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Paul Erdkamp, ed., *A Companion to the Roman Army*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Pp xxvi, 574. ISBN 978-1-4051-2153-8.

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This book, another in the burgeoning special series from Blackwell Publishing, is an unqualified success. Rather than a simple assemblage of vaguely related, overspecialized academic papers, it is truly what its title promises—a companion. But not one intended for the absolute beginner. Those who have never read a good, general history of the Roman Army will be overwhelmed. Every academic library, however, as well as military historians and classicists will want to acquire this work. Its 600 pages provide an in-depth overview of the Roman military system, from its remote beginnings to its unpleasant dissolution at the end of the Empire, written by recognized (mostly European, British, and North American) experts in its subfields.

Each of the volume's chapters starts with a very brief discussion of sources, written and archeological, then moves on to what we can know with some certainty despite the painful lack of resources that historians of ancient Rome must face. For example, in the first chapter, "Warfare and the Army in Early Rome" (7-23), John Rich (Nottingham) engages us in the problem of evidence for pre-republican warfare, complicated as it is by the Roman historians' penchant for elaboration:

As a result the identification of the hard core of authentic data in the surviving historical accounts is very problematic and its extent [sic] remains disputed. There is general agreement that much of what we are told is literary confection, and this applies in particular to most of the accounts of the early wars, which are full of stereotyped and often anachronistic invention.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to establish a good deal about early Roman history and to make an assessment of the character of its warfare. We are helped in this by a range of further information, including, ... particularly for the regal period, extensive archeological evidence (8).

Each of the twenty-nine chapters moves forward chronologically, but covers a specific thematic area. The book comprises four parts: I: Early Rome (chapters 1-2), II: Mid- and Late Republic (chapters 3-10), III: The Empire (Actium to Adrianople) (chapters 11-25), and IV: The Late Roman Empire (up to Justinian) (chapters 26-29). This structure works well, especially as the book is meant for occasional consultation rather than a straight read-through. That said, the long third part, on the Imperial Army, has four subdivisions, each containing from three to five chapters, on structure, organization, leadership, and the common soldier. This emphasis on one, albeit lengthy, period reflects the relative plethora of primary sources and the resultant focus of many modern histories, both popular and scholarly. Though this is understandable, the reviewer would have preferred more discussion of the republican period.

The chapters exhibit similar structure and length (fifteen to twenty pages). So, for example, the third chapter, "Army and Battle during the Conquest of Italy (350-264 BC)," by Louis Rawlings (Cardiff), has fourteen pages of text, including three of notes, and a topic-specific bibliography with a brief paragraph on further reading. There is an explicit introduction and several subdivisions. Rawlings treats the rise of the army as a structural entity in this early period and the actual "nuts and bolts" evolution of its tactical operations. He also considers the social realities of the army, the glue that gave the Romans an edge even before they possessed any clear superiority in weapons or formations. He notes, in this regard, the importance of the soldiers' oath: "In addition to the *sacramentum*, Roman soldiers also appear to have sworn an oath (*conjuratio*) more informally among themselves, 'not to flee the battlefield or abandon their place in the battle-line.' Such oaths undoubtedly fostered cohesion and identity in war, but, in this period, it was up to the soldiers themselves to exchange these undertakings. It was not until 216 BC that the state appropriated this later oath and combined it with the *sacramentum* as an oath of loyalty to the commanders" (51). The chapter goes on to an excellent, brief description of the functioning of the early manipular army with its *hastati*,

principes, and *triarii*. Over a three-page space, Rawlings makes clear the intricate social dynamics of this force, something not always so easily done, and critical in a book of reference.

Having tried to convey some sense of a representative chapter, I will sketch the book's range of subject matter by surveying more rapidly its other chapters. As stated above, the first chapter reviews the general notion of early Roman warfare. Completing Part I, Chapter 2, by Gary Forsythe (Texas Tech), examines the evolution of "The Army and Centuriate Organization in Early Rome" (24-42).

Part II begins with Chapter 3, summarized above. The fourth chapter, by Dexter Hoyos (Sydney), on "The Age of Overseas Expansion (264-146 BC)" (63-79), investigates the evolving nature of army structure and leadership as Rome campaigned farther and farther from Italy itself. In Chapter 5, Pierre Cagniard (Southwest Texas State) surveys "The Late Republican Army (146-30 BC)" (80-95). Chapter 6, by the volume's editor, Paul Erdkamp (Leiden), on "War and State Formation in the Roman Republic" (96-113), delves into the logistical and political exigencies of running campaigns of conquest. Chapter 7, by Luuk de Ligt (Leiden), handles "Roman Manpower and Recruitment during the Middle Republic" (114-31), while Chapter 8, "Military Command, Political Power, and the Republican Elite" (132-47), by Nathan Rosenstein (Ohio State), considers the demands on Roman "elites" faced with managing army commands and political careers. Finally in Part II, Will Broadhead (MIT) introduces in Chapter 9 the difficult topic of "Colonization, Land Distribution, and Veteran Settlement" (148-63), while Lukas de Blois (Nijmegen) seeks in Chapter 10, "Army and General in the Late Roman Republic" (164-80), to answer the question of how Roman generals in periods of civil strife won and retained their soldiers' loyalties.

In the portion of Part III dealing with the structure of the Imperial Army, Kate Gilliver (Cardiff) devotes her chapter (11) to "The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army" (183-200). Of special interest is Chapter 12, "Classes: The Evolution of the Imperial Fleets" (201-18), in which D.B. Saddington gives particular attention to logistics and manpower. James Thorne (Manchester) and Everett L. Wheeler, respectively, take up the issue of frontiers in Chapters 13, "Battle, Tactics, and the Emergence of the *Limites* in the West" (218-34), and 14, "The Army and the *Limes* in the West" (235-66). A reading of each gives a broad and clear picture of the inherently different development and nature of the two halves of the Roman world. Chapter 15, "Strategy and Army Structure between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great" (267-85), is by Karl Strobel (Klagenfurt).

Under the subheading of military organization in Part III, we find Chapter 16, "Military Documents, Languages, and Literacy" (286-305), in which Sara Elise Phang assesses the value of actual documents to gauging the level of literacy in the army. In Chapter 17, "Finances and Costs of the Roman Army" (306-22), Paul Herz (Regensburg) explores the complexities of Roman military funding, even to the purchase and care of pack animals. Chapter 18, "War- and Peacetime Logistics: Supplying Imperial Armies in East and West" (323-38), by Peter Kehne (Hanover), again approaches the overall topic of Roman logistics, but differentiates between operations in the East and West of the empire.

On a more macro level, the Part III subsection dedicated to "Army, Emperor, and Empire" begins with Olivier Hekster's (Nijmegen) coverage of "The Roman Army and Propaganda" (339-58) in Chapter 19, while in Chapter 20, Clifford Ando (Chicago) addresses "The Army and the Urban Elite: A Competition for Power" (359-78). In Chapter 21, "Making Emperors: Imperial Instrument or Independent Force?" (379-94), Anthony R. Birley (Vindolanda Trust) looks at the eternal issue of whether the emperor ran the army or the army the emperor.

In the fourth subsection of Part III, "Soldiers and Veterans in Society," the focus is on the "common" soldier. In Chapter 22, "Military Camps, *Canabae*, and *Vici*: The Archaeological Evidence" (395-416), Norbert Hanel (Cologne and Bochum) tries to give a fair picture of life in military encampments through the available archeological evidence. In Chapter 23, "Marriage, Families, and Survival" (417-34), Walter Scheidel (Stanford) covers the demographics of marriage and family in the military context. Gabriele Wesch-Klein (Heidelberg), in Chapter 24, "Recruits and Veterans" (435-50), presents the basics of the recruitment, service, and veteran status of legionary soldiers. Finally in this part, Oliver Stoll (Mainz), in Chapter 25, "The Religions of the Armies" (451-76), evaluates the place and variety of religious experiences in the legions, in

the process revealing how the diversity of the men and their backgrounds is reflected in the numerous cults that evolved, often specific to individual legions or armies.

Part IV begins with Chapter 26, “Warlords and Landlords” (479–94), in which Wolf Liebeschuetz (Nottingham) looks at the transition from centralized imperial authority to more regional, “general-based” rule. On the supposed barbarization of the army, Timo Stickler (Düsseldorf), in Chapter 27, “The *Foederati*” (495–514), writes of the degree to which Roman armies consisted of allied soldiers. Chapter 28, “Army and Society in the Late Roman World: A Context for Decline?” (515–31), by Michael Whitby (Warwick), sees the empire’s decline through issues of recruitment, the role of the outsider, the relationship between the emperor and army, differences between East and West, and finally the impact of Christianity. In the last Chapter (29), Hugh Elton (Trent [Canada]) creates an overview of “Army and Battle in the Age of Justinian (527–65)” (532–50).

To repeat: the high-quality essays in Erdkamp’s *Companion* make it essential reading for anyone with a more than passing interest in the Roman Army and a necessary addition to any good research library. And, too, the twenty-nine bibliographies and paragraphs of “further reading” advice constitute a marvelous guide for those wishing to know more about the subject area. Regrettably, the volume’s list price (\$188.95/£115.00/€132.30) puts it beyond the means of most individuals.