

BOOK REVIEW

Greek Taktika: Ancient Military Writing and Its Heritage. Proceedings of the International Conference on Greek Taktika held at the University of Toruń, 7-11 April 2005. Edited by PHILIP RANCE and NICHOLAS V. SEKUNDA. Akantina Monograph Series, vol. 13. Gdańsk, PL: Fundacja Rozwoju Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2018. Pp. 308. Paperback, £40,00. ISBN: 978-83-7531-242-3.

In 2005, a conference on “Greek Taktika: Ancient Military Writing and Its Heritage” was held at the University of Toruń. The conference proceedings to be reviewed here have been available since November 2018 directly from the publisher (<https://frug.ug.edu.pl>). The delay has led to one paper already being published elsewhere (154-166 is the same as S. Sprawski, “Alexander at Tempe”, in: S. G. Gouloulis and S. T. Sdrolia (eds.), *Hagios Demetrios Stomiou, Larisa 2010*, 433-444), while other papers appear to have been updated to ca. 2010 (one paper refers to a publication of 1994 as published “some sixteen years ago,” 116). There is, however, reason to be grateful for the effort made by the editors to allow readers access to the conference proceedings now.

As Philip Rance states in his very valuable introduction, the volume concentrates “on ancient Greek works relating to tactics and generalship (*taktika*, *stratēgika*), broadly construed, in contrast to those concerned mainly or exclusively with siegecraft (*poliorkētika*) or artillery (*belopoiika*), which merit separate discussion elsewhere” (12). Rance sets out the major research questions, including those of genre, and of philological, historical and literary scholarship, and also surveys the contributions thus making sense of their (otherwise unexplained) order (48-53). The first section thus identified includes papers dealing with the origins of Greek military writings in the 5th and 4th centuries BC: Burkhard Meißner suggests that “Aeneas’ writings did not evolve *ex nihilo*, but in response to well-established practices of – sophistic – teaching” (78), while Hans Michael Schellenberg examines the validity of employing Aeneas’ writings as sources for ancient history, and Bogdan Burliga studies the extent to which Aeneas understood and illustrated “tactics” in his surviving work. A second section, comprising four chapters, concerns the Hellenistic traditions of tactical handbooks: Alexander Nefedkin examines how Asclepiodotus, Aelian and Arrian

classified different types of cavalry, Nicholas Sekunda updates his previously published work on cavalry organization and Burliga, in a second contribution, argues that some texts show that “pushing-tactics were sometimes employed by phalanxes” armed with the *sarissa* (129). Finally, Schellenberg, in his second paper, recommends studying later Arabic translations of Aelianus Tacticus. A third section deals with Polyaeus: Jacek Rzepka analyses the author’s conception of the Hellenistic monarchy and Slawomir Sprawski argues that Polyaeus conflated two different Alexanders (II and III) in describing the king’s route over Mt. Ossa to Tempe. In the fourth section, Pierre O. Juhel and Radoslaw A. Gawroński consider how tactical writings can contribute to a better understanding of our evidence about military insignia and equipment. In the penultimate section Wojciech Brillowski states that in these writings rhetorical choices sometimes take precedence over strict accuracy, and Philip Rance shows how Maurice’s *Strategicon* goes back to Greek military writings. The sixth and last section studies the use of the classical texts in the 16th and 17th centuries: Keith Roberts explores how Maurice of Nassau developed a dominant military system by combining ancient and contemporary examples of war and Richard Brzezinski looks at classical inheritances in Polish culture from the 15th through 18th centuries.

Recent scholarship has seen more work on what the volume calls “ancient military writing” including in 2017 and 2018 fresh bilingual editions of Aeneas Tacticus, Polyaeus and Onasander, as well as the *Taktika* by Aelianus, Arrianus and Asclepiodotus and, *inter alia*, the publication of *Brill’s Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, edited by Maria Pretzler and Nick Barley (Leiden, 2017, still referred to as “forthcoming” in the present volume). Rance’s and Sekunda’s volume is to be welcomed both as a collection of papers on individual aspects and as a reminder of fields for further study of *taktika* and *stratēgika* (and ideally *poliorkētika* and *belopoiika* as well), not as an end in itself but as a way towards a better understanding of the societies of the ancient Mediterranean world, the writings they produced and their heritage.

KAI BRODERSEN

Universitaet Erfurt, kai.brodersen@uni-erfurt.de

Table of Contents

- Philip Rance, "Introduction"
- Burkhard Meißner, "Early Greek Strategic and Tactical Teaching and Literature"
- Hans Michael Schellenberg, "Reflection on the Military Views of the 'Military Writer' Aeneas Tacticus"
- Bogdan Burliga, "Tactical Issues in Aeneas 'Tacticus'"
- Alexander Nefedkin, "The Classification of Greco-Macedonian Cavalry in Ancient Taktika and in Modern Literature"
- Nicholas Sekunda, "Cavalry Organisation in the Taktika: the Tarantinarchia"
- Bogdan Burliga, "Asclepiodotus' *tois ge sōmasin epibrithontes* (Tactica 5.2) and Polybius' *tō tou sōματος barei* (18.30.1-4)"
- Hans Michael Schellenberg, "A Short Bibliographical Note on the Arabic Translation of Aelian's *Tactica Theoria*"
- Jacek Rzepka, "Polyaenus and the Creation of Hellenistic Monarchy"
- Slawomir Sprawski, "Alexander at Tempe: Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 4.3.23"
- Pierre O. Juhel, "The Rank Insignia of the Officers of the Macedonian Phalanx: The Lessons of Iconography and an Indirect Reference in Vegetius"
- Radoslaw A. Gawroński, "The Javelins used by the Roman Cavalry of the Early Principate in Archaeological Contexts and Written Sources"
- Wojciech Brillowski, "The Principles of *ars tactica*: Roman Military Theory and Practice in Arrian's *Acies contra Alanos*"
- Philip Rance, "Maurice's *Strategicon* and 'the Ancients': The Late Antique Reception of Aelian and Arrian"
- Keith Roberts, "The Practical Use of Classical Texts for Modern War in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"
- Richard Brzezinski, "The Influence of Classical Military Texts in Early Modern Poland: a Survey"