to underline not merely the nature of warlords as part of a failed or collapsed state system in terms of legitimate and illegitimate power, but also how this nature is dependent on the geopolitical and economic context.

This volume set out to challenge theses concerning the relationship between war and politics in a multipolar ancient Mediterranean world. It certainly emphasises the complexity of interstate relations and the need to look at the specific geopolitical contexts of interaction that provide opportunities for multilateral connectivity. The volume struggles in certain respects to tie down the applicability of 'warlord' to the ancient context, yet the discussion that arises as a result is perhaps all the more fruitful. The polarised position of potential 'warlords' in relation to centralised government is challenged both in terms of it offering a potentially beneficial 'working arrangement' and in terms of questioning the legitimacy of institutional forms of power and offering potential alternative forms of governance.

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INSIGHTS INTO MILITARY DEFEAT

CLARK (J.H.), TURNER (B.) (edd.) *Brill's Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society*. (Brill's Companions in Classical Studies: Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World 2.) Pp. xviii + 382, ills, maps. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018. Cased, €149, US$172. ISBN: 978-90-04-29858-3.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X18002305

The revival of the study of ancient warfare continues to bear fruit. The last decade has seen a glut of high-quality edited volumes, in particular, which have provided a platform for new research and new approaches to the subject – from groundbreaking collections like E. Bragg, L.I. Hau and E. Macaulay-Lewis's *Beyond the Battlefields: New Perspectives on Warfare and Society in the Graeco-Roman World* (2008) and G.G. Fagan and M. Trundle's *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare* (2010) to recent works like G. Lee, H. Whittaker and G. Wrightson's *Ancient Warfare: Introducing New Research vol. I* (2015) and P. Contamine, J. Jouanna and M. Zink's *La Grèce et la Guerre* (2015). These are only a few examples of the efforts made by international teams of scholars to clear the cobwebs and push back the traditional boundaries of the subfield. In the last few years, Brill has taken the lead, publishing one innovative edited volume on ancient warfare after another. A prime example is this themed volume on defeat as a rich but often neglected vein of ancient military history.

Inspired by N. Rosenstein's *Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic* (1990) and M. Sordi's *La Morte in Combattimento nell'Antichità* (1990), the editors organised a panel on war losses in Antiquity at the SCS in 2015. They expanded the scope of the ensuing volume to embrace all aspects of defeat and its consequences and to include perspectives from the Neo-Assyrian to the Byzantine Empire, citing a range of recent historical studies on this topic in other periods. In their introductory chapter, they carefully define their theme, but they also indicate its many

dimensions, from the soldier's-eye view of the aftermath of a lost battle to the ways in which societal structures and literary traditions absorb and process military setbacks. This broad view of the concept is the strength of the volume. Far from taking defeats as a matter of tactics and combat mechanics alone, it treats them as a window on war in its wider context; battlefield losses put an often noticeable strain on ancient military and political systems, societies, cultures and ideologies. In this way, defeat allows us unique insight into the ways war and society were interconnected. It is this contextualising approach, this desire to use defeat as a lens on the past in a wider sense, that should justify the editors' hope that it may serve as a guide for future works in a research area where much remains to be said.

The chapters cover an enormous span of time and space and a range of different approaches to the evidence. They appear in roughly chronological order, with three chapters on the Near East, four on the Greek and seven on the Roman world. In his epilogue, N. Rosenstein identifies three main themes: attempts to 'affix or evade blame' (p. 361), the immediate impact of defeat on the people involved and the ways in which defeats are represented in the literary record. But these themes are only retroactively discernible. The book is really an eclectic collection, of which the individual chapters will be useful for scholars of many different subfields of Classics and ancient history. Besides their general theme, the contributions share a unanimously high standard of scholarship. Each makes meaningful strides within its own subject area, and often, thanks to the well-chosen theme, in several subject areas at once.

The three chapters on Near Eastern history are some of the most interesting and compelling in the volume. S.C. Melville explores how Neo-Assyrian rulers were bound by their royal ideology never to acknowledge defeat and how they used the alleged inaction or absence of protective deities to explain setbacks, giving successors the tools to redress the situation. J. Rop's chapter on the Achaemenid kings' treatment of defeated subordinates provides a fascinating counterpoint to the Orientalist trope of the vengeful despot, noting that execution of an unsuccessful commander was rare (and always preceded by a formal trial) and that reassignment in accordance with proven skills and connections was the more common response. Rop decisively discredits the received tradition regarding the death of Tissaphernes, though his suggested alternative is purely speculative. J.O. Hyland's study of the fate of Persian survivors of Gaugamela shows the great potential of the volume's theme in generating new questions and offering fresh perspectives on events where the received narrative is focused almost exclusively on the victory. His argument regarding the supply of armies in the Persian empire could have been further fleshed out with the recent work of S. O'Connor, 'Private Traders and the Food Supply of Classical Greek Armies', *JAH* 3 (2015) and 'The Problem of the 400 Wagons: the Provisioning of the Ten Thousand on the March to Cunaxa', in G. Lee et al. (edd.), *Ancient Warfare* (op. cit.). In any case, the chapter makes an admirable effort to recover experiences that are too often glossed over or ignored.

E. Foster offers a richly fertile study of the interconnections between genre, politics and warfare in Thucydides' treatment of Athenian defeats, arguing that historiography deliberately sought to provide a context for more in-depth analysis of what had gone wrong. This chapter has room only to touch on many interesting case studies from Thucydides' work and practically screams for a book-length elaboration. M.L. Goldman's chapter on Demosthenes' funeral oration is welcome, because this source is rarely treated in detail in the context of military history. However, the argument that Demosthenes used his rhetorical skill to turn the battle into a moral victory of steadfast citizen hoplites does not address the disruptively high number of Athenian dead at Chaeronea (not to mention the several thousand taken prisoner). M. Trundle's study of the origins and power of the

Spartan ideology of fighting to the death is built on a refreshingly critical view of the battle of Thermopylae and fills in another small part of the growing picture of the more down-to-earth 'new Sparta' that has been emerging over the last few decades.

The chapter by P. Johstono on the effects of the battle of Panium may be the only one dealing with the Hellenistic period, but it is a particularly enlightening study of the interplay between battlefield losses, demography and military strategy, arguing that the casualties sustained at this battle forced the Ptolemaic kingdom to rethink its entire army composition and its socio-economic foundations. As the only contribution that is primarily guided by evidence from papyri rather than the literary record, it demonstrates how much can be learned from this type of evidence where extant historical narratives say little.

There follow seven chapters on Roman history – the specialism of both editors – and on authors from the Roman period. Clark critically examines the ways in which defeats are made to fit larger narratives in Livy, reduced or inflated in scope to suit the particular rhetorical or political purposes of earlier authors, interest groups or public figures. It is difficult not to come out of this chapter wondering whether any of these accounts have much factual value to them. A. Richlin's chapter on slave actors playing enslaved war captives points out that Roman comedy offers a rare and invaluable 'view from below' on defeat in Antiquity (p. 228), though it does so in a strange, almost literary style, leaping erratically from passage to passage and from topic to topic. I. Östenberg's study of how the Romans would blame the terrain and the weather for their defeats, and would describe the very landscape of places such as Germania as treacherous and hostile, is initially straightforward but gains depth when it connects these narratives of defeat with Roman rhetoric about taming and controlling nature in conquered lands. The chapter on imperial responses to defeat by Turner contrasts neatly with that of Clark on figures from the Republican era: while the latter might highlight a defeat to create political opportunities, emperors could not afford to underline their own failures. Perhaps a thematic rather than a chronological approach could have shown more clearly the different strategies available to early emperors to cope with disasters in war. G. Ward discusses legionary honours and designations – a fascinating topic that has no parallel outside Rome in Antiquity –, but unfortunately the evidence for connections between defeats and the repeal or adjustment of unit titles is thin, and the chapter ends up straying from the theme of the volume, exploring the importance of legions' loyalty to changing emperors. S. Dmitriev diverges from the theme in a different way: his in-depth study of a pseudo-historical anecdote that later authors connected to the aftermath of the Greek defeat at Chaeronea says far more about rhetoric and elite education than it does about military defeat. A final chapter by C.H. Caldwell examines literary interpretations of the capture of emperor Valerian by the Parthians and explores the changing ways in which his captivity was described and explained to suit different political and religious agendas.

This is a valuable companion with many original pieces of research, showing the genuine potential of the study of military defeat in the ancient world. Apart from a few minor but eye-catching editing oversights, such as misspelled names ('Ctesius' p. 53, 'Tisssaphernes' p. 70, P. Christesen misidentified as 'Christenson' p. 103 and 'Christensen' p. 120) and contradictory estimates of the death toll of the battle of the Teutoburg Forest (15,000 on p. 263; more than 20,000 on p. 292), the volume is immaculate, with several helpful maps and images. It will be a useful guideline for anyone looking to explore defeat as a fresh angle on the past.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X18002305 Published online by Cambridge University Press