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JAMES T. CHLUP – CONOR WHATELY (eds), *Greek and Roman Military Manuals. Genre and History* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies). London – New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2020. xi, 295 pp. – ISBN 978-1-13833514-1

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This volume contains a collection of essays on a broad category of texts commonly termed ‘military manuals’, which testify to enduring, if intermittent, literary traditions concerned with the planning and conduct of war from Classical Greece to the Middle Byzantine period. Most of the papers originated in a workshop held at the University of Winnipeg in October 2016, organised by the editors JAMES CHLUP and CONOR WHATELY, augmented by a couple of commissioned contributions. Whether by design or serendipity, its 14 chapters achieve a wide and relatively balanced coverage, in terms of chronology and authors/texts discussed, from the earliest specimens in the mid-fourth century BC to the late tenth century AD. Although few of the contributors are acknowledged experts in this field, involvement of younger researchers speaks for the general health of the subject. Greek and Roman military literature has seldom lacked modern scholarly attention and its multilingual bibliography is large and venerable, if not always fully appreciated or exploited. In comparison, investigation of Byzantine military manuals was long the peripheral domain of a handful of specialists, but over the last forty years critical editions, translations and commentaries have transformed the textual foundations of research, extended cultural contexts and promoted more diverse methodologies. The publication under review reflects not so much an increasing level of interest as a general reorientation of inquiry, which can be discerned also with respect to other branches of ancient and Byzantine ‘technical’, ‘practical’ or ‘scientific’ writing. Evolving collaboration in the study of military manuals has variously sought to counter the tendency of their generic and historical range to foster compartmentalised approaches and reinforce conventional periodisations, both within classical antiquity and, especially, between ‘ancient’ and ‘Byzantine’.<sup>1</sup> Also apparent over recent decades is heightened

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1. See generally, e.g., another conference-based collective volume: PHILIP RANCE – NICHOLAS V. SEKUNDA (eds), *Greek *Taktika*. Ancient Military Writing and its Heritage* (Akanthina Monograph Series 13). Gdańsk 2017. See also a forthcoming collection of

attentiveness to literary and literary-cultural (or at least ‘non-military’) aspects of such works, in line with a pervasive ‘literary turn’ in approaches to texts previously treated as purely or predominantly historical sources. Here, as elsewhere, English-language scholarship, though often enjoying a higher international profile, has until recently lagged somewhat behind the curve and, in outlook, is generally more literary critical and less philological. While most previous – and, again, especially anglophone – studies treat individual authors or works and specific historical or textual issues, this volume, commendably, seeks also to address certain larger – and more difficult – questions of classification, purpose and milieu. Although most of the chapters, to varying degrees, in fact remain narrowly focused, a few explore broader horizons, while the editors have tried hard to bring cohesion to the study of an intrinsically disparate and intractable genre (if this term is permissible). The introductory contributions appear to imply an intended audience of non-specialists or students, though individual papers should also attract some expert readers.

A brief Introduction by CHLUP and WHATELY poses questions relating to the definition, terminology and interpretation of ancient military manuals, and announces some topics of interest: literary origins, recent scholarship, genre and audience, and interaction with history/historiography. A following chapter by WHATELY, in effect a supplementary introduction, develops and extends these themes and, covering much ground in limited space, aims to frame the subsequent contributions. Initial observations on the origins of military manuals eschew traditionally cited factors: Sophistic teaching, evolution of ‘scientific’ style and literature, professionalisation of warfare. A review of ancient attitudes to war, as expressed in selected quotations, affirms the normative cultural experience and literary significance of war, at least in Classical Greece.<sup>2</sup> The editors stress also the primary

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invited essays: FRANCESCO FIORUCCI – BERNHARD ZIMMERMANN (eds), *Das antike Militärwesen. Autoren, Werke und ihr Nachleben* (Reihe Paradeigmata). Freiburg im Breisgau; and in preparation: PHILIP RANCE (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Military Literature*. Leiden – Boston. For collaborative volumes devoted to individual military authors see, e.g., MARTIN WALLRAFF – LAURA MECELLA (eds), *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung* (TU 165). Berlin – New York 2009; KAI BRODERSEN (ed.), *Polyainos. Neue Studien / Polyaeus. New Studies*. Berlin 2010; MARIA PRETZLER – NICK BARLEY (eds), *A Companion to Aineias Tacticus*. Leiden – Boston 2017.

2. A proverb about military failure discussed on p. 1 and attributed to an ‘Arsenius’ (13 39h) – in fact, a sixteenth-century author – is actually cited from the work of his father Michael Apostoles, *Coll. Paroem.* 13 39h = 2 64 (VON LEUTSCH, *CParG* II, pp. 280,

authority of Homer, from whom some Hellenistic/‘Greco-Roman’ military theoreticians drew an authorial lineage, though here it may be necessary to distinguish more clearly between much later literary posturing and actual causal stimulus: a creative link between Homeric verse and the earliest of the Attic or Koine prose texts we call ‘military manuals’ is not obvious.<sup>3</sup> They further reflect on the place of military treatises in current academe – publishing and teaching – and especially to what extent these texts have been made accessible to non-expert readers in works of reference, translations and commentaries. If some remarks (17, 22) on the dearth of previous literary studies may be a little pessimistic,<sup>4</sup> one can sympathise with their general implication that military manuals have been poorly integrated into wider scholarship. The editors then narrow their focus on two themes they wish particularly to address: ‘genre’ and ‘history’.

First, the fashionable but troublesome question of ‘genre’, incorporating the collective terminology that has or could be applied to such texts, considers whether diversity of content, format, compositional milieu and possibly audience across the extant specimens permits meaningful generic classification. Promising lines of inquiry emerge from remarks on the external boundaries of ‘military manuals’ and potential intersection with works not usually included in this category, notably Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. Here, reference to scholarship in other spheres of ancient ‘practical’ writing might have afforded further comparative ‘intergeneric’ insights, especially as several ‘military’ writers also wrote manuals in other fields of knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

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583), which the son revised and expanded (cf. Arsenius, *Violetum* 3.38 = 41.6). Of greater relevance than these post-Byzantine compilers, the earliest occurrence of this dictum is in Plutarch, *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 186F, where it is attributed to the fifth-century BC Athenian general Lamachus and the context is elucidated; thence Stobaeus, *Anth.* 4.13(54).45 (WACHSMUTH/HENSE, IV, p. 363). Vegetius, *Epit.* 1.13.6–7 attributes a similar sentiment to Cato.

3. For the position of Aeneas Tacticus in the evolution of Koine see JOSÉ VELA TEJADA, *Creating Koine: Aeneas Tacticus in the History of the Greek Language*. In: PRETZLER – BARLEY (see above n. 1), pp. 96–122.

4. See bibliography in PHILIP RANCE, Introduction. In: RANCE – SEKUNDA (see above n. 1), pp. 9–64 at 46–48. See also an exemplary application of literary and literary-cultural approaches to technical (including military) writing in: MARCO FORMISANO, *Tecnica e scrittura: le letterature tecnico-scientifiche nello spazio letterario tardolatino*. Rome 2001

5. E.g. Onasander pr. 1 hints at familiarity with instructional monographs on other gentlemanly pursuits – equestrianism, hunting, fishing, farming, which perhaps furnished conceptual exemplars for his ‘*logos*’ on generalship. Xenophon and Arrian also wrote hunting manuals; Cato on agriculture; Frontinus on hydraulic engineering; Vegetius on equine and

WHATELY's additional remarks under the heading 'audience' primarily concern textual tradition and specific source relationships rather than readership in a socio-cultural sense, which remains perhaps the most elusive aspect of these texts. It would be easy to overstate the issue of 'genre' – and the editors' choice of quotation (4: from the American sci-fi writer Norman Spinrad) implies justifiable scepticism about the variable application of this term. It remains, nonetheless, a convenient term/concept, which few, if any, of the contributors manage to do without. In any case, scholarship has long discerned and classified subgenres or discrete literary traditions within ancient military writing. It might have proved instructive to cite evidence that ancient and Byzantine writers themselves perceived military treatises as a cohesive textual grouping, with a self-conscious literary pedigree, while simultaneously differentiating broad content-defined textual subcategories. Indeed, our own notions of which works to admit into or exclude from Greek 'military literature', with few exceptions, adhere to classifications employed by Middle Byzantine editor-copyists and patron-readers, who were also, and more fundamentally, responsible for the selective sample of texts we possess.<sup>6</sup>

Second, the theme of 'history', introduced 'as meaning "reality", that is, a realistic representation of warfare as it occurred', ostensibly points towards the intricate and long-debated interplay of prescriptive and descriptive discourse, or precept and narrative. However, discussion focuses rather – and more interestingly – on historiography and literary-generic interaction. The editors note the conjunction of genres that occurs when a theoretician inserts or compiles exempla extracted from historical works, while, conversely, WHATELY draws attention to explicit cases of historians importing information from military manuals: Polybius and Agathias (to this modest list one can, with certainty, add Psellos)<sup>7</sup> – inferential arguments

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bovine medicine. See, e.g., as a potential model of inquiry, SILKE DIEDERICH, *Römische Agrarhandbücher zwischen Fachwissenschaft, Literatur und Ideologie (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 88)*. Berlin – New York 2007.

6. See recently, with references and bibliography, RANCE, Introduction (see above n. 4), pp. 23–27. The most notable exception is Xenophon's two military-equestrian treatises, today unquestionably categorised as 'military manuals', but, it seems, never included in Byzantine corpora of military texts and instead transmitted via separate manuscript traditions.

7. See PHILIP RANCE, *Late Byzantine Elites and Military Literature: Authors, Readers and Manuscripts (11th–15th Centuries)*. In: GEORGIOS THEOTOKIS – AYSEL YILDIZ (eds), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea – Aspects of War, Diplomacy and Military Elites*. Leiden – Boston 2018, pp. 255–286 at 260–262, 269–272.

for Procopius and Theophylact are much less persuasive. The editors also note that certain authors, namely Xenophon and Polybius, wrote both histories and military manuals, raising questions of authorial motivation and intertextuality (Arrian's multifaceted oeuvre is perhaps a more intriguing example, inasmuch as he wrote both ancient and (now-lost) contemporary histories, while, correspondingly, his military writings both reprise Hellenistic models and treat current operations in innovative literary formats). Although the editors do not starkly dichotomise military theory and praxis, and WHATLEY's chapter more clearly demarcates 'history' (and, by extension, 'reality') from historiography, closer scrutiny of the empirical foundations of both histories and manuals might have revealed more fundamental commonalities. Of course, soldier-savants like Xenophon, Polybius and Arrian are exceptional, and doubly so – most authors of histories and of military treatises evince or confess no first-hand experience of war. Insofar as the historian and the theoretician thus share the same cognitive horizons and, presumably, educational and intellectual background, one could argue that both, in different ways, remodel military 'reality' according to literary conventions and subjective notions of how war *should* be, especially if we take at face value the conventional assertion that histories, like military manuals, are inherently 'didactic' or, at least, exemplary/admonitory.<sup>8</sup>

Following this introductory material are 13 chapters, arranged in broadly chronological sequence, concluding with an embrasive Epilogue. This review will principally focus on the last four chapters (11-14), which concern the late antique and Byzantine periods, in the belief that these will be of primary interest to readers of the *Byzantine Review*, and on the assumption that most other reviews of this book will appear in journals devoted to Ancient History and/or Classics, where these chapters are likely to receive less attention. In this context, with regard to the two chapters on Vegetius (11–12), it is interesting to note that the distinction between 'late antique' and 'Byzantine' (allowing for shifting terminological taste) is ambiguous and possibly shrinking. Although a long-standing controversy over the exact date (within the termini 383 to 450) and the imperial dedicand of Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* is well known, recent research has considered the

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8. See e.g. remarks in MARCO FORMISANO, Strategie di autorizzazione. Enea Tattico e la tradizione letteraria dell'arte della guerra. *Euphrosyne* (N.S.) 37 (2009), pp. 349–361, esp. 350–352; MARCO BETTALLI, Il militare. In: GIUSEPPE ZECCHINI (ed.), *Lo storico antico. Mestieri e figure sociali*. Bari 2010, pp. 215–229; MARCO FORMISANO, The Strategikós of Onasander: taking military texts seriously. *Technai* 2 (2011), pp. 39–52, esp. 43–48; RANCE, Introduction (see above n. 4), pp. 37–40.

equally – or perhaps more – important question of his location, West or East, which multiplies and complicates the possible compositional scenarios. Older studies simply (or simplistically) presumed a western setting on the basis of Vegetius’ name and Latinity, though Latin literary composition in late fourth-/fifth-century Constantinople would be unremarkable. Plausible arguments for locating Vegetius in a court milieu in the East have informed the debate for more than two decades, while all firm evidence for acquaintance with his *Epitoma* before the seventh century is eastern or specifically Constantinopolitan.<sup>9</sup> Although the sole monographic treatment of Vegetius’ date and context (CHARLES 2007) constructs Vegetius as a western author writing in Italy the 440s, that scenario – in some respects the most problematic of all the options – has had negligible impact on subsequent scholarship.<sup>10</sup> Among more recent discussions, a majority places Vegetius in the East, though disagreement persists regarding the chronology of the *Epitoma*.<sup>11</sup> Given a recent attempt to locate also the anonymous *De rebus bellicis* in the *pars orientis* under Valens,<sup>12</sup> the prospect emerges that both of the surviving late Roman military treatises in Latin could be claimed as ‘Byzantine’ works.

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Among the preceding chapters (2–10), I wish to single out three (without prejudice to the others) on account of their broader perspectives and

9. N. P. MILNER, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*. Liverpool 1996<sup>2</sup>, pp. xxxi–xxxv, xli (citing older studies); MICHAEL D. REEVE, ‘The Transmission of Vegetius’ *Epitoma rei militaris*. *Aevum* 74 (2000), pp. 243–354 at 246–249; MICHAEL D. REEVE (ed.), *Vegetius, Epitoma rei militaris*. Oxford 2004, pp. x–xiv.

10. MICHAEL B. CHARLES, *Vegetius in Context. Establishing the Date of the Epitoma Rei Militaris*. Stuttgart 2007; with critical observations in reviews by EVERETT L. WHEELER, *BMCR* 2008.06.42; VINCENZO ORTOLEVA, *Gnomon* 80 (2009), pp. 407–411; DAVID PANIAGUA AGUILAR, *Sehepunkte* 8 (2008), Nr. 2.

11. SYLVAIN JANNIARD, *Végèce et les transformations de l’art de la guerre aux IVe et Ve siècles après J.-C.* *AntTard* 16 (2008), pp. 19–36 (locating Vegetius in the late fourth-century East); ORTOLEVA (see above n. 10), esp. pp. 408 n. 1, 410–411 (in Constantinople under Theodosius II); and now the most sustained argumentation yet in MAURIZIO COLOMBO, *Nuove prove per la datazione di Vegezio sotto Teodosio II e la sua collocazione nell’impero romano d’Oriente*. *Klio* 101.1 (2019), 256–275. Alternatively, DAVID PANIAGUA AGUILAR, *La Epitoma rei militaris de Vegecio y la legislación relativa al reclutamiento en época de Teodosio I: un apunte cronológico*. *Euphrosyne* 33 (2005), pp. 421–428 favours the late fourth-century West.

12. PHILIPPE FLEURY (ed., Fr. tr), *De Rebus Bellicis. Sur les affaires militaires. Texte établi, traduit et commenté* (Collection Budé 416). Paris 2017, pp. xxviii–xxxiii.

potentially wider application. First, NADYA WILLIAMS (ch. 3) responds to a question that has baffled modern students of ancient military manuals: simply put, who read them? She considers their projected and/or actual audience(s), pointing to an often-noted strand of amateurism in certain works that implies non-utilitarian literary motives – edification, education and/or entertainment – and, by extension, non-expert readers. The basic premise is by no means new: scholarship has long recognised differing degrees of expertise across the surviving textual sample and inferred corresponding readerships. Accepting that prefatorial humility is a topos of ‘technical’ writing, several authors explicitly concede their inexperience, while precisely the three writers WILLIAMS selects as examples – Asclepiodotus, Onasander, Vegetius – are routinely placed on the bookshelf of that somewhat enigmatic bibliophile, the ‘armchair general’/‘stratège en chambre’. Indeed, this view, in some respects, reverts to an old orthodoxy: if pioneering studies were cautiously prepared to use manuals as historical sources, most largely doubted their textual authority and practicality, and it was really only from the 1970s/80s that certain scholars (notably Everett Wheeler, Brian Campbell, Kate Gilliver) actually argued for their practical value to soldier-readers. What WILLIAMS achieves in this well-written essay is to supplant inference and doubt with some cogent argumentation, which, in each case, takes account of diverse authorial motivations in specific literary-cultural contexts. Some working assumptions are contestable (e.g. Aelian’s use of Asclepiodotus (55, 61) is not the settled view of the extensive literature on this question)<sup>13</sup> and some arguments are anticipated in uncited studies (e.g. LE BOHEC on Onasander’s remarks about the socio-economic status of generals).<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, there are fresh insights, coherently presented, which promote further discussion. This reviewer has particular sympathy with WILLIAMS’ implication that, contrary to conventional scholarly perspectives, Vegetius should be regarded as primarily an expert author on veterinary science, who happened to dabble in *res militares*. One could also further nuance the ‘expert’/‘amateur’ distinction with evidence that experienced soldiers read works by civilian literati, not as repositories of technical information but as literary-conceptual models of how to write a treatise (e.g. arguably Frontinus and demonstrably Mau-

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13. For convenience, see a summary of the debate and bibliography in RANCE, Introduction (see above n. 4), pp. 17–19, esp. n. 28.

14. YANN LE BOHEC, *Que voulait Onesandros?* In: YVES BURNAND – YANN LE BOHEC – JEAN-PIERRE MARTIN (eds), *Claude de Lyon, empereur romain. Actes du Colloque Paris-Nancy-Lyon, Nov. 1992*. Paris 1998, pp. 169–179, esp. 174–179.

rice and later Byzantine tacticians as readers of Onasander).<sup>15</sup> In terms of the stated aims and audience of this volume, WILLIAMS' contribution is the most valuable.

Second, HANS MICHAEL SCHELLENBERG (ch. 2) considers fundamental epistemological questions about the nature and transfer of knowledge in Greek and Roman military literature, though his remarks are more broadly applicable to other fields, periods and cultures. Stressing the varying empirical basis and inherent subjectivity of such texts, exemplified by Aeneas and Onasander, he warns specifically that literary and intertextual aspects limit or negate their value as historical sources, especially outside period-specific compositional contexts.<sup>16</sup> While SCHELLENBERG rightly admonishes some strictly military-historical studies for generalising and incautious interpretations, other readers – and perhaps especially Byzantinists – may find that mimesis and intertextuality in this genre do not necessarily or entirely vitiate factual content and contemporary utility (any more than classicising conventions in historiography).<sup>17</sup> Third, a fascinating paper

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15. See now PHILIP RANCE, *The Ideal of the Roman General in Byzantium: the Reception of Onasander's Strategikos in Byzantine Military Literature*. In: SHAUN TOUGHER – RICHARD EVANS (eds), *The Art of Generalship: Military Leadership from Ancient Greece to Byzantium*. Edinburgh 2021, pp. 242–263; also PHILIP RANCE, *Maurice's Strategicon and "the Ancients": the Late Antique Reception of Aelian and Arrian*. In: RANCE – SEKUNDA (see above n. 1), pp. 217–255.

16. E.g. as a case study, SCHELLENBERG discusses a historical exemplum that Aeneas (37.6–7) draws from Herodotus (4.200), an episode during the Persian siege of Barca in c. 512 BC, in which a Barcaean coppersmith uses soundings from a bronze shield to detect differential resonance caused by the besiegers' mine. Aeneas adds that this technique is still employed in his own day. SCHELLENBERG (43–44) doubts both its practicality and contemporaneity: 'No other ancient source that describes this method in use has survived' (44 n. 26). One could take into consideration a fragment of Polybius describing the Roman siege of Ambracia in 189 BC, in which the defenders alternatively use thin bronze sheeting or vessels to amplify reverberations from Roman mining operations, see Polybius 21.28.8–9 (BÜTTNER-WOBST, IV, p. 58), cf. Polyaeus 6.17; Zonaras 9.21 (DINDORF, II, p. 311). Another variant application is reported by Vitruvius 10.16.9–10 (the engineer Tryphon of Alexandria at a siege of an Apollonia). The Polybian text only survives owing to its interest to Byzantine excerptors and poliorcetic authors, who sought to elucidate this passage: see FRANK W. WALBANK, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Oxford 1957–79, III, pp. 6, 126–127; DENIS F. SULLIVAN, *A Byzantine Instructional Manual on Siege Defense: The De Obsidione Toleranda*. Introduction, English Translation and Annotations. In: JOHN W. NESBITT (ed.) *Byzantine Authors. Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides*. Leiden 2003, pp. 139–266 at 212–213 (§186–§187 with app. crit. and annotations).

17. E.g. recently GEORGIOS CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals as Literary Works and Practical Handbooks: The Case of the Tenth-Century Sylloge Tacticorum*. Lon-



by NICHOLAS SEKUNDA (ch. 4) explores the extent and nature of ‘Homeric *taktika*’, incorporating the conception of Homer as the first and foremost military authority. SEKUNDA persuasively identifies an essentially late Hellenistic subgenre, but its affiliation to the broader literary-cultural sphere of Homeric commentary reinforces the poet’s far-reaching and imperishable cachet, which should make this study of interest also to scholars of Homeric reception in subsequent periods, including the recent florescence of research in late antiquity and especially the Komnenian era. Finally, honourable mentions are due to JEFFREY ROP (ch. 8) for investigation of affinities between prescriptive military writing and Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, a work popular with Byzantine readers, writers and compilers;<sup>18</sup> and to JAMES CHLUP (ch. 10) for analysis of literary-rhetorical strategies in Frontinus’ *Strategemata*, with potential applications to studies of other specimens of this stratagemical ‘subgenre’, which profusely proliferated in Byzantine military literature.

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In the first of two contributions concerning Vegetius, JONATHAN WARNER (ch. 11) examines the origin and textual history of the *regulae bellorum generales*, a suite of 33 (as conventionally edited and numbered) maxims appended to *Epitoma rei militaris* III (26). He surveys evidence and arguments for their authenticity and provenance adduced since the mid-nineteenth century, with the primary aim of rebutting the contention that they are a later interpolation (originating with LANG<sup>1</sup> 1869), while touching on a different but associated thesis that Vegetius uncritically reproduced the *regulae* from his source material. Although some of the older *Quellenforschungen* discussed are now partly obsolete, WARNER brings the *status quaestionis* up to date as far as observations by WHEELER (2012), based on perceived structural and lexical incongruities.<sup>19</sup> WARNER’s main contribution here is to scrutinise the validity of some arguments from grammar, syntax and vocabulary, an inquiry that he connects to the wider question of whether the paratextual apparatus of the *Epitoma (tituli, indices capitulorum)* is authorial or interpolated, though, strictly, this is a separate issue.

don 2019, esp. pp. 27–29, 88–92.

18. INMACULADA PÉREZ MARTÍN, *The Reception of Xenophon in Byzantium: The Macedonian Period*. GRBS 53 (2013), pp. 812–854.

19. EVERETT L. WHEELER, *Review of C. Allmand, The De Re Militari of Vegetius: The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2011, *Review in History* no. 1293 (<https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1293>).

Ultimately, stressing that the *regulae* were a demonstrable component of the text by 450, early – and potentially very early – in the textual tradition, WARNER takes a legitimate view that the onus lies with the accuser to prove the charge of interpolation and that compelling evidence is lacking. This is, essentially, the stance of the most recent editor.<sup>20</sup> Yet, scholarship in this field shows that once interpolation has been alleged or a text prematurely branded ‘pseudo-’, such a ‘not proven’ verdict (as in Scots law) is rarely enough to dispel suspicions. Subsequently, WARNER investigates examples of ‘list-making’ in prior military writing, mostly Classical Greek and Hellenistic, to show that ‘Vegetius’ summarising list is consistent with the conventions of other Greek and Latin military handbooks’ (199). In fact, this review of diverse historical, textual or paratextual contexts, embracing unrelated practices and phenomena, in chronologically and culturally distant texts, finds few, if any, relevant parallels, while arguably reinforcing previous assessments of Vegetius’ unfamiliarity with Greek military writing. The closest, but still inexact, counterpart is found in first-century Latin technical literature (the lost recapitulative table at Columella, *De rust.* 11.3.65). Two further aspects of this paper require clarification. First, WARNER notes that a textual affinity between the *regulae* and Maurice’s *Strategikon* VIII has long been recognised and may be germane to their origin.<sup>21</sup> As most of the older and derivative scholarship he cites is so riddled with misconceptions as to be redundant, his conclusion that ‘we have no idea of the link between the text of Vegetius and these Byzantine *Praecepta*’ (200) is understandable but invalid. For example, studies by RICHARDOT and REEVE would have clarified that Greek versions of 22 of the 33 *regulae* are found as 19 of the 101 maxims in *Strategikon* VIII.B (as edited by DENNIS; in fact, 21 of 103 when correctly edited). The evidence also leaves no doubt regarding the priority of the Latin text.<sup>22</sup> Further investigation con-

20. MICHAEL D. REEVE (ed.), *Vegetius, Epitoma rei militaris*. Oxford 2004, xxxviii, xlvii

21. WARNER traces this observation to CARL [CAROLUS] LANG (ed.), *Vegetius, Epitoma rei militaris*. Leipzig<sup>1</sup> 1869, pp. 119–120, but it goes back at least to F. HAASE, *Über die griechischen und lateinischen Kriegsschriftsteller*. *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik*, Jahrg. 5 [14.1] (1835), pp. 88–118 at 115.

22. PHILIPPE RICHARDOT, *Végèce et la culture militaire au Moyen Âge (Ve–XVe siècles)*. Paris 1998, pp. 138–142 (though throughout hampered by knowledge of the *Strategikon* only in translation); MICHAEL D. REEVE, *Notes on Vegetius*. *PCPhS* 44 (1998), pp. 182–218 at 207–208, preliminary to and summarised in MICHAEL D. REEVE (ed.) Oxford 2004, pp. xi, 116 (app. crit.). GEORGE T. DENNIS (ed.), *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, Germ. tr. ERNST GAMILLSCHEG (*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*

firmly that, as VIII.B is demonstrably an anterior collection of maxims, one of several pre-existing documents incorporated into the *Strategikon* with little or no revision, the original compiler of VIII.B, rather than ‘Maurice’, was responsible for the selection, arrangement and translation of this ‘Vegetian’ material.<sup>23</sup> This anthologising activity, in turn, supports and nuances WARNER’s concluding remarks on the early reception of the *regulae* in the eastern empire. Second, and of wider relevance to WARNER’s analysis, he twice (199, 206) defines the *regulae* as a summary of the main points of *Epitoma* I–III. In fact, the *regulae* are overwhelmingly and fundamentally a recapitulation of III alone.<sup>24</sup> This raises the obvious question as to why this book, but not the preceding two, is furnished with such an apparatus. Consideration of this differing methodology might have led WARNER to alternative interpretations of the place of the *regulae* within the textual evolution of the *Epitoma*, including his tentative inference (202–203) of a recapitulation appended to an originally three-book treatise.

CRAIG CALDWELL (ch. 12) offers a short paper relating to the ‘naval appendix’ of Vegetius’ *Epitoma* IV (31–46). Although hardly ‘neglected’ (216), this section has drawn less scholarly attention than I–III, perhaps because it seems, at least, tangential to Vegetius’ polemical programme, but more generally owing to the limited incidence of or scholarly interest in contemporary maritime warfare. In this attempt to integrate military history and military manuals, CALDWELL focuses on the battle(s) fought between the fleets of Constantine and Licinius in the Hellespont/Dardanelles in July/August 324, the largest of a handful of naval actions in late antiquity. He contends that details of this engagement were somehow known to Vegetius and, without explicit reference, inspired elements of his naval precepts, which thereby become a rare intersection of recent historical events

17). Vienna 1981, pp. 278, 280, mistakenly conjoins two maxims at 8.B.6 and at B.9, contrary to the manuscript witnesses and wider textual tradition.

23. See further PHILIP RANCE, *Vegetius graecus*: a late antique Greek translation of Vegetius’ *Regulae bellorum generales* (*Epitoma* 3.26). In: FIORUCCI – ZIMMERMANN (see above n. 1), forthcoming.

24. Of the 33 *regulae* only five do not recapitulate passages of *Epitoma* III. Of these five, 3.26.12 has been compared to a maxim variously placed at the beginning of the *Epitoma* but the correspondence is far from close (in authoritative MSS this maxim is located at the end of the synopsis preceding the *index capitulorum* to *Epitoma* I [ed. REEVE 2004, 2, lines 3–5], while in vulgate MSS it occurs at 1.1). The remaining four *regulae* find no direct parallels: 3.26.1, 2, 27, 28. Unpersuasive is correspondence that MILNER (see above n. 9) p. 116 n. 2 alleges between 3.26.2 and 1.3. WARNER himself (200–201) discerns parallels for 3.26.27 and 28, but again within III (3.6.8–12, 25–8).

and current military theory. The paper is most valuable for its discussion of the confrontation in the Hellespont, which clarifies scant and conflicting sources and elucidates military-political contexts of this dynastic conflict. CALDWELL rightly stresses fundamental subordination of fleets to terrestrial operations, which goes some way to mitigating the ostensible anomaly of a major sea battle in this period, while his investigation of topography, winds and currents offers potential solutions to more puzzling aspects, not least why the initially larger Licinian fleet, despite controlling the straits, apparently ended up fighting in disadvantageous locations and/or conditions at either end. In contrast, CALDWELL's efforts to construe passages of *Epitoma* IV as 'attempts to derive general principles from the most recent naval engagement' (221) are, at best, impressionistic. He infers that both historical knowledge and abstractive analysis inform a few of Vegetius' statements, notably in chapters on navigation, winds and tides (4.38–42). Even if we could leave to one side the long-term consensus that Vegetius derived this material from one or more lost writings of Varro (cited as '*libri navales*' at 4.41.6), it is as – or more – likely that isolated circumstantial correspondences with reconstructed features of the battle simply reflect the generality, even banality, of Vegetius' naval prescriptions. Furthermore, CALDWELL's broader characterisation of Vegetius' 'encyclopaedic' objective 'to provide a comprehensive overview of Roman warfare' (221) is not consistent with Vegetius' explicit refusals to discuss whole branches of warfare, including cavalry (3.26.34–6; cf. 1.20.2) and riverine operations (4.46.9), on the grounds that present practice suffices – this points rather to a selective reformist agenda, in which an emphasis on preparedness of fleets and nautical knowledge seeks to remedy specific perceived deficiencies. Finally, CALDWELL enters the hazardous waters around the date of the *Epitoma*. He rejects (rightly, in my view) a recent contextualisation of *Epitoma* IV in relation to Vandal seapower in the 440s, though it obviously serves his thesis to make the battle in the Hellespont as 'recent' as possible. Noting that Vegetius says nothing about transporting armies by sea, he proposes that IV could thus predate reports of large-scale troop shipments, positing as a likely *terminus ante quem* 'the naval expeditions of Gildo in 398' (217, 223: to be precise, one task-force sent against Gildo). In fact, such naval-logistical operations were already more prevalent than this line of reasoning recognises and its value as a dating criterion seems doubtful.<sup>25</sup> Although I am, overall, sympathetic to CALDWELL's chronology of

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25. E.g. *comes* Theodosius' expeditionary forces shipped from Arles to Mauretania in 373: Ammianus Marcellinus 29.5.5, 7. Naval operations in the Adriatic during the war

the *Epitoma*, it remains the case that Vegetius was writing at least 60 and possibly over 100 years after the action in the Hellespont in 324, while its significance in fourth-/fifth-century historiography and historical memory appears somewhat tenuous.

CLEMENS KOEHN (ch. 13) examines Byzantine manuals primarily as historical sources for the evolution of military theory and practice, in relation to the empire's long-term geostrategic predicament. Within a general review of Byzantine approaches to war, KOEHN specifically challenges an assumption in prior scholarship that military developments during the reign of Justinian represent a crucial innovation and became an operational template for subsequent centuries. Rehearsing the commonly accepted particularities of 'the Byzantine way of war' – avoidance of direct confrontation in favour of irregular operations, stratagems and attrition, as typified by Byzantine-Muslim frontier hostilities, KOEHN notes broad congruence with some perceived patterns of sixth-century warfare – small-scale forces, tactical mobility and versatile exploitation of technological asymmetries, though acknowledging that the high profile of composite archer-lancers in Procopius' narrative may belie their actual numbers and typicality. Yet KOEHN rightly stresses not only an overall lack of historical resonance of Justinian's wars in Middle Byzantine military literature but also significant disjunctures in tactics and weaponry, notably a diversifying shift away from multipurpose cavalry and towards specialised cavalry-types. Simultaneously, he accentuates some basic continuities with Greco-Roman attitudes to and conduct of war, rejecting a hackneyed dichotomy of 'Western' and 'Byzantine' military philosophies. Indeed, one could go further: while this theoretical continuum can be substantiated at the level of tactical procedures and operational strategies, apparent difference between Roman and Byzantine military doctrine is often less a matter of practice than of literary culture – in short, of writing things down.<sup>26</sup> Although concise and selective, KOEHN's essay, by seeking to discard old conceptual

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between Theodosius I and Magnus Maximus in 388: Ambrose, *Ep.* 40.(32).22; Orosius 7.35.3; Zosimus 4.45.4–47.1; followed by military action on/off Sicily: Ambrose, *Ep.* 40.(32).23. Shipment of Stilicho's forces from Adriatic ports to Greece in 397: Claudian, *IV cons. Hons.* 460–465; Eunapius, frg. 64.1 (= John of Antioch frg. 282 Roberto/215.2 Mariev); Zosimus 5.7.1. Expedition against Gildo in Africa in 398, sailing from Pisa via Sardinia: Claudian, *Gild.* 480–526; Orosius 7.36.5.

26. See remarks in PHILIP RANCE, Review E.N. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge, MA – London 2009. *ByzZs* 103.2 (2011), pp. 829–833.

baggage, should assist future discussion. Arguably, some other constructs could be usefully jettisoned. A more radical deconstruction of what we consider to be defining characteristics of ‘Justinianic warfare’ might in fact reveal certain practices peculiar to overseas expeditionary campaigns, magnified by the lens of Procopius’ literary-historiographic priorities, but distinct from contemporary operations in other, less-reported theatres, such as the Balkans. Furthermore, while it is tempting to trace an institutional ‘standardisation’ of the composite archer-lancer in East Roman forces from Procopius to Maurice, evidence for recruitment, armies and operations in the 570s–590s, to some extent, subverts the equipment inventories and training regimes prescribed in the *Strategikon* and casts doubt on whether the iconic East Roman ‘hippotoxotai’ were ever a widespread or significant mode of combat. On the other hand, KOEHN’s exclusive focus on equipment and tactics potentially overlooks aspects of an actual long-term Justinianic legacy in other spheres of waging war, notably logistics and military-fiscal infrastructure.<sup>27</sup> Finally, we must confront the elephant in the room – the absence of Justinianic military treatises, reflective of and in dialogue with contemporary warfare in a manner comparable to the profuse output of manuals during the tenth-century Byzantine imperial revival, including both general compendia and operational monographs. With the relocation of Syrianus Magister (formally ‘the Sixth-Century Anonymous’) to the ninth century, now the majority view, if falling short of consensus, the always rather fragile notion of an analogous sixth-century ‘corpus’ largely evaporates.<sup>28</sup> There remains no original composition between Urbicius’

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27. E.g. PHILIP RANCE, *The Farmer and the Soldier should be Friends – Justinian’s Legislation on the Provisioning of Soldiers (Novel 130)*. *JLA* 12.2 (2019), pp. 380–421, esp. 393–396.

28. For the Middle Byzantine dating of Syrianus, see A. DOUG LEE – JONATHAN SHEPARD, *A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon*. *Byzsl* 52 (1991), pp. 15–39; SALVATORE COSENTINO, *The Syrianos’s “Strategikon”: a 9th century source?* *Bizantinistica* 2 (2000), pp. 243–280; PHILIP RANCE, *The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (formerly the Sixth-Century Anonymus Byzantinus)*. *ByzZs* 100.2 (2007), pp. 701–737; LAURA MECELLA, *Die Überlieferung der Kestoi des Julius Africanus in den byzantinischen Textsammlungen zur Militärtechnik*. In: WALLRAFF – MECELLA (see above n. 1), pp. 85–144, esp. 97–98; and now GEORGIOS THEOTOKIS – DIMITRIOS SIDIROPOULOS, *Byzantine Military Rhetoric in the Ninth Century: A Translation of the Anonymi Byzantini Rhetorica Militaris*. London – New York 2021, pp. 6–21. Those who prefer a sixth-century date have not explained anomalies in both content (procedures and artefacts unknown in late antiquity but routine in the Middle Byzantine period) and textual transmission (notably the absence of majuscule or uncial errors indicative of a pre-c.800 tradition).

opuscula (c.490s/500s) and Maurice's *Strategikon* (late 590s), itself much more a response to new circumstances in the 570s–590s than a retrospective on conflicts of the 520s–550s. Even if we wish to fill this century-long gap with posited lost treatises or informal texts, or an antiquarian Platonic discourse on military matters in fragmentary *De scientia politica dialogus* IV, the comparative dearth is striking. Accordingly, just as some historiographic scholarship has questioned contemporary interest in Justinian's western 'reconquests',<sup>29</sup> so we may have reached a point where we can dare to doubt also their military and military-literary significance, not only as a model for subsequent generations, as KOEHN persuasively argues, but even in their own era.

MEREDITH RIEDEL (ch. 14) examines 'ideological distinctives' of tenth-century Byzantine military treatises (nounal usage of 'distinctive', common in modern theological and biblical discourse, signals RIEDEL's primary disciplinary expertise). She initially focuses on Leo VI's *Taktika* and particularly how he reconfigured source material, either by christianising existing religious or ethical content or by introducing new religious-ideological dimensions, primarily in response to Muslim aggression. Motifs include the role of Christian theology and faith in the exhortation, motivation and morale of soldiers, the christianisation of idealised leadership, and contrastive polemic against Muslim beliefs. Where space limits exposition, RIEDEL's recent monograph can provide fuller analysis of Leo's theological approach and creative use of scriptural language to craft 'a distinctly Byzantine and Christian philosophy of warfare' (248).<sup>30</sup> RIEDEL then surveys four other tenth-century manuals that 'bear the marks of Leo's influence' – a trio of monographs commonly assigned to the 'circle' or *Nachlass* of Nikephoros II (dated 960s–980/90s) and the dossier-like *Taktika* of Nikephoros Ouranos (c. 1000). The last work alone owes a direct and substantial textual debt to Leo's *Taktika*; the first three are, at best, tangentially affiliated. It might have proved more instructive to in-

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29. E.g. MICHAEL MAAS, *Roman Questions, Byzantine Answers. Contours of the Age of Justinian*. In: MICHAEL MAAS (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*. Cambridge 2005, pp. 3–27 at 17–18; CLAUDIA RAPP, *Literary Culture under Justinian*. In: *ibid.* pp. 376–398 at 394; ROGER SCOTT, *Chronicles versus classicizing history: Justinian's West and East*. In: ROGER SCOTT, *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century* (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 1004). Farnham 2012, no. VI (pp. 1–25).

30. MEREDITH L.D. RIEDEL, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity: Writings of an Unexpected Emperor*. Cambridge 2018, esp. pp. 56–94.

clude the *Sylloge tacticorum* (920–940s), nowhere mentioned, inasmuch as its author drew directly on Leo’s work and some of the same sources, while, in a similar but independent manner, he also modified ancient texts with Christian nuances.<sup>31</sup> In an otherwise basic review, RIEDEL charts some common religious-ideological elements and offers general observations on Byzantine-Muslim conflict. The main value of this paper is to apply knowledge and insights from an adjacent field of (‘Byzantine’) theology to the study of military manuals. RIEDEL rightly stresses that the ‘religious’ component of Leo’s *Taktika* is rooted in contemporary theology, ideology and piety (perhaps more so than the strictly military content coheres with operational realities), and this aspect thus demands closer attention. She also plausibly contextualises this literary development in intellectual efforts to counter the motivational dynamics of the Caliphate’s armies. The paper is not without difficulties. It harbours several misconceptions, some arising from reliance on older scholarship.<sup>32</sup> RIEDEL arguably overstates the significance of both Leo VI and his *Taktika*. The inspirational impact of Leo’s treatise on Byzantine military resurgence in the first half of the tenth century is recurrently implied or assumed, but the protracted chronology of this process, as well as uncertainties about book production, readership and milieu, complicate such causal links. To

31. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals* (see above n. 17), pp. 73–74; and now GEORGIOS CHATZELIS, *The Ideal General and the Impact of Onasander and Rhetoric on Middle Byzantine Military Manuals*. In: D. DIMITRIJEVIĆ – A. ELAKOVIC-NENADOVIĆ – J. ŠIJKOVIĆ (eds), *Reshaping the Classical Tradition in Byzantine Texts and Contexts*. Belgrade, forthcoming.

32. E.g. the cited Greek title of Ouranos’ treatise – Ἐκ τῶν τακτικῶν Νικηφόρου τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ (251) – is not an authoritative reading found in any manuscript but ERIC MCGEER’s own heading for his edition of chs. 56–65 ‘from’ that work. The statement that Ouranos’ *Taktika* ‘remains unedited’ (256), with an out-of-date list of 25 edited chapters at n. 71, reports the state of scholarship about twenty-five years ago: excluding antiquarian publications, of the 178 chapters at least 53 now have modern critical editions, while at least another 52 have serviceable provisional texts (not based on a full collation of manuscripts). RIEDEL (258) cites the opinion of DAIN that the received text of Nikephoros II’s *Praecepta militaria* is truncated and a lost terminal section may be preserved in Ouranos’ *Taktika* 63–5; this thesis is refuted by HARALAMBIE MIHĂESCU, *Pour une nouvelle édition du traité Praecepta militaria du Xe siècle*. RSBS 2 (1982), pp. 315–322, esp. 318–321; ERIC MCGEER, *Tradition and Reality in the Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos*. DOP 45 (1991), pp. 129–140 at 131–134. RIEDEL’s remarks (258) on the unique manuscript witness to the *Praecepta militaria* (Mosq. synod. gr. 298 [Vlad. 436]) seem to misconstrue the nature and, especially, the implications of the copyist’s exemplar and transcriptional difficulties; see bibliography in RANCE, *Late Byzantine Elites and Military Literature* (see above n. 7), pp. 260, 274.



judge by a simple count of manuscripts, RIEDEL is correct to cite DENNIS' inference that 'Leo's manual "was copied more than any other Byzantine military work"' (250), but that numerical preponderance is much less significant than it appears – the vast majority of extant manuscripts are post-Byzantine copies executed in western Europe, which testify to the interests of humanist scholars, mostly in the sixteenth century, but can tell us nothing about the tenth-century currency of the text.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the traditional view that Leo was 'singlehandedly' responsible for a 'renaissance' of military writing (245) overlooks evidence for both original composition and editorial activity in this field in the preceding century.<sup>34</sup> More to the point, SALVATORE COSENTINO has discerned prior awareness of Islamic concepts of 'holy war' (*jihād*), requiring a faith-based Byzantine response, in multiple passages of Syrianus' military compendium, a text known to Leo, which COSENTINO dates to around the mid-ninth century.<sup>35</sup> Even with regard to specific methodology, RIEDEL is inclined to credit to Leo developments that are in fact anticipated in his principal late antique source, Maurice's *Strategikon* (590s). For example, singling out Constitution 2 of Leo's *Taktika*, a catalogue of the qualities of an ideal general derived from Onasander's *Strategikos*, she observes that Leo 'scrupulously replaces Onasander's references to fate (τύχη) with references to God, thus explicitly christianising a text already deeply concerned with moral behaviour' (249). However, the same modification is already found in Maurice's preface, also partly modelled on Onasander's prologue and initial chapters, where Maurice likewise substitutes God's 'favour' (εὐμένεια) and 'Providence' (πρόνοια) for divine Fortune (τύχη). More revealing is Maurice's reprise of a maritime simile, from a later section of Onasander's work, which likens an experienced general to an expert helmsman dependent on favourable winds. Maurice inverts his model's religious-philosophical outlook: whereas for

33. ALPHONSE DAIN, *Inventaire raisonné des cents manuscrits des "Constitutions tactiques" de Léon VI le Sage*. Scriptorium 1 (1946–47), pp. 33–49; with corrections in GREGORIOS ANDRÉS, *Nota al "Inventaire raisonné des cents manuscrits des "Constitutions tactiques" de Leon VI le Sage*. Scriptorium 11 (1957), pp. 261–263. The stemma codicum in GEORGE T. DENNIS (ed., Eng. tr.), *The Taktika of Leo VI (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 49)*. Washington, DC, 2010, is partly defective and he also omits authoritative witnesses to the earliest or 'Laurentian' recension; I plan to examine these questions in a separate study.

34. MECELLA, *Die Überlieferung der Kestoi* (see above n. 28), pp. 93–98; PHILIP RANCE, *The Reception of Aineias' Poliorketika in Byzantine Military Literature*. In: PRETZLER – BARLEY (see above n. 1), pp. 290–373 at 294–297, 324–329.

35. COSENTINO, *The Syrianos's "Strategikon"* (see above n. 27), pp. 263–267, 270–275 (citing *De re strat.* 4.9–14; *Rhet. mil.* 10.1, 26.1, 37.6).

Onasander it is generalship, rather than Fortune alone, that determines success or failure, for Maurice even the ablest general, without divine favour, will find talent unavailing. This is, in essence, Leo's religious mentality, but three centuries earlier.<sup>36</sup> While RIEDEL is undoubtedly correct to stress Leo VI's role in systematising notions of the ideal Christian general in and for the Middle Byzantine period, both their conceptual basis and literary treatment have a longer and more complex pedigree beyond Leo's innovative genius.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, in a wide-ranging and typically erudite Epilogue, IMMA ERAMO nuances and contextualises selected themes in relation to modern literary and historical studies, old and new, and usefully expands bibliography. Her observations embrace the influence of Homeric verse, the efforts of pioneering scholarship to define pre-modern military writing, experience as an epistemological qualification of military writers – both 'technical' and historical, ancient attitudes to knowledge transfer and technical-scientific texts, intended readership and authorial objectives, and the impact of Byzantine transmission on preserving, selecting and defining extant Greek military literature (an otherwise underrated aspect in this volume).

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Inevitably and unsurprisingly, what this book might have to offer readers will depend on their prior familiarity with this deceptively large and rather untidy field, especially as the concept of investigating Greco-Roman military theoreticians as representatives of their literary-cultural and intellectual environments has shaped and informed research for at least two decades. Inasmuch as the objectives of the volume are 'not to provide definitive answers, but rather to open up lines of enquiry and to convey an appreciation of the multifaceted nature of the military text' (8), this collection can certainly provide guidance and insights. Non-specialist readers should profit from both an interrogative framework and selected case studies. Specialists too may find contributions of specific interest. If some papers might have benefited from deeper engagement with bibliography

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36. Onasander pr. 5–6, 1.1–2.2, with 32.9–10, 33.2; Maurice pr. 36–69 (cf. 7. pr. 4–5). See further RANCE, *The Ideal of the Roman General in Byzantium* (see above n. 15).

37. To the cited bibliography one might add: GIOACCHINO STRANO, *Valore militare e cultura religiosa nella formazione del perfetto generale bizantino*. In: ATTILIO VACCARO (ed.) *Storia, Religione e Società tra Oriente e Occidente (Secoli IX–XIX)*. Lecce 2013, pp. 175–188.

and/or more rigorous peer review, this is, nevertheless, a notably well-edited collection, insofar as frequent cross-referencing within and between chapters tightens thematic threads and enhances overall coherence. In terms of the bigger questions, on the whole, the volume more successfully addresses issues of ‘genre’ – both internal subdivisions and external boundaries – than of ‘history’, though this pattern varies according to period. Owing to broad qualitative distinctions, late antique/Byzantine treatises can be more securely anchored in military-historical realities (or historiographic reflections of reality) than earlier Greek/Greco-Roman works. Potentially, the question of ‘audience’ offers a link or hinge between literary and historical dimensions, but, as some chapters intimate, ‘audience’ is itself a multi-dimensional construct. In particular, in any given period, a notional bookshelf of ‘military manuals’ might hold both recent and ancient compositions. This phenomenon is, of course, more clearly discernible in late antiquity and especially in the Middle Byzantine era, when tenth- and eleventh-century editor-copyists could assemble well over a millennium of military writing between the covers of a single collective codex, while the broader evidence suggests that some antique ‘classics’ attracted no less – and possibly more – interest than the latest treatise. Accordingly, if, in historical time, ‘military literature’ entails an unhistorical timeless medley of old and new, the question ‘who read them?’ demands elastic and mutable answers: not only must we consider anticipated and actual readers in an author’s own day, but also subsequent generations and centuries of readers, whose tastes and outlook may significantly differ. By extension, although it is rarely possible to gauge current or short-term responses to the ‘publication’ of a Greek or Roman military treatise, we must concede the prospect that some texts had little or no resonance among contemporary readers but enjoyed much greater esteem and popularity centuries later (such suspicions most obviously linger over the medieval receptions of Onasander and Vegetius). In any case, we should avoid the temptation to retroject that later status and currency back into antiquity or to make interpretative assumptions about ancient audiences and influence based on more abundant evidence for late antique or medieval reception. Ultimately, we should also remain open to the possibility that, in some cases, a military manual had an extremely small or culturally circumscribed audience, at least outside immediate compositional contexts, and certainly if compared to the transmission and reception of some other branches of ‘practical’ writing. For certain ancient treatises (e.g. Asclepiodotus) the textual tradition, direct and indirect, is exceptionally tenuous and testimonia are scant or negligible. Even the more ample

Byzantine codicological evidence for the production and copying of military manuscripts very rarely escapes a close orbit of the Constantinopolitan court, though we currently refrain from a narrow classification of military manuals as a ‘court genre’. These may seem excessively sceptical considerations but, in truth, even if universal constraints of cost and literacy could be set aside, we are seldom in a position to presume wide circulation, readership or impact, and, despite some credible observations in this volume, the actual (as opposed to intended) consumers of military literature – old and new – typically defy precise characterisation in any period.

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**Keywords**

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