F. K. DROGULA, *COMMANDERS AND COMMAND IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND EARLY EMPIRE*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. x + 422. ISBN 9781469621265 (bound); 9781469621272 (e-book). £52.50/US$59.95.

Recent years have seen a welcome revival of interest in Roman constitutional studies, and two major treatments of Republican command structures have now appeared in quick succession, namely Frederik Vervaet's *The High Command in the Roman Republic* (2014) and the work under review. Whereas Vervaet starts from and builds on orthodox, Mommsenian conceptions, much of Fred Drogula's approach is radically heterodox.

D. is at his most iconoclastic in his treatment of *imperium*. In ch. 2, he argues (as earlier in *Historia* 56 (2007), 419–52) that *imperium*, rather than, as usually supposed, denoting the totality of the higher magistrates' powers, was a strictly military authority, to be sharply differentiated from their civil power (*potestas*): *imperium* was conferred after entry into office through the *lex curiata*; dictators could exercise it within the city, but consuls and praetors only took it up when departing for their province, and could not exercise it in the city except on the day of their triumph or if authorized by a *senatus consultum ultimum*. D. also maintains that there was no gradation in the strength of the various magistrates' *imperium*: although their offices differed in prestige, dictators, consuls and praetors all held exactly the same *imperium* (142–209). This conception of *imperium* leads D. to regard it as of less significance than *provincia*, which forms the primary focus of his work: 'the *provincia* was the main concept that defined — and therefore limited — the scope of each commander's authority, and as such it was a far more dynamic and malleable idea than *imperium*' (377).

Rejecting the traditional account of the double consulship as immediately replacing the kings, D. holds that in the first years of the Republic military command was exercised merely by aristocratic clan leaders. In time, perhaps from 449 B.C., the Roman state acquired a monopoly over the appointment of military commanders, and the Licinio-Sextian reform of 367 B.C. reduced their number, not, as our sources claim, to two consuls and a praetor, but to three praetors of equal power and status (ch. 1). The assignment of *provinciae* probably originated as part of the state's assertion of its control over aristocratic warlords, since commanders were thereafter only permitted to use the full force of their *imperium* within their *provincia* and conflict between commanders was normally avoided by assigning them to different *provinciae* (ch. 3). Chs 4–5 deal with various developments from the late fourth to the second century, including prorogation and the emergence of permanent *provinciae* and of controls on provincial governors. Consuls and praetors, D. argues, were differentiated in title and prestige (but not *imperium*) during the third century, and praetors normally provided the governors of permanent provinces, while consuls continued to receive wars as their *provinciae*. Ch. 6 considers various developments of the late Republic, and the final chapter discusses how Augustus 'used successive interpretations of the *provincia* and *imperium* to craft his principate' (381).

D.'s work thus offers a bold and challenging synthesis of a wide range of themes, but controversy is likely to focus in particular on his conception of *imperium*. Other scholars have recently maintained that *imperium* was military in origin and down-dated the separation of consuls and praetors to the third century, but D. goes much further in arguing that throughout the Republic *imperium* remained ungraded and exclusively military. These claims face formidable obstacles in the ancient sources. D. is obliged to dismiss or explain away numerous passages referring to the *imperium* of consuls or praetors where it is naturally interpreted as denoting the totality of their powers, civil as well as military, and also a substantial body of texts which speak of consuls as having greater *imperium* than praetors and dictators greater than consuls. To take just two examples, D. (165) misinterprets Cic., *Leg.* 3.9, which in fact equates the power of a dictator with that of the two consuls together, and is unduly dismissive (190–2) of the authority of the augurs Cicero (*Att.* 9.9.3) and Messalla (*ap.* Gell. 13.15.4), citing respectively the augurs' books and the second-century writer Tuditanus: whether or not they were correct to conclude that a praetor could not preside at elections, these authors and their sources evidently took it for granted that a consul's *imperium* was greater than that of a praetor. Also problematic is D.'s handling of magistrates' entitlement to lictors and *fasces*: he acknowledges that dictators were entitled to twenty-four, consuls to twelve and praetors to six, but insists that this differentiation related merely to prestige rather than *imperium*, and that it was only outside the city, when accompanied by axes, that *fasces* constituted *insignia imperii* (a claim clearly incompatible at least with Cic.,

Rep. 2.55). Nor are these the only difficulties: D. takes no account, for example, of the levy, an activity conducted by the consuls within the city, but surely by virtue of their *imperium*.

On *provinciae*, D. has many insightful contributions to offer, for example on the differentiation between consular and praetorian provinces. However, he exaggerates the impact of Gaius Gracchus' law on the consular provinces (298–304): more consuls came to be assigned overseas to permanent provinces from the later second century not because of the changed timing prescribed by that law, but because of the reduced opportunities for warfare in Italy, where most consuls had previously been deployed.

Although some aspects will inevitably be contested, D.'s erudite study constitutes an important and stimulating contribution on a major aspect of Roman Republican history which has long provoked debate. The controversy has indeed been running even longer than he acknowledges. Although he has mastered the vast subsequent bibliography, D., like most scholars working in this field, takes Mommsen's account as his starting point. In many respects, however, Mommsen gave canonical expression to an earlier consensus. One of his most eminent predecessors had taken a very different view of *imperium*, envisaging it as exclusively military on lines strikingly similar to D., namely the greatest Renaissance student of Roman antiquities, Carlo Sigonio (*De antiquo iure civium Romanorum* (1560) I, §§20–1; W. McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance* (1989), 209–19).

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doi:10.1017/S0075435816000824

Y. LE BOHEC, *LA GUERRE ROMAINE: 58 AVANT J.-C.–235 APRÈS J.-C.* Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2014. Pp. 448, illus. ISBN 9791021004634. €25.00.

In *La Guerre romaine*, Yann Le Bohec, emeritus professor at the Sorbonne, has once again given us a comprehensive one-volume study of the Roman army of the early Empire. It builds on his earlier account of that army in his, *L'Armée romaine sous le haut-empire*, which is now in its third edition. It covers the same time period, from 58 B.C. to A.D. 235. Much of the material that appears in *L'Armée romaine* reappears in this work, but with a great deal of additional information and discussion. The book is a sound introduction to its subject matter among the increasing number of general works on the Roman army.

A prologue sets out the basic goal of the work: to explain how the Romans made war. This is followed by a treatment of the sources with a preference for literary ones. But B. does not neglect other types of material, although these are treated at lesser length. In error, B. limits Polybius' description of the army to 6.21–3. Included is a history of scholarship on Roman military affairs from the Renaissance to contemporary research and publication. It is too brief to deal adequately with its subject and ends in two short appendices (33). The first puts forward the claim that Chinese military writers offer nothing new, and the second complains about a mania for erudition and pedantry among certain scholars at the expense of understanding and explanation. They are polemical without giving the reader sufficient context to understand the points being made.

Overall the work falls into two parts. The first two chapters cover the army and navy as institutions, dealing with various units including the garrison of Rome, the legions, the *auxilia* and the navy. Also included is a description of the army's and navy's command structure. This is an extremely useful, but dense guide for the reader. B. supplements it with lists of legions and their stations at the beginning of the first, second and third centuries, as well as useful tables specifying the internal structures and command hierarchies in various units including naval ones (49–54).

The second part is a series of short chapters covering various aspects of the army and navy, with especially interesting discussions of mentalities and the relationship of the military to the economy and broader society. The discussion of the environment of war argues that the Romans were neither bloodthirsty nor warlike (85). This is a strange assertion about a culture which celebrated victories with triumphal processions and whose major public buildings were often constructed with the help of war booty. The discussion that follows does not argue the point and although reference is made to the extensive literature on the subject, the notes give the reader little help in finding the literature referred to. The discussion of the causes of war could have benefited from a reference to the extensive political literature by 'realist' scholars on anarchic state systems that produce an environment that is especially prone to igniting conflict.