

BOOK REVIEW

A Roman Army Reader: Twenty-One Selections from Literary, Epigraphic, and Other Documents. Edited by DEXTER HOYOS. Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy–Carducci Publishers, 2013. Pp. xlviii + 214. Paper, \$19.00. ISBN 978–0–86516–715–5.

The Roman Army has always been a subject of great popular interest, and as such, Hoyos' reader is a welcome supplement to the vast literature on the topic. A new addition in a series of Latin readers from Bolchazy–Carducci, this selection of various types of ancient evidence on the Roman army is an excellent introduction to the material, though it is not without flaws.

The passages in the reader are an admirable collection of some of the most important Latin writings on the Roman army that we have, including everything from well-known inscriptions such as the tombstone of Marcus Caelius, centurion and victim of the Varian Disaster, to unique finds such as the Vindolanda tablets, as well as passages from historians and satirists alike. This serves to introduce students not only to the wide variety of ancient sources used by historians in scholarly assessment, but also to some of the most engaging evidence available.

The one significant point of contention throughout the reader is the structure. Though it is the standard format for the entire series from Bolchazy–Carducci (and so the blame lies with them), it is one I found to be clumsy. Beginning with the introduction, references to the Latin passages are somewhat awkward, since references are given as passage numbers, rather than page numbers, and so to look up information referenced in the saturated introduction, readers must flip through numerous pages to clarify meaning or gain understanding through examples. Perhaps having an overview divided as appropriate into each relevant section, followed by the sources and their commentary would have been more effective.

The introduction itself (xiii–xlviii) provides an overview of the army, though perhaps not entirely effectively. There is a lot of information given in a short space without much explanation or discussion, which gives the introduction a rushed character. Furthermore, not all the information seems useful. For example, the foundation of colonies with its listing of what towns arose from which

military camps, while interesting, packs in information that may not be of direct use to the reader and is thus overwhelming. Some reference to the map in Appendix D may have been useful here.

At the end of the introduction, the suggested readings are a welcome addition, and serve to point interested readers in the right direction, if the saturated introduction happens to whet readers' curiosity. It is certainly an excellent array of some of the most important scholarly publications in the field, as well as more general publications, such as a good selection of Osprey titles.

The Latin passages then follow, one after another, without any English commentary. Historical introductions to each passage are also reserved for the commentary section. This structure is not helpful. I would argue that the commentary for each passage should follow the Latin, so that readers are not flipping half the book back and forth while translating. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the short historical explanations given at the beginning of the commentary for each passage would be more effective at the beginning of the Latin passage. The lack of context for the Latin takes away a valuable tool for the translator.

The historical introductions to the English commentary encourage some source criticism, particularly in the selections from the historians, but in general they give the reader a good idea of not only why the selected sources are unique in Roman military history, but also what we should pay special attention to in their structure or style. The English commentary on the Latin is quite thorough. Hoyos provides etymological, historical, and grammatical explanations. Hoyos also notes rhetorical, idiomatic and stylistic tendencies of the historians selected, which provides the reader with an opportunity to begin thinking about the historians critically.

Hoyos's inclusion of Livy's notorious description at 8.8 of *Ab Urbe Condita* is, perhaps, on the one hand necessary, but on the other, highly contentious. Naturally, this passage is one of the seminal sources in Latin for the organization of the Roman army, but it is nonetheless flawed and controversial. It is commendable that Hoyos ventured to introduce a difficult source for the Roman army, and in that vein, he probably furthers the push towards critical awareness of our sources which underlies his commentary of the historians. Though he appropriately discusses the flaws of this passage in his commentary, I think red flags regarding the passage could have been raised earlier (in the introduction, for example), and much more prominently. Perhaps one way of doing this may have been comparing Livy's information to Polybius', as Hoyos does in another pas-

sage (Livy 22.46 – the Battle of Trasimene). Here, Hoyos commendably compares the narratives of the two historians, providing the reader with a better awareness of not simply the vital Greek counterpart, but the standard historiographic practice of comparing Polybius and Livy's accounts on the same subjects.

On page 138, Hoyos commits his only considerable error. Here he equates the term *tertiam aciem* at Caes. BC 3.94 (the Battle of Pharsalus) to *triarii*. He further mentions *triarii* in both Caesar's and Pompey's armies at Pharsalus. This is a misleading error. Caesar is referring to his third line of cohorts, which are not *triarii* (the third-line veterans in a Roman mid-republican manipular-style army). *Triarii* as an organizational unit had almost certainly ceased to exist around 60 years before this battle, probably under Marius as a result of his reforms.

The appendices are also a welcome feature of the reader. Appendix A with the original epigraphic texts provides the useful opportunity to understand what working with epigraphic evidence is actually like, with all of its abbreviations, line breaks, omissions, and faults. Appendix B useful for chronologically orienting readers. Appendix D however, might be confusing as it is titled 'Map of the eastern Roman Empire and 'Map of the western Roman Empire', giving the impression that the empire may have been split by the 3rd century. Of great use is the complete vocabulary at the end, and it will probably save students time.

Overall, this reader is extremely useful for the study of the Roman army by advanced students of Latin and ancient history. It has a wide range of sources and it is highly informative for those interested in the army. Hoyos' commentary is not only thorough, but praiseworthy for its promotion of source criticism. As such, this reader would be an excellent tool for undergraduates studying Latin and ancient history.

ADAM ANDERS

British International School, University of Łódź, adam.o.anders@gmail.com