

BOOK REVIEW

War, Warlords, and Interstate Relations in the Ancient Mediterranean. Edited by TONI ÑACO DEL HOYO and FERNANDO LÓPEZ SÁNCHEZ. Leiden, NL: Brill, 2018. Pp xiv + 504. Hardback, \$160.88, ISBN: 9789004354043.

This volume is the result of a 2013 conference on *Multipolarity and Warlordism in the Ancient Mediterranean*. As the title indicates, the organizers sought to examine how concepts drawn from political sociology and “realist” international relations theory might illuminate features of the ancient past.¹ The results are mixed. The original conference participants failed to find a mutually agreeable definition of *warlord*. As a result, the primary weakness of the volume is the variety of definitions authors use, which leads to predictable inconsistencies among the chapters. Despite that shortcoming there are a number of excellent chapters that are cautious in their approach to and application of the concepts. Readers (scholars and advanced students) seeking examples of applying modern concepts to the ancient world will find a mixed bag of chapters, but the careful reader will be rewarded by a number of discussions that succeed in illuminating both methodology and the past.

Following an introduction that establishes the background but falls short of defining warlord, the material is divided into three parts. Part I includes Persia, classical and early fourth-century Greece and Carthage. Christopher Tuplin provides the only chapter on Persia, successfully arguing that certain semi-independent satraps and non-Persian leaders might be similar to warlords in the modern sense, but that these were few. Polly Low tackles classical Greece, isolating several independent military commanders but also paying attention to the growth of multipolarity in 4th-century Greece. An unconvincing treatment of Lysander by Daniel Gómez-Castro demonstrates the weakness of employing the term warlord incautiously. Nik Sekunda’s chapter on Iphicrates’ career (who he concludes was

¹ This is not the first volume to apply modern concepts in this way; see the recent works, A. Bakogianni and V.M. Hope, eds. *War as Spectacle: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Display of Armed Conflict*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); and T. Howe and L.L. Brice, eds. *Brill Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

not a warlord) and the recruitment of mercenary armies is useful but does not fit in this volume. José Pascual González provides an interesting review of multipolarity in central Greece in the 4th century, concluding that the Phocian commanders were “a dynasty of warlords” (108). In an interesting chapter on Tyre and its colonial diaspora, Manuel Álvarez Martí-Aguilar focuses on identity as an aspect of long-distance relations. The final chapter of Part I, by Louis Rawlings, is a good use of the warlord concept to examine Carthage and the ways its hegemony was limited by its reliance on individuals with regional private power.

Part 2, which covers the Hellenistic world and the Roman Republic, starts with Fernando López Sánchez’s examination of the Galatian invasion of Macedonia treating the Galatian chiefs as a type of warlord. One of the best chapters of the volume is Alty Coşkun’s consideration of warlordism in Hellenistic Anatolia. His careful examination of both realist IR theory and warlord as a term is a welcome dive into the problems posed by application of these modernist concepts on the ancient world. Eckstein revisits the question of unipolarity and defining empire, leading him to demonstrate Rome had not established an empire in Greece after 188 BCE. Champion opens his discussion of Greek perceptions of mid-Republican Roman actions with a discussion of defining warlord, in which he chooses his own vague definition that would include every Roman commander with a force. The resulting discussion highlights the problem with inconsistent definitions. Rich starts by demonstrating the problems with using the modern concept of warlord, but unlike Champion he suggests a workable definition similar to Coşkun’s, denoting “any individual non-state agent with military force at his control and able to act with effective autonomy” (269). He then demonstrates the role of such individuals in the Roman Republic, focusing especially on the early and late periods. Rosenstein emphasizes the problematic nature of warlordism as a concept and grounds his explanation for the general lack of such individuals in Roman cultural and political institutions.

Following Rich’s and Rosenstein’s broad chapters are several narrower discussions. Michael Fronda and François Gauthier show how the concepts of multipolarity and warlordism contribute to a better understanding of Sicily during the Second Punic War. Eduardo Sánchez Moreno employs realist theory to explain events in Spain during the Middle Republic. Sophia Zoumbaki analyzes Sulla’s activity in Greece. Toni Naco del Hoyo and Jordi Principal provide another superb chapter with their cautious approach to warlordism and a persuasive analysis of Sertorius as a warlord. In treating powerful military commanders in the Late Republic as warlords, Boris Rankov’s chapter on the early Empire contradicts not

only the conclusions of most other Roman chapters in the volume but also ignores prior work by Gruen, De Blois, and Keaveney, who demonstrated that client armies are an historiographical fiction.²

Part 3 includes two chapters outside the scope of the original conference. Jeroen Wijnendaele provides a splendid discussion demonstrating how the concept of warlordism illuminates the confusing Roman military situation in the west during the late 5th century. The final chapter, a theoretical discussion by Rafael Grasa, will be of interest to scholars working on the modern world, but is entirely disconnected from the historical content in the rest of the book. This disconnect is unfortunate, as it reinforces the chasm between modern political theory and scholars working on the ancient past. In this the volume missed an opportunity.

Taken as a whole, the volume is to be recommended on two accounts. The cautious but effective treatment (selective adoption and rejection) of modern concepts found in some chapters demonstrates to scholars and advanced students proper methodology and the opportunities provided by theoretical approaches drawn from the social sciences. The strong chapters outnumber the weak ones, but nearly all the chapters have some useful discussions for the careful reader.

The ancillaries include three indices: personal names, places and peoples, and subjects. The provision of multiple indices is most helpful. There are no maps, but they are unnecessary. Each chapter has its own separate bibliography. Editorial gaffs such as misspelled words are few in number.

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² E. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, 2nd ed., (U. of California Press: Berkeley, 1995) 378-79; L. de Blois "Army and Society in the Late Roman Republic: Professionalism and the Role of the Military Middle Cadre," in *Kaiser, Heer und Gesellschaft im der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, eds., G. Alföldy, B. Dobson and W. Eck (Stuttgart: De Gruyter, 2000) 11-31; and A. Keaveney, *The Army and the Roman Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2007) 30-33.