardback £20.



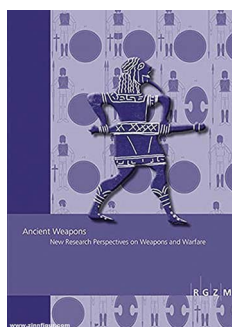
Simon Elliott's book takes on the huge topic of warfare in the ancient Near East during the chronological and geographic scope of the Old Testament, drawing primarily on written evidence and iconography. Warfare, defined here as “organised aggression in the form of war, involving a stratified polity” (p. 2), finds its beginning in this region with the building of the walls of Jericho, *c.* 9000 BC. The book describes events between then and the start of the Classical period (*c.* 500 BC).

The Introduction provides a clear outline, explains the necessary terminology, and provides a detailed, if concise timeline, giving an integrated overview of the different cultural groups and their many conflicts. The following chapters describe the rise and fall of the early states. Chapter 1 covers the Sumerians to the Akkadians in Mesopotamia and Chapter 2, the early histories of Egypt, Nubia, Canaan and Libya. Chapter 3 explores the origins of the chariot and its importance in the development of warfare with the Hyksos and in subsequent kingdoms and empires. Chapter 4 crosses the Mediterranean to combine the histories of the Minoans, Myceneans and the enigmatic Sea Peoples. In a distinct shift, Chapter 5 turns towards a close narrative of the historical events in the Old Testament involving the Hebrew kingdoms and the Philistines. Chapter 6 follows with a lengthy survey of the Hittite, Assyrian and Babylonian empires, based on the extensive written records.

The different chapters only rarely interlink, making it difficult to follow the events over the broader temporal and spatial scales. It is irritating to find that the images of different soldiers and armies are illustrated in the form of wargame miniatures, when ancient depictions, or archaeological finds of weapons, are available. Indeed, almost no reference is made to the

archaeological evidence or to any recent research. Perhaps as a result, the book also misses significant inventions and technological developments of weaponry, such as swords. In sum, the book takes a traditional approach intended for a broader audience, sketching out the military history of the ancient Near Eastern civilisations and painting a vivid picture of their war-fuelled relations.

GIACOMO BARDELLI & RAIMON GRAELLS I FABREGAT (ed.). 2021. *Ancient weapons: new research perspectives on weapons and warfare* (RGZM Tagungen 44). Mainz: RGZM; 978-3-7954-3676-6 paperback €45.



This edited volume is the outcome of a 2019 conference on ‘Ancient Weapons’ at the Römisch-Germanische-Zentralmuseum, Mainz, and the nine chapters published here cover a wide chronological range from the Late Bronze Age to the Italian Iron Age, *c.* tenth to third centuries BC. The contributions focus mainly on Italy, with single chapters on western Hungary, North Macedonia, Greece and western Turkey. Each chapter offers a detailed study of weaponry, mostly recovered from ritual contexts. The emphasis is on the roles of these weapons within rituals in sanctuaries and burials, and more broadly within society, rather than on what they can tell us about warfare and craftsmanship. The collected papers use different

research strategies and analyses to achieve a new understanding of objects which have long been the focus of scholarship.

The first five chapters explore weapons found in Italian sanctuaries and burials. D’Antonio studies the ritual character of weapons recovered from the sanctuaries, temples and necropolis of Poseidonia-Paestum. This Greek city in southern Italy was founded in the sixth century BC and, at that time, full-sized weapons were offered in the sanctuaries. Later, in the Lucanian period (mid fifth to early third century BC), weapons started to appear in funerary contexts as symbolic markers of male prestige. The weapons included in these funerary contexts are distinct from those previously offered to the gods. Moreover, at the sanctuaries in this later phase, offerings were scarcer and comprised mainly miniature weapons. The significance of the real weapons therefore changed over time. Meanwhile, Scarci considers the iron and bronze weapons from the Greek urban sanctuary of Monte Casale (ancient Kasmenai), Sicily, in the seventh/sixth centuries BC. With more than 400 weapons, mainly iron spear- and javelin heads, the site has produced one of the largest assemblages of the western Greek world and comparable in size to that at Olympia. Many of these finds are previously unpublished and the study reveals that one quarter show intentional pre-depositional damage. Scarci’s paper investigates the rituals performed around the deposition of the weapons and assesses the potential type of worshippers who made these offerings to a martial deity, possibly Athena.

The following four chapters research the burial evidence and consider the relationship between weapons and warrior status. Negrini showcases some of the rich burials of the Villanovan and Italic peoples from the Romagna, northern Italy, between the tenth and fifth

centuries BC. The author explores the symbolic significance of the weapons in tombs as individual and group indicators of status in male burials. Further south, at Numana, near Ancona on the Adriatic coast, Bardelli reinvestigates an old excavation of the ‘Circolo delle Fibule’, a small archaic-period (seventh to fifth centuries BC) cemetery of nine rich burials, four of these—all associated with males—containing weapons. Through a combination of new conservation work on the weapons and a re-visiting of the original fieldwork records, the horizontal stratigraphy and chronology of the site is refined.

Staying in the same region, Weidig highlights the rich burial sites of the ruling class of Belmonte Piceno in the sixth century BC. This paper focuses on the reconstruction of the grave goods from the ‘Tomba del Duce’, the richest of the warrior burials, and from some of the other significant burials. The exquisite grave goods demonstrate a distinctive elite artistic style. The author concludes that the elite compared themselves to the virtues and actions of heroic figures and used these rich grave goods to support their aspirational identities. Stefanovski also focuses on a rich burial context, at Gorna Parta on the shores of Lake Ohrid in south-west North Macedonia. From this large cemetery, in use from archaic to medieval times, the author examines the burial rites of one of the oldest graves, ‘tomb 1’ from the fifth century BC. Here, through the weapons and their placement, the warrior and his rank was made visible for the whole community. The author concludes that warriorhood were not just visible in battle, but also in burials and in the social stratification of a warrior group.

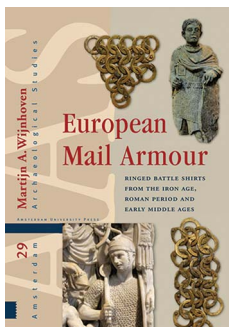
Tarbay takes a different approach to the weapons from two mixed hoards of the Late Bronze Age (Urnfield period, twelfth to tenth centuries BC) from west Hungary. This includes use-wear analysis to evaluate traces of craft production and damage, in order to discuss the weapons’ biographies and the possible rationale for selection of specific weapons. The results show that the smaller hoard of Rinyaszentkirály (Somogy county) resembles the weapons of one high-ranking individual, and that all the objects had been previously used before they were cut into pieces. The larger hoard of Kezõhidegkút (Tolna county) could represent the complex sets of weapon equipment of many individuals. All the weapons show combat marks, with some being repaired and used over a long period of time. All the objects were destroyed before deposition, which is interpreted as a *pars pro toto* offering of a community, where the used weapon pieces represent the warrior identities of that group. This is a welcome new and detailed approach to understanding the many often large hoards from the Carpathian Basin.

Turning south to Greece, Graells i Fabregat delivers a detailed study that shows the variety and development of the weaponry of Greek warriors, c. 580–440 BC. Taking a diachronic approach, the author collects and compares weapon equipment in burials; weapons from sanctuaries, primarily Olympia; and the extensive iconographic evidence on ceramic vessels. The paper gives a good visual overview, using many figures to show stylised warriors with their different panoplies. The author makes clear that there was no absolute standard for the equipment of a Greek warrior, and changes in combat style and warfare were integral to developments that merge into our more familiar image of the Greek hoplite warrior of the fourth century BC. The last chapter, by Verčik and Güder, uses archaeometallurgical methods to identify and interpret the votive offerings of foreigners at ancient Greek sanctuaries. The authors analyse samples of the archaic-period armour scales from the sanctuary to

Apollo at Didyma (Ionia, Turkey) to illuminate the connections between people(s) in the past.

Collectively, the chapters in this volume present a diverse spectrum of how weapons were used and seen in the first millennium BC around the Mediterranean, highlighting the role they played as indicators of social—mainly high-ranking warrior—groups. A concluding chapter would have been helpful to connect these diverse yet excellent case studies and bring out the special roles of ‘ancient weapons’ in past societies.

MARTIJN A. WIJNHOVEN. 2021. *European mail armour: ringed battle shirts from the Iron Age, Roman Period and early Middle Ages* (Archaeological Studies 29). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; 978-94-6372-126-4 hardback €181.



Martijn Wijnhoven’s book is a thoughtful and comprehensive investigation, long required, into early European mail armour. The author compiles a large database of all archaeological finds and compares this with the iconographic and written evidence from the time of the first finds in the later Iron Age up to the medieval period, with many later examples also included in the discussion. The temporal focus lies between the third century BC and the end of the fifth century AD, and geographically ranges across Europe and its neighbouring regions. The original finds are listed in the large catalogue at the end. The author uses an interdisciplinary approach in order to gain a deeper understanding of: the origin and dispersal of ring

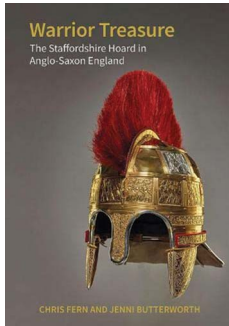
mail armour; its use and different names in the past; the technical and ornamental details and how these were made; and the social context of making and wearing the mail. Looking to the earliest finds of ring mail and related objects, the author traces the origins of mail armour as a defensive garment for elite Celtic warriors along the Rhine-Danube corridor in the La Tène period, to the decades around 300 BC. Within a century, the use of mail had spread far across Europe. The Romans, for example, adopted this useful defensive equipment and the use of early mail armour in the Roman army of the imperial period provides a focus of discussion.

The design of the mail shirt changed over time and the author describes in detail both the technological stages and the decorative elements. These show that they were not only practical garments, but also bore emblems of prestige or religion, for example, an early modern Indo-Persian mail shirt with the ‘Prayer to Ali’ woven into its ring pattern. Since evidence for the production of the rings and the making of the mail armour is sparse in the early periods, the addition of more recent evidence clarifies the processes involved. This detailed scholarship will allow future finds to be much more easily analysed, typologically dated, and understood. Often, mail finds are poorly preserved and ‘not much to look at’, but Wijnhoven’s work allows us to visualise, understand and value these objects.

The book is well illustrated, supporting the overview of the technical details. This study traces a success story of an Iron Age technology that remained an important piece of defensive

armour until the nineteenth century AD, with only minor modifications. If you want to know anything, or rather everything, about early mail armour, you need look no further!

CHRIS FERN & JENNI BUTTERWORTH. 2022. *Warrior treasure: the Staffordshire hoard in Anglo-Saxon England*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; 978-1-800-85481-9 paperback £14.99.

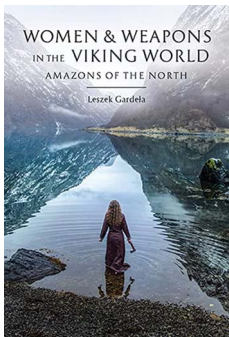


This wonderful book on the mysterious and famous Staffordshire hoard from central England describes in detail the discovery, the finds and their conservation, and the wider context of the hoard in the Anglo-Saxon world. Given the huge public interest in the discovery, the book is written to inform a wide audience; however, it will not disappoint any specialist readers. The authors have succeeded in balancing an academic depth of knowledge with an accessible style. Inset boxes clearly explain certain techniques or sources. Beautiful images illustrate the different steps of conservation and investigation and show off the outstanding finds and the complex manufacturing technologies. A multi-layered timeline places the

hoard in historical context and alongside other contemporaneous material.

The hoard comprises approximately 600 objects, their dates ranging from *c.* AD 550–660, indicating that some pieces were already old when they were placed in the ground, *c.* AD 650–675. All the objects, many of them of gold or silver, were broken or ripped from their mounts. The largest proportion of the finds come from weaponry fittings, such as the ornate pommels that were ripped from their welded blades. There are also fragments of a richly decorated helmet, Christian objects such as a golden cross, and many smaller fragments and nails. These pieces were once part of magnificent weapons—the possessions of the elite warriors of the Anglo-Saxon period. With few comparable finds available, the hoard illuminates the splendour of this social class. The authors' detailed investigations show that every object has its own story—sometimes literally, in the form of intricate images of serpents, an eagle catching fish, horses, mythical beasts and much more. The reason for the brutal damage to the objects and their deposition remains unclear, as ritual hoarding in this period is uncommon. The authors offer their own ideas: maybe the concealed hoard of a fine metal-smith seeking to reuse the items, or due to its locality, maybe a hoard lain down after a victorious battle at the heart of Mercia, possibly by Penda, a triumphant Mercian king.

LESZEK GARDEŁA. 2021. *Women & weapons in the Viking world: Amazons of the North*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78925-665-9 hardback £30.

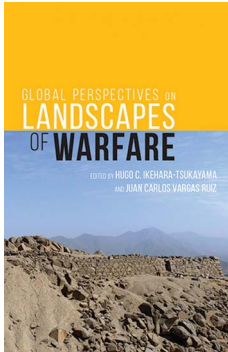


In this well-written book, Leszek Gardela offers a closer understanding of weapon-using Viking women that is much more multi-faceted than the female warriors portrayed in modern popular media. The author takes an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the burial evidence and compares it with the medieval literature, including mythology and folklore. The author gives first a scholarly and historiographical overview of previous research on women in Viking archaeology. The study surveys then the burial evidence for female graves with weapons in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, before meticulously exploring each set of weapon equipment found with a female and comparing it with the assembled textual and archaeological evidence. This is followed by a review of Viking iconog-

raphy and the depiction of female warriors.

The final two chapters offer concluding ideas. The first is a cross-cultural perspective on women with weapons looking across time to include the roles of females in modern wars. It highlights recurrent patterns that reveal that social conventions rather than biological sex are the barrier for women playing an active role in warfare. The second brings the focus back to the research question: ‘Amazons of the North?’ The archaeological evidence from burials is clear: weapons as grave goods in female graves are rare; and even rarer is a buried female identified as a ‘warrior’. The concept of female warriors was, however, known in ninth/tenth-century Scandinavia, for example, as shown in small figurines. The written records, albeit often more recent than the times they are describing and often texts of legendary histories, reveal a varied picture. They show “women who used weapons as potent symbols manifesting inheritance, authority and power, and [...] ambiguous female characters who used weapons in ritual practices enabling them to invoke fear, transform their appearance and see into the future” (p. 1). Only very few were weapon-wielding heroines of war, and Viking society did not approve of such behaviour. This picture is mirrored in the book’s nuanced interpretation of the archaeological record. The popular image of a Viking Amazon is therefore not supported, but the study shows women clearly engaged with weapons and warfare in many different ways.

HUGO C. IKEHARA-TSUKAYAMA & JUAN CARLOS VARGAS RUIZ (ed.). 2022. *Global perspectives on landscapes of warfare*. Louisville: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-64642-099-5 hardback \$75.



This edited volume seeks to understand landscapes of warfare, and compiles 11 case studies spanning research from the Americas, Europe and Asia and with a time depth ranging from the Neolithic to the fifteenth century AD. Both the overarching introductory chapter by the editors and a concluding chapter by Arkush incorporate the case studies and give excellent perspectives on the current approaches and challenges in studying landscapes of warfare. Reading the Introduction, I saw repeated parallels to current reports and analyses of modern conflict zones, which underlines the contemporary importance of this research. The editors explain in their chapter the concept of the book and invite the reader to compare the diverse case studies, for example, “Old World versus New World developments” and “different approaches in studying and visualizing the study of landscapes”. The editors guide the reader through the wide spectrum of research presented, a few examples of which are considered below.

Borzunov reviews the oldest fortifications in the northernmost Eurasian Taiga and finds that they were built in times of conflict and competition for resources between local people and migrants from further south. The oldest fortifications date back to the early Neolithic (*c.* sixth millennium BC) and are often multi-functional. They were not only intended to protect from intruders, but also to keep people and livestock safe from wild animals and the elements, and to serve as communal centres. A different interpretation of later fortifications is offered by Chechushkov, whose research on the Sintashta-Petrovka fortified settlements of the Bronze Age (*c.* 2000–1700 BC) sees their construction as a response to climatic challenges.

Matsugi gives a short overview of the archaeological evidence of warfare and its spatial distribution in protohistoric Japan (Yayoi period 1000 BC–AD 250 and early Kofun era AD 250–600). The changes in the landscape between these two periods—towards fewer fortified sites, fewer injured bodies and fewer weapons deposited in sanctuaries—is explained by a socio-political consolidation, which is visible, for example, through elite burials beneath large mounds.

Earley-Spadoni illuminates the fortified roads of the ancient Near East as part of a defence network and explores the archaeological records and written evidence of two case studies in detail: fort and fire beacon networks from the Middle Bronze Age in Syria (*c.* 2000–1800 BC) and fortress networks in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, from *c.* 800 BC. Both studies reveal the relevance of fortified roads as defence networks and corridors of communication for the expansionary and war-driven states of the ancient Near East.

The adaptation of archery in the Late Woodland Period (AD 400–850) in the Lower Missouri River Valley is Nichols’ topic; this chapter concludes that archery-based warfare and increased hunting led to a rapid change in settlement from valley to intervisible upland sites during this period.

All these volumes explore different aspects of weaponry and warfare. They range from: the military history of the first civilisations to the detailed analyses of single warrior graves; a diachronic study over millennia of chain armour to a broken treasure of royal early Christian warriors; the search for Viking female warriors to global perspectives on landscapes of warfare. Yet, these encompass only a fraction of the scholarship, increasingly based on archaeological approaches and evidence, that explores the complexities of warfare and human society. They highlight how much we need to challenge our assumptions and illustrate some of the possible ways in which we can change our interpretations of past conflicts.

## Books received

This list includes all books received between 1 November 2022 and 31 December 2022. Those featuring at the beginning of New Book Chronicle, however, have not been duplicated in this list. The listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its subsequent review in *Antiquity*.

### Africa and Egypt

SARAH M. SCHELLINGER. 2022. *Nubia: lost civilizations*. London: Reaktion Books; 978-1-78914-659-2 hardback £18.

### Americas

WESLEY BERNARDINI, STEWART B. KOYIYUMPTWEA, GREGSON SCHACHNER & LEIGH J. KUWANWISIWMA (ed.). 2021. *Becoming Hopi: a history*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press; 978-0-8165-4234-5 hardback \$75.

ALLEN J. CHRISTENSON. 2022. *The title of Totonacapan*. Denver: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-64642-265-4 paperback \$45.95.

PHILIPPE ERIKSON & VALENTINA VAPNARSKY (ed.). 2022. *Living ruins: native engagements with past materialities in contemporary Mesoamerica, Amazonia, and the Andes*. Louisville: University Press of Chicago; 978-1-64642-285-2 hardback \$71.

BEN LEEMING. 2022. *Aztec antichrist: performing the apocalypse in Early Colonial Mexico*. Louisville:

University Press of Colorado; 978-1-64642-299-9 paperback \$35.95.

RADOSŁAW PALONKA. 2022. *Art in the pre-Hispanic Southwest: an archaeology of Native American cultures*. Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield; 978-1-7936-4873-0 hardback \$125.

TIMOTHY R. PAUKETAT. 2023. *Gods of thunder: how climate change, travel, and spirituality reshaped precolonial America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-764510-9 hardback £19.99.

NAN A. ROTHSCHILD *et al.* 2022. *Buried beneath the city: an archaeological history of New York*. New York: Columbia University Press; 978-0-231-19495-2 paperback \$39.95.

DENI J. SEYMOUR. 2022. *A green band in a parched and burning land: Sobaipuri O'odham landscapes*. Denver: University Press of Colorado; 978-1-64642-296-8 hardback \$66.

### Anatolia, Levant and the Middle East

DAVID D. BOYER. 2022. *Water management in Gerasa and its hinterland: from the Romans to AD 750*

(Jerash Papers 10). Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-59862-8 paperback €125.



FEDERICO MANUELLI & DIRK PAUL MIELKE (ed.). 2022. *Late Bronze Age painted pottery traditions at the margins of the Hittite state: papers presented at a workshop held at the 11<sup>th</sup> ICAANE (München 4 April 2018) and additional contributions*. Oxford:

Archaeopress; 978-1-80327-202-3 eBook Open Access.

DAMIEN STONE. 2023. *The Hittites: lost civilizations*. London: Reaktion Books; 978-1-78914-684-4 hardback \$25.

## Britain and Ireland

PAUL FRODSHAM & KATE SHARPE (ed.). 2022. *Abstractions based on circles: papers on prehistoric rock art presented to Stan Beckensall on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday*. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-80327-317-4 eBook Open Access.

NICK HODGSON & BILL GRIFFITHS (ed.). 2022. *Roman frontier archaeology, in Britain and beyond: papers in honour of Paul Bidwell presented on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Arberia Society*. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-80327-345-7 eBook Open Access.

## Mediterranean archaeology

JONATHAN M. HALL & JAMES F. OSBORNE. 2022. *The connected Iron Age: interregional networks in the Eastern Mediterranean, 900–600 BCE*. Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press; 978-0-226-81904-4 hardback \$45.

SARAH C. MURRAY. *Male nudity in the Greek Iron Age: representation and ritual context in Aegean societies*. 2022. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-316-51093-3 hardback £90.

## The Roman world

KEN DARK. 2023. *Archaeology of Jesus' Nazareth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 978-0-19-286539-7 hardback £25.

IVANA POPOVIĆ, MILOJE VASIĆ, JEAN GUYON & DOMINIC MOREAU (ed.). 2022. *La basilique Saint-Irénée de Sirmium et sa nécropole*. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-59550-4 paperback €85.

## Heritage, conservation and museums

WILLIAM CARRUTHERS. 2022. *Flooded pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the recolonization of archaeology*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press; 978-1-5017-6646-6 eBook \$38.99.

CORNELIUS HOLTORF & ANDERS HÖGBERG (ed.). 2021. *Cultural heritage and the future*. Abingdon: Routledge; 978-1-138-82901-5 paperback £36.99.

## Paperback, second and subsequent editions

PIERRE GOULETQUER. 2022. *Préhistoire du Futur: archéologies intempêtes du territoire*. Toulouse: Anacharsis; 979-1-0279-0448-8 paperback €9.

## General

RACHEL KING. 2022. *Amber: from antiquity to eternity*. London: Reaktion Books; 978-1-78914-591-5 hardback £30.