

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA**   
**MILITARE**  
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 6  
2025

**Fascicolo 22. Aprile 2025**  
**Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina (6)**

a cura di  
MARCO BETTALLI, ELENA FRANCHI E GIOACCHINO STRANO



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*

Direttore scientifico Virgilio Ilari  
Vicedirettore scientifico Giovanni Brizzi  
Direttore responsabile Gregory Claude Alegi  
Redazione Viviana Castelli

*Consiglio Scientifico.* Presidente: Massimo De Leonardis.

*Membri stranieri:* Jeremy Armstrong, Christopher Bassford, Floribert Baudet, Stathis Birthacas, Jeremy Martin Black, Loretana de Libero, Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales, Tadeusz Grabarczyk, Gregory Hanlon, John Hattendorf, Rotem Kowner, Yann Le Bohec, Aleksei Nikolaevič Lobin, Prof. Armando Marques Guedes, Prof. Dennis Showalter (†). *Membri italiani:* Livio Antonielli, Marco Bettalli, Antonello Folco Biagini, Aldino Bondesan, Giampiero Brunelli, Franco Cardini, Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi, Alessandra Dattero, Piero del Negro, Giuseppe De Vergottini, Carlo Galli, Marco Gemignani, Maria Intriери, Roberta Ivaldi, Nicola Labanca, Luigi Loreto, Gian Enrico Rusconi, Carla Sodini, Gioacchino Strano, Donato Tamblé.

*Comitato consultivo sulle scienze militari e gli studi di strategia, intelligence e geopolitica:* Lucio Caracciolo, Flavio Carbone, Basilio Di Martino, Antulio Joseph Echevarria II, Carlo Jean, Gianfranco Linzi, Edward N. Luttwak, Matteo Paesano, Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte.

*Consulenti di aree scientifiche interdisciplinari:* Donato Tamblé (Archival Sciences), Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi (Architecture and Engineering), Immacolata Eramo (Philology of Military Treatises), Simonetta Conti (Historical Geo-Cartography), Lucio Caracciolo (Geopolitics), Jeremy Martin Black (Global Military History), Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina (History of International Law of War), Gianfranco Linzi (Intelligence), Elena Franchi (Memory Studies and Anthropology of Conflicts), Virgilio Ilari (Military Bibliography), Luigi Loreto (Military Historiography), Basilio Di Martino (Military Technology and Air Studies), John Brewster Hattendorf (Naval History and Maritime Studies), Elina Gugliuzzo (Public History), Vincenzo Lavenia (War and Religion), Angela Teja (War and Sport), Stefano Pisu (War Cinema), Giuseppe Della Torre (War Economics).

### *Nuova Antologia Militare*

Rivista interdisciplinare della Società Italiana di Storia Militare  
Periodico telematico open-access annuale ([www.nam-sism.org](http://www.nam-sism.org))  
Registrazione del Tribunale Ordinario di Roma n. 06 del 30 Gennaio 2020  
Scopus List of Accepted Titles October 2022 (No. 597)  
Rivista scientifica ANVUR (5/9/2023) Area 11



Direzione, Via Bosco degli Arvali 24, 00148 Roma  
Contatti: [direzione@nam-sigm.org](mailto:direzione@nam-sigm.org) ; [virgilio.ilari@gmail.com](mailto:virgilio.ilari@gmail.com)

©Authors hold the copyright of their own articles.

For the Journal: © Società Italiana di Storia Militare  
([www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org](http://www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org))

Grafica: Nadir Media Srl - Via Giuseppe Veronese, 22 - 00146 Roma  
[info@nadirmedia.it](mailto:info@nadirmedia.it)

Gruppo Editoriale Tab Srl -Viale Manzoni 24/c - 00185 Roma  
[www.tabedizioni.it](http://www.tabedizioni.it)

ISSN: 2704-9795

ISBN Fascicolo 979-12-5669-126-5

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA**   
**MILITARE**  
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 6  
2025

Fascicolo 22. Aprile 2025  
**Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina (6)**

a cura di  
MARCO BETTALLI, ELENA FRANCHI E GIOACCHINO STRANO



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*



Bronze statue ( 2nd/3rd century AD ) of the genius of a legion.  
Enns ( Upper Austria ). Museum Lauriacum.  
Foto 20912 Wolfgang Sauber, GNU Free Documentation License  
Wikimedia Commons

Indice del Fascicolo 22, Anno 6  
(Aprile 2025)  
Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina (6)

*a cura di*

MARCO BETTALLI, ELENA FRANCHI E GIOACCHINO STRANO

*A Bibliographical Survey*

- 1 *Present and Past Approaches to the Ancient Military History.* pag. 9  
*A Short Bibliographical Survey of the Current Studies,*  
di VIRGILIO ILARI pag. 23

*Articles*

*Storia greca*

- 2 *The dog barks around the hedgehog Reassessing  
the κύκλος in ancient naval warfare,* pag. 113  
by ALESSANDRO CARLI
- 3 *Tra guerra e politica il caso dei mille logades di Argo,*  
di ALESSANDRO BRAMBILLA pag. 133

*Storia romana*

- 4 *Early Roman Cavalry in Combat (6<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE),*  
by JEREMY ARMSTRONG and GIANLUCA NOTARI pag. 165
- 5 *The republican legionary cohort once again.  
Tactical reform in the Roman republic,*  
by GABRIELE BRUSA pag. 209
- 6 *Le nombre, l'identité et l'origine  
des légions du Bellum Africum,*  
par BATISTE GÉRARDIN pag. 253
- 7 *Autour de la bataille de Thapsus*  
par OUIZA AIT AMARA pag. 287
- 8 *Le ballistae, i ballistarii delle legioni e le legioni di Ballistarii,*  
di MAURIZIO COLOMBO pag. 327

- 9 *Riflessioni sulle componenti tecniche e sull'uso tattico della ballista quadrirotis e del tichodifrus (De rebus bellicis 7-8)*  
di FRANCESCO FIORUCCI pag. 413

*Storia bizantina*

- 10 *L'imperatore e la guerra. Eraclio e la "guerra santa".*  
di FRANCESCO MORACA pag. 461
- 11 *Le facteur scythe dans la 'dernière grande guerre de l'Antiquité'*  
par GUILLAUME SARTOR pag. 483
- 12 *Magyar 'raids' and Frankish invasions: A new perspective*  
by CHRISTOPHER SZABÓ pag. 577
- 13 *The Enseignements of Theodore Palaiologos*  
by JÜRIG GASSMANN pag. 607

*Insight*

- 14 *'La giornata di Zama'. Note in margine alla recente edizione di un saggio militare di Francesco Algarotti*  
di DENISE ARICÒ pag. 649
- 15 *L'importanza delle materie prime nella grand strategy romana*  
di ALESSANDRO GIRAUDO pag. 687

*Reviews*

- 1 LUCIANO CANFORA, *La grande guerra del Peloponneso, 447-394 a.C.*  
(di ALESSANDRO CARLI) pag. 703
- 2 JOHN NASH, *Rulers of the Sea Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece, 550 – 321 BCE*  
(di VITTORIO CISNETTI) pag. 707

- 
- 3 MARTINE DIEPENBROEK, *The Spartan Scytale and Developments in Ancient and Modern Cryptography*  
(di COSMO COLAVITO) pag. 721
- 4 JEREMY ARMSTRONG, *War and Society in Early Rome From Warlords to Generals*  
(di GIANLUCA NOTARI) pag. 727
- 5 CHRISTOPHE BURGEON, *Hannibal. L'ennemi de Rome*  
(di GIOVANNI ZAMPROGNO) pag. 735
- 6 ELIZABETH H. PEARSON, *Exploring the Mid-Republican Origins of Roman Military Administration*  
(by GABRIELE BRUSA) pag. 741
- 7 ALAIN DEYBER, *La bataille d'Orange. Rome en péril – 6 octobre 105 avant J.-C.*  
(di GABRIELE BRUSA) pag. 751
- 8 LUCIA FLORIDI, *Voci e Silenzi di Briseide. Da Omero a Pat Barker*  
(di FABIANA ROSACI) pag. 757
- 9 FRANCESCO FIORUCCI (cur.), *La Scienza Militare Antica. Autori opere e la loro fortuna*  
(di ALESSANDRO CARLI) pag. 761
- 10 ELENA SANTAGATI, *Filone di Bisanzio, Μηχανική Σύνταξις*  
(di FRANCESCO FIORUCCI) pag. 765
- 11 GEORGIOS THEOTOKIS, *The campaign and battle of Manzikert, 1071*  
(EFSTRATIA SYGKELLOU) pag. 781
- 12 LUCA LOSCHIAVO (cur.), *The Civilian Legacy of the Roman Army*  
(LUIGI CAPOGROSSI) pag. 785



Fernand Helfricht, incisore, Medaglia commemorativa (1883) per Karl Joachim Marquardt (1812-1882). Foto Stefan Kmniczek, 2029, C SA 3.0 Wikimedia Commons

*A Bibliographical Survey*  
*Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina*





# Present and Past Approaches to the Ancient Military History

## A Short Bibliographical Survey of the Current Studies

di VIRGILIO ILARI

*“How deceitful are those who attach the Romans to every word! They should have a city conditioned as they were, and then govern themselves according to that example; which to those who have the disproportionate qualities is as disproportionate, as it would be to want a donkey to do the course of a horse.”*

Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, n. 110.<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The current history boom as a fallout of the End of history. “Old” and “New” perspectives in military history. Presentism in military history. a) Classicism in Early-Modern Europe. b) The History of the Art of War (1848-1914). Ancient Wars in contemporary strategic studies and war decision-making. Past and Present in Ancient Military History. Purpose and criteria of this bibliographic selection.

### *The current history boom as a fallout of the End of history*

**I**n March 2024 a Roman military history specialist wrote on *Foreign Policy* that the decades-long trend of de-funding history courses in American universities was endangering national security because it threatened “to produce a generation of politicians and consultants whose worldview is increasingly, and dangerously, superficial”.<sup>2</sup> Historiographical production (academic, indepen-

1 In Id., *Opere* a cura di V. De Caprariis, Milano-Napoli, Ricciardi, 1953, p. 120.

2 Brett Devereaux, «The History Crisis Is a National Security Problem. As universities shed scholars key learning disappears», *Foreign Policy*, March 10, 2024.

dent, amateur, popular), however, is bucking the trend. Not only is it not in decline, but thanks to the Internet, it is growing exponentially. Between 2002 and 2013 in the United States alone, 12 to 15 thousand history books were printed annually.<sup>3</sup> The phenomenon also affects military history, another field generally considered in crisis by specialists: and ancient military history is – along with the history of the Napoleonic wars and the two world wars – the most successful subgenre. And even the negative bias that limits academic recognition of military history seems to except Greek, Roman, and Byzantine history.

Paradoxically, the growing popular, media, editorial, and academic interest in military history in general, and ancient warfare in particular, is also a fallout of the crisis of military history as a critical function of the science and art of war. The post-historical, post-political, and post-heroic thirty years following the Cold War removed not the use of force, but the science and historical and political consciousness of war. As during the *Pax Augusta*, to write today on history of war is rather “an object of delight (ἀνάθημα) for retired commanders” than “a school (ἄσκησις) for good generals.”<sup>4</sup> It was the “end of history” that made possible the “appearance of war as a historical object in itself in the first 2000 issue of the *Annales*,” the previously “unthinkable” symptomatic event in the “historiographic landscape” captured by Luigi Loreto.<sup>5</sup>

### “Old” and “New” perspectives in military history

In fact, despite the misunderstood *histoire-bataille* controversy,<sup>6</sup> the occasional *Annales* interest in military history had illustrious precedents: apart from the

3 Number of new books and editions published in the United States in the category ‘history’ from 2002 to 2013, *Statista*,

4 Onas. *pr.* 4: παλαιῶν τε ἡγεμόνων κατὰ τὴν σεβαστὴν εἰρήνην ἀνάθημα - στρατηγῶν τε ἀγαθῶν ἄσκησις (trad. Oldfather, p. 371).

5 Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico. Prospettive retrospettive*, Napoli, Jovene, 2006, p. 1. See «La Guerre. Comptes-rendus» (*Annales*, ÉSC, 55, 2000, pp. 153-197).

6 The epithet, coined in 1841 by Amans-Alexis Monteil, the most famous among the “fore-runners” and inspirers of the *Annales*, was in fact about the reduction of national history to a chronicle and monumental history, punctuated on the pomp and nefariousness of rulers and courts (Monteil, *Influence de l'histoire des divers états: ou comment fut allée la France si elle eut eu cette histoire*, Paris, W. Coquebert, 1840, pp. 8, 74, 86ss., 93-94, 118ss.). V. Ilari, «Storia delle battaglie fra storia militare e histoire-bataille», in Id., *Clausewitz in Italia e altri scritti di storia militare*, Roma, Aracne, 2019, pp. 45-47.

journal itself [a Piero Pieri's essay on military history,<sup>7</sup> a deep review of *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce*<sup>8</sup>] one need only think of *L'étrange défaite*<sup>9</sup> or *La dimanche de Bouvines*.<sup>10</sup> But, from the old-fashion point of view, the suspicious article on the *Annales* 2000 heralded barbarian incursions *ultra crepidam*, threatening the sovereignty of political, legal, economic and military sciences over the study of war. Indeed, this *quadrivium*, or constellation of disciplines encompassed all that needed to be known to wage and understand war. An *epistème* made up of codifications of Western experience sanitized by critical history. Whose task was to intellectualize (*intellegere*) experience in order to review (*recensire*) the genesis, variations, and relativity of codifications, according to the dichotomy between "external" history (*necessaria ad intelligendum*) and "internal" history (*quae variationes recensit*) intuited in 1668 by Leibniz regarding the history of law.<sup>11</sup> This task cannot be accomplished in an interdisciplinary way: it is not a matter of comparing the two perspectives, historical and scientific, in parallel, but of historicizing science and therefore seriously mastering both perspectives. Which requires the formation of special Centaur disciplines, such as precisely the history of law and other sciences, including the military.

In the perspective of this Apollonian *epistème*, the contribution of social history to the study of war could be – at best – a Dionysian dumping ground from which to laboriously filter some useful revision of external history. And at worst, a deafening babel of neologisms and pseudo-concepts forged by the ignorance and prosopopoeia of the parvenu. With the not unfounded fear that, in a society convinced of the war's extinction, study would be reduced to commemoration, erudition and entertainment, becoming increasingly ancillary to the needs and rules of the publishing market, social communication and institutional and ideo-

7 Piero Pieri, «Sur les dimensions de l'histoire militaire», *Annales, ÉSC*, 18, N. 4, 1963, pp. 625-638.

8 Jean-Pierre Darmon, «Problèmes de la guerre dans la Grèce ancienne», *Annales.ÉSC*, 25, N. 5, 1970. pp. 1298-1308.

9 Marc Bloch, *L'étrange défaite. Témoignage écrit en 1940*.

10 Georges Duby, *La dimanche de Bouvines*, 1973.

11 *Nova Methodus discendae docendaeque iurisprudentiae* (1668), Pars II, 29-30 (W. G. Leibniti, *Opera Omnia*, Genevae, apud Fratres de Tournes, 1768, t. IV, pars III *Iurisprudentia*, pp. 191-92). F. Taranowsky, «Leibniz und die sogenannte äußere Rechtsgeschichte», *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, Germanistische Abteilung 27 = 40, 1906, pp. 190-233.

logical identities, punctuated by anniversaries and the monumentalization of the past. And it would also lose the epistemic heritage and practical purpose of military history, denying it the specialized status accorded instead to other historical disciplines such as legal and economic history, and so on.

Effects that in various ways and measures have weighed on the social perception and scientific study of warfare in the first quarter of this century, with emblematic events such as the merger (2013) of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (FMGA) with the Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut (SoWI) of the Bundeswehr,<sup>12</sup> or the centenary of 1914 celebrated by the European Parliament as the definitive pacification of a reconciliated continent, just as the “man of another century”<sup>13</sup> reopened the old Eastern and Middle Eastern fronts of 1914 frozen by the Cold War.

But the obliteration of scientific military history was temporary and confined to continental Europe, while the irruption of social history into war studies has not merely enriched “external” history; in fact, it has extraordinarily broadened the methods and research horizon, including, and especially, in the study of the Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Medieval war experience. About methods, the current studies strongly stimulated and refined the interdisciplinary interaction between philology, archaeology, opology, geosciences, cartography, iconography, statistics, computer science, artistic, literary and film reconstruction and representation. It went beyond the classicist and Occidental canon based on

12 See the *de.wikipedia* entries «Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt», «Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut», «Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr» and «Militärgeschichte». Contrary to Loreto's expectations (cit. pp.) the beginning of the sociological trend and academic “civilization” of military history in Germany also dates back to the fateful 2000s, with the essays by Thomas Kühne and Benjamin Ziemann, (Hrsg.), *Was ist Militärgeschichte?*, In Verbindung mit dem Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte e. V. und dem Institut für soziale Bewegungen der Ruhr-Universität Bochum [Tagung in November 1998 in Bochum], Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich, Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2000 (= *Krieg in der Geschichte*, Bd. 6). See here Kühne/Ziemann, «Militärgeschichte in der Erweiterung» (pp. 9-46) and Bernd WEGNER, «Wozu Operationsgeschichte?» (pp. 105-114). See too G Krumeich, «Militärgeschichte für eine zivile Gesellschaft», in Christian Cornelissen, *Geschichtswissenschaften. Eine Einführung*, Frankfurt/M., 2000, pp. 178-93; Jutta Novosadtko, *Krieg, Gewalt und Ordnung. Einführung in die*

13 Angela Merkel, in a phone call with President Obama (March 3, 2014) said that Putin lived «in another world» (Natalie Villacorta, «20 great quotes on Putin, Obama», *Politico*, May 3, 2014).

Greek and Roman literature, both integrating Byzantine and Medieval sources and exploring connections and comparisons with the war experiences of other ancient Mediterranean civilizations, predating or contemporary to the Roman-Hellenistic world. Finally, it opened new perspectives and proposed new paradigms, essentially applying contemporary perspectives, themes and categories. For example, in the application to the ancient world of frontier, gender and memory studies, of themes such as “armée et fiscalité,” “defeat,” “logistics,” “intelligence,” and of descriptive/interpretive categories such as “strategy (in practice),” “generalship,” “grand strategy,” “seapower,” “guerrilla,” “military revolution,” and “geopolitics.” [See the selected bibliography, §.2].

The horizon of the “old”, scientific military history, on the other hand, was much narrower, because it wanted to frame the present, and the method consisted of purposive selection, which we find applied in Clausewitzian studies of the Italian or Russian campaigns and theorized by Mahan in his prologue to the American Association of Historians.<sup>14</sup> Both disregarded ancient military history, because in history they did not look for examples<sup>15</sup> or “parallels” between past and modern strategies, but the diagnosis and framework of the present. The only ancient reference found in Mahan is a comparison between the role of Tarentum in the Athenian expedition to Sicily and that of Santiago de Cuba for the 1898 Spanish squadron and Port Arthur for the 1904 Russian Empire.<sup>16</sup> In an 1809 letter to Fichte, Clausewitz criticized Machiavelli’s *Art of War*, because it was “too much taken” from the “spirit” and “forms” “of the art of war of the Ancients”, and lacking the “free and independent judgment” he valued in Machiavelli’s political writings.<sup>17</sup> And von Hoyer too excluded from his research the era before

---

14 A. T. Mahan, *Subordination in Historical Treatment*, Presidential address delivered December 26, 1902 at the Philadelphia meeting of the American Historical Association (Annual Report of the AHA, 1902, pp. 49–63). Online. See Ilari, «Nota sulla prolusione di Mahan all’American Historical Association», in Id., *Clausewitz*, cit., pp. 157-161.

15 See the Clausewitz’s caveat on the examples (*Vom Kriege*, II, 6).

16 Ilari, «Thucydides’ Traps. The Peloponnesian War in America Political Rhetoric and in Senior Military Education», in Luca Iori, Ivan Matijašić (Eds.), *Thucydides in the Age of Extremes and Beyond. Academia and Politics*, Newcastle upon Tyne and Venice: History of Classical Scholarship, Supplementary Volume 5, 2022, pp. 270-71.

17 Hans Schulz, *Machiavell. Nebst einem Briefe Carls von Clausewitz an Fichte, kritische Ausgabe*, Leipzig, Verlag von Felix Meier, 1918; 1925<sup>2</sup> [G. F. Frigo (cur.), *Fichte-Clausewitz Sul principe di Machiavelli*, Gallo, Ferrara, 1990, p. 123] Quot. by Immacolata Eramo, «Disegni di guerra. La tradizione dei diagrammi tattici greci nell’Arte della guerra di Niccolò

the gunpowder revolution.<sup>18</sup>

The broadening of the horizon pursued by the “new”, social military history presupposes precisely the rejection of “presentism”<sup>19</sup> and the recontextualization of war in the history of the past, including that of the ancient and medieval world. Ultimately, the historian’s job is to reconstruct the past and its documentation in a rigorous and controllable manner. And the more freely he or she can do this, the more he or she can go into the “pathless wilderness” (ἀμέθοδος ὄλη), as a critical philologist contemporary with Polybius called history (while stressing the need to bring order to it).<sup>20</sup> Military historiography, especially of ancient warfare, is thus experiencing an exciting and flourishing “Herodotean moment,” breaking out of the otherwise controversial Thucydides canons,<sup>21</sup> and leaving it to the social sciences to extract generalizations, judgments and anticipations.

### *Presentism in military history. a) Classicism in Early-Modern Europe*

Mind, however, that the modern study of ancient military history has experienced three other forms of “presentism,” very different from the post-Clausewitzian “presentism” focused on modern and contemporary warfare. The first form of military-historical “presentism” was, from Machiavelli to Guischart, Classicism

---

Machiavelli», in Vanna Maraglino (cur.), *Scienza antica in età moderna, Teoria e immagini*, Bari, Cacucci, 2012, p. 36.

18 Johann Gottfried von Hoyer, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst: seit der erster Anwendung des Schiesspulvers zum Kriegsgebrauch bis an das Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, in *Geschichte der Künste und Wissenschaften*, von einer Gesellschaft gelehrter Männer, Göttingen, bey Johann Georg Rosenbusch, 1799-1800.

19 Adrian Wilson and T. G. Ashplant, «Whig History and Present-centred History», *The Historical Journal*, 31, 1988, pp 1-16. Lynn Hunt [President of the American Historical Association, AHA], «Against Presentism», *Perspectives in History*, May 1, 2002. David Armitage, «In defense of presentism», in D. M. MacMahon (Ed.), *History and Human Flourishing*, OUP, 2023, pp. 44-69.

20 The grammarian Tauriscus, disciple of Crates of Mallo (Sesto Empirico, *Contra Mathematicos*, 249). S. Mazzarino, *Il pensiero storico classico*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1974, A, pp. 485 ss.

21 Plutarch, *The Malice of Herodotus*, ed. by A. J. Bowen, Liverpool U.P., 1992. J. Marincola, *On Writing History from Herodotus to Herodian*, Penguin Books, 2017. Matthew Fox, “Dionysius, Lucian, and the Prejudice against Rhetoric in History,” *The Journal of Roman History*, Vol. 91, Nov. 2001, pp. 76-93. Ugo Fantasia, “The Long Shadow of Thucydides,” *Incidence of the Ancient*, 10, 2012, pp. 209-222 and Id., “Afterword,” in Dino Piovan, *Thucydides in Europe. Greek Historians and Historiography in the Age of Historicism*, Milan and Udine, Mimesis, 2018..

applied to the art of war, which precisely through the humanistic *restitutio* of the ancient *scientia* and *disciplina militaris* constructed the modern military vocabulary, literature and science. As indeed happened in parallel in every other field of knowledge – not only politics and law, but also art, architecture, mechanics, mathematics, medicine – in a constant dialogue between Ancients and Moderns.

The *restitutio* of the ancient knowledge was also a cultural revolution equal in importance to the eighteenth-century encyclopedism that founded contemporary culture. This revolution founded the modern state on the widespread removal of medieval Christendom, and also provided the blueprint for the Spanish conquest of the New World<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, Classics widespread military culture, still exhibited by the *Thucydides Anglicus* and Clark's *Vegetius* carried with by the British officers during the American War of Independence.<sup>23</sup> The *bibliothèque portative* that in June 1809, from Schoenbrunn, Napoleon commissioned from his librarian, was made up of three thousand pocket volumes in 30 cases, two fifths of which are “histoire ancienne” and “histoire du bas-Empire”, each comprising [volumes] “par les originaux” and [volumes] “par les modernes”.<sup>24</sup>

### b) *The History of the Art of War (1848-1914)*

A new form of “presentism” was the “History of the Art of War” (*Geschichte der Kriegskunst*) flourished between 1848 and 1914. This new approach to military history grafted the scientific and academic historiography into the practical study of the art (*Kriegskunst*) and the science of war (*Kriegs-Wissenschaft*). This crossed fertilization was favored by the fact that academic historians belonged to the political and military elite of their nations and many also had political commitments. An intimacy very rare today. This is another reason why the studies produced in this era still remain fundamental and indispensable, and it's unfortunate that they were later so neglected, not so much because the vast majority

---

22 David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World. Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2003: 2016.

23 Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the age of American Revolution*, University of North Carolina Press, 2010, pp. 233-34.

24 Charles-Éloi Vial, «Les livres à la guerre: les bibliothèques portatives de Napoléon I<sup>er</sup>», *Varia. Bulletin de bibliographie*, 2012, pp. 305-341. «Napoléon et ses bibliothèques portatives (extrait des *Souvenirs sur le Bibliothécaire de l'Empereur*)», Extrait du *Spectateur militaire*, Cahier de Septembre 1843.

of them are in German, but mostly because there is not a full awareness of the treasures to be found there. However the recovery of this tradition has already begun, as demonstrated by the recent pioneering studies of Roel Konijnendijk<sup>25</sup> and Michał-Norbert Faszczka.<sup>26</sup>

The Clausewitzian prejudice about the practical irrelevance of ancient and medieval military history was not entirely overcome in the pre-1914 military science, but the study of the pre-gunpowder warfare was justified and encouraged by the then current view of history as a “process” and the present as its “culmination.” Indeed the History of the Art of War was fully imbued with French and German positivism and British “Whig interpretation of history.”<sup>27</sup> Delbrück – now claimed as a forerunner by the “new” German military history<sup>28</sup> – argued that “the history of the art of war is a continuous strand (*ein einzelner Faden*) in the context of universal history and begins with it.”<sup>29</sup>

### *Ancient Wars in contemporary strategic studies and war decision-making*

This evolutionary interpretation of history was obviously discredited by the catastrophe of 1914, so much so that it was ridiculed in 1930 by a witty parody of British imperial history schoolbooks entitled *1066 and All That*,<sup>30</sup> from which

25 Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke: Early German Studies in Greek Military History*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2023.

26 Michał-Norbert Faszczka, *Hans Delbrück i Narodziny Nowoczesnej Historii Wojskowosci. Tworzcosc Koncepcje Recepcja* [Hans Delbrück and the Birth of Modern Military History: Creation, Concepts, Reception], Europejskie Miasto Nauki, Katowice, 2024.

27 Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig interpretation of history*, London, G. Bell & sons, 1931. Jeremy Black, «Military History and the Whig Interpretation. In memoriam Dennis Showalter», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, Vol. 1, issue 1, February 2020, pp. 3-26. (*U. S. Military History Review*, 6, 1, 2019, pp. 1-16). Cfr. Ilari, review of J. Black, *Military Strategy: A Global History* (2020) and *Plotting Power: Strategy in the Eighteenth Century* (2017), *NAM*, 1, 2020, Supplemento Recensioni /Reviews, pp. 5-22. Cristopher Torr, «The Whig interpretation of history», *South African Journal of Economy and Management Sciences*, NS, 3, 1, pp. 52-58.

28 See «Militärgeschichte» entry, *de.wikipedia*.

29 “The history of the art of war is a single thread in the context of universal history and begins with it.” (Hans Delbrück, «Ausgangspunkt», in Id., *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, Berlin, 1920<sup>3</sup>, Teil 1).

30 W. C. Sellar / R. J. Yeatman, *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England, Comprising All the Parts You Can Remember*, London, Methuen & Co., 1930 (formerly serialised in *Punch*).

Arnold J. Toynbee drew in 1934 this splendid tautology: “History is now at an end: therefore this history is final”. But the pregnancy of Ancient history in military and strategic thought survived in multiple fields and in multiple forms, as an inexhaustible source of analogies, parallels and lessons. Unlike Military Classicism and the *Geschichte der Kriegskunst*, the reception of ancient military history in contemporary military-strategic studies is mostly what Mearsheimer called – with reference to the historical essays and journalistic interventions of Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart – ‘*omnipresent history*’, that is, a «forcing of the present to conform it to a specific interpretation of the past».<sup>31</sup>

Writing in 1981, in an age of relative *Realpolitik*, Mearsheimer believed that ancient history, like hyper-specialized histories (‘*selective history*’), had little influence on the political decision-making, unlike histories truly dedicated to the *consilium principis* (‘*analytic history*’). But *omnipresent history* (and therefore ancient history) exerts a particular fascination in periods of ‘liberal peace’ and ‘end of history’, such as the two last globalizations of 1870-1914 and 1991-2014. Thus Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War had their quarter of an hour of political-media fame during the little neo-Victorian wars of 2003-2014, also skyrocketing ancient and byzantine military scholarship in academy and popular publishing.<sup>32</sup> While the failure of the ‘long’/‘forever’ war for exporting democracy rekindles interest in a forgotten Marxist interpretation of the origins of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>33</sup>

But the Roman imprint connotes the entire political and war culture of transatlantic civilization. Not only did the Catholic Church and the Ottoman and Russian empires see themselves as direct heirs of Rome, but also all European and American political identities forged themselves on the Roman example (while celebrating Greek, Jewish, Iberian, Gallic, Celtic, and Germanic resistance to Romanization). The same was true of contemporary “Carthaginian” thalassocracies

---

31 John J. Mearsheimer, *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History*, Cornell University, 1988, Oxford, Brassey’s Defence Publishers, 1988, pp. 218-19 («The policy makers behave like the classic rational actor; he consciously turns to the past for help in understanding present»). Id., «The False Promise of International Institutions», *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1994, pp. 5–49. Id. & Sebastian Rosato, *How States Think: The Rationality of Foreign Policy*, Yale U. P. 2023.

32 Luca Iori, «Uti e abusi di Tucideide», *Limes*, 12, 2024, pp. 133-148.

33 Nino Luraghi (ed.), *Geoffrey de Ste. Croix and the Peloponnesian War*, Special Issue of *Polis, The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, 41, 2024, Issue 1.

such as the British Empire and American hegemony, although in both cases Pericles' Athens offered the possibility of combining democracy and imperialism.<sup>34</sup>

It is interesting to compare the two different readings Raymond Aron and Edward Luttwak gave of the American Roman comparison in mid-1970s. For Aron, the Cold War United States was a '*république impériale*,'<sup>35</sup> as for Machiavelli Florence was the Roman Republic of Livian *Prima Deca*. For Luttwak, however, the American-led West had already reached, at least in terms of territorial expansion, the 3rd century CE, and thus the analogy rested on an incumbent security dilemma, risking – «we, like the Romans»<sup>36</sup> – overextension, barbarization of the defence, proxy wars and an Adrianople fateful turning point. The title of this book gave rise to a (rather pedantic) controversy over the applicability of the Liddellhartian concept of 'grand strategy'<sup>37</sup> to the Roman empire (without considering possible Roman corresponding concepts, such as *arcana imperii*). And thus missing the most interesting aspect of Luttwak's essay, namely that he reintroduced, albeit unknowingly, one of the political, legal and historical topics addressed by Alberigo Gentili's *de armis Romanis* (1599), that of the (*fraudolenta sed iusta*) *sociorum defensio* as *arcanum imperii*.<sup>38</sup>

### *Past and Present in Ancient Military History*

The problem is that to free the study of the past from the tyranny of the present is not enough to ban "presentism." The main reason is that historical-archaeological reconstruction dangerously panders to the social perception of history as a

34 V. Ilari, «We, like the Romans? Per lo studio del paradigma romano nella rappresentazione e nell'interpretazione della Pax Americana», *Civiltà Romana*, II, 2015, pp. 313-340.

35 Raymond Aron, *République impériale. Les États-Unis dans le monde (1945-1972)*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1973.

36 Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. From the First Century A.D. to the Third*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. xii: «We, like the Romans, face the prospect not of decisive conflict, but of a permanent state of war, albeit limited»..

37 Lukas Milewski, «Liddell Hart's Impact on the Study of Grand Strategy», in Theodor Balzacq / R. K. Krebs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 73-88.

38 A. Gentili, *de armis Romanis*, *Actio* I, X, p. 62; II, p. 116, Diego Panizza, «Alberigo Gentili's De Armis Romanis: The Roman Model of the Just Empire», in Benedict Kingsbury, Benjamin Straumann, *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberigo Gentili and the Justice of Empire*, 2010, pp. 68-69.

time machine. The emphasis and precision of details, especially technical-military ones, triggers self-identification, generating the extremely attractive illusion that we can “see” and “relive” the “real” past through spectacle and reenactment. Indeed, without the mediation of critical presentism, the social history of war, and especially of ancient war, paradoxically risks fueling the vituperative *histoire-bataille*, the “monumental” history that “ushers” the past into the future<sup>39</sup> and nurtures the analogies and Athenian / Roman ancestry or imprinting of modern empires.<sup>40</sup>

One does not need to know Gramsci<sup>41</sup> to realise that our knowledge of the past is also, inevitably, a *trompe-l’oeil*, a mirroring, a projection of the present. In a certain sense, it is also true that we know the ancient world better than the Ancients: and not only for the ‘Thucydidesque’ reason that we know its entire historical development, but also for the ‘Herodotean’ sophistication of our systems of investigation. But the consoling ‘intimacy’ with the Ancients, the ‘transferring into them’,<sup>42</sup> must not make us forget that the most precious fruit of the study of the past is to grasp how far from it we actually are. For what we see of it is only a firmament immersed in a dark matter of known unknowns, unknown knowns and unknown unknowns.<sup>43</sup>

But there are also forgotten or removed knowns, such as the famous *quincunx* – Lipsio’s pedantic hypothesis to solve the enigma of the *triplex acies* repeated to the point of believing it to be a Livian ‘technical term’.<sup>44</sup> Attempts to derive a history of the evolution of the republican legion’s tactics from classical sources is not idle, because it demonstrates the impossibility, already admitted by Ma-

---

39 F. Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben*, Leipzig, Fritsch, 1874.

40 Ilari, «We, like the Romans», cit. Luciano Canfora, *L’uso politico dei paradigmi storici*, Roma-Bari, Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 2010.

41 Luciano Canfora, *Il presente come storia. Perché il passato ci chiarisce le idee*, Milano, Rcs, 2015.

42 Machiavelli, Letter XI to Francesco Vettori, 10 December 1513 (*Opere*, II, p. 295). William J. Connell, “La Lettera Di Machiavelli a Vettori Del 10 Dicembre 1513.” *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. 171, no. 4 (638), 2013, pp. 665–724.

43 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, New York, Penguin Group, 2011, p. xiii.

44 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte*, 1, p. 491 (on Georg Veith).

chiavelli himself,<sup>45</sup> mindful of Phormio, the rhetorician who wanted to teach Hannibal tactics.<sup>46</sup> The practical experimentation with Roman armament and discipline, apparently attempted in Venice under the Duke of Urbino, was a failure: the Roman model did not affect the Florentine *ordinanza*<sup>47</sup> and the French provincial legions (1534), like the Urbino's *Feltria* legion (1533), were Roman in name only.

### *Purpose and criteria of this bibliographic selection*

This bibliography includes just a thousand titles (mainly collections and monographs, mostly post-1970), selected from the ten thousand or so known to me. It does not include Byzantine military history, opology, military archaeology, land and naval architecture, navigation, and the more specialized contributions on individual wars, campaigns, battles, biographies, land and naval components and units, and a host of valuable works.

It's thus a purely subjective, tentative, and even hasty selection from a random sample determined by my personal experience and eclectic research interests, fished out of a sea in which sail perhaps millions of potentially relevant books and articles. Well aware that I cannot map such a pathless wilderness, I have not given up trying to get some idea of the *Biblioteca de Babel*. The benevolent reader should know that the tour I intend to show him is not William of Baskerville's ingenious route to the *secretum finis Africae*, but rather the scribbling of any Adso of Melk in an attempt to get out of the labyrinth and try to look at it from the outside and possibly even from a higher point.

The purpose is to capture the epistemic sense of contemporary research by placing it in a historical perspective. For this reason, the texts are cited in chronological order, separating those devoted to the history of ancient military historiography (§. 1) and the history of proto-modern military Classicism (§. 4) from the two main strands of research, respectively devoted to facts and structures (§. 2) and to the edition and interpretation of literary sources (§. 3). To these I have

---

45 Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, II, 16.

46 Ilari, *Clausewitz*, p. 89 ntt. 5 e 6 (Cic., *De or.* II. 18.75-76 e II. 19.77, 254, 256. Machiavelli, lettera XII a F. Guicciardini, 4 aprile 1526. Matteo Bandello, *Novella*, I, 40).

47 Mikael Hörnqvist, «Perché non si usa allegare i Romani: Machiavelli and the Florentine Militia of 1506», *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 55, Issue 1, Spring 2002, pp. 148-191.

added two more selections, one relating to ancient military history as part of the history of the art of war (§. 5 and Appendix) and one relating to ancient military history as a paradigm for contemporary military and strategic studies (§. 6).

The chronological order, focused on context and trends, doesn't do justice to the authors, not only because of the omissions of many of their contributions but because the sense of individual paths is lost. But my purpose was precisely to bring out the art we profess, and the contribution it makes not only to ourselves but especially to the collective perception of the time we are given to live in. And how, conversely, this collective perception is reflected in our art.

Moreover, the chronological perspective corrects and rescales the subjective perception of sharp turns, such as the one reported by Loreto from which this reflection of mine was inspired. Nevertheless, at the length the shifts are profound, as much in research approaches and interests as in literary form. Striking, for example, is the increasing prevalence of thematic collections (conference proceedings, companions) over individual monographs. An effect certainly of feverish academic and editorial urgencies (publish or perish), but perhaps also of a certain overabundance of innovations and contributions that complicates their 'digestion' by individual authors.

Another interesting observation, is that few authors appear in two or more sections of this bibliography. They seem almost like parallel brotherhoods, with little contact or knowledge of each other. But we all belong, even if we do not realize it, to the same tribe: or rather to two closely related by exogamous exchanges, that of military history and that of ancient history. So we are all a little cousins and a little half-breed, and we would all gain by increasing mutual knowledge and cooperation. And even more so by rediscovering the cult of ancestors. For ultimately no historical issue can be truly mastered unless it is also, at the same time, a history of relative historiography.



Gerard de Laresse (1640-1711) *Clio Taking Dictation from Minerva*, design for title-page. Courtesy of Art Institute Chicago, CC0.

## A Selected Bibliography<sup>1</sup>

(Most of the texts listed can be read online.)

SUMMARY. §.1 History and Epistemology of the Ancient Military Studies [p. 23]. §.2 The Rediscovery of Ancient Military History (A Taste of New Approaches, Directions, Paradigms in Journals, Bibliographies & Collections) [p. 26 ]. 2 a. *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Battles* [ed. by Michael Whitby / Harry Sidebottom, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2017, 3 vols.] [p. 65]. 2 b. *Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World* [a series in the Brill's Companions in Classical Studies, edited by Lee L. Brice] [p. 67]. 2 c. *International Ancient Warfare Conference* (IAWC 2023) [p. 72]. §.3 *Militaris Scientia* (Studies on literary sources for Ancient Military History) [p. 74]. §.4 *Militaris Prudentia* (History and Epistemology of Military Classicism, 15th-18th cent.) [p. 88]. 4a) Machiavelli and the Ancients [p. 96]. §.5 History of the Art of War (The Wigh Interpretation of Ancient Warfare) [p. 97]. §.6 *Exempla Historica* (Ancient Military History in Contemporary Strategic Rhetoric). [p. 102]. Appendix: German *Dissertationes* on Ancient Military History from the 1894 Fock Catalogus [p. 107].

### §. 1

#### History and Epistemology of the Ancient Military Studies

- 1975 Arnaldo Momigliano, «Le regole del gioco nello studio della storia antica», *Annali Scuola Normale Superiore*, Classe di lettere e filosofia, 4, 1974, n. 4, pp. 1183-1192. Transl. by Kenneth W. Yu, «The Rules of the Game in the Studying of Ancient History», *History and Theory*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2016, pp. 39–45.
- 1975 Yvon Garlan, «Éléments de polémologie marxiste», *Mélanges Helléniques offerts à G. Daux*, Paris, E. de Boccard, 1974, pp. 139-145.
- 1981 Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr., «The Crisis in Military Historiography», *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 299-316.

<sup>1</sup> I warmly thank Prof. Luca Iori and the library service of the University of Parma (NILDE) for kindly allowing me access (precluded to me, having retired since 2010) to some texts not available on the online scientific sharing sites.

- 1985 Chester G. Starr, *Past and Future in Ancient History*, Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians No. 1, Regina Books, Claremont, California, 1985.
- 1988 Adrian Wilson and T. G. Ashplant, «Whig History and Present-centred History», *The Historical Journal*, 31, 1988, pp 1-16.
- 1991 V. D. Hanson, «The Future of Greek Military History», in Id. (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 253-256.
- 1999 Victor Davis Hanson, «The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and On-going Controversies», *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 63, Iss. 2, April 1999.
- 2000 Luigi Loreto, «L'idea di Cartagine nel pensiero storico tedesco da Weimar allo 'Jahr 0», *Studi Storici*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2000, pp. 825-870.
- 2006 Luigi Loreto, *Per la storia militare del mondo antico, Prospettive retrospettive*, (Storia politica, costituzionale e militare del mondo antico, fondata e diretta da Luigi Loreto 2), Napoli, Jovene, 2006. Review by Doyne Dawson, "The Return of Military History?", *History and Theory*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2008, pp. 597-606.
- 2006 Luigi Loreto, Art. «Krieg» (RGW), *Der Neue Pauly Online*, Brill, 2006.
- 2007 Michael Whitby, «Reconstructing ancient warfare», in Michael Whitby / Philip Sabin / Hans van Wees (Eds.), *The Cambridge history of Greek and Roman warfare: Volume 1. Greece, the Hellenistic world and the rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 54-81.
- 2007 Victor Davis Hanson, «The Modern Historiography of Ancient Warfare», in Philip Sabin, Hans Van Wees, Michael Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare. Vol. 1 Greece The Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- 2007 Peter Krenz, «Warfare and Hoplites», in H. A. Shapiro (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- 2008 Marco Bettalli, «Guerre tra polemologi. Dieci anni di studi sulla guerra nel mondo greco, 1998-2008», *Quaderni di Storia* (2008), pp. 159-231; Id., «Il militare», in Giuseppe Zecchini (cur.), *Lo storico antico. Mestieri e figure sociali*, Edipuglia, 2010, pp. 215-229 e 251-52. Id., «Gli studi italiani sulla guerra nel mondo greco antico», in Nicola Labanca (ed.), *Storie di guerre ed eserciti. Gli studi italiani di storia militare negli ultimi venticinque anni*, Milano, Unicopli, 2011, 173-187.
- 2011 Lee L. Brice / Jennifer T. Roberts, *Recent Directions in the Military History of the Ancient World*, Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians No. 10, Regina Books, Claremont, California, 2011. Brice/Roberts, «Introduction» (1). Seth F. C. Richardson, «Mesopotamia and the 'new' military history» (11). Everett L. Wheeler, «Greece: mad hatters and March hares» (53). Sara E. Phang, «New approaches to the Roman army» (105). Doug Lee, «Military history in late antiquity: changing perspectives and paradigms» (145). «Bibliography» (167).
- 2011 Lee L. Brice, «Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Question of a Macedonian 'Revolution in Military Affairs'», *The Ancient World* 42.2 (2011), pp. 137-147 [on

- David Lonsdale, *Alexander the Great, Killer of Men*, (New York: 2004), 16-20, 51-52; Id., *Alexander the Great: Lessons in Strategy*, (New York: 2007), 23-25]. Sophie van Duin, «If Alexander Didn't Exist: Refining Lee L. Brice's Analysis of Philip II's Revolution on Military Affairs», *The Journal of Foreign Affairs at Carolina*, VIII, issue 1, Fall 2022, pp. 8-13.
- 2012 Klaus Fabian, «Das Hopliten Schutz und Trutz oder die Philologie aus Lanzenspitzen», in Vanna Maraglino (cur.), *Scienza antica in età moderna, Teoria e immagini*, Bari, Cacucci, 2012, pp. 63-138.
- 2013 François Cadiou, «*Alia ratio*. L'armée romaine, la guérilla et l'historiographie moderne», *Revue des Études Anciennes*, T. 115, 2013, n°1, pp. 119-145.
- 2013 Alexander Sarantis / Neil Christie (eds.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2013.
- 2014 Virgilio Ilari, «Roman Seapower: l'emersione di un tema storiografico», in *Naval History*, Quaderno SISM *Naval History*, 2014, pp. 145-168 (now in Id., *Clausewitz in Italia e altri scritti di storia militare*, Roma: Aracne, 2019, pp. 163-180).
- 2016 Fernando Quesada Sanz, «El 'Rostro de la Batalla': Nuevas corrientes y problemas en la historia militar antigua y el auge de la novela histórica de tema bélico», *Habis*, 47, 2016, pp. 325-346.
- 2021 Fernando Echeverría, «The 'Hoplite Revolution' and the Nature of Hoplite Warfare», in W. Heckel; F.S. Naiden; E.E. Garvin; J. Vanderspoel (Eds.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.
- 2021 Conor Whately, «Was there a Military Revolution at the End of Antiquity?», *Journal of Ancient History*, 9 (2021), No. 3, pp. 203-219.
- 2023 Jérémy Clément / François Porte, «De nouvelles approches de la guerre antique ? À propos d'un ouvrage récent» (*HiMA: revue internationale d'histoire militaire ancienne*, 2023, 12, pp.391-422).
- 2023 Roel Konijnendijk, *Between Miltiades and Moltke: Early German Studies in Greek Military History*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2023.
- 2023 Roel Konijnendijk / Fernando Echeverría, «Max Weber, the Rise of the Polis, and the "Hoplite Revolution" Theory», *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (January 2023), pp. 103-125. [Konijnendijk and Echeverría spoke with Alex Collin about their recent JHI article, *jhiblog.org Broadly Speaking: A Companion Interview*, Feb. 17, 2023].
- 2024 Michal-Norbert Faszczka, *Hans Delbruck i Narodziny Nowoczesnej Historii Wojskowosci Tworczość Koncepcja Recepcja*, Europejskie Miasto Nauki, Katowice 2024.
- 2024 Taisuke Okada, «Naval Imagery in Athenian Art in the Fifth Century BCE», *The Journal of Greco-Roman Studies*, Vol. 63, 2024, issue 3, pp. 157-192.

## §. 2

## The Rediscovery of Ancient Military History

A Taste of New Approaches, Directions, Paradigms  
in Journals, Bibliographies & Collections

- 1941 Chester G. Starr *The Roman Imperial Navy, 31 B. C - A. D. 324*, Westport, Connecticut (repr. 1993); Cambridge, MA, W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1960. Id., «The Ancient Warship», *Classical Philology*, 35, 4 (October 1940), pp. 353-374 e «The Myth of Minoan Thalassocracy», *Historia*, 3 (1955), pp. 282-291; «Naval Activity in Greek Imperial Issue», *Revue Suisse de numismatique*, 46 (1967), pp. 51-57. (later in Arther Ferrill / Thomas Kelly (eds.), *Essays on Ancient History: A Selection of Articles and Reviews*, Brill Archive, 1979, pp. 59-80, 87-96, 278-284).
- 1944 Arnaldo Momigliano, «Sea Power in Greek Thought», in *Classical Review*, 58 (1944), pp. 1-7 (ora in *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici*, Roma, 1960, pp. 57-68).
- 1946 Johannes Hendrik Thiel, *Studies on the history of Roman sea-power in republican times*, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1946. *A History of Roman Sea-Power before the Second Punic War*, ibidem, 1954.
- 1949 First International Congress on Roman Frontier Studies organized by Eric Birley in Newcastle, replacing the International Congress of Archaeology (the Sixth and last edition in Berlin, 1939). The 2nd Congress at Carnutum, Austria, 1955 – 26th in Batumi, Georgia, 2024. David J. Breeze / Tatiana Ivleva / Rebecca H. Jones / Andreas Thiel, *A History of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies 1949-2022. A Retrospective to mark the 25th Congress in Nijmegen*, Oxford, Archaeopress Publishing, 2022. «Congress of Roman Frontier Studies» (entry in *en.wikipedia*).
- 1950 Lothar Wickert, «Die Flotte der römischen Kaiserzeit», *Würzburger Jahrbücher*, IV, 1949-50, p. 100-125.
- 1957 Erich Sander, «Zur Rangordnung des römischen Heeres; IV. Die Flotten», *Historia*, 6 (1957), p. 347-367.
- 1958 William Kendrick Pritchett, «Observations on Chaironeia», *American Journal of Archaeology*, 62, 1958, pp. 307-11. Id., «Toward a Restudy of the Battle of Salamis», *ibidem*, 63, 1959, pp. 251-62. Id., *Marathon*, University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology IV, 2, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960.
- 1959 Lionel Casson, *The Ancient Mariners: Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times*, Victor Gollancz, 1959 (2a ed. Princeton U. P. 1991). Id., *Illustrated History of Ships & Boats*. Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1964; Id., «The Ancient World», in J. B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Ubi sumus? The State of Naval and Maritime History*, Naval War College Press, Newport, R. I., 1994, pp. 9-14. Id., *Ships*

- and Seamanship in the Ancient World*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- 1961 Birth of *Gladius*. *Estudios sobre armas antiguas, armamento, arte militar y vida cultural en Oriente y Occidente*, a scientific journal edited by the Instituto de Historia del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). <https://gladius.revistas.csic.es/index.php/gladius/index>.
- 1963 Paul Jal, *La guerre civile à Rome, Étude littéraire et morale*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1963.
- 1964 Eric William Marsden, *The Campaign of Gaugamela*, Liverpool University Press, 1964.
- 1964 Sergio Daris, *Documenti per la storia dell'esercito romano in Egitto*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1964.
- 1965 William Kendrick Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography*, University of California Press. Part 1 (1965). Part 2 *Battlefields* (1969). Part 3 *Roads* (1969). Part 4 (). Part 5 1965 [The Topography of Tyrtaios and the Messenian Wars. II Pausania's Road from Megalopolis to the Lakonian Frontier. III The Road along the Upper Alpheios River. IV The Strategy of the Plataiai Campaign. V Routes over Helikon from Thespiiai towards Levadeia. VI East Lokris Revisited. VII In Defense of the Thermopylai Pass]. Part 6 1989 [I Philip's Campaign in the Peloponnesos in 219/8 BC. II. The Cenotaph Inscription on the Battlefield of Mount Zavitza. 3 The Estate of Herodes Atticus at Loukou. IV Pseudo-Skylax and Pausanias on the Thyreatis. V Pseudo-Dyrrhachion. VI The Herms at the Lakonian Frontier. VII The Tegea-Hysiai Roads. VIII. Clarke's Helikon Route. IX The Upper Larymna Road. X Skarpheia and the Aphamios River. Addenda: The Pass at Thermopylai. XI Buried Bridges of the via Egnatia. XII The Route of Philip's March on Thermon in 218]. Part 8 1992 [I Demosthenes' Amphilochian Campaign in 426 B.C.. II Sites in Northeastern Akarnania. III Akarnanian Walls and Scaling-Ladders. IV The Towns East of Thermopylai. V Leukai.]
- 1966 Dietmar Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflootten der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Antiquitas, Reihe 1, Band 13), Bonn, Habelt, 1966. Rev. Chester Starr, *American Journal of Philology*, 90, 1969, pp. 120-122 (now in *Essays, cit.*, pp. 285-287).
- 1968 Georg Alexander Rost, *Vom Seewesen und Seehandel in der Antike, Eine Studie aus maritim-militärischer Sicht*, B. R. Grüner, Amsterdam, 1968; John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1968.
- 1968 Jean-Pierre Vernant (dir.), *Problèmes de la guerre dans la Grèce ancienne*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton & O, 1968. Jean-Pierre Vernant, Introduction. I. Michel Lejeune, La civilisation micénienne et la guerre. 2 Francis Vian, La fonction guerrière dans la mythologie grecque. 3. Paul Courbin, La guerre en Grèce à haute époque d'après les documents archéologiques. 4. Geoffrey S. Kirk, War and the Warrior in the Homeric Poems. 5 Marcelle Détiéne, La Phalange: problèmes et controverses. 6. M. I. Finley, Sparta. 7. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, La tradition de l'Hoplite Athénien. 8. Jacques Taillardat, La trière Athénienne et la guerre sur mer aux Ve et IVe siècles. 9. Jacqueline de Romilly, Guerre et Paix entre cités. 10. Claude Mossé, Le rôle politique

- des armées dans le monde grecque à l'époque classique. 11. Pierre Ducrey, Aspects juridiques de la victoire et du traitement des vaincus. 12. Yvon Garlan, Fortifications et Histoire grecque. 13. Pierre Lévêque, La guerre à l'époque hellénistique. Appendice: Recherches comparatives sur le problème du char: Paul Garelli, Note sur l'évolution du char de guerre en Mésopotamie jusqu'à la fin de l'empire assyrien. Elena Cassin, A propos du char de guerre en Mésopotamie. Jacques Gernet, Note sur le char en Chine. Marcel Détienne, Remarques sur le char en Grèce.
- 1968 Pierre Ducrey, *Le traitement des prisonniers de guerre dans la Grèce antique, des origines à la conquête romaine*, École française d'Athènes, Travaux et mémoires..., t. XVII, Paris, De Boccard, 1968. (Th. Université de Lausanne). Paris, de Boccard, 1999.
- 1969 Eric William Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery: Historical Development*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969. Id., *Greek and Roman Artillery: Technical Treatises* (Oxford University Press academic monograph reprints), 1971.
- 1969 Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the first and second centuries A.D.*, 1969<sup>1</sup>, A. C. Black Publishers, 1979<sup>2</sup>, reprint with corrections, 1981; Totowa, N. J., Barnes & Nobles, 1985<sup>3</sup>; Constable, 1996<sup>3</sup>; University of Oklahoma Press, 1998<sup>3</sup>.
- 1970 Jean-Pierre Darmon, «Problèmes de la guerre dans la Grèce ancienne», *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*. 25<sup>e</sup> année, N. 5, 1970. pp. 1298-1308.
- 1971 William Kendrick Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices*, Part i, Berkeley / London, University of California Press, 1971.
- 1971 Paolo Marrassini, *Formazione del lessico dell'edilizia militare nel semitico di Siria* (Quaderni di semitistica, 1), Istituto di linguistica e di lingue orientali, Università di Firenze, 1971.
- 1972 Geoffrey E. M. De Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London, Duckworth, 1972.
- 1972 Yvon Garlan, *La guerre dans l'antiquité*, Paris, Fernand Nathan, 1972. Id., *War in the Ancient World: A Social history, Ancient Culture and Society*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1976.
- 1973 Manfred Clauss, *Untersuchungen zu den principales des römischen Heeres von Augustus bis Diokletian. Cornicularii, speculatores, frumentarii*. Dokt. Diss., Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 1973.
- 1973 Emilio Gabba, *Esercito e società nella tarda repubblica romana*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1973 (= *Republican Rome, the army and the allies*, transl. By P. J. Cuff, Oxford, Blackwell, 1976; University of California Press, 1976).
- 1974 Yvon Garlan, *Recherches de poliorcétique grecque*, Athènes, École française d'Athènes, 1974. pp. 1-5. (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 223). [Avant-Propos. Bibliographie (p. xv-xxii). I. La poliorcétique grecque de Périclès à Démétrios Poliorcète (stratégie traditionnelle, stratégie d Périclès, stratégie nouvelle) (p. 3). II. La poliorcétique grecque pendant la guerre du Péloponnèse (p. 105). III La poliorcétique grecque dans la première moitié du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle (p. 155).

- IV La poliorcétique macédonienne de Philippe II à Dèmétrios Poliorcète (p. 201). Conclusion (p. 271). Le Livre «V» de la Syntaxe Mécanique de Philon de Byzance. Texte, Traduction et Commentaire (p. 279). Index (p. 405). Table des illustrations (p. 417). Table des matières (p. 421)].
- 1974 William Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, University of California Press. *PART I* 1974 [I Military Pay. II Provisioning. III Booty. IV Legal Ownership over Booty. V The Dekate from Booty. VI The Athenian Treasury after the Persian Wars. VII The Marching Plan. VIII Sacrifice Before Battle. IX Phases of the Moon and Festivals. X Scouts. XI Depth of Phalanx. XII Width of the File in Phalanx Array]. *PART II* 1974 [I Trials of Generals. II The Generals and the State. III The Condottieri of the Fourth Century. IV Iphikrates and His Corinthian Peltasts. V Profits of Generals. VI Fortified Camps. VII The Challenge to Battle. VIII Surprise Attacks. IX Ambuscades. X The Wings of the Allied Phalanxes and Fleets. XI Greek Military Training. XII Greek Military Discipline. XIII. The Battlefield Trophy. XIV Aristeia in Greek Warfare]. *PART III: RELIGION* 1980 [I Religion and Greek Warfare. II Military Epiphanies. III The Military Mantike. IV Miscellaneous Portents. V War Festivals and Calendar. VI Military Vows. VII Dedication of Armor. VIII Captured Armor. IX Military Oracles. X The Epitheiasmos. XI Cult Tax on Military Pay. XII Religion and Discipline]. *PART IV: 1985: I THE PITCHED BATTLE* [1 Homeric Warfare. 2 Warfare in Early Greek Poetry. 3 Warfare in the Greek Historians]. II BURIAL OF GREEK WAR DEAD [1 Origin of the Convention in Myth. 2 Homeric Customs. 3 Prothesis and Ekphora. 4 The Athenian Agòn Epitáphios and Lógos Epitáphios. 5 Reports from Excavations of Mass Burials. 6 Casualty-Lists on Stone. Monuments Reported by Pausanias. 8 Burials of War Dead in Historical Sources, Including Literary Epitaphs and Inscriptions. 9 Unburied Dead. 10 The Spartan Conventions. 11 The Herald. 12 Burials at Home or on the Battlefield. 13 Cremation or Inhumation. 14 Cenotaphs]. *PART V: 1991 STONE THROWERS AND SLINGERS IN ANCIENT GREEK WARFARE* [I Literary Evidence. II The Sling and Stone-Casters in Mediterranean Art. III Numismatic Evidence, Including the Kestros. IV Excavations of Stone and Clay Missiles. V The Lead Sling Bullet. VI Conclusions]. Booty [I Vocabulary for booty. II Objects for Booty. III Fate of Captives. IV Raids and Pirates. V Division of Booty. VI Sale of Booty. VII Profit of War. Appendix: Tables of Booty in Greek Historians].
- 1974 Emilio Gabba, *Per la storia dell'esercito romano in età imperiale*, Bologna, Patron, 1974.
- 1974 Virgilio Ilari, *Gli italici nelle strutture militari romane*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1974. Rev. Hartmut Galsterer, *Gnomon*, Band 51, 1979, Heft 2, pp. 159-165.
- 1974 Chester G. Starr, *Political Intelligence in Classical Greece*, Mnemosyne, Supplements, Vol. 31, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 1974 (**Lo spionaggio politico nella Grecia classica**, trad. it. Corrado Petrocelli, prefazione di Luciano Canfora, Palermo, Sellerio, 1993).
- 1974 John W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion*, Bruxelles, Latomus, 1976.

- 1975 Emilio Gabba, *Le rivolte militari dal IV secolo a. C. ad Augusto*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1975.
- 1975 Emilio Gabba, «P. Cornelio Scipione Africano e la leggenda», *Athenaeum*, N.S., vol. 53, fasc. 1-2, 1975, pp. 1-17.
- 1975 Hans D. L. Viereck, *Die römische Flotte, Classis Romana*, Herford, Koehler, 1975; Hamburg Nikol Verlag, 1996.
- 1976 Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid army: organization and tactics in the great campaigns*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- 1976 Gaetano De Sanctis, *La guerra sociale*. Opera inedita, a cura di Leandro Polverini, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1976.
- 1976 André Chastagnol / Claude Nicolet / Henri van Effenterre (dir.), *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique* (Actes du colloque national, Paris 14-16 octobre, 1976 [Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1977]).
- 1979 William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome: 327-70 B. C.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979. Corrected reprint, 1985. Spanish transl. Guerra E Imperialismo En La Roma Republicana, 327 70 A. C., 1989.
- 1979 Elizabeth W. B. Fentress, *Numidia and the Roman Army: social, military and economic aspects of the frontier zone*, Oxford, British Archaeological Reports (BAR) International series 53, 1979.
- 1979 Umberto Cozzoli, *Proprietà fondiaria ed esercito nello stato spartano dell'età classica*, Istituto italiano per la storia antica, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1979.
- 1980 Virgilio Ilari, *Guerra e diritto nel mondo antico. I Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco-ellenistico*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1980.
- 1981 Graham Webster, *Rome Against Caratacus: The Roman Campaigns in Britain AD 48-58*, B. T. Batsford, 1981. Revised ed. 1993. Abingdon / New York, Routledge, 2019.
- 1982 Nacéra Benseddik, *Les troupes auxiliaires de l'armée romaine en Maurétanie Césarienne sous le Haut-Empire*, Alger, Société Nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 1982.
- 1983 Giovanni Brizzi, *Studi militari romani*, Bologna, CLUEB, 1983.
- 1983 Giorgio Ravegnani, *Castelli e città fortificate nel VI secolo*, Ravenna, M. Lapucci, Edizioni del Girasole, 1983.
- 1983 Birth of the Roman Military Equipment Conference (ROMECC) organised as a seminar by the Department of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology of the University of Sheffield. Proceeding edited by Mike C. Bishop. Starting in 1989 ROMECC publish an annual newsletter (*Arma*) and since 1999 the *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies (JRMES)* edited by the Association of Roman Military Equipment Studies (ARMES). The present editors are Eckhard Deschler-Erb / Peter Henrich / Stefanie Hoss, and *JRMES* is published by Universität zu Köln, Archäologisches Institut, Archäologie der Römischen Provinzen. Mike Bishop, «History of the Roman Military

- Equipment Conferences», *JRMES*, 21 (2020), pp. xiii-xvi. <https://a-r-m-e-s.org/the-association-for-roman-military-equipment-studies/romec/>
- 1984 D. B. Campbell, «Ballistaria in first to mid-third century Britain: a reappraisal», *Britannia*, 15, 1984, pp. 75-84.
- 1984 Lawrence J. F. Keppie, *The making of the Roman Army: from Republic to Empire*, B. T. Batsford 1984. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998; Routledge 1998. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.
- 1984 Giovanni Brizzi, *Annibale, strategia e immagine*, Perugia, Provincia di Perugia, 1984. Id., *Studi di storia annibalica*, Faenza, F.lli Lega, 1984. Id., *Carcopino, Cartagine e altri scritti*, Sassari, Università degli studi, 1989. Id., *Annibale. Come un'autobiografia*, Milano, Rusconi, 1994. Id., *Annibale*, Roma, Rai-ERI, 2000. Id., *Scipione e Annibale. La guerra per salvare Roma*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2007. Id., *Metus Punicus. Studi e ricerche su Annibale e Roma*, Imola, Angelini, 2011. Id., *Canne. La sconfitta che fece vincere Roma*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2016.
- 1985 Peter Krenz, «Casualties in hoplite battles», *Greek, Roman and Byzantine studies*, 26, 1985, 1, pp. 13-20. Id., «The Nature of Hoplite Battle, Classical Antiquity», Vol. 4. 1985, No. 1, pp. 50-61. Id., «Fighting by the Rules: The Invention of the Hoplite Agôn», *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 71 2002, 1, pp. 23-39.
- 1985 Pierre Ducrey, *Guerre et guerriers dans la Grèce antique*, Fribourg-Paris, Office du Livre-Payot, 1985. [Transl. *Warfare in Ancient Greece*, New York, Schocken Books, 1986. Nouvelles éd. revues et augmentées, Paris, Hachette, Coll. Pluriel, 1999; 2010.
- 1985 Raoul Lonis, «La guerre en Grèce: quinze années de recherche: 1968-1983», *Revue des études grecques*, T. XCVIII, Nos 467-469, Juillet-Décembre 1985, Bulletin de bibliographie critique, pp. 321-379.
- 1985 Sir Ian Archibald Richmond, *Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column*, (pref. & bibliography by Mark Hassal), London, The British School at Rome, 1982 (= Papers BSR, 13, 1935, pp. 1-40).
- 1986 Karlheinz Dietz, «Maler im Dienst des römischen Heeres», *Sonderdruck aus "Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter"*, 51 (1986), pp. 221-234.
- 1986 Graham Wylie, «What really happened at Aegospotami?», *L'antiquité classique*, T. 55, 1986. pp. 125-141.
- 1986 Michel Reddé, *Mare Nostrum. Les infrastructures, les dispositifs et l'histoire de la marine militaire sous l'empire romain*, Ecole Française de Rome, BEFAR 260, 1986.
- 1986 Duncan Campbell, «Auxiliary Artillery Revisited», *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseum in Bonn*, 186, 1986, pp. 117-132.
- 1986 Arther Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1986.
- 1987 Gabriele Bockisch, «Heroenzeit und militärische Demokratie», *Klio*, Band 69, Heft 2 1987, pp. 374-387.

- 1987 Giusto Traina, «Aspettando i barbari. Le origini tardoantiche della guerriglia di frontiera», *Romanobarbarica* 9, Herder, 1986-87, pp. 247-280.
- 1988 Benjamin Isaac, «The Meaning of the Terms Limes and Limitanei», *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 78, 1988, pp. 125-147.
- 1989 Duncan Campbell, «A Chinese Puzzle for the Romans», *Historia*, 38, 1989, pp. 371-376.
- 1989 Luigi Loreto, «Il conflitto romano-falisco del 241/240 a.C. e la politica romana degli anni successivi», *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, T. 101, N°2. 1989. pp. 717-737.
- 1989 Roy W. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army*, edited by D. J. Breeze & V.A. Maxfield, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1989.
- 1989 Chester G. Starr, *The influence of sea power on ancient history*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- 1989 Vincenzo Giuffré, *Testimonianze sul trattamento penale dei «Milites»* (Parte speciale del corso di «diritto penale romano», Napoli, Jovene, 1989.
- 1989 Yvon Garlan, *Guerre et économie en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, La Découverte, 1989.
- 1989 Yann Le Bohec, *L'armée romaine sous le Haut-Empire*, 1989, 1998, 2002 et 2018, 4e édit., Paris, Picard = *L'esercito romano*, Roma, N.I.S., 1992 (9th repr. 2009) = *Die römische Armee*, Franz Steiner, Stuttgart, 1993 = *The Imperial Roman Army*, London, Batsford, 1994 = *El ejército romano*, Ariel, Barcelona, 2004 = *Rimskaya armiya epokhi Ranney Imperii* [in Russian], Moscow, 2001.
- 1990 M.C. Bishop, «On parade: status, display, and morale in the Roman army», *Akten der 14. Internationalen Limeskongresses in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg / Carnuntum, 14.-21. September 1986*, Römische Limes in Österreich Sonderband, (Vienna 1990), pp. 21-30.
- 1990 C. S. Lightfoot, «Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth-Century Perspective», *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 80, 1990, pp. 115-126.
- 1990 Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990. Clarendon Press, 1992.
- 1990 Jörg Rüpke, *Domi militiae. Die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990.
- 1990 Antonio Sartori, «L'evergetismo dei militari 'graduati' in congedo: in margine a Svet. Tib. 37», *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, T. 102, N°2. 1990. pp. 687-697.
- 1990 Nancy Thomson de Grummond, «Pax Augusta and the Horae n the Ara Pacis Augustae», *American Journal of Archaeology*, 94, 1990, pp. 663-671.
- 1990 Nathan Rosenstein, *Imperatores Victi: Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990.
- 1991 Arther Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy*, Publication of the Association of the Ancient Historians, No. 3, University of Washinton, 1991.

- 1992 C. G. Falkner, *Sparta and the Sea. A Study of Spartan sea-power, c. 706-c. 373 B. C.* Ph. D. Diss. (unprint), Edmonton, Alberta, 1992.
- 1992 Mike J. Bishop, «The early imperial Apron», *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies*, 3, 1993, pp. 81-194.
- 1993 Michel Feugère, *Les Armes des Romains. De la République à l'antiquité tardive*, Paris, Éditions Errance, 1993.
- 1993 Germaine Guillaume-Coirier, «Les couronnes militaires végétales à Rome. Vestiges indo-européens et croyances archaïques», *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, t. 210 n°4, 1993, pp. 387-411.
- 1993 Gianfranco Paci, «Histoire politique et militaire», *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Antiquité*, T. 105 (*Recherches sur l'Adriatique antique*), N°1. 1993. pp. 345-359.
- 1993 John Rich / Graham Shipley (eds.), *War and Society in the Roman World*, London / New York, 1993. J. Rich, Introduction (p. 1). 1 Stephen Oakley, The Roman conquest of Italy (p. 9). 3 J. Rich, Fear, greed and glory: the causes of Roman war-making in the middle Republic (p. 38). 3 Adam Ziolkowski, *Urbs direpta*, or how the Romans sacked cities (p. 69). 4 John Patterson, Military organization and social change in the later Roman Republic (p. 92). 5 Duncan Cloud, Roman poetry and anti-militarism (p. 113). 6 Tim Cornell, The end of Roman imperial expansion (p. 139). 7 Greg Woolf, Roman peace (p. 171). 8 David Braund, Piracy under the principate and the ideology of imperial eradication (p. 195). 9 Brian Campbell, War and diplomacy: Rome and Parthia, 31 BC–AD 235 (p. 213). 10 Harry Sidebottom. Philosophers' attitudes to warfare under the principate (p. 241). 11 Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, The end of the Roman army in the western empire (p. 265). 12 Dick Whittaker, Landlords and warlords in the later Roman Empire (p. 277). Index (p. 303).
- 1993 Walter Ameling, *Karthago. Studien zu Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft*, München, C. H. Beck, 1993. Criticized by Luigi Loreto, «Guerra, società e illusioni ottiche a Cartagine. Una presa di posizione su W. Ameling, *Karthago. Studien zu Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft*, Munich, 1993», *Quaderni di storia* 23 (1997), p. 237-250.
- 1994 Paul Keyser, «The Use of Artillery by Philip II and Alexander the Great», *Ancient World*, 25, 1994, issue 1, pp. 27-59.
- 1994 Edmund F. Bloedow, «Alexander's Speech on the Eve of the Siege of Tyre», *L'antiquité classique*, T. 63, 1994. pp. 65-76.
- 1994 Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, «La cité, 'l'oikoumène' et la guerre», *Mètis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*, 9, 10, 1994. pp. 171-187.
- 1994 Yann Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army*, London, B. T. Batsford, 1994. J. Peddie, *The Roman War Machine*, Stroud, Sutton, 1994. A. K. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996. All reviewed by Duncan Campbell, *Britannia*, vol. 28, 1997, pp. 479-483.
- 1995 Paul Erdkamp, «Polybius, Livy, and the Fabian strategy», *Ancient Society*, 23., 1995, pp. 127-147.

- 1995 Noel Lenski, «The Date of the Gothic Civil War and the Date of the Gothic Conversion», *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 36, 1, 1995, pp. 51-87.
- 1995 Domenico Carro, *Maritima. La Marina di Roma repubblicana*, Roma, Forum Editore, 1995. Later Adm. Carro published a lot of articles and essays about. See his *Orbis maritimus. La geografia imperiale e la grande strategia marittima di Roma*, Milano, Acies, 2019.
- 1995 Jonathan Roth, «The Length of the Siege of Masada», *Scripta Classica Israelica*, XV, 1995, pp. 1-26.
- 1995 Warren T. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army 284-1081*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995
- 1996 Pat Southern / Karen R. Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, London, B. T. Batsford, 1996. Terence Coello, *Unit Sizes in the Late Roman Army*, BAR International Series 645, Oxford, Tempus Reparatum, 1996. Hugh Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350-425*, Oxford Classical Monographs, Clarendon Press, 1996. All reviewed by Duncan Campbell, «Later Roman Army», *Britannia*, Vol. 30, 1999, pp. 391-394.
- 1996 Jaś Elsner, «Inventing imperium: texts and the propaganda of monuments in Augustan Rome», in Id., *Art and text in Roman culture*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 32-53.
- 1996 Michael Alexander Speidel, *Dierömischen Schreibtafeln von Vindonissa. Lateinische Texte des militärischen Alltags und ihre geschichtliche Bedeutung*. Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa Band XII, Brugg 1996, (Habilitationsschrift).
- 1996 Leonard Alexander Burckhardt, *Bürger und Soldaten: Aspekte der politischen und militärischen Rolle athenischer Bürger im Kriegswesen des 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Stuttgart, F. Steiner, 1996.
- 1996 Yann Le Bohec, *Histoire militaire des guerres puniques: 246-146 avant J.C.*, Paris-Monaco, Éd. du Rocher, 1996; 2003<sup>2</sup>. Repr. 2014.
- 1996 Tim Cornell / Boris Rankov / Philip Sabin (eds.), *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Suppl. 67), University of London, 1996. John Rich, the origins of the Second Punic War. John Lazenby, Was Maharbal Right?. Boris Rankov, The Second Punic War at Sea. Philip Sabin, The Mechanics of battle in the Second Punic War. Louis Rawlings, Celts, Spaniards, and Samnites: warriors in a soldier's war. Tim Cornell, Hannibal's Legacy: the effects of the Hannibalic War on Italy.
- 1997 François de Callataÿ, *L'histoire des guerres mithridatiques vue par les monnaies*, Numismatica Lovaniensia 18, Louvain-La-Neuve, 1997.
- 1997 Eric P. McCormack, *The regionalization of equestrians and centurions in the roman imperial army*, PhD Th., The University of New Brunswick, 1997.
- 1997 Walter Lapini, «Les hoplites Athéniens de 431 (Thuc. 2.13.6)», *Mnemosyne*, I, fasc. 3, pp. 259-270.
- 1997 Marietta Šašel Kos, «Appian und Dio on the Illyrian Wars of Octavian», Inštitut za arheologijo (ZRC SAZU), *ŽA*, 47, 1997, pp. 187-198.

- 1997 Jan Rajtár, «Die Legionen Mark Aurels in Vormarsch», in Judith Oexle (hg), *Aus der Luft. Bilde unserer Geschichte- Luftbildarchäologie in Zentraleuropa*, Dresden, Landesamt für Archäologie, pp. 59-67.
- 1997 Christoph Unz / Eckhard Deschler-Erb, *Katalog der Militaria aus Vindonissa. Militärische Funde, Pferdegeschirr und Jochteile bis 1976*, Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft pro Vindonissa, Brugg, Schwabe & Co., 1997.
- 1997 Pierre Brulé / Jacques Oulhen (éd.), *Esclavage, guerre, économie en Grèce ancienne*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1997. Ed., Avant-propos (p. 9). André Chédeville, Préface. Visite à l'ami d'à-côté (p. 13). Pierre Lèveque, Hipponactea ou de quelques esclaves d'Ephèse (p. 19). Edmond Lévy, Livres et non-livres dans le code de Gortyne (p. 25). Jean Ducat, La cryptie en question (p. 43). Slobodan Dusanic, Platon, la question messénienne et les guerres contre les Barbares (p. 75). Olivier Masson, Femmes donatrices à l'Asklepieion d'Athènes (p. 87). Michael H. Jameson, Women and Democracy in Fourth-century Athens (p. 95). Jacques Annequin, Métaphore de l'esclavage et esclavage comme métaphore (p. 109). Pierre Ducrey, Aspects de l'histoire de la guerre en Grèce ancienne 1945-1996 (p. 123). David Whitehead, οἶον τὸ μῦς λυτοῦσθαι (p. 139). Jeannine Boëldieu-Trevet, Brasidas: la naissance de l'art du commandement (p. 147). François Chamoux, Le supplice tragique de Phytion (p. 159). Claude Mossé, Les mercenaires dans les luttes internes de Syracuse au ive siècle : le témoignage des vies de Dion et de Timoléon de Plutarque (p. 165). Pierre Briant, Note d'histoire militaire achéménide À propos des éléphants de Darius III (p. 177). Pierre Leriche, Pourquoi et comment Europos a été fondée à Doura ? (p. 191). Olivier Picard, Monnaies et législateurs, Bibliographie (p. 213). Michèle Brunet, Thasos et son Épire à la fin du ve et au début du ive s. avant Jésus-Christ (p. 229). Bibliographie d'Yvon Garlan (p. 243-248).
- 1997 Charles D. Hamilton / Peter Krentz (eds.), *Polis and Polemos: Essays on Politics, War, and History in Ancient Greece in Honour of Donald Kagan*, Claremont, Regina Books, 1997. Dedication. Preface. Biography of Donald Kagan. Bibliography of Donald Kagan. PART I THUCYDIDES AND THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: 1. Ronald P. Legon, «Thucydides and the Case for Contemporary History». 2. Elizabeth A. Meyer, «The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War after 25 Years». 3. Peter Krentz, «The Strategic Culture of Periclean Athens». 4. Brook Manville, «Pericles and the “both/and” Vision for Democratic Athens». 5. John Hale, «General Phormio's Art of War: a Greek Commentary on a Chinese Classic» (p. 85). 6. J. E. Lendon, «Spartan Honor» (p. 105). 7. Barry Strauss, «The Art of Alliance and the Peloponnesian War». 8. Paul Rahe, «Thucydides and Ancient Constitutionalism». 9. W. J. McCoy, «The Political Debut of Theramenes». 10. Charles D. Hamilton, «Thucydides on the End of the Peloponnesian War». PART II: AFTER THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: 11. David Rice, «Litigation As A Political Weapon: The Case of Timotheus of Athens». 12. Valerie French, «The Spartan Family and the Spartan Decline: Changes in Child-Rearing Practices and Failure to Reform.» 13. Alvin Bernstein, «Imperialism, Ethnicity and Strategy: the Collapse of Spartan (and Soviet) Hegemony». 14. Kenneth W. Hari, «Alexander's Cavalry Battle at the Granicus». 15. James Williams, «Ideology and the

- Constitution of Demetrius of Phalerum». 16. Jay Bregman, «The Emperor Julian's View of Classical Athens».
- 1998 Sophia Katharina Bietenhard, *Des Königs General: die Heerführer tradition in der vorstaatlichen und frühen staatlichen Zeit und die Joabgestalt in 2 Sam 2-20; 1 Kön 1-2*, Zugl. Bern Univ. Diss. 1977, Freiburg, Univ. Verlag, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998.
- 1998 Yann Le Bohec / Catherine Wolff (éds), *Les Légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire. Actes du congrès de Lyon (17-19 septembre 1998)*, t. I et II, III (Index), Y. Le Bohec et C. Wolff (éd.), Lyon/Paris, CEROR/De Boccard, 2000.
- 1998 Martijn J. Nicasie, *Twilight of Empire : The Roman army from the reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople*, (Dutch monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, 19), Amsterdam 1998.
- 1998 J. W. Rich, «Augustus's Parthian honours, the temple of Mars Ultor and the arch in the Forum Romanum», *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 66, pp 71-128.
- 1998 Paul Erdkamp, *Hunger and the Sword: Warfare and Food Supply in Roman Republican Wars (264-30 BC)*, Amsterdam, J C. Gieben, 1998.
- 1998 Sabino Perea Yébenes, *Los stratores en le ejército imperial romano*, Colección Signifer, Monografías y Estudios de Antigüedad Griega y Romana, Madrid, 1998. Id., *Collegia Militaria. Asociaciones Militares en el Imperio Romano*, *ibidem*, 1999.
- 1998 Frances Anne Scoczylas Pownall, «What Makes a War a Sacred War», *Échos du Monde Classique/Classical Views*, 17 (1998). Pp. 35-55.
- 1998 Constantine Zuckerman, «Two reforms of the 370s recruiting soldiers and senators in the divided empire», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 56, 1998, p. 79-139.
- 1998 Eugenio Polito, *Fulgentibus armis. Introduzione allo studio dei fregi d'armi antichi*, Xenia Antiqua N. 4, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1998.
- 1999 Eugenio Polito, *I Galati vinti. Il trionfo sui barbari da Pergamo a Roma*, Soprintendenza archeologica di Roma, Milano, Electa, 1999.
- 1999 Jonathan P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 BC – AD 235)*, Columbia Studies in the Classical tradition, XXIII, Leiden / Boston / Köln, Brill, 1999.
- 1999 Claude Mossé, *Guerres et sociétés dans les mondes grecs: De 490 à 322 avant J.-C.*, Paris, éd. Jacques Marseille, 1999.
- 1999 John Haldon, *Warfare, state and society in the Byzantine world 565-1204*, London, UCL Press, 1999.
- 1999 Enner von Hesberg (Hg.), *Das Militär als Kulturträger in römischer Zeit*, Schriften des Archäologischen Instituts der Universität zu Köln, 1999.
- 1999 Adrian Goldsworthy / Ian Haynes (eds.), *The Roman Army as a Community, Including Papers of a Conference Held at Birkbeck College, University Of London on 11-12 January, 1997*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Suppl. 34, Portsmouth RI, 1999.

- 1999 Nathan Rosenstein / Kurt Raaflaub (eds.), *War and society in the ancient and medieval worlds: Asia, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Mesoamerica*, Center for Hellenic Studies, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1999. 1 Eds, Introduction (p. 1). 2 Robin D. S. Yates, Early China (p. 7). 3 W. Wayne Farris, Japan to 1300 (p. 47). 4 Andrea M. Gnirs, Ancient Egypt (p. 71). 5 Pierre Briant, The Achaemenid Empire (p. 105). 6 Kurt Raaflaub, Archaic and Classical Greece (p. 129). 7 Charles D. Hamilton, The Hellenistic World (p. 163). 8 Nathan Rosenstein, Republican Rome (p. 193). 9 Brian Campbell (p. 217). 10 John Haldon, The Byzantine World (p. 241). 11 Bernard S. Bachrach, Early Medieval Europe (p. 271). 12 Patricia Crone, Early Islamic World (p. 301). 13 David Webster, Ancient Maya Warfare (p. 333). 14 Ross Hassig, The Aztec World (p. 361). 15 R. Brian Ferguson, A Paradigm for the Study of War and Society (p. 389). 16 Victor Davis Hanson / Barry S. Strauss, Epilogue (pp. 439-454).
- 1999 Vincenzo Giuffrè, *Lecture e ricerche sulla «Res militaris»*, Vol. 1 (Collana del Dip. dir. romano-Univ. Napoli Federico II, Nr. 9), Napoli, Jovene, 1996.
- 2000 Hans van Wees (ed.), *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, London, Duckworth, 2000. PART I: CAUSES OF WAR: 1 J. E. Lendon, Homeric Vengeance and the outbreak of Greek wars (p. 1). 2 Jonathan Shy, Killing rage: *physis* or *nomos* – or both? (p. 31). PART II: FORMS OF VIOLENCE WITHIN THE POLIS: 3 Simon Hornblower, Sticks, stones, and Spartans: the sociology of the Spartan violence (p. 57). 4 Nick Fisher, Hybris, revenge and stasis in the Greek-city states (p. 83). PART III: BEYOND THE CLASSICAL PHALANX: 5 H. van Wees, The development of the Hoplite phalanx: iconography and reality in the seventh century (p. 125). 6 Peter Krenz, Deception in archaic and classical Greece (p. 167). 7 Victor Davis Hanson, Hoplite battle as ancient Greek warfare: when, where and why? (p. 201). 8 Louis Rawlings, Alternative agonies: hoplite martial and combat experiences beyond the phalanx (p. 233). 9 Barry S. Strauss, Perspectives on the death of fifth-century Athenian seamen (p. 261). 10 Paul Beston, Hellenistic military leadership (p. 315). 11 John Ma, Fighting poleis of the hellenistic world (337-375).
- 2000 Richard J Brewer (ed.), *Roman Fortresses and their Legions. Papers in honour of George C Boon*. London/Cardiff, Society of Antiquaries of London/National Museums & Galleries of Wales, 2000. S. von Schnurbein (The Organization of the Fortresses in Augustan Germany). Tom F. C. Blagg (The Architecture of the Legionary *Principia*). D. Baatz (Vegetius' Legion and the Archaeological Facts). R.S.O. Tomlin (The Legions in the Late Empire). S. T. Parker (Roman Legionary Fortresses in the East). J. J. Wilkes (Roman Legions and their Fortresses in the Danube Lands [first to third centuries AD]). M. G. Fulford (The Organization of Legionary Supply: the Claudian Invasion of Britain). W. H. Manning (The Fortresses of *Legio XX*). L. J. F. Keppie (*Legio VIII* in Britain: the Beginning and the End). M. W. C. Hassall (Pre-Hadrianic Legionary Dispositions in Britain). J.R. Kenyon.
- 2000 *Économie antique. La guerre dans les économies antiques*, Entretiens d'Archeologie et d'Histoire, 5, Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, Conseil Général Haute-Garonne, 2000, p. 337-364.
- 2000 Jean-Michel Carrié / Sylvain Janniard, «L'armée romaine tardive dans quelques

- travaux récents: 1e partie: l'institution militaire et les modes de combat», *An Tard*, 8, 2000, pp. 321-341. Janniard, «2e partie: stratégie et techniques militaires», *ibidem*, 9, 2001, pp. 351-361.
- 2000 Philip Sabin, «The face of Roman battle», *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 90 (2000), pp. 1-17.
- 2000 Luigi Piccirilli, «La tradizione extratucididea relativa alla spedizione ateniese in Sicilia del 415-413», in *Atti delle Terze giornate internazionali di studi sull'area elima* (Gibellina - Erice - Contessa Entellina, 23-26 ottobre 1997), II, Scuola normale superiore di Pisa, Pisa / Gibellina, 2000, pp. 823-848.
- 2000 Jocelyne Nélis-Clément, *Les bénéficiaires; militaires et administrateurs au service de l'empire (1er s. a.C. - VIe s. p.C)*, Paris / Bordeaux, Diffusion De Boccard, 2000.
- 2000 Birth of *Res Militares*, *The Official Newsletter of the Society of Ancient Military Historians (SAMH)*. <https://www.ancientmilitaryhistorians.org/about.html>. Current SAMH Officers are Jonathan Roth (President), Jenn Finn (Vice President), Ioannis Georganas, (Secretary), Brian D. Turner, Lee L. Brice, Jessica H. Clark, Jeffrey Ropp, and Paul Johstono (Advisory Board).
- 2001 Birth of *Aquila legionis: Cuadernos de estudio sobre el ejército romano*. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/revista?codigo=39302003>.
- 2001 Attilio Mastino / Alessandro Teatini, Ancora sul discusso 'trionfo' di Costantino dopo la battaglia del Ponte Milvio: nota a proposito di CIL, VIII, 9356 = 20941 (Caesarea). In: *Varia epigraphica: atti del Colloquio internazionale di epigrafia*, 8-10 giugno 2000, Bertinoro, Italia. Faenza, Fratelli Lega Editori. pp. 274-327.
- 2001 François Cadiou, «Les guerres en Hispania et l'émergence de la cohorte légionnaire dans l'armée romaine sous la république: una revision critique», *Gladius*, XXI, 2001, pp. 167-182.
- 2001 Toni Ñaco del Hoyo, « Toni. Milites in oppidis hibernabant. El hospitium militare invernal en ciudades peregrinas y los abusos de la hospitalidad sub tectis durante la República», *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, Vol. 27 N°2, 2001, pp. 63-90.
- 2001 Philip Rance, «Attacotti, Déisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain», *Britannia*, 32, 2001, pp 243-270.
- 2001 Marcus Müller, *Das Bellum Africum: Ein historisch-philologischer Kommentar der Kapitel 1-47*, Dokt. Diss., Trier, mai 2001.
- 2001 Yann Le Bohec, *César chef de guerre*, Paris-Monaco, Édit. du Rocher, 2001, repr. 2015 (coll. Texto).
- 2001 Andreas Zack, *Studien zum »Römischen Völkerrecht«. Kriegserklärung, Kriegsbeschluss, Beedung und Ratifikation zwischenstaatlicher Verträge, internationale Freundschaft und Feindschaft während der römischen Republik bis zum Beginn des Prinzipats*, Siegm. Döpp u. Jan Radicke (Hg), Beihefte zum Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft, Göttingen, Edition Ruprecht, 2001. 2e Auflage 2007.
- 2001 Sara E. Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C.–A.D. 235): Law and*

- Family in the Imperial Army*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 24, Leiden, Brill, 2001.
- 2002 Penny McGeorge, *Late Roman Warlords*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002. [«Appendix: Naval Power in the Fifth Century», pp. 306-311].
- 2002 Marta Sordi (cur.), *Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco e romano*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2002. Marta Sordi, *Bellum iustum ac pius* (p. 3). Iliara Ramelli, I concetto di iure caesus e la sua corrispondenza con quello di *bellum iustum* (p. 13). Giampaolo Urso, Guerra e giustizia nei frammenti ‘arcaici’ di Cassie Dione (p. 29). Mario Lombardo, La norma e l’eccesso: la guerra tra Sibari e Crotona e alcuni aspetti della ‘greek way of war’ in età arcaica (p. 43). Cinzia Bearzot, Guerra e costituzione in Isocrate (*Panath.* 114-118) (p. 69). Giovanni Brizzi, Il guerriero e il soldato: le linee del mutamento dall’età eroica dell’Ellade alla rivoluzione militare dell’Occidente (p. 87). Giovanni Bettalli, La disciplina negli eserciti delle poleis. Il caso di Atene (p. 107). Franca Landucci, Il ruolo dei mercenari nella nascita dei regni ellenistici (p. 123). Alessandro Galimberti, Lo *Strategikos* di Onasandro (p. 141). Emilio Gabba, Il generale dell’esercito romano nel I secolo a.C. (p. 155). Federica Cordano, La guerra e la musica nell’antica Grecia (p. 163). Cristiano Dognini, I cavalli bianchi di Camillo (p. 173). Giulio Firpo, Il monosandalismo degli Ernici (Verg. *Aen.* 7, 678-690) (p. 185). Gabriella Amiotti, Il trionfo come spettacolo (p. 201). Celestina Milani, *Ptoleμος, Polemos* nei testi micenei e nei poemi omerici (p. 207). Cristiano Dognini, *Militia amoris* e *militia Caesaris* nell’elegia latina (p. 217). Aldo Luisi, Il pensiero di Orazio sulla guerra (p. 229). Laura Cotta Ramosino, Guerra civile e guerra sociale in Plinio (p. 243). Domenico Lassandro, La spedizione di Costanze Cesare in Britannia nel Panegirico del 297 d.C. (p. 259). Virgilio Ilari, *Imitatio, restitutio, utopia*: la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno (p. 269).
- 2002 Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *The Roman Army and the Economy*, Amsterdam, J. C. Gieben, 2002. Peter Herz (Supplying the Roman armies. Logistik der kaiserzeitlichen Armee: strukturelle Überlegungen). Paul Erdkamp (Corn supply of the Roman armies during the Principate (27 BC-235 AD). César Carreras Monfort (Roman military supply during the Principate: transportation and staples). Lukas de Blois (Monetary policies, the soldiers’ pay, and the onset of crisis in the first half of the third century AD). Ian Haynes (Communications and transport. Britain’s first information revolution: the Roman army and the transformation of economic life). Theodor Kissel (Road-building as a munus publicum). Anne Kolb (Army and transport). THE ROMAN WEST: HISPANIA, BRITANNIA, AND GERMANIA. Jeffrey L. Davies (Soldiers, peasants, industries, and towns: the Roman army in Britain: a Welsh perspective). C.R. Whittaker (Supplying the army: evidence from Vindolanda). Pedro Paulo A. Funari (Consumption of olive oil in Roman Britain and the role of the army). Lothar Wierschowski (Römische Heer und die ökonomische Entwicklung Germaniens in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 1. Jahrhunderts). José Remesal Rodríguez (Baetica and Germania: notes on the concept of ‘provincial interdependence’ in the Roman Empire). Heinrich Konen (Ökonomische Bedeutung der Provinzialflotten während der Zeit des Prinzipates. NORTH AFRICA AND THE EAST. Pierre Morizot (Impace de l’armée romaine sur l’économie de l’Afrique). Jonathan

- Roth (Army and the economy in Judaea and Palestine). Richard Alston (Managing the frontiers: supplying the frontier troops in the sixth and seventh centuries).
- 2002 Maria Intriери, *Biaios didascalos: guerra e stasis a Corcira fra storia e storiografia*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2002.
- 2002 Giovanni Brizzi, *Il guerriero, l'oplita, il legionario. Gli eserciti nel mondo classico*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002.
- 2003 Giovanni Brizzi, «Ancora su Illyriciani e Soldatenkaiser. Qualche ulteriore proposta per una messa a fuoco del problema», in Gianpaolo Urso (cur.), *Dall'Adriatico al Danubio: l'illirico nell'età greca e romana. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 25-27 settembre 2003*, Pisa, ETS, 2004, pp. 319-342.
- 2003 Giusto Traina, *Marco Antonio*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2003; 2023.
- 2003 David J. P. Mason, *Roman Britain and the Roman Navy*, Stroud, Tempus Publ., 2003.
- 2003 *Bibliografia di Studi Cesariani* (1896-2003). Biblioteca Fondazione Canussio, Cividale del Friuli. <https://www.fondazionecanussio.org/biblces.htm>
- 2004 John Carman / Anthony Harding (eds.), *Ancient Warfare: Archaeological Perspectives*, Gloucestershire, Sutton, 2004. 1 Introduction (p. 1). 2 Jonathan Haas, The origins of war and ethnic violence (p. 11). 3 Don Brothwell, Biosocial and bioarchaeological aspects of conflict and warfare (p. 25). 4 John Carman, Beyond the Western Way of War: Ancient Battlefields in Comparative Perspective (p. 39). 5 Slavomir Vencl, Stone Age warfare (p. 57). 6 P. M. Dolukhanov, War and peace in prehistoric Eastern Europe (p. 73). 7 Dimitra Kokkinidou / Marianna Nikolaidou, Neolithic enclosures in Greek Macedonia: violent and non-violent aspects of territorial demarcation (p. 89). 8 John Chapman, The origins of warfare in the prehistory of Central and Eastern Europe (p. 101). 9 R. J. Mercier, The origins of warfare in the British Isles (p. 143). 10 Anthony Harding, Warfare: a defining characteristic of Bronze Age Europe? (p. 157). 11 Kristian Kristiansen, The emergence of warrior aristocracies in later European prehistory and their long-term history (p. 175). 12 Klaus Randsborg, Into the Iron Age: a discourse on war and society (p. 191). 13 Victor Davis Hanson, Hoplite obliteration: the case of the town of Thespieae (p. 203). 14 Deborah J. Shephers, The elusive warrior maiden tradition – bearing weapons in Anglo-Saxon society (p. 219). Eds., Epilogue: the future study of ancient warfare (p. 249). Bibliography (pp. 255-276).
- 2004 Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities*, London, Duckworth, 2004.
- 2004 Robert Gardiner (Ed.), *Age of the Galley: Mediterranean Oared Vessels since Pre-classical Times*, Conway Maritime Press, 2004.
- 2004 Sylvain Janniard, «Les formations tactiques en éperon et en tenaille dans l'armée romaine», *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Antiquité*, T. 116.2, 2004, pp. 1001-1038.
- 2004 Rose Mary Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome: Trust in the Gods but Verify*, Abingdon. Frank Cass, 2004. Part 1 The Republic; Introduction; Chapter 1

- Trust in the gods, but verify; Chapter 2 Rome conquers Italy; Chapter 3 Hannibal's spies; Chapter 4 Diplomat, trader, messenger, client, spy; Chapter 5 The high price of failure; Chapter 6; Chapter 7 Julius Caesar and the end of the Roman Republic; Part 2 The Empire; Chapter 8 The Augustan revolution; Chapter 9 Roman military intelligence; Chapter 10 Intelligence systems failure; Chapter 11 Transmission and signaling; Chapter 12 The Roman secret service; Chapter 13 Big brother is watching you; Chapter 14 Epilogue.
- 2004 Giorgio Ravegnani, *I bizantini e la guerra*, Roma, Jouvence, 2004. Id., *Soldados de Bizancio en tiempos de Justiniano*, Signifer Libros, 2007. *Soldati e guerre a Bisanzio. Il secolo di Giustiniano*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.
- 2004 Yann Le Bohec / Catherine Wolff (éds), *L'Armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien I<sup>er</sup>*. Actes du congrès de Lyon (12-14 septembre 2002), Lyon/Paris, CEROR/De Boccard, 2004.
- 2005 Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire, Battle for the West*, New York, Little, Brown & C., 2005; Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2007; London, Hachette UK, 2011, trad. it. Il Saggiatore, 2015.
- 2005 John Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, New Haven, Ct, Yale University Press, 2005.
- 2005 Giovanni Brizzi, «*Si vis pacem, para bellum*», in Mario Pani (cur.), *Storia romana e storia moderna. Fasi in prospettiva*, Bari, Edipuglia, 2005, pp. 11-26.
- 2006 Duncan Campbell, *Besieged. Siege Warfare in the Ancient World*, Botley, Osprey Publishing, 2006.
- 2007 Birth of the Società Italiana per gli Studi Militari Antichi, founded by Carlo Sansilvestri and Giuseppe Cascarino. The SISMA published in 2007 the journal *Vexillum* and later gave birth to the Associazione Culturale Decima Legio. Cascarino published (Roma, Il Cerchio) *L'esercito romano: armamento e organizzazione* (4 vols., 2007-2012); *Navi di Roma. L'arte del dominio del mare* (2021); *Arcana. I servizi segreti dei Romani* (2023); *Obsidia. Gli assedi dei romani* (2025).
- 2007 Michael Alexander Speidel (Hrsg.), *Militärdiplome. Die Forschungsbeiträge der Berner Gespräche von 2004* (Mavors Roman Army Researches 15), Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007.
- 2007 Christa STEINBY, *The Roman Republican Navy: from the Sixth Century to 167 BC*, Societas scientiarum fennicae, 2007.
- 2007 Louis Rawlings, *The ancient Greeks at war*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- 2007 Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden / Oxford, Blackwell, 2007. PART I EARLY ROME: 1 John Rich, 1 Warfare and the Army in Early Rome (p. 7). 2 Gary Forsythe, The Army and Centuriate Organization in Early Rome (p. 24). PART II MID- AND LATE REPUBLIC: 3 Louis Rawlings, Army and Battle During the Conquest of Italy (350–264 bc) (p. 45). 4 Dexter Hoyos, The Age of Overseas Expansion (264–146 bc) (p. 63). 5 Pierre Cagnart, The Late Republican Army (146–30 bc) (p. 80). 6 Paul

Erdkamp, War and State Formation in the Roman Republic (p. 96). 7 Luuk de Ligt, Roman Manpower and Recruitment During the Middle Republic (p. 114). 8 Nathan Rosenstein, Military Command, Political Power, and the Republican Elite (p. 132). 9 Will Broadhead, Colonization, Land Distribution, and Veteran Settlement (p. 148). 10 Lukas de Blois, Army and General in the Late Roman Republic (p. 164). PART III THE EMPIRE (ACTIUM TO ADRIANOPLE): THE STRUCTURE OF THE IMPERIAL ARMY: 11 Kate Gilliver, The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army (p. 183). 12 D. B. Saddington, Classes. The Evolution of the Roman Imperial Fleets (p. 201). 13 James Thorne, Battle, Tactics, and the Emergence of the *Limites* in the West (p. 218). 14 Everett L. Wheeler, The Army and the *Limes* in the East (p. 235). 15 Karl Strobel, Strategy and Army Structure between Septimius Severus and Constantine the Great (p. 267). MILITARY ORGANIZATION: 16 Sara Elise Phang, Military Documents, Languages, and Literacy (p. 286). 17 Peter Herz, Finances and Costs of the Roman Army (p. 306). 18 Peter Kehne, War- and Peacetime Logistics: Supplying Imperial Armies in East and West (p. 323). ARMY, EMPEROR, AND EMPIRE: 19 Olivier Hekster, The Roman Army and Propaganda (p. 339). 20 Clifford Ando, The Army and the Urban Elite: A Competition for Power (p. 359). 21 Anthony R. Birley, Making Emperors. Imperial Instrument or Independent Force? (p. 379). SOLDIERS AND VETERANS IN SOCIETY: 22 Norbert Hanel, Military Camps, *Canabae*, and *Vici*. The Archaeological Evidence (p. 395). 23 Walter Scheidel, Marriage, Families, and Survival: Demographic Aspects (p. 417). 24 Gabriele Wesch-Klein, Recruits and Veterans (p. 435). 25 Oliver Stoll, The Religions of the Armies (p. 451). PART IV THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE (UP TO JUSTINIAN): 26 Wolf Liebeschuetz, Warlords and Landlords (p. 479). 27 Timo Stickler, The *Foederati* (p. 495). 28 Michael Whitby, Army and Society in the Late Roman World: A Context for Decline? (p. 515). 29 Hugh Elton, Army and Battle in the Age of Justinian (527–65) (p. 532–550).

2007 Lukas de Blois / Elio Lo Cascio (eds.) with the aid of Olivier Hekster / Gerda de Kleijn, *The impact of the Roman army (200 BC-AD 476): economic, social, political, religious, and cultural aspects: proceedings of the Sixth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 B.C.-A.D. 476), Capri, March 29-April 2, 2005*. Impact of empire, v. 6. Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2007. PART ONE THE IMPACT OF THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN ARMY: Luuk de Ligt, Roman Manpower Resources and the Proletarianization of the Roman Army in the Second Century bc (p. 3). Frederik Vervaeke / Tony Ñaco del Hoyo, War in Outer Space: Nature and Impact of the Roman War Effort in Spain, 218–197 bce (p. 21). Paul Erdkamp, Polybius and Livy on the Allies in the Roman Army (p. 47). Nathan Rosenstein, War, Sex, and Death: From Republic to Empire (p. 75). PART TWO: THE EMPEROR AND HIS FORCES. GENERAL ISSUES: Olivier J. Hekster, Fighting for Rome: The Emperor as a Military Leader (p. 91). Armin Eich, Das Berufsheer der frühen und hohen Kaiserzeit und die Verarmung der kaiserlichen Zentrale (p. 107). Vincenzo Giuffrè, I ‘*milites*’ ed il ‘*commune ius privatorum*’ (p. 129). Ségolène Demougin, De nouveaux officiers équestres (p. 149). Jasper Oorthuijs, Marines and Mariners in the Roman Imperial Fleets (p. 169). Hans Michael Schellenberg, Einige Bemerkungen zum Strategikos

- des Onasandros (p. 181). PART THREE: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ARMY: Elio Lo Cascio, L'approvvigionamento dell'esercito romano: mercato libero o 'commercio amministrato'? (p. 195). Karl Strobel, Vom marginalen Grenzraum zum Kernraum Europas. Das Römische Heer als Motor der Neustrukturierung historischer Landschaften und Wirtschaftsräume (p. 207). Pierre Cosme, Les fournitures d'armes aux soldats romains (p. 239). Salvatore Martino, Dinamiche di interscambio fra tecnologia meccanica militare e civile a Roma (p. 261). Colin Adams, Irregular Levies and the Impact of the Roman Army in Egypt (p. 281). PART FOUR: THE IMPACT OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ARMY: ITALY AND THE WEST: Koenraad S. Verboven, Good for Business. The Roman Army and the Emergence of a 'Business Class' in the Northwestern Provinces of the Roman Empire (1st century bce–3rd century ce) (p. 295). Alexandra Busch, 'Militia in urbe'. The Military Presence in Rome (p. 315). Salvatore Ortisi, Roman Military in the Vesuvius Area (p. 343). Anthony R. Birley, The Frontier Zone in Britain: Hadrian to Caracalla (p. 355). Gabriele Weiler, Römisches Militär und die Gründung niedergermanischer Städte (p. 371). PART FIVE: THE IMPACT OF THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ARMY: EASTERN AND AFRICAN PROVINCES: Hannah M. Cotton, The Impact of the Roman Army in the Province of Judaea/Syria Palaestina (p. 393). Jonathan P. Roth, Jews and the Roman Army: Perceptions and Realities (p. 409). Wolfgang Liebeschütz, The impact of the imposition of Roman rule on Northern Syria (p. 421). Oliver Stoll, „Städte Arabiens mit herrlichen Tempeln...“ oder: Von Ägypten in die Provinz Arabia. Der Kulttransfer eines Regimentsgottes nach Bostra durch römisches Militär und seine Folgen (p. 439). Ariel Lewin, The Impact of the Late Roman Army in Palaestina and Arabia (p. 463). Arbia Hilali, L'impact de la légio IIIa Augusta dans les provinces romaines d'Afrique. L'aspect religieux (p. 481). PART SIX: THE THIRD CENTURY AD: Lukas de Blois, The Military Factor in the Onset of Crises in the Roman Empire in the Third Century ad (p. 497). Peter Eich, Militarierungs- und Demilitarisierungstendenzen im dritten Jahrhundert n.Chr. (p. 509). Jon Coulston, Art, Culture and Service: The Depiction of Soldiers on Funerary Monuments of the 3rd Century ad (p. 529). Fernando López Sánchez, Virtus Probi: Payments for the Battle Cavalry during the Rule of Probus (ad 277–278) (p. 563–580).
- 2008 Jorit Wintjes, «Total War. The Ancient Perspective», in *Conflitti militari e popolazioni civili. Atti del XXXIV Congresso della Commissione Internazionale di Storia Militare* (2008).
- 2008 Matthew Joseph Bearzotti, *The First Punic War and the Development of the Roman Navy*, UMI Dissertation Services, 2008;
- 2008 Sara E. Phang, *Roman Military Service. Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- 2008 Philip Sabin / Hans van Wees / Michael Whitby (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare Vol. 1. Greece, the Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008. INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT WARFARE: 1 Victor Davis Hanson, The modern historiography of ancient warfare (p. 3). 2 Simon Hornblower, Warfare in ancient literature: the paradox of war (p. 22). 3 Michael Whitby, Reconstructing ancient warfare (p. 54). PART I: ARCHAIC AND

CLASSICAL GREECE: 4 Jonathan M. Hall, International relations (p. 85). 5 Peter Hunt, Military forces (p. 108). 6 Peter Krentz, War (p. 147). 7 Battle: A. Everett L. Wheeler, Land battles (p. 186). B. Barry Strauss, Naval battles and sieges (p. 223). 8 Vincent Gabrielsen, Warfare and the state (p. 248). 9 Hans van Wees, War and society (p. 273). PART II: THE HELLENISTIC WORLD AND THE ROMAN REPUBLIC: 10 Richard Billows, International relations (p. 303). 11 Military forces: A. Nikolas Sekunda, Land forces (p. 325). B. Philip de Souza, Naval forces (p. 357). 12 Jonathan P. Roth, War (p. 368). 13 Battle: A. Philip Sabin, Land battles (p. 399). B. Philip de Souza, Naval battles and sieges (p. 434). 14 John Serrati, Warfare and the state (p. 461). 15 J. E. Lendon, War and society (p. 498). *Chronological table* (p. 517). *Glossary* (p. 533). *List of ancient authors* (p. 545). *Bibliography* (pp. 555-602). *Index of ancient passages cited* (p. 603). *General index* (p. 628).

2008 Edward Bragg / Lisa Irene Hau / Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis (eds), *Beyond the Battlefields: New Perspectives on Warfare and Society in the Graeco-Roman World. Proceedings of a conference held in Oxford 2nd-4th of July 2006*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008. Brian Campbell / Hans van Wees, «Introduction» (p. 1). 1 Edward Bragg, «‘Show us your scars, Marius Aquilinus’ - The Military Record of the Magistrates in Defence Speeches during the Roman Republic» (p. 7). 2 Josh Levithan, «Emperors, sieges, and intentional exposure» (p. 25). 3. Jeremy Armstrong, «Breaking the Rules: Irregularities in the Recruitment in the Early Roman Army (509-450 BC)» (p. 47-66). 4 Mark Woolmer, «Thinker, Trader, Sailor, Spy? The Role of the Mercantile Community in Greek Intelligence Gathering» (p. 67). 5 Luca Asmonti, «How to Become Renowned General without Winning Battles: the Case of Conon» (p. 85). 6 Sonya Nevin, «Military Ethics in the Writing of History: Thucydides and Diodorus on Delium» (p. 99). 7 Lisa Irene Hau, «The Victor after the Victory: A Narrative Set-Piece in Greek Historiography from Herodotus to Diodorus of Sicily» (p. 121). 8 Lynn Kozak, «‘Do glorious battles no longer inspire your dreams?’ Moments of Compromise and Fantasies of Peace in *Iliad*» (p. 145). 9 David Saunders, «Mourning Glory? The Depiction of Fallen Warriors in Athenian Black-Figure Vase-Painting» (p. 161). 10. Carsten Hjort Langen, «Civil War in the Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Conquering the World and Fighting a War at Home» (p. 85-204). 11 Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, «The Fruits of Victory: Generals, Plants, and Power in the Roman World» (p. 205). 12 Craig H. Caldwell, III, «Promoting Civil War: Rewards and Loyalty in the Danubian-Balkan Provinces, AD 285-354» (p. 225). 13 Conor Whately, «Indiscipline in the Sixth Century Historiography of Generals» (p. 241). Epilogue (259-260).

2008 Leonhard Burckhardt, *Militärsgeschichte der Antike*, München, Beck, 2008.

2008 Sara Elise Phang, *Roman Military Service. Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

2009 Jorit Wintjes, «Defending the Realm: Roman Naval Capabilities in Waters Beyond the Mediterranean», in Maochun Yu (Ed.), *New Interpretations in Naval History*, Selected Papers from the 15th McMullen Naval History Symposium Held at the U. S. Naval Academy, 20-22 September 2007, Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, Historical Monographs 2009. Id., «Sea Power without a Navy? Roman Naval Forces

- in the Principate», in Marcus O. Jones (ed.), *New Interpretations, cit.*, 17<sup>th</sup> Symposium (15-16 Sept 2011), pp. 13-24. «Continuity or change? Late Roman naval forces», in L. Bogle (ed.), *New Interpretations cit.*, 19<sup>th</sup> Symposium (2013), H2018, pp. 13-23.
- 2009 Michael Alexander Speidel, *Heer und Herrschaft im Römischen Reich der Hohen Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009.
- 2009 Yann Le Bohec / Catherine Wolff (éds), *L'Armée romaine et la religion sous le Haut-Empire romain. Actes du congrès de Lyon (26-28 octobre 2006)*, Y. Le Bohec et C. Wolff (éd.), Lyon/Paris, CEROR/De Boccard, 2009.
- 2009 Catherine Wolff, *Déserteurs et transfuges dans l'armée romaine à l'époque républicaine* (Storia politica, costituzionale e militare del mondo antico, fondata e diretta da Luigi Loreto 4), Napoli, Jovene, 2009.
- 2009 Noel Lenski, «Schiavi armati e formazione di eserciti privati nel mondo tardoantico », in Gianpaolo Urso, *Ordine e sovversione nel mondo greco e romano: atti del convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 25-27 settembre 2008*, Pisa, ETS, 2009, pp. 145-175.
- 2009 Boris Rankov, «The Trireme», in Jenny Bennett (Ed.), *Sailing the Past: Learning from Replica Ships*, Pen and Sword, 2009, pp. 33-52.
- 2010 Eric Hotz Stuff, *Roman Seas. Ancient Roman Naval Combat Rules, 264 BC – AD 400*, *Roman Seas: Barbarians vs Rome Ship Set*, Wargame Vault, 2010.
- 2010 Michael Paul PITASSI, *The Navies of Rome*, Boydell & Brewer, 2010 (*Le Flotte di Roma*, Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2011); ID., *Roman Warships*, Boydell Press, 2011 (*Le Navi da guerra di Roma*, LEG, 2013): ID., *The Roman Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 350 BC-AD 475*, Pen & Sword Books, 2012.
- 2010 James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolt Against Rome: A. D. 66-135. A Military Analysis*, Jefferson, NC / London, McFarland & Company, 2010.
- 2010 Enrico Silverio / Anna Maria Liberati, *Servizi segreti in Roma antica*, Studia Archaeologica n. 173, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2010.
- 2010 Catherine Wolff, *La Campagne de Julien en Perse, 363 apr. J.C.*, Clermont-Ferrand, Les Éditions Maison, 2010.
- 2010 James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, AD 66-135. A Military Analysis*, Jefferson, NC, McFarland, 2010 [«Jewish Combat Effectiveness in the Revolts Against Rome»].
- 2010 Birth of *Desperta Ferro Antigua y Medieval*, bimonthly printed journal founded by Alberto Pérez, Javier Gómez y Carlos de la Rocha, and published by Desperta Ferro Ediciones, Madrid.
- 2010 Garrett G. Fagan / Matthew Trundle (eds.), *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare. History of Warfare*, 59. Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010. Preliminary Material (p.i-xiii ). Eds., Introduction (p. 1). 1. Fernando Echeverria, Weapons, Technological Determinism, And Ancient Warfare (p. 21). 2. Robin Archer, Chariotry To Cavalry: Developments In The Early First Millennium (p. 57). 3. G. G. Fagan, “I Fell Upon Him Like A Furious Arrow”: Toward A Reconstruction Of The Assyrian Tactical System (p.

81). 4. Christopher Tuplin, *All The King's Horse: In Search Of Achaemenid Persian Cavalry* by (p. 101). 5. Peter Krenz, *A Cup By Douris And The Battle Of Marathon* (p. 183). 6. Hans van Wees, "Those Who Sail Are To Receive A Wage": *Naval Warfare And Finance In Archaic Eretria* (p. 205). 7. Matthew Trundle, *Coinage And The Transformation Of Greek Warfare* (p. 227). 8. Louis Rawlings, *The Carthaginian Navy: Questions And Assumptions* (pp. 253-268). 9. Nathan Rosenstein, *Phalanges In Rome?* (p. 289). 10. David Potter, *Caesar And The Helvetians* (p. 305). Bibliography (p. 331-358).

2010 David M. Pritchard (ed.), *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. 1. David M. Pritchard, 'The Symbiosis between Democracy and War: The Case of Ancient Athens' (p. 1). PART I: THE IMPACT OF DEMOCRACY ON WAR: 2. Josiah Ober, 'Thucydides on Athens' Democratic Advantage in the Archidamian War' (p. 65). 3. Ryan K. Balot, 'Democratizing Courage in Classical Athens' (p. 88). PART II: MILITARY INNOVATIONS OF THE DEMOCRACY: 4. Iain Spence, 'Cavalry, Democracy and Military Thinking in Classical Athens' (p. 111). 5. Matthew Trundle, 'Light Troops in Classical Athens' (p. 139). PART III: THE FIFTH-CENTURY DRAMA OF WAR: 6. Sophie Mills, 'Affirming Athenian Action: Euripides' Portrayal of Military Activity and the Limits of Tragic Instruction' (p. 163). 7. David Konstan, 'Ridiculing a Popular War: Old Comedy and Militarism in Classical Athens' (p. 184). PART IV: WAR IN FOURTH-CENTURY SPEECHES: 8. Alastair J.L. Blanshard, 'War in the Law-Court: Some Athenian Discussions' (p. 201). 9. Peter Hunt, 'Athenian Militarism and the Recourse to War' (p. 225). PART V: SOLDIERS IN PRIVATELY PURCHASED ART: 10. Robin Osborne, 'Democratic Ideology, the Events of War and the Iconography of Attic Funerary Sculpture' (p. 245). 11. Patricia Hannah, 'The Warrior *Loutrophoroi* of Fifth-Century Athens' (p. 266). 12. Margaret C. Miller, 'I am Eurymedon: Tensions and Ambiguities in Athenian War Imagery' (p. 304). PART VI: HONOURING THE WAR DEAD: 13. Polly Low, 'Commemoration of the War Dead in Classical Athens: Remembering Defeat and Victory' (p. 341). 14. Sumio Yoshitake, '*Areté* and the Achievements of the War Dead: The Logic of Praise in the Athenian Funeral Oration' (p. 359). 15. John Keane, 'Epilogue: Does Democracy Have a Violent Heart?' (p. 378). References (p. 409). Index (452).

2011 Dexter Hoyos (ed.), *A Companion To The Punic Wars*, Chichester, West Sussex, Wiley Blackwell, 2011. Ed., Introduction: The Punic Wars (1). PART I BACKGROUND AND SOURCES: 1 John Serrati, *The Rise of Rome to 264* (p. 9). 2 Barbara Scardigli, *Early Relations between Rome and Carthage* (p. 28). 3 Walter Ameling, *The Rise of Carthage to 264* (p. 39). 4 Paul Erdkamp, *Manpower and Food Supply in the First and Second Punic Wars* (p. 58). 5 Sam Koon, *Phalanx and Legion: the "Face" of Punic War Battle* (p. 77). 6 Craige B. Champion, *Polybius and the Punic Wars* (p. 95). 7 Bernard Mineo, *Principal Literary Sources for the Punic Wars (apart from Polybius)* (p. 111). PART II THE FIRST PUNIC WAR AND AFTERMATH: 8 Dexter Hoyos, *The Outbreak of war* (p. 131). 9 Boris Rankov, *A War of Phases: Strategies and Stalemates 264–241 (è. 149)*. 10 Bruno Bleckmann, *Roman Politics in the First Punic War* (p. 167). 11 Luigi Loreto, *Roman Politics and Expansion, 241–219* (p. 184). 12

- Dexter Hoyos, Carthage in Africa and Spain, 241–218 (p. 204). PART III THE SECOND PUNIC WAR: 13 Hans Beck, The Reasons for the War (p. 225). 14 Michael P. Fronda, Hannibal: Tactics, Strategy, and Geostrategy (p. 242). 15 Richard Miles, Hannibal and Propaganda (p. 260). 16 Klaus Zimmermann, Roman Strategy and Aims in the Second Punic War (p. 280). 17 Louis Rawlings, The War in Italy, 218–203 (p. 299). 18 Peter Edwell, War Abroad: Spain, Sicily, Macedon, Africa (p. 320). 19 Kathryn Lomas, Rome, Latins, and Italians in the Second Punic War (p. 339). 20 Pedro Barceló, Punic Politics, Economy, and Alliances, 218–201 (p. 357). 21 Toni Nāco del Hoyo, Roman Economy, Finance, and Politics in the Second Punic War (p. 376). PART IV THE LAST HALF-CENTURY OF CARTHAGE: 22 Claudia Kunze, Carthage and Numidia, 201–149 (p.395). 23 Nathan Rosenstein, Italy: Economy and Demography after Hannibal's War (p. 412). 24 Yann Le Bohec, The "Third Punic War": The Siege of Carthage (148–146 BC ) (p. 430). PART V CONCLUSIONS : 25 M'hamed-Hassine Fantar, Death and Transfiguration: Punic Culture after 146 (p. 449). 26 John Richardson, Spain, Africa, and Rome after Carthage (p. 467). 27 Giovanni Brizzi, Carthage and Hannibal in Roman and Greek Memory (p. 483). References (p. 499).
- 2011 Tommaso GNOLI, «La battaglia delle Egadi. A proposito di ritrovamenti recenti», *Rivista storica dell'Antichità*, 41 (2011), pp. 47-86.
- 2011 Mark Kindrachuk, This is a partial list of resources dealing with ancient Greek warfare, October 2011, online, academia.edu.
- 2011 Mark Kindrachuk, This is a partial list of resources for Roman warfare, October 2011, online, academia.edu.
- 2012 Jorit Wintjes, «“Keep the Women out of the Camp!”: Women and Military Institutions in the Classical World», in Barton Hacker / Margaret Vining (eds.), *A Companion to Women's Military History* (Series: History of Warfare, Vol. 74), Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2012, pp. 15-59.
- 2012 Catherine Wolff, *L'Armée romaine. Une armée modèle ?*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 2012.
- 2012 Catherine Wolff (éd.), *Le métier de soldat dans le monde romain*, actes du cinquième congrès de Lyon, 23-25 septembre 2010, Lyon/Paris, CEROR / De Boccard, 2012.
- 2012 Barry Strauss, *Masters of Command. Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership*, New York / London, Simon & Schuster, 2012 (*L'arte del comando: Alessandro, Annibale, Cesare*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2015).
- 2012 Gastone Breccia, *I figli di Marte. L'arte della guerra nell'antica Roma*, Milano, Mondadori, 2012.
- 2012 David M. Pritchard, *Sport, Democracy and War in Classical Athens*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- 2012 Natale Rampazzo, *Iustitia e bellum. Prospettive storiografiche sulla guerra nella Repubblica romana*, (Storia politica costituzionale e militare del mondo antico 5), Napoli, Jovene, 2012.
- 2012 Claudio Vacanti, *Guerra per la Sicilia e guerra della Sicilia. Il ruolo delle città*

- siciliane nel primo conflitto romano-punico*, (Storia politica costituzionale e militare del mondo antico, 6), Napoli, Jovene, 2012.
- 2012 Samuel Y. Winsted, *Justinian's Strategic Motivations for the Naval Assault on the Vandals*. USMC
- 2012 Samuel Y. Winsted, *Justinian's Strategic Motivations for the Conquest of the Vandals*, USMC.
- 2013 Luciano Canfora, *La guerra civile ateniese*, Milano, Rizzoli, BUR, 2013.
- 2013 Vincenzo Giuffrè, *Homines militares e status rei publicae. Torsioni di una costituzione*, (Storia politica costituzionale e militare del mondo antico, 7), Napoli, Jovene, 2013.
- 2013 Donald Kagan / Gregory F. Viggiano, *Men of Bronze. Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2013. 1. Donald Kagan / Gregory F. Viggiano, «The Hoplite Debate» (p. 1). 2. Gregory F. Viggiano / Hans van Wees, «The Arms, Armor, and Iconography of Early Greek Hoplite Warfare» (p. 57). 3. Paul Cartledge, «Hoplitai/Politai: Refighting Ancient Battles» (p. 74). 4. Anthony Snodgrass, «Setting the Frame Chronologically» (p. 85). 5. Kurt A. Raaflaub, «Early Greek Infantry Fighting in a Mediterranean Context» (p. 95). 6. Gregory F. Viggiano, «The Hoplite Revolution and the Rise of the Polis» (p. 112). 7. Peter Krentz, «Hoplite Hell: How Hoplites Fought» (p. 134). 8. Adam Schwartz, «Large Weapons, Small Greeks: The Practical Limitations of Hoplite Weapons and Equipment» (p. 157). 9. John R. Hale, «Not Patriots, Not Farmers, Not Amateurs: Greek Soldiers of Fortune and the Origins of Hoplite Warfare» (p. 176). 10. Lin Foxhall, «Can We See the "Hoplite Revolution" on the Ground? Archaeological Landscapes, Material Culture, and Social Status in Early Greece» (p. 194). 11. Hans van Wees, «Farmers and Hoplites: Models of Historical Development» (p. 222). 12. Victor Davis Hanson, «The Hoplite Narrative» (p. 256).
- 2013 Alexander Sarantis / Neil Christie (Eds.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*. Late Antique Archaeology. Leiden /Boston, Brill, 2013. Volume 8.1: BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAYS: A. Sarantis, 'Waging War in Late Antiquity' (1). Conor Whately, 'War in Late Antiquity Secondary Works, Literary Sources and Material Evidence' (101). A. Sarantis, 'Military Equipment and Weaponry. A Bibliographic Essay' (153). A. Sarantis, 'Tactics: A Bibliographic Essay' (177). Conor Whately, 'Organisation and Life in the Late Roman Military: A Bibliographic Essay' (209). Conor Whately, 'Strategy, Diplomacy and Frontiers: A Bibliographic Essay' (239). A. Sarantis with Neil Christie, 'Fortifications in the West: A Bibliographic Essay' (255). A. Sarantis, 'Fortifications in Africa: A Bibliography Essay' (297). A. Sarantis, 'Fortifications in the East: A Bibliographic Essay' (317). Volume 8.2: STRATEGY AND INTELLIGENCE: John Haldon, 'Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (ca. A.D. 660–1025)' (373). FORTIFICATIONS AND SIEGE WARFARE: James Crow, 'Fortifications and the Late Roman East: From Urban Walls to Long Walls' (397). Michael Whitby, 'Siege Warfare and Counter-Siege Tactics in Late Antiquity (ca. 250–640)' (433). WEAPONRY AND

EQUIPMENT: J. C. N. Coulston, 'Late Roman Military Equipment Culture' (463). Michel Kazanski, 'Barbarian Military Equipment and its Evolution in the Late Roman and great migration Periods (3rd–5th c. A.D.)' (493). John Conyard, 'Recreating the Late Roman Army' (523). LITERARY SOURCES AND TOPOGRAPHY. Ian Colvin, 'Reporting battles and Understanding campaigns in Procopius and Agathias: classicising historians' Use of Archived Documents as Sources' (571). Christopher Lillington-Martin, 'Procopius on the Struggle for Dara in 530 and Rome in 537–38: Reconciling Texts and Landscapes' (599). Susannah Belche, 'Ammianus Marcellinus and the Nisibene handover of A.D. 363' (631). THE WEST. Hugh Elton, Imperial campaigns between Diocletian and Honorius, A.D. 284–423: the Rhine Frontier and the Western Provinces (655). Michael Kulikowski, 'The Archaeology of War and the 5th c. "Invasions"' (683). Oriol Olesti, Jordi Guàrdia, Marta Maragall, Oriol Mercadal, Jordi Galbany and Jordi Nada, 'Controlling the Pyrenees: a macaque's burial from Late Antique Iulia Libica (Llívia, La Cerdanya, Spain)' (703). THE BALKANS: John Wilkes, 'The Archaeology of War: homeland Security in the South-West Balkans (3rd–6th c. A.D.)' (735). A. Sarantis, 'Military Encounters and Diplomatic Affairs in the North Balkans during the Reigns of Anastasius and Justinian' (759). Florin Curta, 'horsemen in Forts or Peasants in villages? Remarks on the Archaeology of Warfare in the 6th to 7th c. Balkans' (809). THE EAST: James Howard-Johnston, 'Military Infrastructure in the Roman Provinces North and South of the Armenian Taurus in Late Antiquity' (853). C. Whately, 'El-Lejjūn: Logistics and Localisation on Rome's Eastern Frontier in the 6th c. A.D.' (893). CIVIL WAR: Neil Christie, 'Wars within the Frontiers: Archaeologies of Rebellion, Revolt and civil War' (927). Maria Kouroumalis, 'The Justinianic Reconquest of Italy: Imperial campaigns and Local Responses' (969).

2013 Brian Campbell / Lawrence Tritle (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2013. PART I: INTRODUCTION: THE CLASSICAL WORLD AT WAR: 1. Louis Rawlings, War and Warfare in Ancient Greece (p.). 2. Randall S. Howarth, War and Warfare in Ancient Rome (p.). 3. Writers on War: P. C. Millett, Part I Greece: Winning Ways in Warfare (p.); Michael Lovano, Part II Rome: A Story of Conflict (p.). 4. Simon James, The Archaeology of War (p.). 5. J. Donald Hughes, Warfare and Environment in the Ancient World (p.). PART II: THE FACE OF BATTLE IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD: 6. John W. I. Lee, The Classical Greek Experience (p.). 7. Waldemar Heckel, The Three Thousand: Alexander's Infantry Guard (p.). 8. John Serrati, The Hellenistic World at War: Stagnation or Development? (p.). 9. Nikolas V. Sekunda, War and Society in Greece (p.). 10. Michael Sage, The Rise of Rome (p.). 11. Phyllis Culham, Imperial Rome at War (p.). 12. Colin Adams, War and Society in the Roman Empire (p.). PART III IMPACTS AND TECHNIQUES: WAR IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD: 13. Lawrence A. Tritle, Men at War (p.). 14. Christine F. Salazar, Treating the Sick and Wounded (p.). 15. Stefan G. Chrissanthos, Keeping Military Discipline (p.). 16. Matthew Trundle, The Business of War: Mercenaries (p.). 17. Donald Engels, Logistics: Sinews of War (p.). 18. Philip de Souza, War at Sea (p.). 19. Arms and Armor: Part I: Eero Jarva, Arming Greeks for Battle (p.). Part II: Duncan B. Campbell, Arming Romans for Battle (p.). 20. Angelos Chaniotis, Greeks

- Under Siege: Challenges, Experiences, and Emotions (p. ). 21. Rosemary Moore, Generalship: Leadership and Command (p. ). 22. Frank Russell, Finding the Enemy: Military Intelligence (p. ). 23. Ann Hyland, War and the Horse: Part I Horses for War: Breeding and Keeping a Warhorse (p. ). Part II The Development and Training of Cavalry in Greece and Rome (p. ). 4. Daniel P. Tompkins, Greek Rituals of War (p. ). 25. John Rich, Roman Rituals of War (p. ). 26. Fighting the Other: Part I: Bruce Laforse, Greeks and Achaemenid Persians (p. ). Part II Peter S. Wells, The Germanic and Danubian Transfrontier Peoples (p. ). Part III Scott McDonough, Military and Society in Sasanian Iran (p. ). PART IV: CASE STUDIES: THE CLASSICAL WORLD AT WAR: 27. Lee L. Brice, The Athenian Expedition to Sicily (p. ). 28. Michael Seaman, The Peloponnesian War and Its Sieges (p. ). 29. John Buckler, Epaminondas at Leuctra, 371 B.C. (p. ). 30. Thomas R. Martin, Demetrius “the Besieger” and Hellenistic Warfare (p. ). 31. Dexter Hoyos, The Second Punic War (p. ). 32. A. D. Lee, Roman Warfare with Sasanian Persia (p. ). Epilogue: Thomas Palaima / Lawrence A. Tritle, The Legacy of War in the Classical World (p. ).
- 2013 Birth of the *International Ancient Warfare Conference*, a workshop organised by Geoff Lee and the University of Wales (Trinity Saint David) and jointly supported by Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities. Later organised by Dr. Lennart Gilhaus, Department of Ancient History, University of Bonn.
- 2013 Birth of *Res Militaris. Studia nad historią wojen i wojskowości w starożytności* (Studies on the history of wars and the military in antiquity) later *Studia nad wojskowością antyczną* (studies on ancient military history) ed. by Damian Waszak, Michał Norbert Faszczka, Michał Kowalski. Published by Wydawnictwo Tetrakon, Kalisz–Warszawa.
- 2013 Birth of *Rivista di studi militari*, ed. by Giovanni Brizzi, Università di Bologna, Patron editore.
- 2014 Birth of *Revue internationale d’Histoire Militaire Ancienne (HiMA)*, ed. by Giusto Traina / Jean-Christophe Couvenhes. Ed. Klincksieck, Paris. Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté. *Dossiers*: Représentations militaires dans le monde romain: textes et images (1, 2015). Tyrannis, basileia, imperium, les composantes militaires des légitimités politiques dans le monde gréco-romain (Ve siècle avant-IVe siècle après J.-C.) (4, 2016). Entrer dans l’armée romaine: bassins de recrutement des unités auxiliaires (Ier-IIe siècles après J.-C.) (6, 2017). Plutarque et la guerre (8, 2019). Les troupes d’élite et l’État dans l’Antiquité (9, 2020). Les Spartiates à la guerre, au-delà du mirage (10, 2021). Femmes, violences et guerres dans le monde gréco-romain (11, 2022). Symmachia, societas, foedus: les alliances militaires à l’épreuve de la guerre, de Philippe V à Paul Émile (11, 2022). Les animaux combattants (12, 2023). Les limites de la conquête et les transformations des frontières impériales romaines (14, 2025). [www.entrevues.org/revues/revue-internationale-dhistoire-militaire-ancienne-hima/](http://www.entrevues.org/revues/revue-internationale-dhistoire-militaire-ancienne-hima/)
- 2014 Yann Le Bohec, *La guerre romaine (58 av. J.-C.-235 ap. J.-C.)*, Paris, Tallandier, 2014. Id., *Histoire des guerres romaines (milieu du VIIIe siècle av. J.-C.-410 ap. J.-*

- C.), Paris, Tallandier, 2017.
- 2014 Michael Greenhalgh, *The Military and Colonial Destruction of the Roman Landscape of North Africa, 1830-1900*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2014.
- 2014 Lee L. Brice, *Warfare in the Roman Republic: From the Etruscan Wars to the Battle of Actium*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014.
- 2014 Marco Ladewig, *Rom. Die antike Seerepublik. Untersuchungen zur Thalassokratie der res publica populi romani von den Anfängen bis zur Begründung des Principat* (Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 48), Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2014.
- 2015 Yann Le Bohec (gen. ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*, Malden-Oxford, Wiley Blackwell, 2015, 3 vol., LXI-1153.
- 2015 Giovanni Brizzi, *70 d.C. La conquista di Gerusalemme*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2015.
- 2015 Fred K. Drogula, *Commanders & command in the Roman Republic and Early Empire*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- 2015 Geff Lee /Hélène Whittaker / G. Wrightson (eds.), *Ancient Warfare: Introducing Current Research*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. Volume I, 1 Hélène Whittaker, «Symbolic Aspects of Warfare in Minoan Crete» (p. 1). 2 Matthew Lloyd, «Death of A Swordman, Death of A Sword: The Killing of Swords in the Early Iron Age Aegean (ca 1050 to ca 690 BCE)» (p. 14). 3 Aimee Schofield, «Filling the Gaps: Catapults and Philon of Byzantium» (p. 32). 4 Nick Barley, «Aeneas Tacticus and Small Units in Greek Warfare» (p. 43). 5 Graham Wrightson, «To Use or not to Use: The Practical and Historical Reliability of Asclepiodotus's 'Philosophical' Tactical Manual» (p. 65). 6 Borja Antela-Bernárdez, «Furious Wrath: Alexander's Siege of Thebes and Perdikkas' False Retreat» (p. 94). 7 Konstantinos Lentakis, «Civil War and Counterinsurgency in Greece: Rival Systems of Hegemony during the Fourth Century BC» (p. 107). 8 Stephen O'Connor, «The Problem of the Four Hundred Wagons: The Provisioning of the Ten Thousand on the March to Cunaxa» (p. 124). 9 Anna Busetto, «War as training, war as spectacle: the *hippika gymnasia* from Xenophon to Arrian» (p. 147). 10 Alberto Pérez-Rubio, «Trouble Comes in Threes: From Chariot to Cavalry in the 'Celtic' World» (p. 172). 11 Jeffrey P. Emanuel, «The Late Bronze–Early Iron Age Transition: Changes in Warriors and Warfare and the Earliest Recorded Naval Battles» (p. 191). 12 Matteo Zaccarini, «Thucydides' Narrative on Naval Warfare: *Epibatai*, Military Theory, Ideology» (p. 210). 13 Elena Franchi / Giorgia Proietti, «Commemorating War Dead and Inventing Battle Heroes: Heroic Paradigms and Discursive Strategies in Ancient Athens and Phocis» (p. 229). 14 Susan Deacy / Fiona McHardy, «Ajax, Cassandra and Athena: Retaliatory Warfare and Gender Violence at the Sack of Troy» (p. 252). 15 Julie Laskaris, «Treating Hemorrhage in Greek and Roman Militaries» (p. 273). 16 Adam Anders, «Are You (Ro)man Enough? Non-Roman Virtus in the Roman Army» (p. 291). 17 Joanne Ball, «To the Victor the Spoils? Post-Battle Looting in the Roman World» (p. 309). 18 Hannah Cornwell, «The Role of the Peace-Makers (*Caduceatores*) in Roman Attitudes to War and Peace» (p. 331).

- 2016 Amm. Cristiano Bettini, *Oltre il fiume Oceano. Uomini e navi alla conquista della Britannia*, Roma, Laurus Robuffo, 2016.
- 2016 Phyllis Culham, «The Strategic Threat of Piracy to the Roman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea, 69-71 CE», in Marcus O. Jones (ed.), *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the 17<sup>th</sup> McMullen Naval History Symposium Held at the U. S. Naval Academy 15–16 September 2011*, Annapolis, 2016, pp. 1-12.
- 2016 Gastone Breccia, *Lo scudo di Cristo. Le guerre dell'Impero romano d'Oriente*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2016.
- 2016 Sara Elise Phang / Iain Spencer / Douglas Kelly / Peter Londey (eds.), *Conflict in Ancient Greece and Rome: The Definitive Political, Social, and Military Encyclopedia*, Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2016, 3 vols.
- 2016 Catherine Wolff / Patrice Faure (éds.), *Les auxiliaires de l'armée romaine. Des alliés aux fédérés*, Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> congrès de Lyon (23-25 octobre 2014), Paris, Éditions de Boccard, 2016. INTRODUCTION ET MISE EN PERSPECTIVE Patrice Faure, une introduction (p. 11). Yann Le Bohec, Sur les auxiliaires de l'armée romaine : des alliés aux fédérés (p. 23). 1. LES ALLIÉS DE ROME, DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE À AUGUSTE: Giovanni Brizzi, «*Socii et auxilia*» (p. 37). François Cadiou, «Cavalerie auxiliaire et cavalerie légionnaire dans l'armée romaine au I<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.-C.» (p. 53). Michael Alexander Speidel, «Actium, Allies, and the Augustan Auxilia: reconsidering the transformation of military structures and foreign relations in the reign of Augustus» (p. 79). Patrick Sängler, «'In conclusion, Rome did not disarm Egypt': Some Critical Notes on Livia Capponi's Depiction of Roman Military Policy in late Ptolemaic and Augustan Egypt» (p. 97). 2. LES *AUXILIA* DU PRINCIPATE: Werner Eck, «Die Entwicklung der Auxiliareinheiten als Teil des römischen Heeres in der frühen und hohen Kaiserzeit: eine Teilsynthese» (p. 111). Patrick Leroux, «Les empereurs romains et la guerre» (p. 127). Dan Dana, «Recrutement, prosopographie et onomastique au miroir de trois unités auxiliaires» (p. 155). Everett L. Wheeler, «Parthian *Auxilia* in the Roman Army Part I: From the Late Republic to c. 70 A.D.» (p. 171). Christian Schmidt Heidenreich, «Les unités palmyréniennes de l'armée romaine: une approche historique » (p. 223). Agnès Gros Lambert, «Les unités de Numides dans l'armée romaine sous le Haut-Empire» (p. 237). Benoit Rossignol, «Nouvelles unités auxiliaires et troupes de renforts dans les guerres du règne de Marc Aurèle » (p. 251). François Bérard, «À propos de la garnison des provinces sans légions (p. 291). Pierre Cosme, Les archives de la cavalerie auxiliaire» (p. 309). Maria Federica Petracchia, «Gli ausiliari nelle guerre Daciche e loro rappresentazione sulla colonna Traiana (p. 317). Giulia Baratta, «*Imaginarii uel imaginiferi*: note sul ruolo e le funzioni dei portatori di imagines» (p. 329). Mihai Popescu, «Des dieux et des troupes : autour des dédicaces collectives des auxiliaires danubiens» (p. 343). Juan José Palao Vicente, «En torno a algunas tropas auxiliares en Hispania durante el Alto Imperio. Tropas regulares vs. tropas irregulares» (p. 357). Jean-Pierre Laporte, «Notes sur l'armée romaine de Maurétanie césarienne de 40 à 455» (p. 379). Nacéra Benseddik / Jean-Pierre Laporte, «Découverte d'une nouvelle inscription à El Bayedh (ex Géryville) (p. 409). Cecilia Ricci, «Cohortes et alae ad

- Aquileia. Tra epigrafia e storia (I-III secolo d.C.) » (p. 421). Marc Mayer i Olivé, «La presencia de militares en Narona, Vid, Metković, Croacia, y las cohortes auxiliares de la zona» (p. 431). 3. LES MUTATIONS DU III<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLE ET DE L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE: Jean-Michel Carrié, «Les formations 'auxiliaires' de l'armée romaine tardive: permanence et innovation» (p. 447). Maxime Petitjean, «Pour une réévaluation de l'essor de la cavalerie au III<sup>e</sup> siècle» (p. 491). Guillaume Sartor, «Les fédérés (foederati) dans les guerres impériales (III<sup>e</sup> e -VI<sup>e</sup> e siècles) » (p. 527). Péter Kovács, «Notes on the Pannonian foederati» (p. 575). Conclusions (p. 603). Résumés (p. 605). Bibliographie (p. 627). Index (p. 727).
- 2016 Philippe Abrahams / Catherine Wolff (éds.), *Kakkēka rukusma* («Ceins tes armes!») 2e Rencontre d'Histoire militaire du Proche-Orient ancien (Lyon, 17-18 octobre 2013), dans *HiMA*, 3, 2016. Ph. Abrahams / C. Wolff, Introduction (p. 5). Marco Bonechi, «Strife in Early Bronze Syria. Lexical, prosopographical, and historical notes on the Ebla texts» (p. 17). Bertrand Lafont, Données nouvelles sur l'organisation militaire des rois d'Ur d'après les archives de Garšana et d'Irisagrig (p. 55). Philippe Abrahams, Aspects de la guerre dans le corpus divinatoire de Mésopotamie (p. 69). Pierre Villard, Quelques aspects du renseignement militaire dans l'empire néo-assyrien (p. 87). Philippe Clancier, Le Sūhu dans la guerre à l'époque néo-assyrienne (p. 99). Rocío Da Riva, L'empire en guerre. Considérations sur l'aspect militaire de la dynastie néo-babylonienne: le site du Nahr el-Kalb au Liban (p. 115). Jordi Vidal, Military conscription in Ugarit (p. 123). Bruno Gombert, Recrutement et mobilisation en Babylonie du VI<sup>e</sup> e au IV<sup>e</sup> e siècle av. J.-C (p. 135). Guillaume Gernez, Histoire des lances tripartites à soie au Proche-Orient (IV<sup>e</sup> e -II<sup>e</sup> e millénaire av. J.-C. (p. 151). Fabrice De Backer, Les boucliers néo-assyriens à protomé de lion.(p. 181). Jaume Llop, The weaponry of the middle Assyrian army according to the written sources (p. 199). Laura Battini, Les portes urbaines mésopotamiennes : dynamique militaire et utilitaire (p. 223). Christine Proust, Les bâtisseurs de remparts avaient-ils besoin de mathématiques? Quelques témoignages puisés dans des tablettes mathématiques paléo-babyloniennes provenant de Babylonie du nord (p. 249). Alice Mouton, Rituels hittites à exécuter avant ou après le combat (p. 277). Catherine Wolff, De quelques particularités concernant l'armée romaine (p 289).
- 2016 Jeremy Armstrong (ed.), *Circum Mare: Themes in Ancient Warfare* [Mnemosyne, Supplements, History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity, Vol. 388], Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2016. Ed., «War and Society in the Ancient World: An Introduction» (p. 1). Anthony Spalinger, «Simple Words, Simple Pictures: The Link between the Snapshots of Battle and the War Diary Entries in Ancient Egypt» (p. 13). David Nolan, «Caesar's *Exempla* and the Role of Centurions in Battle» (p. 34). Matthew Trundle, «Coinage and the Economics of the Athenian Empire» (p. 65). Nathan Rosenstein, «*Tributum* in the Middle Republic» (p. 80). Jeremy Armstrong, «The Ties that Bind: Military Cohesion in Archaic Rome (p. 101). Mark Hebblewhite, «*Sacramentum Militiae*: Empty Words in an Age of Chaos» (p. 120). Ralph Covino, «Circumscribing Imperium: Power and Regulation in the Republican Province» (p. 145). James Kierstead, The Delian and Second Athenian Leagues: The Perspective of Collective

- Action» (p. 164). Jeroen W.P. Wijnendaele, «‘Warlordism’ and the Disintegration of the Western Roman Army» (p. 185). Louis Rawlings, «The Significance of Insignificant Engagements: Irregular Warfare during the Punic Wars» (p. 204). Brett H. Heagren, «‘Siege Warfare’ in Ancient Egypt, as Derived from Select Royal and Private Battle Scenes» (p. 237). John W.I. Lee, «Tissaphernes and the Achaemenid Defense of Western Anatolia, 412–395 BC» (p. 262). Ed., «Bibliography» (pp. 283–316).
- 2017 Fritz Mitthof / Günther Schörner (Hg), *Columna Traiani – Traianssäule Siegesmonument und Kriegsbericht in Bildern* Beiträge der Tagung in Wien anlässlich des 1900. Jahrestages der Einweihung, 9.–12. Mai 2013, Tyche Sonderband 9, Vienna, Holzhausen, 2017.
- 2017 Gastone Breccia, *Scipione l’Africano*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2017.
- 2017 Marc G. DeSantis, *Naval History of the Peloponnesian War*, Ships, Men & Money in the War at Sea, 431-404, Barnsley, BC Pen & Sword Maritime, 2017.
- 2018 Roel Konijnendijk, *Classical Greek Tactics. A Cultural History*, Mnemosyne Supplement 404, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2018 [Introduction (p. 1). CHAPTER 1: THE PRUSSIAN MODEL OF HOPLITE BATTLE (p.6): The Traditional View of Tactics: The Prussians 7; The English 12; The Americans 17. The Case of Leuktra 24: The Theories 25; The Basis 29; The Problem 34. CHAPTER 2: “IMPROVISERS IN SOLDIERING”: TRAINING FOR WAR (p. 39). The Question 39; Good Order 42; Skill at Arms 58. CHAPTER 3 “The Finest Platted Piece of Land”: Where to Fight (p. 72). Traditions 72; Practices 79; Theory 91. CHAPTER 4 “DEPLOYED TO FIT THE NEED”: FORMING UP FOR BATTLE (p. 95). Worthless Hopliters 95; Ways to Deploy 107; Positions of Honour 116; The Depth of the Line, 126. CHAPTER 5 “UTTERLY OUTMATCHED IN SKILL”: BATTLE TACTICS (p. 139). Controlling Battle 139; The Tools of the Tactician 153; How to Win 162; Theory 173. CHAPTER 6: “NO SHORTAGE OF PEOPLE TO KILL”: THE ROUT AND ITS AFTERMATH (p. 178). Fight or Flight 178; A Divine Gift 188; Last Rites 206. CONCLUSION (p. 216). The Context of Tactical Thought 2016; A New Model of Hoplite Battle 218; The Greek Way of War 224. Works Cited 229. Index of Passages Cited 243] (Review by Everett L. Wheeler, *AHBOR*, 9, 2019, pp. 35-45). Roel Konijnendijk, «Playing Dice for the Polis: Pitched Battle in Greek Military Thought», *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 151, 1, (2021), pp. 1-33.
- 2018 Toni Naco del Hoyo / Fernando Lopez Sanchez (eds.), *War, Warlords and Interstate Relations in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Vol. 28. Impact of Empire, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2018. Eds., Introduction: ‘Multipolarity’ and ‘Warlords’ prior to the Roman Empire (p. 1). PART 1: ACHAEMENID PERSIA, FOURTH CENTURY GREECE, AND CARTHAGE: Christopher Tuplin, Mercenaries and Warlords in the Achaemenid Empire (p. 17). Polly Low, State and Warlord in Classical Greece: From Bipolarity to Multipolarity (p. 36). Daniel Gómez-Castro, A Spartan Warlord: Lysander and the Creation of a New Greek Empire (p. 54), Nicholas V. Sekunda, The lochagoi of Iphicrates: Forming a Mercenary Army in the Fourth Century BC (p. 64). José Pascual González, Commanders and Warlords in Fourth Century BC Central Greece (p. 89). Manuel Álvarez Martí-Aguilar, The Network of Melqart: Tyre, Gadir, Carthage and the Founding God (p. 113). Louis

- Rawlings, Warlords, Carthage and the Limits of Hegemony (p. 151). PART 2 THE HELLENISTIC WORLD AND ROME: Fernando López Sánchez, Galatians in Macedonia (280–277 BC): Invasion or Invitation? (p. 183). Altay Coşkun, Prolegomena to the Study of ‘Warlordism in Later Hellenistic Anatolia’ (p. 204). Arthur M. Eckstein, Rome, Empire, and the Hellenistic State-system (p. 231). Craige B. Champion, Conquest, Liberation, Protectionism, or Enslavement? Mid-Republican Rome from a Greek Perspective (p. 254). John W. Rich, Warlords and the Roman Republic (p. 266). Nathan Rosenstein Republican Rome? (p. 295). Michael P. Fronda / François Gauthier, Italy and Sicily in the Second Punic War: Multipolarity, Minor Powers, and Local Military Entrepreneurialism (p. 308). Eduardo Sánchez Moreno, Imperialism and Multipolarity in the Far West: Beyond the Lusitanians (237–146 BC) (p. 326). my, the Officers and the poleis of Greece: A Reassessment of Warlordism in the First Phase of the Mithridatic Wars (p. 351). Toni Ñaco del Hoyo / Jordi Principal, Q. Sertorius: A Warlord in Hispania? (p. 380). Boris Rankov, Warlordism and the Making of the Roman Imperial Army (p. 415). PART 3 A NECESSARY EPILOGUE: Jeroen W.P. Wijnendaele, Generalissimos and Warlords in the Late Roman West (p. 429). Rafael Grasa, Contemporary Warlordism, Armed Conflicts and the International System: An International Relations Perspective (p. 452-478).
- 2018 Christopher B. Zeichmann, *The Roman Army and the New Testament*, Lanham Maryland, Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2018.
- 2018 Giorgio Ravegnani, *Ezio*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2018.
- 2018 François Cadiou, *L’Armée imaginaire. Les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la République*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2018.
- 2019 Matthew Sears, *Understanding Greek Warfare*, Abingdon / New York, Routledge, 2019.
- 2019 Matthew Sears / C. Jacob Butera, *Battles and Battlefields of Ancient Greece: A Guide to their History, Topography and Archaeology*, Pen & Sword, 2019.
- 2019 Alfred S. Bradford, *The Blood-Drenched Sea: Ships at War in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Santa Barbara, Cal., ABC-CLIO, LLC 2019.
- 2019 David M. Pritchard, *Athenian Democracy at War*, Cambridge / New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- 2019 Oliver Stoll, *Vestigia Cladis – Roms Umgang mit militärischem Misserfolg: Niederlagen verdrängen, Siege betonen, Resilienz beweisen*, Frank & Timme GmbH, 2019.
- 2019 Lucia Cecchet, Cristopher Degelmann, M. Patzelt (eds.), *Ancient War’s Impact on the Home Front*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019. Eds., «Introduction» (p. 1). PREPARING WAR AT THE HOME FRONT: 1 Anna Busetto, «The Psychological Preparation for War: the Effects of the ‘Rhetoric of Visibility’ on Military Training» (p. 23). 2 Stephanie Kirsch «Declamation of War: The vir fortis and the Quest for Old Values and New Answers in Roman Imperial Declamation» (p. 45). RITUALS FOR THE HOME FRONT: 3 Giorgia Proietti, «Athens as a ‘Landscape’ of

Trauma: Phrynichus' Sack of Miletus and the Aftermath of the Persian Wars» (p. 79). 4 Simon Lentzsch, «*A Small Part of You be brought Home in an Urn for Her to mourn: Commemorating the War Dead in the Roman Republic*» (p. 99). 5 Maik Patzelt, «Coping Prayers on the Home Front: The Case of Collective Supplications at Rome» (p. 125). 6 Christian Schönburg, «He Has Saved Us Without Wall» (p. ). SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS AT THE HOME FRONT: CULTURAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS: 7 Jorit Wintjes, «'You can Tell a Woman a Long Way Off by The Way She Throws': Women and War in Ancient Greece» (p. 173). 8 Lucia Cecchet, «The Dark Site of the War: War Wounded and Dissenters in the Athenian Theatre of the Late 5th century » (p. 193). 9 Michael Kleu, «The Democratic Impact of War on the Home Front during the Reign of Philip V of Macedon» (p. 217). 10, Christopher Degelmann, «Reading Male Bodies: The Fate of a Veteran in Livy 2, 23» (p. 237). 11 Emanuele Pulvirenti, «Athens, the Ionians and the 'Netting' of the Islands » (p. 261).

2019 Éric Denécé / Patrice Brun (dir.), *Renseignement et espionnage pendant l'Antiquité et le Moyen-Âge*, Paris, Ellipses, 2019. Première Partie: Antiquité: Pascal Butterlin, Hommes de langue, hommes du secret: la question du renseignement en Mésopotamie et ses chausse-trappes (p. 57). Juan Carlos Moreno García, Le renseignement en Égypte pharaonique (3100-525 avant J.-C.) (p. 81) Julie Descarpentrie, Le renseignement dans l'Inde ancienne, des Vedas à l'Arthashastra de Kautilya (p. 97). François-Yves Damon, Guerres de l'ombre dans la Chine ancienne (p. 113). Alexis Lycas, Renseignement et espionnage en Chine ancienne (p. 137). Philippe-Joseph Salazar, Renseignement «théorique» et «skopique»: aux sources philologiques grecques et latines (p. 153). Stéphanie Maillot et Julien Zurbach, Le renseignement dans les cités-États grecques (p. 165). Michel Debidour, La transmission des messages dans le monde gréco-romain (p. 179). Id., Le secret de l'information et la cryptographie dans le monde gréco-romain (p. 195). Yann Rivière, Renseignement tactique et opérationnel de l'armée romaine, sur terre et sur mer: perspectives autour de l'époque césarienne (p. 209). Yann Le Bohec, Le renseignement et l'armée romaine de 58 avant J.-C. à 235 après J.-C. (p. 223). Eric Denécé, Stratagèmes et opérations spéciales au cours de l'Antiquité (p. 233).

2019 Marco Bettalli / Giovanni Brizzi (cur.), *Guerre ed eserciti nell'antichità*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2019. M. Bettalli, «L'oplita nella storia greca». Elena Franchi, «Il militarismo di Sparta, tra immaginario e realtà». Manuela Mauri, «Da Ceronea a Cinoscefale (338-182 a. C.); l'età della falange macedone». Gianluca Cuniberti, «La guerra navale dei Greci». G. Brizzi, «Romana minima». Id., «L'età arcaica e la conquista romana». Luca Nanni, «Le guerre in Italia da Annibale a Spartaco». Immacolata Eramo, «L'età delle guerre civili. Dalla tarda repubblica ai Severi». Beatrice Girotti, «Il III sec. d. C.: Gli imperatori dell'anarchia militare e le guerre in Italia». Giusto Traina, «Italiani e no: identità e integrazione nell'esercito romano».

2019 *New Directions in the Study of Ancient Geography*, by Paul T. Keyser, Duane W. Roller, Georgia L. Irby, Molly Ayn Jones-Lewis, ed. Duane W. Roller, Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians No. 12, University Park, PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, [2019].

- 2019 James J. Bloom, *Rome Rules the Waves: A Naval Staff Appreciation of Ancient Rome's Maritime Strategy 300 BCE-500 CE*, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Pen & Sword Military, 2019. [Bloom, «The Role of Sea Power in Antiquity: A Rejoinder to Chester Starr», 2005. Online].
- 2019 David Yates, *States of memory: the polis, panhellenism, and the Persian War*, Oxford / New York, Oxford University Press, 2019.
- 2020 Jorit Wintjes, *Die Römische Armee auf dem Oceanus - Zur römischen Seekriegsgeschichte in Nordwesteuropa*, Mnemosyne, Supplements, Vol. 433, Leiden / Boston, 2020.
- 2020, Jorit Wintjes, «'On the side of a righteous vengeance'—Counterinsurgency operations in Roman Britain», *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 31, No. 5, 2020, pp. 1108–1129.
- 2020 Gabriele Brusa, *Le coorti nell'esercito romano di età repubblicana*, Pisa, ETS, 2020.
- 2020 Giovanni Brizzi, *Andare per le vie militari romane*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2020.
- 2020 Pau Valdés Matias, «Cum cura exploratis (Liv. XXII, 12,2): Inteligencia Militar en Roma durante el siglo III A.C.», *Studia Historica, Historia antigua*, 38, 2020, pp. 49-77.
- 2020 Paul A. Rahe, *Sparta's Second Attic War. The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta, 446-418 B. C.*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2020.
- 2020 Yann Le Bohec, *Le vie quotidienne des soldats romains à l'apogée de l'Empire. 31 avant J.-C.-235 après J.-C.*, L'art de la guerre, Paris, Tallandier, 2020.
- 2020 Yann Le Bohec, *La première marine de guerre romaine. Des origines à 241 av. J.-C.*, Chamalières, Lemme Edit, 2020.
- 2020 birth of *Nuova Antologia Militare (NAM)*, international journal in open access of the Italian Society of Military History (SISM), ed. by Virgilio Ilari / Giovanni Brizzi [issues on Ancient & Byzantine Military History ed. by Marco Bettalli / Elena Franchi / Gioacchino Strano]. Tab edizioni Roma [www.nam-sism.org](http://www.nam-sism.org).
- 2020 Elena Franchi, «Memory studies e antropologia del conflitto. Prospettive interdisciplinari sulla guerra nel mondo antico», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, N. 2, 2020, pp. 245-295.
- 2020 Michael J. Taylor, *Soldiers and Silver: Mobilizing Resources in the Age of Roman Conquest* (Ashley and Peter Larkin Series in Greek and Roman Culture), Austin, University of Texas Press, 2020.
- 2020 Jeremy Armstrong / Michael P. Fonda (eds.), *Romans at War. Soldiers, Citizens, and Society in the Roman Republic*, London / New York, Routledge, 2020. 1 Jeremy Armstrong / Michael P. Fonda, «Writing about Romans at war» (p. 1). 2 Fred K. Drogula, «The institutionalization of warfare in early Rome» (p. 17). 3 Peter van der Puy, «The price of expansion: agriculture, debt-dependency, and warfare during the rise of the Republic, c. 450–287» (p. 35). 4 James Tan, «The dilectus-tributum system and the settlement of fourth century Italy» (p. 52). 5 Jeremy Armstrong, «Organized chaos: manipuli, socii, and the Roman army c. 300» (p. 76). 6 Marian Helm, «Poor

man's war – rich man's fight: military integration in Republican Rome» (p. 99). 7 John Serrati, «“Take the sword away from that girl!” Combat, gender, and vengeance in the middle Republic» (p. 116). 8 Kathryn H. Milne, «The middle Republican soldier and systems of social distinction» (p. 134). 9 Cary Barber, «Uncovering a “Lost Generation” in the senate: demography and the Hannibalic War (p. 154). 10 Michael P. Fronda, «Titus Quinctius Flaminius’ “Italian triumph”» (p. 171). 11 Saskiat Roselaar, «Ager publicus: land as a spoil of war in the Roman Republic» (p. 191). 12 Jeremiah McCall, «The manipular army system and command decisions in the second century» (p. 210). 13 Jessica H. Clack, «Anecdotal history and the Social War» (p. 232). 14 Lee L. Brice, «SPQR SNAFU: indiscipline and internal conflict in the late Republic» (p. 247). 15 Jack Wells, «From slave to citizen: the lessons of Servius Tullius» (p. 267). 16 François Gauthier, «The transformation of the Roman army in the last decades of the Republic» (p. 283). 17 Nathan Rosenstein, «Epilogue» (p. 297).

2020 Lee L. Brice (éd.), *New Approaches to Greek and Roman Warfare*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2020. 1 Lee L. Brice, «Ancient Warfare and Moving Beyond “New Military History”» (1). PART I GREECE : 2 Matthew Trundle, «Wealth and the Logistics of Greek Warfare: Food, Pay, and Plunder» (17). 3 Michael G. Seaman, «Early Greek Siege Warfare» (29). 4 John W.I. Lee, «Daily Life in Classical Greek Armies, c. 500–330 BCE» (39). 5 Lawrence A. Tritle, «Soldiers’ Home: Life After Battle» (53). 6 Glenn R. Bugh, «Greek Cavalry in the Hellenistic World: Review and Reappraisal» (65). 7 Maria A. Liston, «Skeletal Evidence for the Impact of Battle on Soldiers and Non-Combatants» (81). PART II ROME: 8 Nathan Rosenstein, «Financing Imperialism in the Middle Roman Republic» (99). 9 Lee L. Brice, «Indiscipline in the Roman Army of the Late Republic and Principate» (113). 10 Susan M. Heidenreich / Jonathan P. Roth, «The Neurophysiology of Panic on the Ancient Battlefield» (127). 11 Josh Levithan, «Roman Siege Warfare: Moral and Morale» (139). 12 Elizabeth M. Greene, «Roman Military Communities and the Families of Auxiliary Soldiers» (149). 13 Alexander Meyer, «Approaching “Ethnic” Communities in the Roman Auxilia» (161). 14 Philip Rance, «Health, Wounds, and Medicine in the Late Roman Army (250–600 CE)» (173).

2021 Catherine Wolff, Patrice Faure (éds.), *Corps du chef et gardes du corps dans l'armée romaine*. Actes du septième Congrès de Lyon (25-27 octobre 2018), Lyon, 2020 (CEROR 53). Patrice Faure, une introduction (p. 9). 1. CORPS ET GARDES, DES ORIGINES AUX IMPERATOIRES: Armando Cherici, «Guardie del corpo nella Roma delle origini: *latrones, celeres, clientes, satellites*» (p. 25). Mathieu Engerbeaud, «Le corps du chef de guerre à l'époque républicaine» (p. 37). François Cadiou, «Les cohortes prétoriennes et les gardes montées républicaines» (p. 51). 2. CORPS DE L'EMPEREUR ET CORPS DU GARDE: Wolfgang Havener, «Dux et legatus et miles - The Discourse on the Emperor's ‘Military Body’» (p. 75). Benoît Lefebvre, «Le corps du garde» (p. 97). 3. AU SOMMET: EMPEREURS ET PRÉFETS: Patrick Le Roux, «L'empereur et sa garde» (p. 117). Benoît Rossignol, «Le commandement de la garde impériale : autour des préfets du prétoire et de leurs compétences militaires» (p. 135). 4. LES COHORTES

- PRÉTORIENNES: Davide Redaelli, «I pretoriani: funzioni, ruolo politico, reclutamento» (p. 161). Giorgio Crimi, «Le coorti pretorie 80 anni dopo Durry e Passerini: nuove interpretazioni e problemi aperti» (p. 177). Christophe Schmidt Heidenreich, «La vie religieuse dans les castra praetoria» (p. 189). 5. AUTOUR DE LA GARDE: Yann Le Bohec, «Les speculatores de la ‘garnison de Rome’ sous le Principat» (p. 213). Id., «Les statores de la ‘garnison de Rome’ sous le Principat» (p. 225). 6. LES CAVALIERS DE L’EMPEREUR: Kees Geluk & Gian Luca Gregori, «The Germani corporis custodes: a “unit in motion”?» (p. 235). Catherine Wolff, «Les equites singulares Augusti» (p. 261). 7. DANS LES PROVINCES: Rudolf Haensch, «Les singulares du gouverneur» (p. 279). François Bérard, «Les gardes du corps des officiers de l’armée romaine» (p. 289). Agnès Gros Lambert, «Les singulares à Lambèse» (p. 307). 8. DOSSIERS DOCUMENTAIRES ET DÉCOUVERTES RÉCENTES: Dan Dana, «Les corps de garde dans les diplômes militaires» (p. 319). Franziska Beutler, «Zwei Prätorianer, ein *heres fiduciarius* und Marc Aurel. Eine neue Grabstele aus Carnuntum» (p. 369). Simona Morretta / Rossella Rea, «Roma. Una nuova caserma alle pendici del Celio» (p. 387). 9. SUR LA ROUTE: Pierre Cosme, «Escorter les puissants» (p. 411). Michael A. Speidel, «Protectors and Assassins. Caracalla’s guards on the day he died» (p. 421). Maxime Petitjean, «Les unités de garde du comitatus impérial (193-312)» (p. 433). 10. LES GARDES DE L’EMPIRE TARDIF: Jean-Michel Carrié, «Les recompositions de la garde à partir du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle» (p. 453). Maxime Émion, «Les *protectores Augusti*» (p. 473). Sylvain Janniard, «Les scholes palatines» (p. 497). Guillaume Sartor, «Les fédérés (*foederati*) comme gardes du corps du chef (empereur, officiers, chefs fédérés) du III<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle» (p. 521), Patrick Le Roux, «Observations finales» (p. 627). Bibliographie (p. 635), Résumés (p. 717). Index (p. 745). Table des Matières (p. 813-15).
- 2021 Waldemar Heckel / F. S. Naiden / E. Edward Garvin, John Vanderspoel (eds.), *A Companion to Greek Warfare*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2021. Introduction (p. ). PART I HISTORICAL SURVEY: 1. Johannes Heinrichs, Bronze Age and Early Greek Wars (p. 11). 2. Sabine Müller, The Persian Wars to Alexander (p. 21). 3. Frances Pownall, Internal Wars from the “First Peloponnesian War” to Chaeronea (p. 31). 4. Edward M. Anson, Hellenistic Land Warfare (p. 42). 5. Melanie Jonasch, Greek Warfare in Sicily (p. 58). PART 2 MILITARY OPERATIONS: 6. Fernando Echeverría, The Nature of Hoplite Warfare (p. 75). 7. Carolyn Willekes, Cavalry Battle in Greece and the Hellenistic East (p. 88). 8. David Whitehead, Siege Warfare (p. 99). PART III MILITARY PERSONNEL: 9. F.S. Naiden, The Organization of Greek Armies (p. 119). 10. Joseph Roisman, Generalship (p. 137). 11. Mauricio G. Álvarez, Greek Camps and Camp Followers (p. 148). 12. Jeffrey Rop, Greeks in Foreign Service: The Case of the Achaemenid Empire (p. 160). PART IV WAR WITH NON-GREEKS: 13. Michael B. Charles, The Royal Elite of the Achaemenid Army (p. 173). 14. Marek Jan Olbrycht, Parthian Warfare Under the Early Arsacids (p. 185). 15. Christopher Epplert, Elephants in Hellenistic Warfare (p. 202). 16. Emil Nankov, Thracian Warfare (p. 214). PART V TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF GREEK WARFARE: 17. Stephen O’Connor, Logistics (p. 227). 18. Silke Müth, Fortifications (p. 241). 19. Frank Russell, Military Intelligence (p. 252). 20. Johannes Heinrichs, The Economics of War (p. 261). 21. Peter Hunt, War and Slavery

in the Greek World (p. 271). 22. Jeanne Reames / Ann Haverkost, Agriculture and Greek Warfare (p. 286). PART VI SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF GREEK WARFARE: 23. Lawrence Tritle, Battle Trauma in Ancient Greece (p. 301). 24. F.S. Naiden, Religion and Warfare (p. 312). 25. Elizabeth D. Carney, Women and War in the Greek World (p. 329). 26. Sheila L. Ager, Piracy, Brigandage, and Terrorism (p. 339). 27. Gordon Shrimpton, Civil War in Greece: Forgetting as the Path to Reconciliation (p. 358). PART VII WARFARE IN ART AND LITERATURE: 28. Olga Palagia, The Iconography of War (p. 369). 29. Lawrence A. Tritle, War Monuments and Memorials (p. 384). 30. J. Vela-Tejada, War in Greek Poetry (p. 394). 31. Sabine Müller, War and Propaganda (p. 406). Bibliography (p. 416). Index (p. 464).

2021 Edward Harris / Sylvian Fachard / Dylan K Rogers / Clemente Marconi (eds), *The Destruction of Cities in Ancient Greek World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. 1. Sylvian Fachard / Edward M. Harris, Introduction (p. 1). 2 Panagiotis Karkanis, Destruction, Abandonment, Reoccupastion: What Microstratigraphy and Micromorphology Tells Us (p. 34). 3. Hans Lohmann, Miletus after the disaster of 494 B.C.: Refondation or Recovery? (p. 50). 4. John McKesson Camp, The Persian Destruction of Athens: Sources and Archaeology (p. 70). 5. Clemente Marconi, The Carthaginian Conquest and Destruction of Selinus in 409 B.C.: Diodorus and Archaeology (p. 85). 6. Manthos Bessios, Athina Athanassiadou, and Konstantinos Noulas, Ancient Methone (354 B.C.): Destruction and Abandonment (p. 108). 7. Christos Gatzolis / Selene Psoma, The destruction of Cities in Northern Greece During the Classical and Hellenistic Periods. The Numismatic Evidence (p. 129). 8. Guy Ackermann Eretria's 'Destructions' during the Hellenistic Period and their Impact on the City's Development , (p. 163). 9. Alain Bresson, Rhodes Circa 227 B.C.: Destruction and Recovery (p. 189). 10. Björn Forsén, Destruction, Survival, and Colonisation: Effects of the Roman Arrival to Epirus (p. 228). 11. Charles K. Williams / Nancy Bookidis / Kathleen W. Slane, with Stephen Tracy, From the Destruction of Corinth to Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis (p. 258). 12 Dylan K. Rogers, Sulla and the Siege of Athens: Reconsidering Crisis, Survival, and Recovery in the First Century B.C. (p. 288). 13 Lamprini Chioti, The Herulian Invasion in Athens (A.D. 267): The Archaeological Evidence (p. 319). 14 John Bintliff, Epilogue: The Survival of Cities After Military Devastation: Comparing the Classical Greek and Roman Experience (p. 340). 15 Appendix: The Destruction and Survival of Cities: Sylvian Fachard, Athens; Id., Euboea; Id., Phokis; Cédric Pernet, Boeotia. Gavin Bladell, Peloponnese. Rebecca Sausville, Epirus. Hanna Smagh, Northern Greece and Thrace. Florencia Foxley, Aegean Islands. Steven Brandwood, Western Asia Minor . Index (p. 355).

2021 James Howard-Johnson, *The Last Great War of Antiquity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021.

2021 Witold Chrzanowski, «Flota Pyrrusa z Epiru podczas kampanii sycylijskiej w latach 278–276 p.n.e.», *Res Gestae*, 12, June 2021, pp. 73-90.

2021 Myke Cole, *The Bronze Lie: Shattering the Myth of Spartan Warrior Supremacy*, Oxford, Osprey Publishing / Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.

- 2021 Elizabeth H. Pearson, *Exploring the Mid-Republican Origins of Roman Military Administration. With Stylus and Spear*, London-New York, Routledge, 2021.
- 2022 Lisa Agnello, «Fake News in der Antike: Schon die Alten Griechen nutzten Falschinformationen», *National Geographic*, 11 Sept. 2022.
- 2022 Maurizio Colombo, *Auxilia e Legiones. La fanteria romana nel IV secolo*, Collana Fveina di Marte N. 5, Roma, Nadir Media, 2022.
- 2022 Catherine Wolff, *Rome: éduquer et combattre. Un florilège en forme d'hommages*, Édité par Bernadette Cabouret, Guido Castelnuovo, Éd. Universitaires d'Avignon, 2022.
- 2022 Eckhard Deschler-Erb / Peter Henrich / Stefanie Hoss (Hg.), *Waffen im rituellen Kontext*. Akten der 20. Internationalen Konferenz für Römische Militärausrüstung, Köln, 11.-15. Juni 2019 = *Weapons in ritual context: proceedings of the 20th Roman military equipment conference*, Cologne, June 11th-15th 2019. The Association for Roman Military Equipment Studies, Pewsey, Wiltshire, 2022.
- 2022 Pierre Cosme / Jean-Christophe Couvenhes / Sylvain Janniard / Giusto Traina, Michèle Virol (dir.), *Le récit de guerre comme source d'histoire, de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Besançon, Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2022. PART ONE: THE WAR NARRATIVE, SOURCE AND LITERARY GENRE: Michèle Virol, Le récit de guerre, source et genre (p 21-25). A. *Rewritings and Reconstructions of the Facts in the War Narrative*: Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, La violence imposée aux Galates vaincus: le récit des grandes et petites offrandes attalides dans le seconde moitié du IIIe siècle avant J-C (p. 29-56). Sergio Boffa, Raconter le combat singulier au Moyen Âge: une tâche impossible? (p. 57). Michel Biard, Une guerre qui ne tue pas, ou si peu... Les blessures et la mort dans le Recueil des actions héroïques et civiques des républicains français (1794) (p. 71). Mathieu Engerbeaud, Masquer la défaite ? L'interruption des combats par les éléments naturels dans les récits des guerres romaines archaïques (vie-début du IIIe siècle avant J-C) (p. 87). B. *The Freedoms of the Narrative and the Acts of War*: Pierre Cosme, Les silences des récits de guerre autour d'Actium (p. 103). Gilles Grivaud, L'œil du militaire, l'œil du civil : lectures strabiques de la guerre de Chypre (1570-1571) (p. 115). Marino Viganò, Guerra, violenza, "composizione" nelle fonti manoscritte su Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, maresciallo di Francia (Crema 1442-Chartres 1518) (p. 131). C. *The War Narrative as a Literary Genre*: Jean-Michel Carrié, Le récit de guerre dans l'Antiquité (1): pistes pour une analyse linguistico-sémiotique (p.155). Eric Durot, Le récit épistolaire du siège de Metz (1552) par le duc de Guise ou la valorisation de soi (p. 183). Fadi El Hage, De la construction de la source à la construction de soi: le récit de guerre dans les Mémoires et Souvenirs d'officiers français au xviiiè siècle (p. 195). Sylvie Crogiez-Pétrequin, Synthèse de la première partie : Dire la guerre, décrire la guerre? (p. 211). PART TWO: THE VIOLENCE OF SOLDIERS IN THE WAR NARRATIVE. Sylvain Janniard, Presentation (p. 221). A. *Battles, Combatants and War Violence*: Anne-Emmanuelle Veisse, Violence of the Rebels and Repressive Violence in Egypt at the Turn of the 3rd and 2nd Centuries BC (p. 227). Jean-Marc Largeaud, Violence and the Infernal Retreat the Armies of

the Loire 1870-1871 (p. 239). Maxime Petitjean, The Headhunter Horsemen of the Roman Army: a New Look at Imperial Era Documentation (p. 255). Guillaume Sartor, The Place of the Federates in the Line of War Violence (3rd Century-6th Century) (p. 273). *B. Standards and Violences of War*: Pascal Butterlin, Skulls and Piles of Bones, or the Forced State March in the Ancient Prehistoric Near East (p. 293). Natacha Lubtchansky, Claude Pouzadoux, The Imaging of War Violence: Cross-Readings of Etruscan and Italiote Representations (6th-3rd Centuries BC) (p. 315). Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, The Attitude of the Soldiers in Warfare as Reflected in the Byzantine Sources (9th-12th Centuries) (p. 337). Pascal Payen, Norms and War Violence in Greek Epic and Historiography (from Herodotus to Polybe) (p. 355). *C. The Violence of Combatants Through the Filter of Sources*: Marilia Lykaki, The Violence of Soldiers in Byzantium (9th-10th Centuries): the Testimonies of Theodosius the Monk and Theodosius the Deacon as War Stories (p. 373). Séverin Duc, "Go Straight to Where Mars Stands" The Dreamlike Epistle of Dauphin François about the Death in Action of Gaston de Foix in Ravenna (1512) (p. 387). Debra Kelly, Battlefields: Experiences and Representations (p. 399). Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, Synthesis of the Second Part: Soldiers' Violence, Between the Imaginary and the Real (p. 415). PART THREE: THE PLACE OF CIVILIANS IN WAR NARRATIVES: Pierre Cosme, Presentation (p. 421). *A. Categories of Civilians*: Jean-Claude Cheynet, The Place of Civilians in Byzantine War Stories (p. 427). Ghislaine Stouder, The Roman Old Men in War Accounts during the Republic. (p. 441). Clément Oury, The Role of the Ecclesiastics during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) (p. 457). *B. Forgotten Civilians*: Nadine Bernard, War Narratives of the Greeks: Is there a Place for the Elderly? (p. 475). Michèle Virol, Civilians, Largely Forgotten in the Siege Relations of the 17th Century Wars (p. 493). *C. Civilian Narrators*: Sylvain Janniard, The Account of His "Guerilla Warfare" by Synesios of Cyrene (ca 405-413) (p. 511). Françoise Michaud-Fréjaville, From Christine de Pizan to Anatole France, the Stories of Joan of Arc Meeting Failure in Front of Paris (1429) (p. 525). Pierre Allorant, Civilians in Epistolary Correspondence from a French Napoleonic Grande Armée Military Doctor with his Wife at Home in France (1802-1812) (p. 543). Ghislaine Stouder, Synthesis of the Third Part: The place of Civilians in War Stories (p. 555). Hervé Dréviron, General Conclusion (p. 559). Abstracts (p. 573). Index Place (p. 597). Index of Names of Characters, Authors, People, States (p. 601). Index of Concepts, Notions, Type of Sources (pp. 609-616).

2022 Richard Evans / Shaun Tougher (eds.), *Generalship in Ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2022. 1 Cesary Kucewicz, «Kings, Tyrants and Bandy-Legged Men: Generalship in Archaic Greece» (p. 6). 2 Richard Evans, «Commemorating Thermopylae: The andreaia of Glorious Defeat as a Literary Construct» (p. 36). 3 Nicholas Rockwell, «Plato on Military and Political Leadership» (p. 52). 4 Alex McAuley, «Reconstructing Early Seleucid Generalship, 301-322 BC» (p. 66). 5 Michael Taylor, «Generalship and Knowledge in the Middle Roman Republic» (86). 6 David Nolan, «Command Assessment in the *Bellum Gallicum*: Caesar and *Fortuna*» (p. 98). 7 Daniel Crosby, «Remembering O. Quinctilius Varus: Opposing Oerspectives on the Memory and Memorialisation of the Failed General in

- the *Annales* of Tacitus» (p. 116). 8 David Potter, «Decius and the Battle near Abritus» (p. 139). 9 Conor Whately, «Ammianus and the Heroic Mode of Generalship in the Fourth Century AD» (p. 151). 10 Michael Stewart, «The Fine Line between Courage and Fear in the Vandalic War» (p. 164). 11 Martine de Marre, «The Generalship of John Troglita: Art in Artifice» (p. 187). 12 Eve MacDonald, «The Best of Men: Cross-Cultural Command in the 630s AD» (p. 206). 13 David A. Graff, «Tian Yue Marshals His Tropes: Public Persuasion and the Character of Military Leadership in Late Tang China» (p. 225). 14 Philip Rance, «The Ideal of the Roman General in Byzantium: The Reception of Onasander's Strategikos in Byzantine Military Literature» (p. 242). 15 Shaun Tougher, «Generalship and Gender in Byzantium: Non-Campaigning Emperors and Eunuch Generals in the Age of the Macedonian Dynasty» (p. 264). 16 Dimitris Krallis, «The Politics of War: Virtue, *Tyche*, Persuasion and the Byzantine General» (p. 284).
- 2023 Joshua R. Hall / Louis Rawlings / Geoff Lee (eds.), *Unit cohesion and warfare in the ancient world: Military and social approaches*, Abingdon / New York, Routledge, 2023. Joshua R. Hall, Unit Cohesion in the Ancient World: An Introduction (p. 1). 1 Roel Konijnendijk, The Eager Amateur: Unit Cohesion and the Athenian Hoplite Phalanx (p. 11). 2 C. W. Marshall, The Rhodian Slingers in Xenophon's Anabasis (p. 28). 3 Aimee Schofield, Keeping It Together: Aeneas Tacticus and Unit Cohesion in Ancient Greek Siege Warfare (p. 45). 4 Gabriel Baker, 'Once within the Gates': Storming Cities and Unit Cohesion in Ancient Mediterranean Warfare (p. 62). 5 Joshua R. Hall / Louis Rawlings, Unit Cohesion in the Multi-Ethnic Armies of Carthage (p. 78). 6 Adam O. Anders, Roman Standards and Trumpets as Implements of Cohesion in Battle (p. 106). 7 Ben Greet, The Legionary Standards as a Means of Religious Cohesion (p. 126). 8 Conor Whately, Looking for Unit Cohesion at the End of Antiquity (p. 140). 9. Louis Rawlings, '... They Were Routed': Cohesion and Disintegration in Ancient Battle (p.158-179).
- 2023 Franca Landucci / Giuseppe Zecchini (cur.), *Geopolitica del mondo antico. Caratteri politico-militari del Mediterraneo, dal II millennio a.C. al VI secolo d.C.*, Roma, Carocci, 2023. 1. F. Landucci, La translatio imperii (p. 13). Federico Giusfredi, Il Vicino Oriente Antico (p. 29). 3 e 4 Cinzia Bearzot, Orizzonti geopolitici tra Egeo e Mediterraneo occidentale dall'VIII al IV secolo a.C. (p. 51). 5 Giovanni Brizzi, Cartagine negli equilibri geopolitici del Mediterraneo (p. 93). 6. G. Zecchini, La geopolitica italica di Roma (p. 113). 7 F. Landucci, La globalizzazione ellenistica (p. 139). 8 G. Zecchini, assi geopolitici tra Media Repubblica e Principato (p. 157). 9 Id., Geopolitica della transizione: la fine del mondo antico (p. 185). Tavole (p. 209). Bibliografia (pp. 219-244).
- 2023 Federico Marazzi, Chiara Raimondo, Giuseppe Hyeraci (cur.), *La difesa militare bizantina in Italia (sec. VI-XI)*. Atti del convegno di studi internazionale Squillace (CZ) 15-18.04.2021, Collana: Studi Vulturturnensi 2023.
- 2023 Joseph Frechette, «The Naval Factors in Procopius of Caesarea's Account of Justinian's Wars», in Benjamin "BJ" Armstrong (Ed.) *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the 21<sup>st</sup> McMullen Naval History Symposium Held*

- at the U.S. Naval Academy 19–20 September 2019, Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 2023, pp. 1-12.
- 2023 Michael Alexander Speidel, «Roman Soldiers' Letters. The Importance of Writing Letters in the Roman Army», in Madalina Dana (ed.), *La correspondance privée dans la Méditerranée antique: sociétés en miroir*, Université Bordeaux Montagne, Bordeaux, Ausonius Éditions — Scripta Antiqua 168, 2023, pp. 261-272.
- 2023 Ségolène Demougin / Bernard Augier, «*Militaris Gloriae Cupido*. Les tribuns militaires de César à Auguste (44 AV. J.-C.-14 AP. J.-C.)», in Frédéric Hurlet (dir.), *Honores et officia: Reconfiguration du cursus sénatorial aux époques triumvirale et augustéenne*, Saragosse-Séville, Collection Res Publica Libera n° 11, 2023, pp.
- 2023 John Nash, *Rulers of the Sea Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece, 550 – 321 BCE*, de Gruyter Studies in Military History 8, Berlin / Boston, de Gruyter, 2023.
- 2023 Paul A. Rahe, *Sparta's Sicilian Proxy War. The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta 418-413 B.C.*, New York - London, Encounter Books, 2023.
- 2023 Giusto Traina, *La prima guerra mondiale della storia. Dall'assassinio di Cesare al suicidio di Antonio e Cleopatra (44-30 a.C.)*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2023.
- 2024 Giusto Traina, *La resa di Roma. 9 giugno 53 a. C., battaglia a Carre*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2024.
- 2024 Luciano Canfora, *La grande guerra del Peloponneso, 447-394 a. C.*, Bari-Roma, Gius. Laterza & Figli, 2024.
- 2024 Kevin Blachford, *World Order in Late Antiquity: The 'Two Eyes' Rivalry of Byzantium and Sasanian Persia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2024.
- 2024 Martine Diepenbroek, *The Spartan Scytale and Developments in Ancient and Modern Cryptography*, London / New York / Dublin, Bloomsbury Academic, 2024.
- 2024 Matthew Sears, *Sparta and the Commemoration of War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024.
- 2024 Lee L. Brice / Elizabeth M. Greene (eds.), *Women and the Army in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2024. 1 Eds., «Present but not Accounted For: Women and the Roman Army in the Twenty-First Century» (p. 1). 2 Eds., «Approaches to Women and the Roman Army: The History of a Debate» (p. 21). 3 Lee L. Brice / Georgia Tsouvala, «Agrippina and Company: Elite Women in the Castra» (p. 54). 4 Sara E. Phang, «Elite Marriage and Adultery in the Camp: Pliny *Epistles* 6.31.4–6 and Tacitus *Histories* 1.48» (p. 84). 5 Alexandra W. Busch / Elizabeth M. Greene, «Mother Courage and Her Children: The Family and Social Life of the Garrisons Stationed in Rome» (p. 110). 6 Penelope M. Allison, «Investigating Roles for Women inside Roman Military Bases through Artifact Distribution» (p. 151). 7 Tatiana Ivleva, «(In)Visible Women and Children: Literary, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Evidence for British Migrant Families in the Roman Army» (p. 181). 8 Lien Foubert, «Soldiers' Wives en Route in Roman Egypt: A Study through Graffiti, Private Letters, and Official Documents» (p. 219). 9 Elizabeth M. Greene,

«The Role of Women in the Religious Activities of Roman Military Communities» (p. 240). 10 Julie Langford / Christina Hotalen, «Mater Castrorum: Imperial Women and Succession Ideology» (p. 270). 11 Conor Whately, «Women and the Military in the Age of Justinian» (p. 299-324).

2025 Flavio Raviola, *Pirro*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2025.

2025 Francisco Pina Polo (ed.), *Cursus honorum: pathways to rank and power in the roman republic*, Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2025. Thibaud Lanfranchi, «Military tribunes with consular power, auspices and the birth of *cursus honorum*» (pp. 53-78). Marian Helm, «*Honores* to the heroes – the *tribuni militum* and the *cursus honorum*» (pp. 103-128).

## 2 a. *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Battles*

[edited by Michael Whitby / Harry Sidebottom,  
Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2017, 3 vols.]

PART I GENERAL TOPICS: 1. Boris Rankov, «Ancient Naval Warfare, 700 BC-AD 600». 2. Harry Sidebottom, «Ancient Siege Warfare, 700 BC-AD 645». 3. Barry Strauss, «War and Battle in the Greek World, 800-168 BC». 4. Paul Erdkamp, «War and Battle in the Roman World, 700 BC-AD 235».

PART II ARCHAIC GREECE AND THE NEAR EAST: 5. Hans van Wees, «The Lelantine War, c.700 or c.540 BC». 6. Maria Brosius, «The Rise of Achaemenid Persia, 550-525 BC». 7. Hans van Wees, «Early Greek Wars, 750-450 BC». 8. Maria Brosius, «The Ionian Revolt, 498-494 BC». 9. Christopher Hassan / Maria Brosius «The Persian Wars, 492-450 BC».

PART III THE CLASSICAL GREEK WORLD: 10. Fernando Echeverría, «The First Peloponnesian War, 460-446 BC». 11. Tim Cornell, «Latin, Etruscan, Aeolian, Volsci, and Gallic Wars, 499-340 BC». 12. Fernando Echeverría, «The Second Peloponnesian War, 431-404 BC». 13. Matthew Trundle, «The Anabasis and the Ten Thousand, 401-399 BC». 14. Id., «The Corinthian War, 395-387 BC». 15. Id., «Fourth-Century BC Greek Wars». 16. Id., «Carthaginian Offensives in Sicily, 409-307 BC». 17. Sławomir Sprawski, «Campaigns of Thebes, 379-362 BC».

PART IV THE MACEDONIAN AGE AND THE RISE OF ROME: 18. Tim Cornell, «The ‘Samnite Wars,’ 343-290 BC». 19. Edward Anson, «The Rise of Macedon, 359-336 BC». 20. Michael Whitby, «Greeks in Italy, 342-303 BC». 21. Id., «The Revolt of Agis, 333-331 BC». 22. Id., «Campaigns of Alexander the Great, 336-323 BC». 23. Sławomir Sprawski, «The Lamian War, 323-322 BC». 24. Edward Anson, «The Wars of the Successors, 323-281 BC». 25. Jeremy Armstrong, «The Campaigns of Pyrrhus, 282-272 BC». 26. Arthur Eckstein, «The First Punic War and After, 264-237 BC». 27. Paul McKechnie, «Dynastic Wars, 260-145 BC». 28. Id., «Inter-Greek Wars of the

Third Century BC». 29. Paul Erdkamp, «The Illyrian Wars, 229-219 BC». 30. Louis Rawlings, «The Gallic Wars, Northern Italy, 225-222 BC». 31. Eddie Owens, «The Second Punic War, 220-202 BC». 32. Louis Rawlings, «The Roman Conquest of Cisalpine Gaul, 201-191 BC». 33. Paul Erdkamp, «The First Macedonian War, 215-205 BC». 34. Paul McKechnie, «Philopoemen in the Peloponnese, 221-192 BC». 35. Paul Erdkamp, «The Second Macedonian War, 200-197 BC». 36. Id., «The War against Antiochus III, 191-188 BC». 37. Id., «The Third Macedonian War, 171-168 BC». 38. Michael Whitby, «The Maccabean War, 167-161 BC». 39. Dexter Hoyos, «The Third Punic War, 149-146 BC». 40. Paul Erdkamp, «The Andrisus Uprising and the Achaean War, 149-146 BC».

PART V THE IMPERIAL ROMAN REPUBLIC : 41. Harry Sidebottom, «The Rise of Parthia, C. 250-C. 92 BC». 42. Dexter Hoyos, «The Numantine War, 154-133 BC». 43. Id., «The Jugurthine War, 112-105 BC». 44. Louis Rawlings, «The Roman Conquest of Southern Gaul, 125-121 BC». 45. Philip Matyszak, «Campaigns against Pirates, 103-67 BC». 46. Id., «The Social War, 91-87 BC». 47. Id., «The Mithridatic Wars, 89-66 BC». 48. Id., «Marius versus Sulla, 83-82 BC». 49. Id., «Campaigns against Sertorius, 81-72 BC». 50. Id., «Spartacus and the Slave Revolts, 133-71 BC». 51. Richard Marshall, «The Battle of Pistoia, 62 BC». 52. Louis Rawlings, «The Gallic Wars, 61-51 BC». 53. Id., «Invasions of Britain, 55 and 54 BC». 54. Michael Whitby, «The Battle of Carrhae, 53 BC». 55. Stephen Matthews, «Pompey versus Caesar, 49-45 BC».

PART VI EARLY IMPERIAL ROME: 56. Stephen Matthews, «The Second Triumvirate, 43-31 BC». 57. Brian Campbell, «Campaigns in Pannonia, 35 BC-AD 9». 58. Id., «German Campaigns, 55 BC-AD 16». 59. Id., «The Conquest of Britain, 43-87». 60. Id., «Campaigns in Armenia, 58-66». 61. Id., «The Jewish Revolt, 66». 62. Id., «The Year of the Four Emperors, 69». 63. Harry Sidebottom, «The Dacian Wars, 84-106».

PART VII ROMAN IMPERIAL TRIUMPH AND CHALLENGES: 64. Jonathan P. Roth, «Trajan's Parthian War, 113-117». 65. Id., «The Battle of Aelia, 133-135». 66. Id., «Lucius Verus and the East, 161-165». 67. Id., «Marcus Aurelius and Europe, c. 165-180». 68. Id., «The Civil Wars of 193-195». 69. Id., «The Severan Campaigns, 194-235». 70. Udo Hartmann, «The Rise of the Sasanids and the Battle of Hormizdagan, 224». 71. Udo Hartmann, «The Third-Century 'Crisis'».

PART VIII THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE: 72. Udo Hartmann, «The Tetrarchy, 284-305». 73. Mark Humphries, «The Rise of Constantine, 306-324». 74. Mark Humphries, «The Fourth-Century Roman Empire: Internal». 75. Mark Humphries, «The Fourth-Century Roman Empire: West». 76. Doug Lee, «The Fourth-Century Roman Empire: Persia». 77. Doug Lee, «The Goths and the Romans, 376-378».

PART IX CHALLENGES TO EMPIRE 1135: 78. Mark Humphries, «Alaric and Italy, 401-410». 79. Mark Humphries, «Italy in the Fifth Century». 80. Mark Humphries, «Gaul and Spain in the Fifth Century». 81. Mark Humphries, «The Vandals in Spain and Africa, 422-468». 82. Michael Whitby, «Attila and the Huns, 442-455». 83. Michael Whitby, «Theoderic and the Goths, 476-492».

PART X THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE: 84. Doug Lee, «The Eastern Roman Empire: Internal, 450-610». 85. Michael Whitby, «Anastasius and Persia, 502-506». 86. Michael Whitby, «Justinian and Persia, 527-562». 87. Alexander Sarantis, «Justinian and Africa, 533-548». 88. Michael Whitby, «Justinian and Italy, 535-554». 89. Alexander Sarantis, «The Early Sixth-Century Balkan Wars». 90. Michael Whitby, «The Persian Wars, 572-591».

PART XI FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE: 91. Alexander Sarantis, «The Lombard Conquest of Italy, 569-572». 92. Michael Whitby «The Avars and the Slavs, 570-626». 93. James D. Howard-Johnston, «The Persian Wars, 602-628». 94. James D. Howard-Johnston, «Islamic Conquests, 622-645».

## 2 b. *Warfare in the Ancient Mediterranean World*

[a series in the Brill's Companions in Classical Studies,

edited by Lee L. Brice]

Vol. 1 (2016). Timothy Howe / Lee L. Brice (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 2016. 1 Lee Brice, «Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient World, Grounding the Discussion» (p. 3). 2 Seth Richardson, «Insurgency and Terror in Mesopotamia» (p. 31). 3 Sarah Melville, «Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Assyrian Empire during the Late Eight Century BCE.» (p. 62). 4 Josef Wiesehöfer, «Fourth Century Revolts against Persia: The Test Case of Sidon (348-345 BCE)» (p. 93). 5 Ellen Millender. «Spartan State Terror: Violence, Humiliation, and the Reinforcement of Social Boundaries in Classical Sparta.» (p. 117). 6 Timothy Howe, «Alexander and 'Afghan Insurgency': A Reassessment» (p. 151). 7 Paul Johnston, «Insurgency in Ptolemaic Egypt» (p. 183). 8 Francisco Marco Simón, «Insurgency or State Terrorism? The Hispanic Wars in the Second Century BCE» (p. 221). 9. Frank Russell, «Roman Counterinsurgency Policy and Practice in Judaea» (p. 282). 10 Brian Turner, «From Batavian Revolt to Rhenish Insurgency» (p. 282). 11 J. Grant Couper, «Gallic Insurgencies? Annihilating the Bagaudae» (p. 312) 12 Jonathan Roth, «Epilogue: Looking Ahead» (p. 344).

Vol. 2 (2018). Jessica H. Clark / Brian Turner (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society*, 2018. 1 Brian Turner, Jessica H. Clark, «Thinking about Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society» (p. 3). 2 Sarah C. Melville, «Ideology, Politics, and the Assyrian Understanding of Defeat» (p. 24). 3 Jeffrey Rop, «The Assassination of Tissaphernes: Royal Responses to Military Defeat in the Achaemenid Empire» (p. 51). 4 John O. Hyland, «Achaemenid Soldiers, Alexander's Conquest, and the Experience of Defeat» (p. 74). 5 Edith Foster, «Military Defeat in Fifth-Century Athens: Thucydides and His Audience» (p. 96). 6 Max L. Goldman, «Demosthenes, Chaeronea, and the Rhetoric of Defeat» (p. 123). Matthew Trundle, «Spartan Responses to Defeat: From a Mythical Hysiae to a Very

Real Sellasia» (p. 144). 8 Paul Johnston, «‘No Strength to Stand’: Defeat at Panium, the Macedonian Class, and Ptolemaic Decline» (p. 152). 9 Jessica H. Clark, «Defeat and the Roman Republic: Stories from Spain» (p. 191). 10 Amy Richlin, «The Ones Who Paid the Butcher’s Bill: Soldiers and War Captives in Roman Comedy» (p. 213). 11 Ida Östenberg, «Defeated by the Forest, the Pass, the Wind: Nature as an Enemy of Rome» (p. 240). 12 Brian Turner, «Imperial Reactions to Military Failures in the Julio-Claudian Era» (p. 262). 13 Graeme A. Ward, «‘By Any Other Name’: Disgrace, Defeat, and the Loss of Legionary History» (p. 284). 14 Sviatoslav Dmitriev, «Recycling the Classical Past: Rhetorical Responses from the Roman Period to a Military Loss in Classical Greece» (p. 309). 15 Craig H. Caldwell III, «The Roman Emperor as Persian Prisoner of War: Remembering Shapur’s Capture of Valerian» (p. 335). 16 Nathan Rosenstein, «Looking Ahead» (p. 361).

Vol. 3 (2019). Jeremy Armstrong / Matthew Trundle (eds.), *Brill’s Companion to Sieges in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 2019. Eds, «Sieges in the Mediterranean World» (1). 2 Gwyn Davia, «The Landscape of Sieges» (p. 18). 3 Luis R. Siddall, «The Nature of Siege Warfare in the Neo-Assyrian Period» (p. 35). 4 Davide Nadali, «Images of Assyrian Sieges: What They Show, What We Know, What Can We Say» (p. 53). 5 Brett H. Heagren, «The ‘Development’ of Egyptian Assault Warfare (Late Predynastic Period to Dynasty XX) » (p. 69). 6 Alan B. Lloyd, «The Defence in Egypt in the Fourth Century BC: Forts and Sundry Failures» (p. 111). 7 Matthew Trundle, «The Introduction of Siege Technology into Classical Greece» (p. 135). 8 Jennifer Martinez Morales, «Women on the Walls? The Role and Impact of Women in Classical Greek Sieges» (p. 150). 9 Thomas C. Rose, «Demetrius the Besieger (and Fortifier) of Cities» (p. 169). 10. Jeremy Armstrong, «*Sic Deinde, Quicumque Alius Transiliet Moenia Mea*: Early Roman Fortification and Sieges» (p. 191). 11 James Crooks, «*Voluntarii* at the Gates: Irregular Recruitment and the Sieges of Veii» (p. 2017). 12 Duncan B. Campbell, «Siegecraft in Caesar» (p. 241). 13 Conor Whately, «Procopius on the Siege of Rome in AD 537/538» (p. 265). 14 Josh Levithan, «Afterlives of the Ancient Siege: Echoes and Epic» (p. 285). Fernando Echeverria, «Epilogue: Ancient Sieges in Modern Perspectives» (p. 321).

Vol. 4 (2021). Roel Konijnendijk / Cezary Kucwicz / Matthew Lloyd (eds.), *Brill’s Companion to Greek Land Warfare Beyond the Phalanx*, 2021. Matthew Lloyd, Roel Konijnendijk, and Cezary Kucwicz, «Introduction: Beyond the Phalanx» (p. 1). 2 Matthew Lloyd, «Men of Iron. Pre-Archaic Greek Warfare in Context» (p. 17). 3 Josho Brouwers, «The Anatolian Roots of Archaic Greek Warfare» (p. 64). 4 Cezary Kucwicz, «The War Dead in Archaic Sparta» (p. 83). 5 Jennifer Martinez Morales, «Women, Diversity, and War off the Battlefield in Classical Greece» (p. 122). 6 Alexander T. Millington, «Worshipping Violence» (p. 145). 7 Roel Konijnendijk, «Cavalry and the Character of Classical Warfare» (p. 169). 8 Cezary Kucwicz, Matthew Lloyd, and Roel Konijnendijk, «‘Not Many Bows’? Light-Armed Fighters of the Tenth through Fourth Centuries» (p. 205). 9 Fernando Echeverria, «Assaults and Sieges. Rewriting the Other Side of Greek Land Warfare» (p. 236). 10 Joshua R. Hall, «The Western Greeks and the ‘Greek Warfare’ Narrative» (p. 266). 11 Hans van Wees,

- «The First Greek Soldiers in Egypt. Myths and Realities» (p. 293). Matthew A. Sears, «Epilogue» (p. 345).
- Vol. 5 (2023). Mark Hebblewhite / Conor Whately (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Bodyguards in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 2023. 1 Conor Whately, «Bodyguards in the Ancient Mediterranean World», (p. 1). 2 Susan Thorpe, «Bodyguards in Ancient Egypt: Their Role as Protectors of the King», (p. 19). 3 Shana Zaia, «Protecting the King in Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BCE: Perspectives from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires», (p. 32). 4 Emily K. Varto, «Bodyguards and the Connecting Ideology of Early Greek Warfare», (p. 59). 5 Michael B. Charles, «Apple Bearers and Kinsmen Cavalry: Guard Units of the Kings of Achaemenid Persia», (p. 81). 6 Jeffrey Rop, «The Four Hundred and the Ten Thousand: The Politics of Greek Bodyguard Service in the Achaemenid Empire», (p. 102). 7 Carol J. King, «Guarding the Macedonian King: Royal Servitude, Political Jockeying, and Regicide», (p. 128). 8 Jeremy Armstrong, «The Lictores: Guarding the Body and the Body Politic in Republican Rome», (p. 154). 9 Matt Gibbs, «“Bodyguards” and Their Responsibilities in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt», (p. 172). 10 Gwynnaeth McIntyre, «Making and Breaking Emperors: The cohorts praetoria and the Transition of Imperial Power», (p. 202). 11 Christian Rollinger, «Specie Dominationis: The ‘Ceremonial’ Uses of Imperial Bodyguards Under the Principate», (p. 223). 12 Mark Hebblewhite, «Guarding the Emperor in an Age of Chaos», (p. 249). 13 Michael Edward Stewart, «Protectors and Assassins: Armed Eunuch-cubicularii and -spatharii, 400–532 CE», (p. 272). 14 Maxime Emion, «Epilogue on Bodyguards», (p. 292-301).
- Vol. 6 (2024). Lynne Kvapil / Kim Shelton (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Warfare in the Bronze Age Aegean*, 2024. PART 1 INTRODUCTION: 1 Eds., «Introduction to Warfare in the Bronze Age Aegean» (p. 3). PART 2 MATERIAL AND TEXTUAL EVIDENCE: 2 Tomáš Alušík, «Fortifications and Defensive Architecture» (p. 25). 3 Ioannis Georganas / Lynne A. Kvapil, «Weaponry» (p. 89). 4 Cynthia W. Shelmerdine, «Mycenaean Warfare: The Evidence of the Linear B Tablets» (p. 116). 5 Margaretha Kramer-Hajo, «Iconography» (p. 161). PART 3 WARFARE IN PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION: 6 Barry Molloy, «Warfare in the EBA to the Beginning of the LBA» (p. 201). 7 Jesse Obert and Barry Molloy, «Warfare in LH IIIA–C» (p. 245). 8 Angelos Papadopoulos, «An Aegean Warrior Ethos?» (p. 268). 9 Stephen O'Brien, «Warfare and “Social Complexity” from LH III to the Early Iron Age» (p. 296). Part 4 Historical Questions: 10 Natalie Abell, «The Myth of the Minoan Thalassocracy: A Review of Evidence for Maritime Interaction, Power, and Violence in the Insular and Coastal Aegean» (p. 353). 11 Trevor Bryce, «Ahhiyawa» (p. 418). 12 Shannon LaFayette Hogue, «The Trojan War, a Trojan War, or Some Trojan Wars? Considering the Historicity of the Trojan War» (p. 447). Part 5 Epilogue: 13 Eds., «Warfare in the Bronze Age Aegean: Rules of Future Engagement » (p. 493).
- Vol. 7 (2024). Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare on Film*, 2024. PART 1 INTRODUCTION: 1 Ed., «Swords Made of Rubber: Cinematic Antiquity through the Lens of War» (p. 3). PART 2 CINEMA VS. HISTORY: TESTING THE ACCURACY OF CELLULOID BATTLES: 2 Jeremy Armstrong, «Form

and Function: The Importance of Military Formations in Cinematic Depictions of the Roman Army» (p. 41). 3 Elias Koulakiotis, «Alexander in Ares' Mirror: Armed Conflict in Oliver Stone's Historical Epic» (p. 71). PART 3 THE LEADING MEN OF CELLULOID ARMIES: 4 Michael Williams, «“Hail! The Sign of the Cross”: Industrial Campaigns and Commanding Performances in *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) and *Cleopatra* (1934)» (p. 95). 5 Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos, «Richard Burton in *Alexander the Great* (1956) and the Mechanisms of Hollywood Stardom: Fashioning an Ancient Military Icon in Post-WWII American Cinema» (p. 131). 6 Djoyimi Baker, «Brad's Biceps and Dwayne's Delts: Stardom as Physicality and Digital Spectacle in *Troy* (2004) and *Hercules* (2014)» (p. 164). PART 4 WOMEN AND MILITARY CONFLICT: 7 Patricia Salzman-Mitchell, «*Atalanta* as Celluloid Warrior in *Jason and the Argonauts* (2000) and *Hercules* (2014)» (p. 191). 8 Irene Berti, «Women on the Battlefield: Ancient Warrior Queens and Female Military Commanders on the Millennial Screen» (p. 214). 9 Jorit Wintjes, «“She Wants to Be Married and Give the Children Names!”: Women and the Roman Army in Post-Gladiator Films» (p. 246). 10 Anastasia Bakogianni, «Women in Captivity: The Human Cost of Armed Conflict from the Trojan War to Modern Greek Cinema» (p. 273). PART 5 WESTERN COLONIALISM AND RACIST ATTITUDES: 11 Arthur J. Pomeroy, «Rome vs. Carthage: Imperial and Racist Aspirations in Italian Films of the Twentieth Century» (p. 295). 12 Seán Easton, «Porus vs. Alexander in Modi's *Sikandar* (1941) and Stone's *Alexander* (2004–2014)» (p. 324). PART 6 ANCIENT WARFARE ON FILM AND MODERN POLITICS: 13 Óscar Luis Lapeña Marchena, «Armed Conflict in Italian Historical Films of the Fascist and Post-WWII Era (1937–1954)» (p. 353). 14 Robert A. Rushing, «The Noise of War: Sound, Politics and Space in the Italian Peplum» (p. 386). 15 Renata Senna Garraffoni, «“Make Love, Not War”: Roman Soldiers and 1960s Countercultural Masculinity in Fellini-Satyricon» (p. 405). 16 Jonathan Stubbs, «Epic Combat in Ancient and Modern History: A Comparative Analysis of *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) and *The Longest Day* (1962)» (p. 426). 17 Kaiti Diamantakou, «*Lysistrata* (1972): Political and Sexual Refractions of the Peloponnesian War during the Greek Junta» (p. 450). PART 7 ANCIENT BATTLES FOR MILLENNIAL SPECTATORS AND THE IMPACT OF THE HOLLYWOOD WAR FILM: 18 Hannah-Marie Chidwick, «Sensational Violence: Brutality in Twenty-First-Century Cinematic Depictions of Roman Battles» (p. 481). 19 Owen Rees, «*Rockules' Revenge*: The Portrayal of the Veteran Warrior in Brett Ratner's *Hercules*» (p. 508). 20 Oskar Aguado-Cantabran, «Romans and Zealots in the Global War on Terror: Asymmetric Warfare and Counterinsurgency in *Risen* (2016) and *Ben-Hur* (2016)» (p. 529).

Vol. 8 (2024). John Donahue / Lee L. Brice (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Diet and Logistics in Greek and Roman Warfare*, 2024. PART 1 INTRODUCTION: 1 Eds., «Diet and Logistics in Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare, a Consideration» (p. 3). Maps (p. 17). PART 2 MILITARY DIET: 2 Sarah C. Murray, «Diet, Preparation, and Consumption in Homer» (p. 29). 3 Fernando Echeverría, «Nutrition and Diet: Archaic and Classical Greece» (p. 56). 4 Eduardo García-Molina, «Nutrition and Diet: Hellenistic Greece» (p. 93). 5 Jeremy Armstrong, «Diet and Nutrition in the Roman Republican Army»

(p. 126). 6 Paul Erdkamp, «The Diet of Roman Soldiers in the Northwest Provinces of the Roman Empire» (p. 152). 7 Kelsey Koon, «Dining in the Desert: The Roman Military Diet in Egypt and the East in the Imperial Period» (p. 178). PART 3 LOGISTICS OF FOOD AND DRINK: 8 Matthew A. Sears, «Organization of the Military Food Supply: Greece» (p. 207). 9 Thomas C. Rose, «Provisioning and the Logistics of Occupation and Resistance in Early Hellenistic Greece» (p. 231). 10 Nikolaus Leo Overtoom, «Logistics and Strategy in the Hellenistic World: Parthians and Seleucids» (p. 258). 11 John F. Donahue, «Sieges, Deception, and Bioterrorism: Logistics and Strategy of Food and Drink during the Republic» (p. 287). 12 Bret C. Devereaux, «Organization of the Military Food Supply: Rome» (p. 311). PART 4 CASE STUDIES: 13 Gregory Francis Viggiano, «Logistics and Strategy in the Greek Army: A Case Study of Diet and Logistics in Herodotus and Thucydides» (p. 341). 14 Marc Kleijwegt, «Equestrian Officers, Food Supply, and Military Campaigns in the Reigns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius» (p. 375). PART 5 IN CLOSING: 15 Lee L. Brice, «Assessing Military Logistics and Diet in Ancient Greece and Rome» (pp. 403-432).

Vol. 9 (2024). John Hyland / Khodadad Rezakhani (eds.), *Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*, 2024. 1 Eds., «War and Peace in Ancient Iran: Ideologies, Structures, and Practice» (p. 1). 2 Javier Álvarez-Mon / Yasmina Wicks, «Like a Raining Cloud: Archery as the Pillar of Elamite Warfare» (p. 34). 3 Eduard Rung, «War and Ideology in Achaemenid Persia» (p. 84). 4 Jenn Finn, «The Grand Strategy of Achaemenid Persia, 539–331 BCE» (p. 120). 5 John Hyland, «The Achaemenid Military System and Its Campaign Logistics» (p. 157). 6 Jeffrey Rop, «The Persian Way of War: Infantry Tactics in the Achaemenid Empire» (p. 187). 7 Daniel Beckman, «Achaemenid Diplomacy in Historical Perspective» (p. 219). 8 Reinhard Pirngruber, «Impact of Empire: Aspects of Warfare in Babylonia, Achaemenid to Parthian Periods» (p. 252). 9 Waldemar Heckell, «Alexander and the Iranian Satraps in War and Peace» (p. 276). 10 Omar Coloru, «The Military Organisation of the Upper Satrapies Under the Seleucids» (p. 304). 11 Nikolaus Overtoom, «Patricide, Fratricide, and Betrayal: the Role of Parthia in the First War with Rome» (p. 329). 12 Leonardo Gregoratti, «The Arsacids vs. Rome (First to Third Centuries CE): Observations on Parthian Tactics and Warfare» (p. 366). 13 Jake Nobel, «Parthia, Rome, and the Horizons of Ancient Diplomacy» (p. 400). 14 Katarzyna Maksymiuk, «Early Sasanian Expansion and Military Institutions» (p. 435). 15 Patryk Skupniewicz / Katarzyna Maksymiuk, «Cavalry Arms and Armour from the Achaemenids to the Sasanians: Iconography and Methods of Reconstruction» (p. 476). 16 Robert Haug, «Peroz and the Hephthalites ... and the Kidarites, Alkhans, and Sasanians: Warfare, Diplomacy, and the Complexity of the Sasanian East in the Fifth Century» (p. 506). 17 Craig Morley, «Persian-Roman Diplomacy in the Fifth Century» (p. 538). 18 Henning Börm, «Kavad I, Khosrow I, and the Wars with the Roman Empire» (p. 566). 19 Khodadad Rezakhani, «The First Great War of the Middle Ages: the Sasanian Conquest of the Eastern Mediterranean (602–630 CE) as a Background to the Islamic Futūhāt» (p. 600). 20 Touraj Daryaei, «Epilogue: the Evolution of the Ancient Iranian Army» (p. 654-663).

Vol. 10 (2025). Edward M. Anson (ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Campaigns of Philip II*

*and Alexander the Great*, 2025. Lee L. Brice, «Introduction: Not the Usual Treatment of Philip II and Alexander III of Macedon» (p. 1). PART 1: THE COMBAT AND CAMPAIGNS OF PHILIP AND ALEXANDER: 1 Frances Pownall, «Philip's Grand Strategy» (p. 17). 2 Matthew A. Sears, «Alexander's Battles» (p. 35). 3 Edward M. Anson, «Modern Military Terminology and Ancient Practices» (p. 61). 4 Joseph Roisman, «Philip's and Alexander's Naval Warfare» (p. 88). 5 Elizabeth Baynham, «The Sieges of Philip and Alexander» (p. 113). PART 2 THE COMBATANTS: 6 Graham C. L. Wrightson, «The Macedonian Heavy Infantry of Philip II and Alexander the Great» (p. 135). 7 Carolyn Willekes, Macedonian and Thessalian Cavalry (p. 164). 8 Franca Landucci, «The Role of Mercenaries» (p. 187). Sulochana R. Asirvatham, 9 Infantry Allies and Subjects (p. 202). PART 3 ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE: 10 Waldemar Heckel, «Commanders and Command Structure in Alexander's Army» (p. 223). 11 Alexander Meeus, «Money and Honor: Military Compensation in the Armies of Philip and Alexander» (p. 246). 12 Jacek Rzepka, «Recruitment and Training» (p. 264). PART 4 MAINTENANCE: 13 James Lacey, «Food and Conquest: Getting beyond Engels» (p. 281). 14 David Karunanithy, «The Medical Corps in the Army of Alexander the Great» (p. 298). PART 5 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR: 15 Lee L. Brice, «Conditions of Service and Indiscipline in Macedonian Armies, 359–323 BCE» (p. 345). 16 Jenn Finn, «Military Propaganda in the Campaigns of Alexander the Great» (p. 392). 17 Jeanne Reames, «Philip's and Alexander's Use of Religious Cult in Our Extant Sources» (p. 429). PART 6 NATURE OF COMMAND: 18 Carol J. King, «Relationship of King and Army» (p. 479). 19 Monica D'Agostini «The Affective Nature of Command» (p. 501). PART 7 THE HUMAN COST OF WAR: 20 Elizabeth D. Carney, «Women in War» (p. 529). 21 Sabine Müller, «War Crimes?» (p. 551). PART 8 IN CLOSING: 22 Edward M. Anson, «Conclusion: "We Are the Champions": the Underlying Reality of Ancient War» (p. 579).

### 2 c. *International Ancient Warfare Conference (IAWC)*

[in H-Soz-Kult, 22-24 June 2023, organised by Dr. Lennart Gilhaus,  
Department of Ancient History, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn,  
Institut für Geschichtswissenschaft]

*Warfare in the Greek World*. Ignacio Jesus Alvarez Soria (An Easy Victory. The Athenian Expedition in Aetolia in 426 BC), Lennart Gilhaus (City assaults and unbounded violence – The destruction of Motye as a model for the capture of cities in the Greek World). Ole Sebastian Siems (The last journey of the Argyraspids – a case study on the political role of Alexander's veterans in the early wars of the Diadochoi).

*The Roman Civil Wars*: Carlos Espí Forcén (Caesar's Elephant: A Powerful Icon in Time of War). David Hack (A Land of Confusion? – Irregular and personal power versus state control of military forces in Archaic Etruria and Rome). *Keynote Lecture*: Fernando Echeverría (Translations, analogies and metaphors. Interpreting ancient warfare in the 21st century)

- Women and Warfare:* Marco Almansa Fernandez (Mulierum Agmen. Women and Roman Army: Making the Invisible Visible). Pedro D. Conesa Navarro / Carlos Espí Forcén (The Fulvia-Victory Bust: A Female Image for the Wars of the Second Triumvirate). Amanthee Pussepitiya (“Women’s Invisibility” in Military History. A case-by-case analysis of reasons for the female erasure from the historical narrative).
- Greeks and the Others:* Tatiana Tereshchenko (Military Theme in the Images of the Others in Greek Vase Painting of the Middle of the 6th–Early 4th Centuries BC). Daniel Emmelius (Insane undertakings? Cambyses and the crossing of deserts with armies in Herodotus). Florian Feil (Scythian lancers and their influence on fourth-century Persian, Thracian and Macedonian cavalry).
- Rome and the Others:* Peter Freiherr von Danckelman (Steppe Warfare and a Palmyrene Militia?). Julian Gieseke (At the emperor’s service: The armies of dependent states and peoples as a military factor in the early imperial period). Alastair Lumsden (What it means to be a Man: Elite Masculinity and Military Development in Cisalpine Gaul c.400–50).
- Home and Away in Classical Greece:* Phyllis Brighthouse (War and Greek old comedy: A dialogue between past and present in Aristophanes’ knights). Ioannis Mitsios (Sacrificial virgins in Athens and Boeotia: A comparative study). Michael Zerjadtke (Disarming and rearming citizens: The social and political relevance of weapon possession in classical Greece).
- Assassinations: The Greek World:* Fiona Phillips (Carian Conflict! The failed assassination of Mausolus). Julius Guthrie (The assassination of Dion). Ömer Güngörmüş (Sealing the fate of a dynasty: Assassinations of the late Argead royals of Macedonia).
- Assassinations: The Roman World* Alexander Thein (Political assassinations in the Sullan period: c. 90–70 BC). Jurriaan Gouw (The role of the Praetorian Guard in the assassination of Domitian and the rise of Trajan). Silvio Roggo (An unsuccessful assassin’s career in Constantinople).
- The Roman Imperial Army:* Joanna Ball (Nothing to Fear but Fear Itself? Combat Disintegration and the Roman Army). Anna Busetto (Not so elementary, my dear Arrian! Tackling a locus desperatus in Arrian’s *Tactica*). Hanna Fritz (Grain supply in Roman frontier zones: a comparison of the Vindolanda tablets and the Bu Njem Ostraca). Korneel van Lommel (How to seize power? Political violence during the Year of the Five Emperors).
- Greek Tactics:* Natasha Bershinsky (The death of Patroklos and the beginning of the phalanx). Raimon Graells i Fabregat / Alessandro Pace (Weapons and Hoplitēs. A Critical Discourse from Vases, Texts, and Realia). Isabell Tschering (Social aspects of the lightly armed troops in the classical period). Georgio Tsiakalos (Inglorious Warriors: the Aetolian elite fighters and their controversial tactics).
- The Punic Wars.* Bryant Ahrenberg (Ship-Binding in Antiquity: The Practice, Purpose, and Possibilities). Fabrizio Biglino (Rethinking the causes of the Third Punic War). Gabriele Brusa (Marcellus at Nola and the employment of the “long spears of the naval soldiers”: trying to make sense of Plutarch, Marcellus, 12.2).

*Warfare in the Roman Republic*: Marian Helm (Creating “natural fighters”: Age and social expectations in the Roman republican army), Sally Mubarak (The Plot Thickens: Repatriation and Burial of War-dead in the Mid-Republican Period). Theresia Raum (A matter of time – The logics of military violence in the Roman republic).

*Classical Sparta*: Martine Diepenbroek (The Spartan scytale: A simple stick or a useful cryptographic device? Misinterpretations of the use of the scytale as a cryptographic device in ancient Sparta in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE). Imogen Herrad (Plataiai 479: “The others obeyed, but not Amompharetos” (Hdt. 9.53.2) A case study of Spartan disobedience). Han Pedazzini (Alone in command. The legality problem of Spartan military prostasia after the King’s Peace

*Late Antiquity I*: Łukasz Różycki (Roman night combat in VI century – theory and practice). Christopher Ian Lillington-Martin (Narratives of the Battle of Dara, 530). Douglas Whalin (Roman strategy in the second Roman-Arab war AD 654-659).

*Late Antiquity II*: Winfried Kumpitsch (The cultic role of the officers in the Christian Roman army). Christian Michel (Better men? Court eunuchs as generals in the Eastern Roman Empire). Julius Schwarz (“Reading” the late Roman army).

### §. 3

#### *Militaris Scientia*

Studies on literary sources  
for Ancient Military History.

1803 «Notice sur les principaux Historiens anciens et modernes, considérés militairement», *Mémorial topographique et militaire*, rédigé au Dépôt Général de la Guerre, imprimé par ordre du ministre, N° 2. Historique, I<sup>er</sup> Trimestre de l’An X. À Paris, de l’Imprimerie de la République, Brumaire An XI, pp.

1835 Friedrich Gottlob Heinrich Christian Haase, «Über die griechischen und lateinischen Kriegsschriftsteller», *Neue Jahrbücher für Philosophie und Paedagogik*, 14 Bd., H. 1, Leipzig, 1835.

1847 Friedrich Gottlob Heinrich Christian Haase, *De militarium scriptorum graecorum et latinorum omnium editione instituenda narratio*, Berlin, Trautwein, 1847.

1853-55 Hermann Koechly / Wilhelm Rüstow, *Griechische Kriegsschriftsteller*, Leipzig 1853-55, 3 voll. (rist. Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag, 1969).

1860 Friedrich Gottlob Heinrich Christian Haase, *De artis tacticae apud Graecos historia*, Vratislava, 1860.

1877 Richard Förster, «Studien zu den griechischen Taktikern», *Hermes*, Band 12, Heft 4, pp. 426–471.

1879 Edouard Hardy, *L’art de la guerre chez les anciens*, Paris., Librairie militaire, Dumaine, 1879.

- 1882 Karl Konrad Müller, *Eine griechische Schrift über Seekrieg*, A. Stuber's Buch und Kunsthandlung, Würzburg, 1882.
- 1894 *Catalogus Dissertationum Philologicarum Classicarum*, Leipzig, Gustav Fock, 1894. *Particula* III. Alte Geschichte u. Altertumswissenschaften, «d. Militärwesen» (NN. 2556-2651, pp. 76-78).
- 1907 W. Stavenhagen, *Über die altgriechische Militär-Schriftstellerei*, Sonderabzug aus *Die Militärische Welt*, Heft 11, Wien, 1907.
- 1912 Eugene Stock McCartney, *Figurative Uses of Animal Names in Latin and Their Application to Military Devices. A Study in Semantics*, Th., The New Era Printing Company, Lancaster, 1912.
- 1921 William Abbott Oldfather / John B. Titchener, «A note on the Lexicon militare», *Classical Philology*, vol. 16, 1921, No. 1, pp. 74-76.
- 1923 [William Abbott Oldfather / Charles Henry Oldfather / Arthur Stanley Pease / John B. Titchener], *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, and Onasander*, Translated by Illinois Greek Club, Loeb Classical Library 156, London William Heinemann / New York, Putnam's Sons, 1923, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1928.
- 1930 Adrien Bruhl, «Le souvenir d'Alexandre le Grand et les Romains», *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, tome 47, 1930, pp. 202-221.
- 1937 Alphonse Dain, «La 'Tactique' de Nicéphore Ouranos», in *Collection d'études anciennes publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, Paris, 1937, pp. 40 ss..
- 1956 Emilio Gabba, *Appiano e la storia delle guerre civili*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1956. Id., *Appiani bellorum civilium liber primus*, introduzione, traduzione e commento di E. Gabba, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1958. *Appianus. Bellorum Civilium liber quintus*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1970.
- 1957 André Monteilhet, «Xénophon et l'art équestre», *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, n°2, juin 1957, pp. 27-40.
- 1967 Alphonse Dain, *Les stratégistes byzantins*, Travaux et Mémoires, Centre de Recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines, N. 2, 1967.
- 1969 Alphonse Dain, «Luc Holste et la collection romaine des tacticiens grecs», in *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 71, 1969, pp. 338-353.
- 1974 Paul Daniel Emanuele, *Vegetius on the Roman Navy: Translation and Commentary, Book Four; 31-46*, Thesis MA, University of British Columbia, 1974.
- 1978 Everett Wheeler, *The Occasion of Arrian's Tactica*, Duke University Press, 1978.
- 1981 Joseph Geiger, «Plutarch's Parallel Lives: The Choice of Heroes», *Hermes*, Vol. 109, 1981, No. 1, pp. 85-104.
- 1981 George T. Dennis / Ernst Gamillscheg, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981.
- 1984 Robert Sablayrolles, «Bibliographie sur l'Épitoma rei militaris de Végèce», *Cahiers du Groupe de recherches sur l'armée romaine et les provinces*, 3, 1984, pp. 139-146;

- Étienne Famerie, «Bibliographie sur l'Épitoma rei militaris de Végèce (1981–2015)», *Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité*, 62, 2015, pp. 213-218.
- 1985 George T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises. Texts, Translations and Notes*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, XXV, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, 1985.
- 1988 Everett Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery*, Leiden, Brill, 1988.
- 1990 Marco Bettalli, *Enea Tattico, La difesa di una città assediata (Poliorketikon)*, Pisa, ETS, 1990.
- 1991 Francesco Sini, *Bellum Nefandum. Virgilio e il problema del diritto internazionale antico*, Sassari, Libreria Dessì editrice, 1991.
- 1993 Catherine Gilliver, *The Roman Art of War: Theory and Practice. A Study of the Roman Military Writers*, Th., University of London, 1993.
- 1993 Luigi Loreto, «Pensare la guerra in Cesare. Teoria e prassi», in Diego Poli, cur., *La cultura in Cesare*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Macerata-Matelica, 30 aprile – 4 maggio 1990, Quaderni Linguistici e Pedagogici dell'Università di Macerata, V, 1990, Roma, Il Calamo, 1993, I, pp. 230-344.
- 1994 Brian Campbell (ed.), *The Roman Army, 31 BC - AD 337: A Sourcebook*, London / New York, Routledge, 1994, repr. 1996, 2000, 2003. Introduction (p. 1). 1 The soldiers (p. 9) [Recruitment 9. Training 15. Conditions of service 20. Careers 28]. 2 The officers (p. 46). [Centurions 46. Prefects and tribunes 56. Senior officers 61]. 3 The Emperor as commander-in-chief (p. 68) [The emperor with his troops 69. The emperor as general 72. Imperial military honours 74]. 4 The army in the field (p. 79). [The disposition of the army 79. Fighting 89. Medical service 103. Incentives and punishments 104]. 5 The army in peacetime (p. 110). [Military life in and around the camps 110. Soldiers as builders and engineers 120. Religion 127. Military Collegia 136]. 6 The army, the local community, and the law (p. 140) [Soldiers in local life 140. Soldiers, marriage, and family life 151. Soldiers before the law 160. Soldiers and civilians 170]. 7 The army in politics (p. 181). 8 Veterans (p. 193) [Discharge and benefits 193. Veteran colonies 210. Veterans in local life 221]. 9 The army in the later empire (p. 231). Select bibliography (p. 250). Index of translated passages (p. 256).
- 1996 Michael M. Sage (ed.), *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook*, London / New York, Routledge, 1996. 1 EARLY GREEK WARFARE: HOMER AND THE DARK AGES [The hero and the heroic code 3. Weapons and preparation for battle 7. The practice of Homeric warfare 11. The results of war 17. The Dark Ages 18]. 2 THE AGE OF HOPLITE WARFARE [Introduction 25. Army organization 38. Light-armed troops 40. Cavalry 46. Provisioning and supply armies 55. Military and naval pay 58. Military command 60. Treaties of alliance 66. Hoplite battles 72. Greeks and non-Greeks in battle: the Persian Wars 81. The aftermath of battle 94. Siege warfare 107. Greeks and non-Greeks 120. The spoils of war 121. Truces and peace treaties 127]. 3 THE FOURTH CENTURY [Tactical developments 137. The use of light-armed troops 141. Mercenaries 147. Siege warfare 157]. 4 The Rise of Macedonia: Philip and Alexander [The early

- Macedonian army 163. Philip II and the development of the Macedonian army 165. Alexander the Great 181]. 5 Hellenistic Warfare [Some common causes of war 200. Hellenistic armies 203. The armies of the great powers 220]. Suggested readings 228. Index of passages cited 240.
- 1997 Luigi Loreto, «Il generale e la biblioteca. La trattatistica militare greca da Democrito di Abdera ad Alessio I Comneno», in Giuseppe Cambiano *et alii* (cur.), *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, II. *La ricezione e l'attualizzazione del testo*, Salerno editrice, Roma, s. d. (ma 1997), pp. 563-589.
- 1997 Dietwulf Bockius / Ronald Baatz, *Vegetius Und Die Römische Flotte. Flavius Vegetius Renatus Praecepta Belli Navalis. Ratschlage Für Die Seekriegführung*, Mainz, 1997.
- 1998 Maria Teresa Schettino, *Introduzione a Polieno*, Pisa, ETS, 1998. [Ead., *Polyaenus' Strategemata, Book I and II. A Historical Commentary 2 t.*, avec une dissertation complémentaire: Sempronius Asellio's fr. 1-2 Peter and Polyb. XII 25b; Th. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven].
- 1999 Adriano La Regina (cur.), *L'arte dell'assedio di Apollodoro di Damasco*, Roma, Electra, 1999. La Regina, Apollodoro di Damasco e le origini del barocco (p. 9). ΑΠΟΛΛΩΔΗΡΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΟΡΚΗΤΙΚΑ (p. 19). Trad. di Giovanna Commare (p. 51). Ead., I codici della poliorcetica (p. 79). Ead., Apollodoro, autore della *Poliorcetica* (p. 83). Leila Nista, Il ritratto di Apollodoro di Damasco (p. 87). Giangiacomo Martines, Note di tecnica su Apollodoro (p. 91). Anna Maria Liberati, Le macchine da guerra in età imperiale (p. 107). Le 'ballistae' della Colonna Traiana (115-121).
- 2002 Ruth Morello, «Livy's Alexander Digression (9.17-19): Counterfactuals and Apologetics», *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 92, Nov. 2002, pp. 62-85.
- 2003 Maria Teresa Schettino, «Documenti diplomatici scritti e documenti militari non scritti nel 'Polibio romano'», in A. M. Biraschi / P. Desideri / S. Roda / G. Zecchini (eds.), *L'uso dei documenti nella storiografia antica*, [XII incontro perugino di Storia della Storiografia, (Gubbio, 22-24 maggio 2001)], Napoli, ESI, 2003, pp. 391-411.
- 2003 Leandro Polverini, «Imitatio Caesaris, Cesare e Alessandro, Napoleone e Cesare», in *Modelli eroici dall'Antichità alla cultura europea*, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2003, pp. 403-414.
- 2004 José Vela Tejada. «Warfare, History and Literature in the Archaic and Classical Periods: The Development of Greek Military Treatises», *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2004, pp. 129-46.
- 2004 Brian Campbell (ed.), *Greek and Roman Military Writers: Selected Readings*. London / New York, Routledge, 2004.
- 2004 Waldemar Heckel / J.C. Yardley (eds.), *Alexander the Great: Historical Texts in Translation*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004.
- 2005 James Romm (ed.), *Alexander the Great: Selections from Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch and Quintus Curtius*, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Co., 2005.
- 2005 Angela Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri als politisches Instrument römischer*

- Feldherren und Kaiser in der Zeit von der ausgehenden Republik bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n.Chr.*, Diss., Universität Duisburg-Essen, 2005. Ead., *Die imitatio Alexandri in der Römischen Politik*, Rhema Verlag 2008.
- 2006 Hans Michael Schellenberg, «Diodor von Sizilien 14,42,1 und die Erfindung der Artillerie im Mittelmeerraum», *Frankfurter elektronische Rundschau zur Altertumskunde* 3 (2006).
- 2007 Simon Hornblower, «Warfare in ancient literature: the paradox of War», In Michael Whitby / Philip Sabin / Hans van Wees (Eds.), *The Cambridge history of Greek and Roman warfare: Volume 1. Greece, the Hellenistic world and the rise of Rome*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 22-53.
- 2007 Philip Rance, «The Etymologicum Magnum and the Fragment of Urbicius», *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, vol. 47, No. 2, pp.193-224.
- 2008 Nikolaus L. Overtoom, «The Alexanders of Rome. Roman Emulation of Alexander the Great during the Late Republic»,
- 2009 Philip Rance, «The Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos (codex Monacensi graecus 452) and the Reception of Classical Literature in Byzantium», Humboldt-Stiftung-Forschungsstipendium für erfahrene Wissenschaftler, LMU München, 2009-11.
- 2009 J. E. Lendon, «Historians without history: Against Roman historiography» [i. e. against the literary approach to Roman], in A. Feldherr (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pr., 2009) pp. 41-61.
- 2010 Ugo Fantasia, «Strategie militari e strategie narrative in Tucidide : la Grecia occidentale nella guerra archidamica», *Cahiers des études anciennes*, 47 (2010), pp. 283-327.
- 2010 Gastone Breccia, «Educazione e cultura militare a Bisanzio», in Monica Ferrari e Filippo Ledda (cur.), *Formare alle professioni. La cultura militare tra passato e presente*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2010, pp. 64-80.
- 2010 Immacolata Eramo, *Siriano. Discorsi di guerra Testo, traduzione e commento*, Con una nota di Luciano Canfora, Bari, Dedalo, 2010. Ead., «Sul compendio militare di Siriano Magister», *Rivista Storica dell'Antichità*, 41, 2011, pp. 201-222. Ead., «Composition and structure of Syrianus Magister's Military Compendium», *Classica et Christiana*, 7, 1, 2012, pp. 97-112.
- 2011 Alexandre Blaineau, *Xénophon, L'intégrale de l'œuvre équestre*, présentée et annotée par A. Blaineau, Arles, Actes Sud (Arts équestres), 2011.
- 2011 Gastone Breccia, «I trattati tecnici e l'enciclopedia di Costantino VII Porfirogenito: arte militare e agronomia», in Massimo Bernabò (cur.), *Voci dell'Oriente: miniature e testi classici da Bisanzio alla Biblioteca medicea laurenziana*, Polistampa, 2011, pp. 111-120.
- 2011 Philip Rance, «The *De Militari Scientia* or Müller Fragment as a philological resource. Latin in the East Roman army and two new loanwords in Greek: *palmarium* and *\*recala*», *Glotta* 86, pp. 63-92.
- 2011 Fernando Echeverría Rey, «Taktikè Téchnè. The Neglected Element in Classical

- Hoplite Battles», *Ancient Society*, 41, 2011, pp. 45-82.
- 2013 Anna Busetto, «La Tattica di Arriano tra filologia, letteratura ed epigrafia», in V. Gheller (ed.), *Ricerche a confronto. Dialoghi di Antichità Classiche e del Vicino Oriente (Bologna-Trento, 2011)*, Vicenza, Edizioni Saecula, 2013, pp. 186-194, 200-201.
- 2013 Antonis Tsakmakis / Melina Tamiolaki (eds.), *Thucydides Between History and Literature* [Volume 17 in the series Trends in Classics - Supplementary Volumes], Berlin / Boston, De Gruyter, 2013. Eds. «Introduction» (p. ix). I. IDEAS OF HISTORY: Kurt A. Raaflaub, «*Ktèma es aiei*: Thucydides' Concept of "Learning through History" and Its Realization in His Work» (p. 3). Mathieu de Bakker, «Character Judgements in the Histories: their Function and Distribution» (p. 23). Melina Tamiolaki, «Ascribing Motivation in Thucydides. Between Historical Research and Literary Representation» (p. 41). Paul Demont, «The Causes of the Athenian Plague and Thucydides» (p. 73). II. REPRESENTATIONS OF TIME AND SPACE: Jonas Grethlein, «The Presence of the Past in Thucydides» (p. 91). Tim Rood, «The Cylon Conspiracy: Thucydides and the Uses of the Past» (p. 119). Roberto Nicolai, «*kat' éthne kai katà póleis*. From Catalogues to Archaeology» (p. 139). Marek Węcowski, «In the Shadow of Pericles: Athens' Samian Victory and the Organisation of the Pentekontaetia in Thucydides» (p. 153). Vassiliki Pothou, «Transformation of Landscapes in Thucydides» (p. 167). III. THUCYDIDES AND POLITICS: Sarah Brown Ferrario, «"Reading" Athens: Foreign Perceptions of the Political Roles of Athenian Leaders in Thucydides» (p. 181). Suzanne Saïd, «Thucydides and the Masses» (p. 199). Panos Christodoulou, «Thucydides' Pericles. Between Historical Reality and Literary Representation» (p. 225). IV. ASPECTS OF THE NARRATIVE: June Allison, «The Balance of Power and Compositional Balance: Thucydides Book 1» (p. 257). Paula Debnar, «Blurring the Boundaries of Speech: Thucydides and Indirect Discourse» (p. 271). Anna A. Lamari, «Making Meaning: Cross-references and their Interpretation in Thucydides' Sicilian Narrative» (p. 287). Hans-Peter Stahl, «The Dot on the 'i': Thucydidean Epilogues» (p. 309). Nikos Miltsios, The Narrative Legacy of Thucydides: Polybius, Book I (p. 329). V. THE LANGUAGE OF THUCYDIDES: Pierre Pontier, «The litotes of Thucydides» (p. 353). Rutger J. Allan, «History as Presence. Time, Tense and Narrative Modes in Thucydides» (p. 371). Antonis Tsakmakis / Charalambos Themistokleous, «Textual Structure and Modality in Thucydides' Military Exhortations» (p. 391). Maria Pavlou, «Attributive Discourse in the Speeches in Thucydides» (p. 409). Jonathan J. Price, «Difficult Statements in Thucydides» (p. 435). Daniel P. Tompkins, «The Language of Pericles» (p. 447). List of Contributors (p. 465). Bibliography (p. 471). *Index nominum et rerum* (p. 505). *Index locorum* (p. 519).
- 2014 Francesca Gazzano / Giusto Traina, «Plutarque historien militaire?», *Ktèma: civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques*, N°39, 2014, pp. 347-370.
- 2015 Vincenzo Bellini, *Alia ratio. Cesare e la guerriglia*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2015.
- 2015 Yann Le Bohec (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Roman Army*, Wiley, 2015. «Strategy: Republic (Luigi Loreto); Principate (Adolfo Raúl Menéndez Argüín). Late Empire

- (Martin Nicasie)». «*Stratagem: Republic* (Kaja Harter Uibopuu), *Principate* (Adolfo Raúl Menéndez Argüín); *Late Empire* (Philip Rance)». «*Writers: Republic* (Maria Teresa Schettino); *Principate* (Brian Campbell); *Late Empire* (Philip Rance)».
- 2015 Conor Whately, «The Genre and Purpose of Military Manuals in Late Antiquity», in Geoffrey Greatrex / Hugh Elton (Eds.), *Shifting genres in late antiquity*, Shifting Frontiers X, Farnham, Surrey, Ashgate, 2015, pp. 249-261.
- 2017 Kai Brodersen (Hg), *Arrianus Asclepiodotus, Die Kunst der Taktik: Griechisch – deutsch*, Sammlung Tusculum, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2017.
- 2017 Frances Muecke / Maurizio Campanelli (eds.), *The Invention of Rome. Biondo Flavio's Roma Triumphans and its Worlds*, Droz, 2017.
- 2017 Peter Green, «Caesar and Alexander: Aemulatio, Imitatio, Comparatio», *American Journal of Ancient History*, edited by Ernst Badian, Piscataway, NJ, USA, Gorgias Press, 2017, pp. 1-26
- 2017 Timothy Howe / Sabine Müller / Richard Stoneman (Eds.), *Ancient Historiography on War and Empire*, Oxbow Books (Casemate academics), 2017. 1 Mark Munn «Why history? On the emergence of historical writing»(p. 2). 2 Eran Almagor, «The political and the divine in Achaemenid royal inscriptions»(p. 26). 3 Josef Wiesehöfer, «Cyrus the Great and the sacrifices for a dead king» (p. 55). 4 Frances Pownall, «The horse and the stag: Philistus' view of tyrants» (p. 62). 5 William Greenwalt, «Alexander II of Macedon» (p. 80). 6 Waldemar Heckel / Timothy Howe / Sabine Müller, «'The giver of the bride, the bridegroom, and the bride': a study of the murder of Philip II and its aftermath» (p. 92). 7 Franca Landucci Gattinoni, «Royal tombs and cult of the dead kings in Early Hellenistic Macedonia» (p. 125). 8 Maxim M. Kholod. «The financial administration of Asia Minor under Alexander the Great: an interpretation of two passages from Arrian's Anabasis» (p. 136). 9 Hugh Bowden, «The Eagle has landed: divination in the Alexander historians» (p. 149). 10 Jacek Rzepka, «The casualty figures of Alexander's army» (p. 169). 11 Olga Palagia, «Alexander's battles against Persians in the art of the Successors» (p. 177). 12 Richard Stoneman, « how the hoopoe got his crest: reflections on Megasthenes' stories of India» (p. 188). 13 Aleksandra Kłęczar, «Creating the king: the image of Alexander the Great in 1 Maccabees, 1–10» (p. 200). 14 Rebecca Frank, «The hero vs. the tyrant: legitimate and illegitimate rule in the Alexander-Caesar pairing» (p. 210). 15 Elias Koulakiotis, «Plutarch's Alexander, Dionysos and the metaphysics of power» (p. 226). 16 Sabine Müller, «The artistic king: reflections on a Topos in Second Sophistic Historiography» (p. ). 17 Sulochana Asirvatham, «Flattery, history, and the Πεπαιδευμένος» (p. 262).
- 2017 Philip Rance / Nicholas Sekunda (eds.), *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*. Gdańsk: Akanthina, 2017. Ph. Rance, «Introduction» (p. 9). Burkhard Meißner, «Early Greek Strategic and Tactical Teaching and Literature» (p. 65). Hans Michael Schellenberg, «Reflections on the Military Views of the 'Military Writer' Aeneas Tacticus» (p. 81). Bogdan Burliga, «Tactical Issues in Aeneas 'Tacticus'» (p. 94). Alexander Nefedkin, «The Classification of Greco-

- Macedonian Cavalry in Ancient *Taktika* and in Modern Literature» (p. 107). Nicholas Sekunda, «Cavalry Organisation in the *Taktika* : the *Tarantinarchia*» (p. 116). Bogdan Burliga, «Asclepiodotus’ τοῖς γε σώμασιν ἐπιβρίθοντες ( *Taktika* 5.2) and Polybius’ τῷ τοῦ σώματος βάρει (18.30.1-4)» (p. 123). Hans Michael Schellenberg, «A Short Bibliographical Note on the Arabic Translation of Aelian’s *Tactica Theoria* » (p. 135). Jacek Rzepka, «Polyaenus and the Creation of the Hellenistic Monarchy» (p. 141). Sławomir Sprawski, «Alexander at Tempe: Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 4.3.23» (p. 152). Pierre O. Juhel, «The Rank Insignia of the Officers of the Macedonian Phalanx: the Lessons of Iconography and an Indirect Reference in Vegetius» (p. 167). Radosław A. Gawroński, «The Javelins used by the Roman Cavalry of the Early Principate in Archaeological Contexts and Written Sources» (p. 180). Wojciech Brillowski, «The Principles of *ars tactica* : Roman Military Theory and Practice in Arrian’s *Acies contra Alanos* » (p. 195). Philip Rance, «Maurice’s *Strategicon* and ‘the Ancients’: the Late Antique Reception of Aelian and Arrian» (p. 217). Keith Roberts, «The Practical Use of Classical Texts for Modern War in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries» (p. 256). Richard Brzezinski, «The Influence of Classical Military Texts in Early Modern Poland: a Survey» (p. 282).
- 2017 Juan Carlos Iglesias-Zoido, Victoria Pineda (Eds.), *Anthologies of Historiographical Speeches from Antiquity to Early Modern Times: Rearranging the Tesserae*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2017. 5 Immacolata Eramo, «A Word from the General: Ambrosianus B119 sup. and Protreptic Speeches in Byzantine Military Manuals» (pp. 97-114). 7 Juan Carlos Iglesias-Zoido, «The Byzantine Influence: Heredia’s Tucídides and the *Contiones Thucydidis* of Lapo da Castiglionchio» (p. 136). 10 Id., «Remigio Nannini’s *Orationi Militari*» (p. 194). 12. Victoria Pineda, «François de Belleforest’s Harangues militaires» (p. 238). 15 Xavier Tubau, «Modern History in Nannini’s and Belleforest’s Anthologies» (p. 300). 16 Ida Gilda Mastrorosa, «Oratory and Political Debate in the Last Decades of the Roman Republic: Cassius Dio’s Reconstruction (with Some Notes from Remigio Nannini’s *Orationi Militari*)» (p. 319). 17 Robert D. Black, «A Humanist History in the Italian Vernacular: The Speeches in Machiavelli’s Florentine Histories» (p. 339). Juan Carlos Iglesias-Zoido and Victoria Pineda, «Appendix: *Contiones*. Printed Anthologies of Speeches (1471–1699)».
- 2017 Maria Pretzler / Nick Barley (eds.), Brill Companion to Aineias Tacticus, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2017. 1 Eds. Introduction (p. 1). 2 David Whitehead, The Other Aineias’ (p. 14). 3 Robin Lane Fox, Aineias the Author: Who, Where and When? (p. 33). D. Graham J. Shipley, Aineias Tacticus in His Intellectual Context (p. 49). 5 Maria Pretzler, Aineias and History: The Purpose and Context of *Historica* in the *Poliorketika* (p. 68). 6 José Vela Tejada, Creating *Koine*: Aineias Tacticus in the History of the Greek Language (p. 96). 7 Peter Liddell, Writing and Other Forms of Communication in Aineias’ *Poliorketika* (p. 123). 8 Maria Pretzler, The Polis Falling Apart: Aineias Tacticus and *Stasis* (p. 146). 9 Marco Bettalli, Greek Poleis and Warfare in the Fourth Century BC: Aineias *Poliorketika* (p. 166). Nick Barley, Light Infantry and Leadership in Aineias (p. 182). 11 James Roy, The Mercenaries in Aineias Tacticus (p. 206). 12 Philip de Souza (Raiders from the Sea: The Maritime Context of the

Poliorketika (p. 214). 13 Ben Gourley, Notes from Home: A Perspective on Fourth-Century Defence from Arkadian Stymphalos (p. 229). 14 Tracey E. Rihll, Technology in Aineias Tacticus: Simple and Complex (p. 265). Philip Rance, The Reception of Aineias' Poliorketika in Byzantine Literature (p. 290-372).

- 2018 Kenneth Royce Moore (ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2018. PART 1 ANCIENT GREEK, ROMAN AND PERSIAN RECEPTIONS: 1 K.R. Moore, Framing the Debate (p. 3). 2 Elias Koulakiotis, Attic Orators on Alexander the Great (p. 41). 3 Sabine Müller, The Reception of Alexander's Father Philip II of Macedon (p. 72). 4 John Holton, The Reception of Alexander in the Ptolemaic Dynasty (p. 96). 5 Giuseppe Squillace, Alexander after Alexander: Macedonian Propaganda and Historical Memory in Ptolemy and Aristobulus' Writings (p. 119). 6 Olga Palagia, The Reception of Alexander in Hellenistic Art (p. 140). 7 Shane Wallace, Metalexandron: Receptions of Alexander in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds (p. 162). 8 Jake Nabel, Alexander between Rome and Persia: Politics, Ideology, and History (p. 197). 9 James Mullen, Beyond Persianization: The Adoption of Near Eastern Traditions by Alexander the Great (p. 233). 10 Kyle Erickson, Sons of Heracles: Antony and Alexander in the Late Republic (p. 254). 11 Federicomaria Muccioli, The Ambivalent Model: Alexander in the Greek World between Politics and Literature (1st Century BC / beg. 1st Century AD) (p. 275). 12 Dawn L. Gilley, The Latin Alexander: Constructing Roman Identity (p. 304). 13 Giulio Celotto, Alexander the Great in Seneca's Works and in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (p. 325). 14 Sulochana R. Asirvatham, Plutarch's *Alexander* (p. 355). PART 2 LATER RECEPTIONS IN THE NEAR- AND FAR-EAST AND THE ROMANCE TRADITION: 15 Aleksandra Klęczar, Alexander in the Jewish tradition: From Second Temple Writings to Hebrew Alexander Romances (p. 379). 16 Meir Ben Shahar, Jews, Samaritans and Alexander: Facts and Fictions in Jewish Stories on the Meeting of Alexander and the High Priest (p. 403). 17 Agnieszka Wojciechowska and Krzysztof Nawotka, The Reception of Alexander the Great in Roman, Byzantine and Early Modern Egypt (p. 427). 18 Corinne Jouanno, Byzantine Views on Alexander the Great (p. 449). 19 Jaakkojuhani Peltonen, Church Fathers and the Reception of Alexander the Great (p. 477). 20 Barbara Blythe, Medieval and Renaissance Italian Receptions of the Alexander Romance Tradition (p. 503). 21 Krzysztof Nawotka, Syriac and Persian Versions of the Alexander Romance (p. 525). PART 3 "MODERN" AND POSTMODERN RECEPTIONS: 22 Agnieszka Fulińska, Alexander and Napoleon (p. 545). 23 Rachel Mairs, The Men Who Would be Alexander: Alexander the Great and His Graeco-Bactrian Successors in the Raj (p. 576). 24 Josef Wiesehöfer, Receptions of Alexander in Johann Gustav Droysen (p. 596). 25 Elizabeth Baynham and Terry Ryan, "The Unmanly Ruler": Bagoas, Alexander's Eunuch Lover, Mary Renault's *The Persian Boy*, and Alexander Reception (p. 615). 26 Reinhold Bichler, Alexander's Image in German, Anglo-American and French Scholarship from the Aftermath of World War I to the Cold War (p. 640). 27 Alastair J.L. Blanshard, Alexander as Glorious Failure: The Case of Robert Rossen's *Alexander the Great* (1956) (p. 675). 28 Margaret E. Butler, *Go East, Young Man: Adventuring in the Spirit of Alexander* (p. 694). 29 Alex McAuley,

- The Great Misstep: Alexander the Great, Thais, and the Destruction of Persepolis (p. 717). 30 Jason W. Warren, Avoiding Nation Building in Afghanistan: An Absent Insight from Alexander (p.739).31 Ada Cohen, The Artist as Art Historian: Some Modern Works on Alexander (p. 754). 32 Guendalina D. M. Taietti, Alexander the Great Screaming Out for Hellenicity: Greek Songs and Political Dissent (p. 795). 33 Alexandra F. Morris, The Conscience of the King: Alexander the Great and the Ancient Disabled (p. 825).
- 2018 Philip Rance, «Late Byzantine Elites and Military Literature: Authors, Readers and Manuscripts (c.1050-c.1450)», in Georgios Theotokis / Aysel Yıldız (eds), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2018.
- 2019 Oleg L. Gabelko / Eugene G. Teytelbaum, «Waged war not only on men but also on Gods: Polybius' views on religious crimes in military conflicts of the graecoroman world», *Anabasis. Studia classica et orientalia*, 10, 2019, pp. 309-325. [Idd., «Polybius' views on religious crimes in military conflicts of the Hellenistic states» (in Russian), *Journal of Historical, Philological and Cultural Studies*, Moscow, issue 21, 2008, pp. 222-233].
- 2019 *Le Traité d'art équestre de Xénophon: Modernité ou altérité?*, Colloque, Paris, 2019. Jacques Clément, «Les cultures équestres grecques au IVe s. av. J.-C.: Xénophon était-il un homme de son temps?»: Alexandre Blaineau, «La réception de l'Art équestre de Xénophon».
- 2019 *Plutarque et la guerre*, *HiMA* N. 6, 2019. Francesca Gazzano, Giusto Traina, Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, Plutarco e la guerra: ragioni e bilancio di un seminario (p. 9). RÉALITÉ ET IDÉAL DE LA GUERRE CHEZ PLUTARQUE: Pascal Payen, La tradition critique sur la guerre dans les *Vies Parallèles*: problèmes de narration et dénonciation (p. 17). Luisa Prandi, Plutarco, gli storici e la guerra: per un commento ad *Alex.*, 1, 2 (μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυρίονεκροί καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγιστα καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων) (p. 37). Roberto Nicolai, I discorsi militari nelle *Vite parallele* di Plutarco (p. 55). Lia Ra□aella Cresci, La τόλμα del comandante nelle *Vite* plutarchee: virtù o vizio? (p. 79). Maria Teresa Schettino, Les vertus militaires de l'homme d'État dans les *Vies romaines* de Plutarque (p. 95). Jean-Marie Kowalski, Blessures physiques, blessures psychiques chez Plutarque (p. 111). TACTIQUE ET STRATÉGIE MILITAIRE CHEZ PLUTARQUE: Jean-Nicolas Corvisier, Les risques du métier de général dans le monde de Plutarque (p. 131). Matteo Zaccarini, «La più grande e bella tra le gesta». Plutarco e la monomachia (p. 151). Simone Podestà, La Grecia e la gloria sul mare: naumachie nelle *Vite* greche del V secolo a.C. (p. 171). L'HISTOIRE MILITAIRE CHEZ PLUTARQUE: Francesco Mari, La legge navale del 483/2 nella *Vita di Temistocle* di Plutarco. Dalla strategia bellica nella guerra contro Egina alla *leadership* politica in Atene (p. 191). Cinzia Bearzot, La continuazione della guerra contro la Persia dopo il 478 nella tradizione plutarchea (p. 209). Federicomaria Muccioli, Lo scontro di Alessandro con i Malli in Plutarco. Realtà storica e deformazione (p. 223). Marco Enrico, Dioniso alla guerra: Demetrio Poliorcete secondo Plutarco (p. 247). Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, La place de la trahison de Damotélès dans le récit plutarchéen de la défaite de Cléomène III de Sparte lors de la bataille de Sellasie (p. 263). Lucia Visonà, Les campagnes parthiques

romaines dans les *Vies Parallèles* (p. 279). Maxime Bouteau, Plutarque et l'Arménie: une barbarité exacerbe (p. 295-308).

- 2019 Immacolata Eramo, articles in Giusto Traina (dir.), *Mondes en guerre*. Tome I, *De la préhistoire au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Passés Composés, 2019: «Les manuels militaires chinois» (pp. 143-150); «Le début de la littérature militaire grecque» (pp. 220-221); «Les manuels hellénistiques de poliorcétique» (pp. 264-265); «La littérature militaire d'époque romaine» (pp. 357-369); «La guerre en Chine : la littérature stratégique» (pp. 389-391); «Pratique et théorie de la guerre dans l'Empire tardif. Les manuels militaires» (pp. 433-440); «La Chine et les Mongols. Les manuels militaires» (pp. 584-585); «La littérature militaire à Byzance» (pp. 683-694).
- 2020 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. J.T. Chlup – C. Whately, 'Introduction: the ancient military treatise, genre, and history' (p. 1). C. Whately, 'Military manuals from Aeneas Tacticus to Maurice: origins, scholarship, genre, audience, and history' (p. 17). Hans Michael Schellenberg, 'The limited source value of works of military literature' (p. 39). Nadya Williams, 'The blind leading the blind? Civilian writers and audiences of military manuals in the Roman world' (p. 55). Nicholas Sekunda, Homeric *Taktika* (p. 78). Graham Wrightson, 'Aeneas Tacticus, Philon of Byzantium, Onasander and the good siege: a case-study of Demetrius at Rhodes' (p. 99). Aaron L. Beek, 'Mercenaries and moral concerns' (p. 121). Lucy Felmingham-Cockburn, 'Xenophon's *On Horsemanship*: the equestrian military manual' (p. 136). Jeffrey Rop, 'Refighting Cunaxa: Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* as a manual on military leadership' (p. 153). Murray Dahm, 'The lost *Tactica* of Lucius Papirius Paetus' (p. 172). J.T. Chlup, 'Defeat as stratagem: Frontinus on Cannae' (p. 183). 11 Jonathan Warner, «Vegetius' *regulae bellorum generales*» (p. 199). 12 Craig H. Caldwell, «Vegetius' naval appendix and the Battle of the Hellespont (324 CE)» (p. 216). 13 Clemens Koehn, «Justinian's warfare as role model for Byzantine warfare?: the evidence of the military manuals» (p. 229). 14 Meredith L.D. Riedel, «God has sent the thunder': ideological distinctives of middle Byzantine military manuals» (p. 246). 15 Immacolata Eramo, «Epilogue: is war an art? The past, present, and future of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine military literature» (p. 265-289). Review by Philip Rance, *Byzantine Review*, 3, 2021, pp. 267-287.
- 2021 Immacolata Eramo, «Precetti per gestire l'imperium. Per una rilettura di Onasandro, Strategikos, proemio 1», *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, vol. 47, n° 2, 2021, pp. 239-250.
- 2021 Elena Santagati, *Filone di Bisanzio, Μηχανική Σύνταξις*. I: La costruzione delle mura. II: L'approvvigionamento della città assediata, Roma, Edizioni Quasar, 2021 /2023.
- 2021 Olivier Devillers / Breno Battistin Sebastiani (dir.), *Sources et modèles des historiens anciens*, 2, Scripta Antiqua 145, Université Bordeaux-Montagne, Ausonius, 2021. Andrea Gianotti, «Per un'analisi intertestuale delle fonti della battaglia di Delio:

- Tucidide (4.89-99) e le *Supplici* di Euripide (650-730)» (p. 31). Eugene Teytelbaum, «Between Historiographical Tradition and Reality: Siege Accounts in Polybius' *Histories*» (p. 157). Virginia Fabrizi, «I limiti dell'epica: il *topos* del duello singolare negli *Ab Vrbe condita* di Livio» (p. 167). Nelson Horn, «La construction de l'image d'Alexandre le Grand par Trogue Pompée / Justin : perspectives morales et politiques» (p. 195). Juan Carlos Iglesias-Zoido, «Las arengas de Eleazar y el asedio de Masada en Flavio Josefo: ¿una crítica a los excesos de la retórica?» (p. 227). Emanuele Berti, «Alessandro e l'Oceano. Modelli declamatori nelle *Historiae Alexandri Magni* di Curzio Rufo e nell'*Anabasi* di Arriano» (p. 249). Victoria E. Pagan, Tacitus and the Massacre at Tarracina (*Hist.*, 3.76-77)» (p. 285). Francois Porte, «Cn. Pompeius Magnus *Cunctator* ? La stratégie de Pompée face à César en 48 et le paradigme stratégique de la *cunctatio* chez Plutarque et chez Appien» (p. 307). Murray Dahm, «The Military Handbook of Festus: A New Look at the *Breuiarium*» (p. 403).
- 2022 Eugene G. Teytelbaum, «Polybian Views on Tactics: The Problem of Traditions and Innovations» (in Russian), *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii (Journal of Ancient History)*, Vol. 82, issue 2, 2022, pp. 329-345.
- 2022 Michael Hanaghan/David Woods (eds.), *Ammianus Marcellinus from Soldier to Author* (Historiography of Rome and Its Empire 16), Leiden/Boston, Brill 2022. Eds, Introduction (p. 1). PART I AMMIANUS' TEXT: 1 Gavin Kelly, « Why We Need a New Edition of Ammianus Marcellinus» (p. 19). PART II AMMIANUS' MILITARY EXPERIENCE: 2 Maxime Emion, «Ammianus and the *dignitas protectoris*» (p. 61). 3 Philip Rance, «*Simplicitas militaris*: Ammianus Marcellinus and *sermo castrensis*» (p. 83). 4 Conor Whately, «Ammianus' Identification of Named Legions and Its Literary Significance» (p. 140). 5 Michael Wuk, «*Religionibus firmis iuramenta constricta?* Ammianus and the *sacramentum militiae*» (p. 170). 6 Jeroen Wijnendaele, «Ammianus on Mallobaudes and Magnus Maximus: A Response to Theodosian Discourse?» (p. 204). PART III AMMIANUS' LITERARY AIMS AND MODELS: 7 Ted Lendon, « The Face of Convention: Battle and Siege Description in Ammianus Marcellinus» (p. 231). 8 Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz, «The Literary Function of Ammianus' Criticisms of Military *luxuria*» (p. 262). 9 Sigrid Mratschek, «*Coturni terribilis fabula* (Amm. Marc. 28.6.29): The Goddess of Justice and the Death of Theodosius the Elder» (p. 287). 10 Moysés Marcos, «*Ille ut fax uel incensus malleolus*: Ammianus and His Swift Narration of Julian's Balkan Itinerary in 361 CE» (p. 325). 11 Agnese Bargagna, «The Depiction of the Common Soldier (*miles*) in Ammianus and Tacitus and the Intertextual Background of the *Res gestae*» (p. 357). 12 Guy Williams, «Xenophon and Ammianus: Two Soldier-Historians and Their Persian Expeditions» (pp. 377–402).
- 2022 Francesco Fiorucci, «Poliorketik und Mechanik», in Bernard Zimmermann / Antonios Rengakos (Hgg.), *Handbuch der griechischen Literatur der Antike*, Bd. II: *Die Literatur der Klassischen und Hellenistischen Zeit*, München 2022, pp. 591-610.
- 2022 Francesco Fiorucci, «Militärwesen», in Bernard Zimmermann / Antonios Rengakos (Hgg.), *Handbuch der griechischen Literatur der Antike*, Bd. III 1: *Die pagane Literatur der Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, München 2022, pp. 534-560.

- 2022 Mamuka Tsurtsunia, «De velitatione bellica and the Georgian Art of War During the Reign of David IV», *Journal of Medieval Military History*, 20, 2022, pp.
- 2023 François Santoni, «Imitatio, aemulatio, comparatio Alexandri: usages et mésusages», *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 49/2, 2023, 243-258.
- 2023 Anna Busetto, *La sezione romana della Tattica di Arriano*, Roma, Tab edizioni, 2023. Ead., «Not so elementary my dear Arrian. Tackling a *locus desperatus* in Arrian's *Tactica*», *International Ancient Warfare Conference*, LVR-Landesmuseum Bonn, 22-24 Juni 2023.
- 2024 Olivier Devillers / Breno Battistin Sebastiani (dir.), *Sources et modèles des historiens anciens*, 3, Scripta Antiqua 182, Université Bordeaux-Montagne, Ausonius, 2024. Murray Dahm, «The chronology and contexts of Greek *Tactica*» (p. 9). Paulo Donoso Johnson, «La guerre irregular durante la Guerra del Peloponeso. Algunos ejemplos en el libro 3 de Tucídides» (p. 51); Lucia Sano, «The War of Cyrus: Homeric reception in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*» (p. 61). Cinzia Bearzot, «L' Alcibiade di Tucídide/Senofonte e l' Alcibiade di Diodoro» (p. 85). Eugene G. Teytelbaum, «Land battles in Polybius' *Histories*: General characteristics and the determinants of» (p. 125); C. W. Oughton, «A battle of exemplarity and narratorial self-reference at Livy's Zama» (p. 137); Aske Damtoft Poulsen, «Rebels without a cause: Echoes of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* in Tacitus' account of the Gallic rebellion of AD 21 (*Ann.* 3.40-47)» (p. 221).
- 2024 Francesco Fiorucci (ed.), *La scienza militare antica – Das antike Militärwesen. Autori, opere e loro fortuna – Autoren, Werke und ihr Nachleben* (Reihe Paradeigmata), Baden-Baden, Rombach Wissenschaft, 2024. José Vela-Tejada (Eneas el Táctico: un estratega y táctico del siglo iv aec, p. 9); Francesco Fiorucci (Contributi al testo di Bitone, p. 39); Anna Busetto (Un passo arrianeo ›programmatico‹: riflessioni su *tact.* 32, 2–3m p. 67); Philip Rance (*Vegetius graecus*: a late antique Greek translation of Vegetius' *Regulae bellorum generales*, Epitoma rei militaris 3.26, p. 77); Georgios Chatzelis (Byzantine Education and Military Manuals: Military, Intellectual and Moral Edification in Byzantium, p. 111); Immacolata Eramo (Su alcuni momenti della ricezione dei manuali militari tattici greci nell'età moderna, p. 155).
- 2024 Conor Whately (ed.), *Military Literature in the Medieval Roman World and Beyond*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2024. C. Whately, Introduction (p.1). PART 1 LATE ANTIQUE WORLD: 1 Michael B. Charles, «Using Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris* as a Source for Late Antiquity Some Reflections on Methodology» (p. 29). 2 Pierre Cosme and Maxime Emion, «Tribunes and Prefects of Legions according to Vegetius» (p. 49). 3 Catharine Hof, Building in and by Military Manuals in Late Antiquity Reverse-Reading Traditional and Innovative Features from City Walls in the Roman East (p. 76). 4 Łukasz Rózycki, Bravado on the Battlefield. A Study of Late Antique Roman Military Treatises (p. 130). PART 2 THE MEDIEVAL ROMAN WORLD: 5 Michael Whitby, *The Strategikon* of Maurice (p. 151). 6 Immacolata Eramo, «Authorship in Byzantine Military Literature» (p. 174). 7 Katharina Schoneveld, «Manuscript Illuminations in Military Manuals» (p. 204). 8 Nadya Williams, «Dwarfs Fighting on the Shoulders of Giants. The Legacy of Greek and Roman Military Manuals in the Byzantine

- Empire » (p. 237). 9 Georgios Chatzelis, «Wars and Cultural Wars. The Military, Cultural and Ideological Background to the Emergence of Byzantine Military Treatises (c. 800–1100)» (p. 255). 10 Savvas Kyriakidis, «The Reading of Military Manuals in Byzantium from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Centuries» (p. 300). PART 3 BEYOND THE ROMAN WORLD: 11 David A. Graff, «Medieval Contributions to Chinese Military Thought» (p. 325). 12 Michael S. Fulton, «Medieval Mechanical Artillery ‘Treatises’» (p. 345). 13 John D. Hosler, Writing and Warfighting II. John of Salisbury’s Policraticus to the Eighteenth Century» (p. 368). PART 4 CONCLUSION: 14 Georgios Theotokis, «Timeless Principles of War and the Vertical Transmission of Military Knowledge through the *Taktika*» (p. 401). John Haldon, Epilogue (p. 437). Index (p. 447). Review by Gabriele Brusa (*Nuova Antologia Militare*, No. 21, March 2021, pp. 335-341).
- 2024 David M. Pritchard (ed.), *The Athenian Funeral Oration. After Nicole Loraux*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024. D. M. Pritchett, «The Funeral Oration after Loraux» [p. 1]. PART I: CONTEXTS: 2. Nicole Loraux, «The ‘Beautiful Death’ from Homer to Democratic Athens» [p. 59]. 3. Vincent Azoulay / Paulin Ismard, «Between Ideology and the Imaginary: The Invention of The Invention of Athens» [p. 74]. 4. Nathan T. Arrington, «An Imaginary with Images: Reconsidering the Funeral Oration and Material Culture» [p. 89]. PART II: THE HISTORICAL SPEECHES: 5. Bernd Steinbock, «The Epitaphios Logos of Pericles: Thucydides’ Ambivalence towards the Genre» [p. 115]. 6. Leonhard Burckhardt, «Demosthenes after the Defeat» [p. 140]. 7. Judson Herrman, «Tradition in Hyperides’ Funeral Oration» [p. 157]. PART III THE LITERARY EXAMPLES: 8. Johannes Wienand, «Gorgias’ Funeral Oration» [p. 181]. 9. Alastair J. L. Blanshard, «Authorship and Ideology in Lysias’ Funeral Oration» [p. 198]. 10. Ryan K. Balot, «Corrupting the Youth in Plato’s Menexenus» [p. 221]. 11. Thomas G. M. Blank, «‘To Gloat Over Our Catastrophes’: Isocrates on Commemorating the War Dead» [p. 241]. PART IV INTERTEXTUALITY: 12. Peter Hunt, «Imagining Athens in the Assembly» [p. 261]. 13. Jason Crowley, «Fighting Talk: War’s Human Cost in Drama and Law-Court Speeches» [p. 280]. 14. Sophie Mills, «Making Athens Great Again: Tragedy and the Funeral Oration» [p. 298]. 15. Johanna Hanink, «Euripides’ Erechtheus and the Athenian Catalogue of Exploits: How a Tragic Plot Shaped the Funeral Oration» [p. 319]. 16. Bernhard Zimmermann, «‘Back Then When the Barbarians Came’: Old Comedy and the Funeral Oration [p. 339]. PART V THE LANGUAGE OF DEMOCRACY: 17. Dominique Lenfant, «The Funeral Oration as a Self-Portrait of Athenian Democracy» [p. 357]. 18. D. M. Pritchard, «Sailors in the Funeral Oration and Beyond [p. 376]. 19. Neville Morley, «‘Freedom Is the Sure Possession’: Modern Receptions of Pericles’ Funeral Oration» [p. 414].
- 2025 Philip Rance, *The Roman Art of War in Late Antiquity: The Strategikon of the Emperor Maurice, A Translation with Commentary and Codicological, Textual and Historical Studies*, Vol. 1: Translation and Commentary, with Manuscript Studies; Vol. 2: Textual and Historical Studies, Routledge, 2025.

## §. 4

*Militaris Prudentia*History and Epistemology of  
Military Classicism (XV-XVIII centuries)

- 1903 John Edwin Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship. From the End of the Sixth Century B.C. to the End of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1903 (repr. 2011).
- 1905 Gaetano De Sanctis, «La guerra e la pace nell'antichità», *Annuario della Reale Università di Torino* 1904-1905, pp. 14-37.
- 1918 Eduard Meyer, «Vorläufer des Weltkriegs im Altertum», *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1918, pp. 18-43 = *Kleine Schriften* II, Halle, 1924, pp. 533-544.
- 1941 Werner Hahlweg, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier und die Antike. Studien zur Geschichte des Kriegswesens der Niederlande, Deutschlands, Frankreichs, Englands, Italiens, Spaniens und der Schweiz vom Jahre 1589 bis zum Dreißigjährigen Krieg*, Berlin, Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1941 (an. Osnabrück, Biblio Verlag, 1987). Winfried Schulze, «Berichte und Kritik: Die Heeresreform der Oranier», *Zeitschrift Für Historische Forschung*, 1, 1974, Nr. 2, pp. 233-39. Werner Hahlweg, «Griechische, römische und byzantinische Erbe in den hinterlassenen Schriften des Markgrafen Georg Friedrich von Baden», *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 98, 1950, pp. 58-62.
- 1977 John Rigby Hale, «Printing and the Military Culture of Renaissance Venice», *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 8, 1977, pp. 21-62.
- 1979 Santo Mazzarino, «Vico, Holland and Modern Conceptions of History», *Quaderni Catanesi di Studi Classici e Medievali*, I, 2, 1979, pp. 355-372 (Written for lecture at Utrecht, April 28, 1979).
- 1980 Luciano Canfora, *Ideologie del Classicismo*, Torino, Einaudi, 1980.
- 1981 Virgilio Ilari, *Il diritto di guerra romano fra tradizione romanistica e giusnaturalismo*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1981.
- 1984 Massimiliano Pavan, «A proposito del giudizio di G. De Sanctis su Annibale», *Studi annibalici* (=Rivista storica dell'Antichità 13-14), 1983-84, p. 143-159.
- 1988 John Rigby Hale, «A Humanistic Visual Aid. The Military Diagram in the Renaissance», *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1988, pp. 280-98.
- 1985 Elmar Stolpe, *Klassizismus und Krieg: über den Historienmaler Jacques-Louis David*, Frankfurt, Campus, 1985.
- 1989 Luciano Canfora, *La Tolérance et la vertu. De l'usage politique de l'analogie*, (tr. Denise Fourgous), Paris, Desjonquères, 1989.

- 1990 Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist Und Moderner Staat Bei Justus Lipsius 1547-1606: Der Neustoizismus Als Politische Bewegung* (Studien Zur Geschichte Der Stadt Goettingen), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co, 1990.
- 1993 Jon Solomon (ed.), *Accessing Antiquity: The Computerization of Classical Studies*, University of Arizona Press, 1993. D. L. Clayman (ed.), *The Database of Classical Bibliography, Volume 1 Featuring L'Année Philologique. Volumes 47-58 (1976-1987)*. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1995. Review by T. C. Brennan, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 5, 1, 1996.
- 1994 John A. Lynn / George Satterfield, *A Guide to Sources In Early Modern European Military History In Midwestern Research Libraries*, 2nd Ed., Published for the Midwest Consortium on Military History By the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois, 1994.
- 1997 Jan Papy, «Justus Lipsius, Rome en de Romereis: zoektocht naar een oude mythe», *Kleio. Tijdschrift voor oude talen en antieke cultuur* N. S. 26, 1997, pp. 111-126.
- 1997 Frédérique Verrier, *Les Armes de Minerve. L'Humanisme militaire dans l'Italie du XVIème siècle*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997.
- 1998 Philippe Richardot, *Végèce et la culture militaire au moyen âge*, Economica, Paris 1998.
- 2000 Bruno Colson et Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *Pensée stratégique et humanisme: de la tactique des Anciens à l'éthique de la stratégie*, Paris, Economica, 2000.
- 2000 Marcello Fantoni (cur.), «Il Perfetto Capitano: storia e mitografia», in Id. (cur.), *Il 'Perfetto Capitano'. Immagini e realtà (secoli XV-XVII) = Atti dei seminari di studi* (Georgetown University a Villa 'Le Balze', Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali di Ferrara, 1995-1997), Roma, Bulzoni, 2000, pp. 15-66.
- 2000 Maurizio Bettini, «I classici nella bufera della modernità», in Cherchi, *Il canone alla fine del millennio* [on Classics in the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum*], Roma, Viella, 2000, pp. 75 ss.
- 2001 Pascal Payen, «Le recours analogique à l'Antiquité: problèmes et propositions pour une histoire comparée de la culture», *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique*, 102, 2001, pp. 5-24.
- 2001 Luigi Loreto, *Il bellum iustum e i suoi equivoci. Cicerone e una componente della rappresentazione romana del Völkerrecht antico*, (Storia politica costituzionale e militare del mondo antico, 1) Napoli, Jovene, 2001.
- 2001 Marc Fumaroli, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes, xviiè-xviiiè siècles*, précédé de *Les Abeilles et les araignées*, Postface de Jean-Robert Armogathe. Édition établie et annotée par Anne-Marie Lecoq, Paris, Gallimard, 2001. Marc Fumaroli, *Le Api e i ragni. La disputa degli Antichi e dei Moderni*, Roma: Adelphi, 2005.
- 2002 William K. Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Battle Speeches and a Palfrey*, Archaia Hellas, 9, Amsterdam, J. C. Gieben, 2002.
- 2002 Virgilio Ilari, «Imitatio, restitutio, utopia. La storia militare antica nel pensiero

- strategico moderno», in Marta Sordi (cur.), *Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco e romano*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2002, pp. 269-381.
- 2003 David A. Lupton, *Romans in a New World. Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003: 2016. Review Benjamin Straumann, «Ius Erat In Armis: The Roman and Spanish Empires and Their Discontents», *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Spring 2007, pp. 597-607.
- 2003 Geoffrey Parker, «From the House of Orange to the House of Bush: 400 years of Revolutions in military affairs», *Militaire Spectator*, Jrg 172, 4, 2003, pp. 177-193. Id., «The Limits to Revolutions in Military Affairs: Maurice of Nassau, the Battle of Nieuwpoort (1600), and the Legacy», *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (March 2007), pp. 331-372.
- 2004 Benjamin Straumann, «*Appetitus societatis* and *oikeiosis*: Hugo Grotius' Ciceronian Argument for Natural Law and Just War», *Grotiana*, New Series, Vol. 24/26, 2003/2004, pp. 41-66.
- 2004 Jean-Pierre Bois (dir.), *Dialogues militaires entre Anciens et Modernes*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004. Bois, «Avant-propos» (p. 11). Alexandre Blaineau, «Charge de cavalerie, choc ou esquive: sur un problème rencontré dans l'*Hipparque* de Xénophon» (p. 15). Pierre Mesplé, «Pour une relecture des stratégestes antiques: l'exemple du *Strategicos* d'Onosander» (p. 25). Jean-Nicolas Corvisier, «La guerre dans le roman grec» (p. 39). Isabelle Pimouguet-Pédarros, «L'exaltation du pouvoir royal dans la guerre de siège» (p. 53). P. Schneider, «Les éléphants des Lagides: de l'appropriation du mythe indien à l'amertume des réalités» (p. 73). Jean Peyras, «La marine romaine, arme d'élite méconnue: logistique, opérations combinées, interventions au sol» (p. 81). Laurent Fleuret, «La guerre antique: un jeu ? Quelques remarques à propos de la bataille du Mons Graupius (Tacite, *De uita lulii Agricola*, 36.1)» (p. 93). Laurent Fleuret, «Andrinople: choc tactique ou bataille malheureuse ? Quelques remarques à propos de la 'petite guerre' à l'époque romaine» (p. 101). Jean-Pierre Bois, «Guerre antique, guerre moderne: un dialogue nécessaire» (p. 117). Frédérique Verrier, «Les Discours sur la première décade de Tite-Live, un traité militaire en pointillé» (p. 131). Matthieu Lecoutre, «Villars, parangon de la guerre moderne» (p. 141). Damien Picherit, «Turpin de Crissé: dialogue avec les auteurs anciens (1754-1787)» (p. 151). Mickaël Guichaoua, «Lecture critique de Luttwak. La grande stratégie de l'Empire romain» (p. 169). Jean-Nicolas Corvisier, «Conclusions» (pp. 179-183).
- 2007 Stella Georgoudi, «Hommage à Jean-Pierre Vernant», *Kernos*, 20, 2007, pp. 12-16.
- 2007 Emilio Gabba, «Storia romana e critica storica nell'Europa dell'Illuminismo», in *Riflessioni storiografiche sul mondo antico*, Como, New Press, 2007, pp. 171-176.
- 2007 Craig W. Kallendorf (Ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, Wiley, 2007.
- 2008 Lorna Hardwick / Christopher Stray (Eds.), *A Companion to Classical Reception*, Wiley, 2008.
- 2008 Kelly DeVries, «Premodern military history bibliography new publications,

- 2003–2006», in Id., *A Cumulative Bibliography of Medieval Military History and Technology*, Update 2003-2006, Brill, 2008.
- 2008 Louis Ph. Sloos, *Warfare in the Age of Printing. Catalogue of Early Printed Books from before 1801 in Dutch Military Collections with Analytical Bibliographic Descriptions of 10,000 works*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2008, 3 voll. + Indices.
- 2009 Yann Le Bohec, *César, La guerre des Gaules, avec une Étude d'histoire militaire*, Paris, Economica, 2009: Id., «César et le *Bellum gallicum* : sources et objectifs (BG, I, 23-27)», in Sophie A. de Beaune (éd.), *Écrire le passé. la fabrique de l'histoire et de la préhistoire à travers les siècles*, Paris, CNRS, 2010, pp. 71-82.
- 2009 Marco Formisano, «The Renaissance Tradition of the Ancient Art of War», in Guido Beltramini (cur.), *Andrea Palladio e l'architettura della battaglia con le illustrazioni inedite alle storie di Polibio*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2009 pp.226-239.
- 2009 Guido Beltramini (Ed.), *Andrea Palladio e l'architettura della battaglia. Con le illustrazioni inedite alle Storie di Polibio*, Venezia: Marsilio, 2009. G. Beltramini, 'Palladio e le Storie di Polibio' (12). Stephen Parkin, 'Note sull' esemplare di Dell' imprese de' Greci... di Polibio (293.^20) presso la British Library' (78). 'Andrea Palladio. Testi e illustrazioni per le Storie di Polibio' (85). 'Andrea Palladio. Testi e illustrazioni per i Commentari di Giulio Cesare' (177). Marco Formisano, 'La tradizione dell' arte della guerra antica nel Rinascimento' (227). Luciano Pezzolo, 'Organizzazione bellica e ambiente militare nella Repubblica di Venezia' (240). Claudio Povolo, 'Onore e virtù in una Repubblica aristocratica del Cinquecento' (254). Francesco Paolo Fiore, 'Sebastiano Serlio e l' accampamento dei Romani' (272). Apparati (299).
- 2010 Benedict Kingsbury, Benjamin Straumann, «The State of Nature and Commercial Sociability in Early Modern International Legal Thought», *Grotiana*, New Series, Vol. 31, 2010, pp. 22-43.
- 2010 Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann, «State of Nature versus Commercial Sociability as the Basis of International Law: Reflections on the Roman Foundations and Current Interpretations of the International Political and Legal Thought of Grotius, Hobbes, and Pufendorf», in Samantha Besson, John Tasioulas (eds.), *Philosophy of International Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 33-52.
- 2011 Alberico Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans. A Critical Edition and Translation of De armis Romanis*, ed. by Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann, transl. by David Lupher, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 2011 David Lupher (Ed.), *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations. Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire*, Oxford /New York, Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 2011 Marco Formisano, «The Strategikós of Onasander. Taking Military Texts 'Seriously'», *Téchnai*, 2, 2011, pp. 57-70.
- 2011 Everett Wheeler, «Hugo Grotius and Aristotle's Lost Δικαιώματα πόλεμων: History's First Monograph on Just War», *Politica Antica* 1 (2011), pp. 141-170.
- 2011 Christopher Allmand, *The 'De Re Militari' of Vegetius. The Reception, Transmission*

- and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, 2011. (rev. Marco Formisano, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2012, 11, 59).
- 2012 Gastone Breccia, «La geometria di Marte. Polibio e Cesare nelle incisioni di Andrea Palladio: il volto rinascimentale della battaglia», in Vanna Maraglino (cur.), *Scienza antica in età moderna, Teoria e immagini*, Bari: Cacucci, 2012, pp. 139-158.
- 2012 Marco Formisano / Hartmut Böhme (eds.), *War in Words. Transformations of War from Antiquity to Clausewitz*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2012. Formisano, «Stuck in Panduria. Books and War» (pp. 1-12). Christof Baier / Ulrich Rheinisch, «Das römische Militärlager und die “ideale Stadt” der Neuzeit. Polybios, Machiavelli, Dürer, Serlio, Stevin und die Suche nach der idealen städtischen Raumordnung» (pp.127-156).
- 2012 Therese Schwager, *Militärtheorie im Späthumanismus: Kulturtransfer taktischer und strategischer Theorien in den Niederlanden und Frankreich (1590-1660)*, (Frühe Neuzeit, 160), Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2012.
- 2013 Elizabeth Sawyer, *The Reception of Thucydides in Contemporary America*, Trinity College, Oxford, Dr Th., 2013.
- 2013 Michel Pretalli, «Du bon usage des Anciens. L’espionnage technique chez les militaires italiens au XVIe siècle», dans *Le point de vue de l’autre. Relations culturelles et diplomatie*, Dialogues d’histoire ancienne, 9 suppl., Besançon, Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2013, pp. 231-249.
- 2014 Marco Formisano, «Kriegsliteratur», in M. Landfester (Hg.), *Der Neue Pauly. Supplementband Renaissance-Humanismus*, Darmstadt, WBG, 2014.
- 2014 Giovanna Daverio Rocchi (ed.), *Dalla concordia dei greci al bellum iustum dei moderni*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2014. Ed., «Premessa» (p. 9). *Prospettive dottrinali antiche e moderne*: Luciano Canfora, «Pace e guerra in Demostene» (p. 20). Brunello Vigezzi, «Tre variazioni e uno svolgimento: Croce, Grozio, Walzer e i problemi del ‘bellum justum’» (p. 22). *L’età greca e romana*: Giovanna Daverio Rocchi, «Le ragioni della concordia» (p. 40). Nikos Birgalis, «Peloponnesian War: Justice and Persuasion in the Orations of Thucydides» (p. 55). Paolo Butti de Lima, «Guerra e concordia nella comunità platonica» (p. 71). Daniele Foraboschi, «Guerra e pace a Roma» (p. 83). *L’eredità medievale e moderna*: Giorgio Chittolini, «Quando è giusta la ‘guerra privata’? Italia e Germania alla fine del medioevo» (p. 106). Marco Geuna, «Francisco de Vitoria e la questione della guerra giusta» (p. 143). Silvia Maria Pizzetti, «Progetto di una Dieta perpetua per mantenere la pubblica tranquillità nell’Europa del XVIII sec.» (p. 175). *L’età contemporanea*: Alessandro Colombo, «Ingerenza umanitaria, interventismo e guerra dopo il Novecento. Il discutibile trionfo della ‘guerra giusta’» (p. 200). Giovanni Scirocco, «L’intellettuale nel labirinto: Norberto Bobbio e la ‘guerra giusta’» (p. 219). Indice dei nomi (p. 232). Indice degli argomenti (p. 235).
- 2015 Christine Lee / Neville Morley, *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*, Wiley Blackwell Handbooks to Classical Reception, Chichester, Wiley, 2015. Lee / Morley, «Introduction» (p. 1). PART I SCHOLARSHIP, CRITICISM, AND EDUCATION: 1 Valérie Fromentin / Sophie Gotteland, «Thucydides’ Ancient Reputation» (p. 13). 2 Marianne

- Pade, «The Renaissance» (p. 26). 3 J. Carlos Iglesias-Zoido, «The Speeches of Thucydides and the Renaissance Anthologies» (p. 43). 4 Jeffrey S. Rusten, «Carving Up Thucydides» (p. 61). 5 Oliver Schelske, «Thucydides as an Educational Text» (p. 75). 6 Emily Greenwood, «On Translating Thucydides» (p. 91). PART II THUCYDIDES THE HISTORIAN : 7 Ellen O’Gorman, «Thucydides and His “Contemporaries”» (p. 125). 8 Francisco Murari Pires, «The Thucydidean Clio between Machiavelli and Hobbes» (p. 141). 9 Pascal Payen, «The Reception of Thucydides in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century France» (p. 158). 10 Alexandra Lianeri, «On Historical Time and Method» (p. 176). 11 Klaus Meister, «Thucydides in Nineteenth-Century Germany» (p. 197). 12 Jon Hesk, «Thucydides in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries» (p. 218). PART III THUCYDIDES THE POLITICAL THEORIST: 13 James Jan Sullivan, «Hobbes and His Contemporaries» (p. 241). 14 Ben Earley, «“L’historien des politiques”» (p. 261). 15 Seth N. Jaffe, «The Straussian Thucydides» (p. 278). 16 John Zumbrunnen, «Realism, Constructivism, and Democracy in the History» (p. 296). 17 Gerald Mara, «Thucydides and the Problem of Citizenship» (p. 313). 18 Christine Lee, «Thucydides and Democratic Horizons» (p. 332). PART IV THUCYDIDES THE STRATEGIST: 19 Edward Keene, «The Reception of Thucydides in the History of International Relations» (p. 355). 20 Cian O’Driscoll, «Thucydides and the Just War Tradition» (p. 373). 21 Laurie M. Johnson, «Thucydides the Realist?» (p. 391). 22 Timothy J. Ruback, «Thucydides Our Father, Thucydides Our Shibboleth» (p. 406). 23 Andreas Stradis, «Thucydides in the Staff College» (p. 425). PART V THUCYDIDEAN THEMES: 24 Helen King and Jo Brown, «Thucydides and the Plague» (p. 449). 25 Tim Rood, «The Reception of Thucydides’ Archaeology» (p. 474). 26 Lorna Hardwick, «Thucydidean Concepts» (p. 493). 27 Thom Workman, «Thucydides, Science, and Late Modern Philosophy» (p. 512). 28 Elizabeth Sawyer, «Thucydides in Modern Political Rhetoric» (p. 529). PART VI THUCYDIDEAN REFLECTIONS: 29 Hunter R. Rawlings III, «Why We Need To Read Thucydides – Even When “We” Are Only A Few» (p. 551). 30 Clifford Orwin, «Why Teach Thucydides Today? (And If We’re At It, How?)» (p. 560). 31 Gregory Crane, «Everywhere Monuments of Good and Evil: Thucydides in the Twenty-First Century» (p. 568). 32 Geoffrey Hawthorn, «Receiving the Reception» (p. 579). Part VII Conclusion: 33 Neville Morley, «The Idea of Thucydides in the Western Tradition» (p. 591).
- 2015 Benjamin Straumann, *Roman Law in the State of Nature: The Classical Foundations of Hugo Grotius’ Natural Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- 2015 Luca Iori, *Thucydides Anglicus. Gli Eight Bookes di Thomas Hobbes e la ricezione inglese delle Storie di Tucidide (1450-1642)*, Roma, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2015.
- 2016 Chiara Carsana / Lucio Troiani (eds), *I percorsi di un Historikos. In memoria di Emilio Gabba*. Atti del convegno di Pavia (18-20 settembre 2014), Biblioteca di Athenaem, New Press, Pisa, 2016.
- 2016 Giuseppe Zecchini, «Emilio Gabba e l’esercito romano», in *Emilio Gabba. Un maestro della storia antica*, Atti del Convegno (Roma, 11-12 febbraio 2015), Accademia Naz. dei Lincei, Roma, Bardi, 2016, pp. 97-110.

- 2016 Philip Rance / Nicholas Sekunda (eds.), *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*. Gdańsk, Akanthina, 2017. Keith Roberts, «The Practical Use of Classical Texts for Modern War in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries», pp. 256-282; Richard Brzezinski, «The Influence of Classical Military Texts in Early Modern Poland: a Survey», pp. 282 ss.
- 2016 Adam Parr, *John Clarke's 'Military Institutions of Vegetius' and Joseph Amiot's 'Art Militaire Des Chinois': Translating Classical Military Theory in the Aftermath of the Seven Years' War*, UCL (University College London), 2016. 2017 Michael King Macdona, «Lieutenant John Clarke: An Eighteenth-Century Translator of Vegetius», *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 95 (2017), pp. 119-140.
- 2017 Michael King Macdona, «Lieutenant John Clarke: An Eighteenth-Century Translator of Vegetius», *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 95 (2017), pp. 119-140. *1767 Military Institutions of Vegetius, in Five Books*, Translated from the Original Latin, With a Preface and Notes, by Lieutenant John Clarke, London, printed for the Authors, And Sold by W. Griffin, in Catharine Street, 1767
- 2017 Philip Rance, «The Ideal General Editing Translating and reading Onasander's Strategicus 1500-1750», (Forschungszentrum/-bibliothek Gotha der Universität Gotha, July 2017).
- 2018 Kenneth Royce Moore, *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great*, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2018.
- 2019 Ilse Hilbold, «Jules Marouzeau and *L'Année philologique*. The Genesis of a Reform in Classical Bibliography», *History of Classical Scholarship*, 1, 2019, pp. 174-202.
- 2019 Roberta Berardi, Nicoletta Bruno, Anna Busetto, Luisa Fizzarotti (eds.), *The Old Lie. I classici e la Grande Guerra*, numero speciale di *Futuro Classico*, 2019 (5). Riscritture poetiche: Victoria Bergbauer, «Pain in Isaac Rosenberg's reception of Homer's Iliad». Josie Rae, «Challenging 'The Old Lie' in British First World War poetry the Eastern Front». Roberto Batisti, ««In un mondo diverso / illuminato dagli ordigni. Riscritture poetiche della Grande Guerra fra Tardoantico e XXI secolo». Marco Mondini, «Fratelli in armi. Modelli dell'eroico nella letteratura di guerra italiana». Il Versi latini e retorica augustea: Fabrizio Petorella, «*Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Horatium*: Bertolt Brecht e la retorica augustea». Marco Cristini, «*Bella tonant totumque quatit discordia mundum*: le opere latine sulla Grande Guerra». Nicholas de Sutter, «*Dicam horrida bella*: on Classicists writing Latin war poetry». III Politica, Patriotismo, Pacifismo. Andrea Gianotti, «La 'tortura del patriottismo' e le Troiane di Euripide durante la Grande Guerra: Bertrand Russell a teatro». Rossana Zetti, «L'Antigone di Walter Hasenclever (1917): un'icona politica e pacifista». Raffaele Tondini, «I pericoli della pace: Schwartz e Wilamowitz». IV Italia: Archeologia e Propaganda: Giovanna Di Martino, «Sicilianità, italianità e l'Agamennone di Eschilo alla vigilia della Grande Guerra». Eva Haghghi, «Lanciani e la redenzione del Campidoglio». Mattia Vitelli Casella, «Le foci dell'Eneo... e dintorni».
- 2019 Oswyn Murray, «Between East and West: Memories of the Cold War», *History of*

- Classical Scholarship*, issue 1 (2019), pp. 252-264.
- 2020 Roel Konijnendijk, «Who Wrote Kromayer's Survey of Greek Warfare?», *History of Classical Scholarship*, Issue 2 (2020), pp. 1-17.
- 2020 Immacolata Eramo, «The Discovery of Aelian's *Tactica theoria* in Italian Humanism», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 2 (2020), pp. 31-54.
- 2020 Ramsay McMullen, «Top Scholars in Classical and Late Antiquity», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 2 (2020), pp. 105-114.
- 2020 Oswyn Murray, «The Reception of Vernant in the English-Speaking World», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 2 (2020), pp. 131-157.
- 2020 Virgilio Ilari, *Scrittori militari italiani dell'età moderna. Dizionario bio-bibliografico 1410-1799*, Roma, Nadir Media, 2020.
- 2021 Michel Pretalli, *Giulio Cesare Brancaccio. Letteratura e armi al tramonto del Rinascimento. Con l'edizione critica degli scritti militari inediti* [Fondo Pinelli, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano], Manziana, Vecchiarelli, 2021.
- 2021 Emilio Zucchetti, Anna Maria Cimino (Eds.), *Antonio Gramsci and the Ancient World*, London and New York, Routledge, 2021.
- 2022 Christopher Stray, «The Politics of the Classical: Language and Authority in the Nineteenth Century», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 4 (2022), pp.
- 2022 Philip Rance, «The Ideal of the Roman General in Byzantium: the Reception of Onasander's Strategikos in Byzantine Military Literature», in Richard Evans / Shaun Tougher (eds.), *Generalship in Ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2022, pp. 242-263.
- 2022 Matthias Haake, «Zwischen Herrschertypus und Epochenbegriff. Eine begriffsgeschichtliche und wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Archäologie des Burckhardtschen Pseudoneologismus ‚Soldatenkaiser‘», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 4 (2022), pp.127-180.
- 2022 Luca Iori, «Gualdo Priorato e la storia militare antica. Sul *Guerriero prudente e politico*, 1640», in Alessandro Metlica e Enrico Zucchi (Eds.), *La res publica di Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato (1606-1678). Storiografia, notizie, letteratura*, Venezia: Ed. Ca' Foscari, 2022, pp. 187-224.
- 2022 Federico Santangelo / Manfredi Zanin (cur.), «Napoleone e l'Antico», *Futuro Classico*, n. 8, 2022. Davide Amendola «Tra imitatio ed aemulatio: Bonaparte e la 'géo-historiographie d'Alexandre'» (p. 6). Federico Santangelo, «Napoleon and Ancient Rome: The Models of the Republic and the Empire, 1779-1815» (p. 87). Manfredi Zanin, «L'Empereur face aux Anciens. I giorni di Sant'Elena» (p. 117). Immacolata Eramo, «Leggere Cesare a Sant'Elena. Il Précis des guerres de César» (p. 151). Bruno Colson, «Napoléon et les stratèges de l'Antiquité» (p. 179). Salvatore Marino «Ei fu. Lui è ancora. Napoleone e il diritto romano» (p. 200).
- 2023 Carlo Galli, Prefazione, in Carlo Galli e Antonio Del Vecchio (cur.), *Ugo Grozio, Il diritto di guerra e di pace*, Napoli, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici Press, I, pp. xi-xxvi.

- 2024 Virgilio Ilari, «Voltaire's Scythed Chariots», in Jeremy Black (Ed.), *Cavalry Warfare From Ancient Times to Today*, Fucina di Marte No. 18, Roma: Nadir Media, pp. 313-330.
- 2024 Immacolata Eramo, «Napoleon and Caesar: comparing strategies», in Jeremy Black (Ed.), *The Practice of Strategy*, Fucina di Marte No. 17, Roma: Nadir Media, 2024, pp. 371-394.
- 2024 Oleg Rusakovskiy, *European Military Books and Intellectual Cultures of War in 17th Century Russia From Translation to Adaptation*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2024.
- 2024 «Interview von Stefan Rebenich mit Werner Eck am 14. April 2023 in Bergisch Gladbach», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 6 (2024), pp. 63-136.
- 2025 Brian Croke, «Adventures with Mommsen», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 7 (March 2025), pp. 1-42.
- 2025 Alfredo Sansone, «La storia antica come strumento diplomatico: Napoleone Bonaparte 'socio mancato' della Rubiconia Accademia dei Filopatridi», *History of Classical Scholarship*, issue 7 (March 2025), pp. 43-67.

#### 4 a) Machiavelli and the Ancients

- 1896 Laurence Arthur Burd, «Le fonti letterarie di Machiavelli nell'Arte della guerra», *Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, s. V, 1896, 4, 293, pp. 188-261.
- 1913 Martin Hobhom, *Machiavellis Renaissance der Kriegskunst*, Berlin, 1913, 2 voll. [Eduard Fletter *Historische Zeitschrift*, 113, p. 578; Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 4, 1920, pp. 121-142 = pp. 101-113 R.].
- 1955 Giuliana Procacci, «La fortuna dell'Arte della guerra del Machiavelli nella Francia del secolo XVI», *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 67, 1955, pp. 493-528.
- 1956 H. Hexter, «Machiavelli and Polybius VI: The Mystery of the Missing Translation», in *Studies on the Renaissance*, 3, 1956, pp. 75-96.
- 1987 Gennaro Sasso, *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi*, Milano-Napoli, Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1987, 2 voll.
- 1988 M E Senesi, «Niccolò Machiavelli, l'Arte della guerra e i Medici», *Interpres*, 8, 1988, pp. 297-309.
- 1998 Mario Martelli, *Machiavelli e gli storici antichi. Osservazioni su alcuni luoghi dei Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 1998; Id., «Note su Machiavelli», *Interpres*, 18, 1999, pp. 91-145.
- 1990 Mallett, «The Theory and Practice of Warfare in Machiavelli's Republic», in G. Bock, Q. Skinner, M. Viroli (eds), *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 173-180.

- 2000 Frédérique Verrier, «L'Art de la guerre machiavelien, 'breviare' de l'Humanisme militaire», in Bruno Colson, Hervé Coutau-Bégarie (eds.), *Pensée stratégique et humanisme. De la tactique des Anciens à l'éthique de la stratégie*, Paris, Economica, 2000, pp. 47-71.
- 2002 Mikael Hörnqvist, «Perché non si usa allegare i Romani: Machiavelli and the Florentine Militia of 1506», *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 55, Issue 1, Spring 2002, pp. 148-191.
- 2005 Russell Price, «L. Arthur Burd, Lord Acton, and Machiavelli», in John E. Law; Lene Østermark-Johansen (Eds.), *Victorian and Edwardian responses to the Italian Renaissance*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 257-280.
- 2009 Enrico Nuzzo, «Machiavelli nella Fondazione del Genere Moderno della Storia Antica. Attorno all'Essay su Roma di Walter Moyle», in Alessandro Arienzo / Gianfranco Borrelli (cur.), *Anglo-American Faces of Machiavelli. Machiavelli e machiavellismi nella cultura anglo-americana (secoli XVI-XX)*. Atti del Convegno di Napoli, febbraio, 2007, Monza, Polimetrica, 2009.
- 2012 Immacolata Eramo, «Disegni di guerra. La tradizione dei diagrammi tattici greci nell'Arte della guerra di Niccolò Machiavelli», in Vanna Maraglino (cur.), *Scienza antica in età moderna, Teoria e immagini*, Bari: Cacucci, 2012, pp. 35-62.
- 2015 Peter Paret, «Machiavelli, Fichte, and Clausewitz in the Labyrinth of German Idealism», *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics*, XVII, 2015, 3, pp. 78-95.
- 2017 Marco Formisano, «Strategie da manuale. L'arte della guerra, Vegezio e Machiavelli», *Quaderni di Storia*, 55, gennaio-giugno 2002, pp. 99-127.
- 2017 Michel Pretalli, *Du champ de bataille à la bibliothèque. Le dialogue militaire italien au XVIe siècle*, Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017.
- 2020 Michel Pretalli, «L'Arte della guerra di Machiavelli e la letteratura militare del Cinquecento», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, 2020, I, No. 3, pp. 11-92.

## §. 5

### *History of the Art of War*

#### The Wigh Interpretation of Ancient Warfare

- 1815 Nicolas Viton de Saint-Allais, *Les sièges, batailles et combats mémorables dans l'histoire ancienne et romaine ouvrage qui peut être considéré comme les fastes militaires, des Juifs, des Égyptiens, des Perses, des Mèdes, des Assyriens, des Grecs, des Macédoniens, des Carthaginois, des Romains et des Gaulois*, Paris, Alexis-Eymery, 1815.
- 1819 Alphonse Dureau de la Malle, *Poliorcétique des Anciens: ou De l'attaque et de la défense des places avant l'invention de la poudre*, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1819.

- 1824 Col. Henri de Carrion-Nisas, *Essai d'histoire générale de l'art militaire, de son origine, de ses progrès et de ses révolutions, depuis la première formation des sociétés européennes jusqu'à nos jours*, 2 volumes, Paris, Delaunay-Trouvé, 1824.
- 1827 Antoine Henri de Jomini, *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon, racontée par lui-même, au tribunal de César, d'Alexandre et de Frédéric*, Paris, Anselin, 1827.
- 1852 Wilhelm Rüstow / Hermann Köchly, *Geschichte des griechischen Kriegswesens von der ältesten Zeit bis auf Pyrrhos*, Aarau, Verlag Comptoir, 1852.
- 1852 Alphonse Dureau de La Malle, *L'Algérie: Histoire des guerres des Romains, des Byzantins et des Vandales*, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1852.
- 1853 Francesco Sponzilli, *Sulla veracità delle storie antiche nella parte che riguarda alla scienza ed all'arte della guerra*, Napoli, Dalla Stamperia dell'Iride, 1853.
- 1858 V. de Mars, «Alesia: Étude sur la septième campagne de César en Gaule», *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15, No. 1 (1er mai 1858), pp. 64-146.
- 1859 Domenico Elvezio Bartolucci, *La Milizia Marittima degli Antichi fino al perfezionamento delle artiglierie. Studi Storici*, Firenze, Campolmi, 1859.
- 1860 Édouard de la Barre du Parcq, *Histoire de l'art de la guerre Avant l'usage de la poudre*, Paris, Tanéra, 1860.
- 1864 Bernhard Graser, *De Re Navali Veterum*, Berlin, Apud S. Calvary eiusque Socium, 1864.
- 1865 Cristoforo Negri, *La storia antica restituita a verità e raffrontata alla moderna*, Torino, Stamperia dell'Unione tipografico-editrice, 1865.
- 1867 K. G. von Berneck, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst für Militairakademie und Offiziere aller Grade*, Berlin, Vossische Buchhandlung, 1867.
- 1870 Clovis Lamarre, *De la milice romaine depuis la fondation de Rome jusqu'à Constantin*, Paris, Hachette, 1870.
- 1871 Adolphe Gauldrée-Boilleau, *L'Administration militaire dans l'antiquité*, Paris, Dumaine, 1871.
- 1871 J. R. Seeley, *Livy, books i-x, with historical examination and notes*, Oxford University, 1871.
- 1872 Félix [Marie Louis Jean] Robiou [de la Tréhonnais], «Le recrutement de l'Etat-Major et des Equipages dans les Flottes Romaines au temps de la République», *Révue Archéologique*, N. S., 24 (juillet-décembre 1872), pp. 95-108.
- 1875 Bruno, Jean-Baptiste, Joseph Renard, *Notes sur l'histoire militaire de l'antiquité. Introduction au cours d'histoire militaire professé à l'École de guerre*, Bruxelles, Librairie Militaire Muquardt, Paris, Dumaine, 1875.
- 1876 Karl Joachim Marquardt, «III, Das Militärwesen», in Id., *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, II Band: *Das Finanz- und Militärwesen*, Leipzig, Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1876, pp. 309-591. 2e Auflage in Joachim Marquardt / Theodor Mommsen, *Handbuch der Römische Alterthümer*. 5r Band, 2: *Das Finanz- und Militärwesen*. Besorgt von H. Dessau und A. v. Domaszewski, Leipzig, Hirzel, 1884, pp. 319-612; French transl. J.

- Brissaud, *De l'organisation militaire chez les Romains*, T. XI Mommsen / Marquardt, *Manuel des antiquités romaines*, Paris, Ernest Thorin, 1891.
- 1878 Ermanno Ferrero, *L'ordinamento delle armate romane. Ricerche*, Torino, Bocca, 1878.
- 1878 Thatcher Thayer, *Some-inquiries-concerning-human-sacrifices-among-the-Romans. Preceded by a Reprint of the Correspondence between Mr. Macaulay, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Mahon, upon the same subject*, Printed, not Published, Sidney S. Rider, Providence, 1878. Reprint Preceded by a Reprint of the Correspond, Creative Media Partners, LLC, 26 Oct. 2022.
- 1878 Max Jähns, *Atlas zur Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts: Bewaffnung, Marsch- und Kampfweise, Befestigung, Belagerung, Seewesen*. 100 Blatt zu seinen Vorlesungen an der Königl. Kriegs-Akademie. Ohne Ort 1878; Neudruck Osnabrück 1979 (= Bibliotheca rerum militarium, 22 - Atlas).
- 1879 Édouard Hardy de Périni, *L'art de la guerre chez les anciens*, Paris, Dumaine, 1879.
- 1880 Max Jähns, *Handbuch einer Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance*, Technischer Theil: Bewaffnung, Kampfweise, Befestigung, Belagerung, Seewesen. Nebst einem Atlas von 100 Tafeln, Leipzig, Grunow, 1880; Neudruck (deklarariert als „Erster Teil“) Osnabrück 1979 (= Bibliotheca rerum militarium. Quellen und Darstellungen zur Militärwissenschaft und Militärgeschichte. Band 22 - Textband).
- 1880 Max Jähns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften, vornehmlich in Deutschland*, 3 Bde., München / Leipzig 1880-1891.
- 1880 Hermann Haupt, «Zur Geschichte der Römischen Flotte», *Hermes*, 15 (1880), pp. 154-157.
- 1882 Paul Serre, *La Trière athénienne*, Impr. nationale, 1882. *Les marines de guerre de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, Baudoin, 1885. *Études sur l'histoire militaire et maritime des Grecs et des Romains: suites des marines de l'antiquité et du moyen-âge*, Baudoin, 1888. *Le Siège de Pylo*, L. Baudoin, 1891.
- 1884 Jules Buoquié, *De la justice et de militaire romains et moyen âge*, Bruxelles – Bruxelles, Félix Callewaert / Paris, Librairie militaire de L. Baudoin et Cie., 1884.
- 1884 Ermanno Ferrero, *Iscrizioni e ricerche nuove intorno alle armate romane*, Torino, Ermanno Loescher, 1884. Id., *Nuove iscrizioni ed osservazioni intorno all'ordinamento delle armate dell'impero romano ed indice generali delle iscrizioni classiarie*, Torino, Carlo Clausen, 1898.
- 1885 Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Fahnen im römischen Heere*, O. Benndorf / O. Hirschfeld (Hg), *Abhandlungen des archäologisch-epigraphischen Seminars der Universität Wien*, Heft V, Wien, Druck u. Verlag von Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1885.
- 1885 Jurien de La Gravière, *La marine des Ptolémées et la marine des Romains*, Ouvrage accompagné de 4 cartes en couleur, Paris, Plon, 1885., *La marine des anciens: La bataille de Salamine et l'expédition de Sicile*, Paris, E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs, 1886. *Les Campagnes d'Alexandre*, E. Plon, 1891. *La flottille*

- de l'Euphrate: étude de géographie moderne et de stratégie antique*, Firmin-Didot et cie, 1892.
- 1886 C. de la Berge, «Étude sur l'organisation des flottes romaines», *Bulletin épigraphique*, VI, 1886, p. 3-17, 53-68; 101-116, 153-167, 205-231.
- 1887 Hans Delbrück, *Die Perserkriege und die Burgunderkriege Zwei kombinierte kriegsgeschichtliche Studien*, Berlin: Walther & Apolant, 1887.
- 1887 Adolf Bauer, «Kriegsaltertümer», in Georg Busolt, Adolf Bauer, Iwan Müller, *Die griechischen Staats-, Kriegs- und Privataltertümer*, Nördlingen, Verlag der C. H. Beck'schen, 1887, pp. 225-333.
- 1887 Albert Harkness, *The military system of the Romans, from his revised edition of Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic War*. Illustrated, New York, D. Appleton and Coy, 1887.
- 1888 Martin Fickelscherer, *Das Kriegswesen der Alten*, Kulturbilder aus dem klassischen Altertume IV, Leipzig, Verlag des litterarischen Jahresberichts (Artur Seemann), 1888.
- 1888 Contre-amiral Paul SERRE, *Etudes sur l'Histoire militaire et maritime des Grecs et des Romains*, Paris, Baudoin, 1888.
- 1889 Hans Droysen, *Heerwesen und Kriegsführung der Griechen* [2. Band, 2. Abteilung von Karl Friedrich Hermann's *Lehrbuch der griechischen Antiquitäten*], Freiburg i. B., J. C. B. Mohr, 1889.
- 1889 Theodore Ayrault Dodge, *Great Captains: A Course of Six Lectures Showing the Influence on the Art of War of the Campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick, and Napoleon*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1889.
- 1890 Hans Delbrück, *Die Strategie des Perikles erläuterte durch die Strategie Friedrichs der Grosse Mit einem Anhang über Thucydides und Kleon*, Berlin, Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1890.
- 1894 Otto Fiebiger, «De Classium italicarum historia et institutis quaestiones selectae», *Leipziger Studien*, 15 (1894), p. 277-461.
- 1895 Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Religion des römischen Heeres*, Trier, Verlag der Fr. Lintz'schen Buchhandlung, 1895.
- 1895 Hugo Liers, *Das Kriegswesen der Alten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Strategie*, Breslau, Wilhelm Koebner (Marcus), 1895
- 1896 Victor Chapot, *La flotte de Misène*, Paris, 1896.
- 1898 Contrammiraglio Giuseppe Francesco Gavotti, *La tattica nelle grandi battaglie navali da Temistocle a Ito*, Parte prima e seconda. Poliremi e Navi a vela, Roma, Forzani & C., 1898.
- 1898 Gustave Fougères, *Mantinée et l'Arcadie Orientale*. Thèse pour le doctorat, Paris, Albert Fontemoing, 1898.
- 1899 Edmund Lammert, «Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der griechischen Taktik», in *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1899, III, pp. 1-29.
- 1900 Giovanni Oberziner, *Le guerre d'Augusto contro i popoli alpini*, Roma, Ermanno

- Loescher, 1900.
- 1900 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 1. Teil, *Das Altertum*, Berlin, Georg Stilke, 1900<sup>1</sup>, 1908<sup>2</sup>, 1920<sup>3</sup>.
- 1901 Ettore Ciccotti, *La guerra e la pace nel mondo antico*, Torino, Bocca, 1901 (*Studia Historica* 76, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1971).
- 1901 Pasquale Villari, *Le invasioni barbariche dell'Italia*, Milano, Hoepli, 1901. Engl. transl. By Linda Villari, *The Barbarian Invasions of Italy*, New York, Charles Scribner's 1902; London / Leipsic, T. Fisher Unwin, 1902: 1913.
- 1902 Emmanuel Seyler, *Agrarien und Exkubien eine Untersuchung über römischen Heer*, Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1902.
- 1906 Bianca Bruno, *La terza guerra sannitica*, Roma, Ermanno Loescher, 1906.
- 1907 KROMAYER, «Die Entwicklung der römischen Flotte vom Seerüberkriege des Pompeius bis zur Schlacht von Actium», *Philologus*, 56, N.F. 10, 1907, 426–491.
- 1907 William Whoodthorpe Tarn, «The Fleets of the first Punic war», *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 27 (1907), pp. 40-71, anche se poteva sfuggire «The Roman Navy», in John Edwin Sandys (ed.), *A Companion to Latin Studies*, Cambridge, 1921, pp. 489-501. *Hellenistic military and naval developments*, 1930; «The battle of Actium», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 21 (1931), pp. 173-199.
- 1907 *The Cambridge modern history: an account of its origin, authorship and production*, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1907.
- 1907 Gaetano De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani*, Torino, F.lli Bocca Editori, vol. I *La conquista del primato in Italia* (1907); III *L'età delle guerre Puniche* Parte 1 (1916), Parte 2 (1917); IV *La fondazione dell'Impero. Parte I: Dalla battaglia di Naraggara alla battaglia di Pidna* (1923).
- 1908 Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, Sonderabdruck Aus *Bonner Jahrbücher* Heft 117, Bonn, A. Marcus u. E. Weber's Verlag, 1908.
- 1909 Gaetano De Sanctis, *Per la scienza dell'antichità. Saggi e polemiche*, Torino, F.lli Bocca ed., 1909: «VI. Agatocle» (pp. 141-206). «VII. I più antichi generali sanniti» (pp. 207-230). «VIII. La guerra e la pace nell'antichità» (pp. 231-258). «Intorno al materialismo storico» (pp. 259-299).
- 1910 Emil Daniels, *Das Antike Kriegswesen*, Leipzig, G.J. Göschen, 1910; Berlin und Leipzig, W. de Gruyter, 1920. Id., *Geschichte des Kriegswesens*, 4 voll., Leipzig, G.J. Göschen, 1910-11.
- 1910 Oberst Erwin Adelbert Schramm, *Griechisch-römische Geschütze. Bemerkungen zu der Rekonstruktion*, Metz, Verlag von G. Scriba, 1910.
- 1912 Arthur Boucher, «La tactique grecque à l'origine de l'histoire militaire», *Revue des Études grecques*, 25, 1912, pp. 300-317.
- 1912 Eugene Stock McCartney, *Figurative Uses of Animal Names in Latin and Their Application to Military Devices: A Study in Semantics*, PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1911: Lancaster, Pa, Press of the New Era Printing Company, 1912.

- 1913 Hans Delbrück, *Numbers in history. How the Greeks defeated the Persians, the Romans Conquered the World, the Teutons Overthrew the Roman Empire and William the Norman took possession of England*. Two Lectures delivered before the University of London on October 6 and 7, 1913, London, University of London Press, 1913.
- 1913 René Cagnat, *L'armée romaine d'Afrique et l'occupation militaire de l'Afrique sous les empereurs*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1913.
- 1914 Tenney Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, New York, Macmillan, 1914.
- 1915 F. W. Clark, *The Influence of Sea-power On The History Of The Roman Republic*, George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha (Wisconsin), 1915.
- 1917 Eugene Stock McCartney, «Rome Military Heritage from Etruria», *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, Vol. 1, School of Classical Studies 1915-1916, Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1917, pp. 121-171.
- 1920 Gilbert Murray, *Our great war and the great war of ancient Greeks*, New York, T. Seltzer, 1920.
- 1922 Edmund Lammert P. Lammert, «Kriegskunst (griechische)», *RE*, XI, 22 (1922), pp. 1827-1858.
- 1923 Eugene Stock McCartney, *Warfare by land and sea. Our debt to Greece and Rome*, London, Marshall Jones Company, 1923.
- 1924 Friedrich Lammert, «Kriegskunst (römische)», *RE*, Suppl. IV (1924), pp. 1069-1101.
- 1928 John Bagnell Bury, *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians: a series of lectures*, Rome, American Academy in Rome, 1928.
- 1928 Yves Béquignon, «Études thessaliennes : I. Le champ de bataille de Pharsale», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, Année 1928 52 pp. 9-44.
- 1960 Werner Hahlweg, «Krieg–Kriegskunst–Kriegstheorie», in Id. (Hrsg.), *Klassiker der Kriegskunst. Unter Mitarbeit von 13 Historikern des In- und Auslandes*, Darmstadt, Wehr und Wissen, 1960, pp. 7-20.

## §. 6

### *Exempla Historica*

#### Ancient Military History

#### in Contemporary Strategic Rhetoric

- 1905 Suzuki, Chō-yō, *Japanese Chess (Shō Ngi). The Science and Art of War and Struggle, Philosophically Treated – Chinese Chess (Chong-Kie) and I-Go*, Eurasiamerica, New York, The Press Club of America, Chicago, 1905 (Legare Street Press, 2022). «Actual Warfare Elements as examples for the above: Alexander's siege and destruction of Tyre of the Phoenicians (pp. 117-128); The Siege of Port Arthur, a factor of the Manchurian campaign of Japan-Russian war (pp. 129-186)».

- 1908 *The Book of War. The Military Classic of the Far East*, translated from the Chinese by Captain E. F. Calthrop, R. F. A., 1908.
- 1910 Sun Tzu *On The Art Of War*. The Oldest Military Treatise in the World, Translated from the Chinese with an Introduction and Critical Notes by Lionel Giles, London, Luzac & C., 1910.
- 1926 Basil H. Liddell Hart, *A Greater than Napoleon, Scipio Africanus*, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwell, 1926.
- 1930 William Woodthorpe Tarn, *Hellenistic Military & Naval Developments*, Lees-Knowles Lectures in Military History of 1929-30, CUP, 1930.
- 1931 Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, London, G. Bell and sons, 1931.
- 1933 Lester K. Born, «Roman and Modern Military Science: Some Suggestions for Teaching», *The Classical Journal*, Oct., 1933, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Oct., 1933), pp. 13-22.
- 1937 Adm. William Ledyard Rodgers, *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare*, A Study of Strategy, Tactics, and Ship Design from Salamis (480 b. C.) to Actium (31 b. C.), Annapolis, 1937 [Rev. TARN, *Classical Review*, 52, 1938, pp. 75-77]. Id., *Naval Warfare under Oars, 4th to 16th Centuries*, Annapolis, 1940 (repr. 1967, 1996).
- 1939 Ch. COURTOIS, «Les politiques navales de l'Empire romain», *Révue Historique*, 186 (1939), pp. 17-47 e 225-259.
- 1939 Charles Oman, «A Plea for Military History», in Id., *On the Writing of History*, E.P. Dutton, Incorporated, 1939.
- 1941 Edward Mead Earle (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to Hitler*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1941.
- 1944 *The Military Institutions of the Romans, Flavius Vegetius Renatus*, Translated from the Latin by Lieutenant John Clark (1767), edited by Brig. Gen. Thomas R. Phillips, U.S.A., The Military Publishing Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1944 (Introduction, pp. 13-21).
- 1945 Walter R. Agard, «Classicism as a Contemporary Guide», *The Classical Journal*, vol. 40, no. 7, 1945, pp. 387-97.
- 1976 Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century to the Third*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, 1979, 2016.
- 1977 *Birth of Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*.
- 1979-2024 Luciano Canfora, *La Germania di Tacito da Engels al nazismo*, Napoli Liguori, 1979<sup>1</sup>. Officina Libraria, Roma 2024<sup>2</sup>.
- 1982 Joachim Herrmann, «Militärische Demokratie und die Übergangsperiode zur Klassengesellschaft», *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift*, 23, 1982, pp. 11-31.
- 1984 Benjamin Isaac, «Luttwak's "Grand Strategy" and the Eastern Frontier of the Roman Empire », in D. H. French, C. S. Lightfoot, *Eastern frontier of the Roman Empire*. Proceedings of a Colloquium held at Ankara in sept. 1988, Oxford 1989, pp. 231-234.

- 1985 Josiah Ober, «Thucydides, Pericles, and the Strategy of Defense», in Stanley M. Burstein, Nancy Demand, Ian Morris, Lawrence Tritle (eds), *Current Issues and the Study of Ancient History*, Publication of the AHA, 2002, pp. 171-188.
- 1989 Victor Davis Hanson, *The western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.
- 1991 Arther Ferrill, *Roman Imperial Grand Strategy*, Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians No. 3, Regina Books, Claremont, California, 1991.
- 1993 Everett Wheeler, «Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Parts I and II», *Journal of Military History*, 57 (Jan. & April 1993), pp. 7-41, 215-40.
- 1994 Gino Bandelli / Gian Franco Gianotti, «L'antichistica nell'ambito della storiografia contemporanea: i 'Quadernidistoria' (1975-1994)», in Nino Recupero e Giacomo Todeschini (cur.), *Introduzione all'uso delle riviste storiche. Un corso di lezioni*, Trieste, LINT, 1994, pp. 11-36.
- 1994 Jay Liuvas, «The Great Military Historians and Philosophers», in John E. Jessup, Jr. & Robert W. Coakley (Eds), *A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History*, Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC., 1988, pp. 59-88.
- 1994 Williamson Murray / MacGregor Knox / Alvin Bernstein (eds), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994. 1 Williamson Murray / Mark Grimsley, «Introduction: On Strategy» (p. 1). 2 Donald Kagan, «Athenian strategy in the Peloponnesian War» (p. 24). 3 Alvin H. Bernstein, «The strategy of a warrior state: Rome and the wars against Carthage, 264-201 B. C.» (pp. 56-84).
- 1997 Mariella Cagnetta, *La pace dei vinti. Un discorso di G. Gonella su Pace romana e pace cartaginese con un saggio di Luigi Loreto*, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1997.
- 2001 David R. McCann / Barry S. Strauss (eds.), *War and Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War*, Armonk (NY) / London, Cartledge, 2001. [Victor Davis Hanson, «Democratic Warfare, Ancient and Modern», pp. 3-33].
- 2003 Terence M. Holmes, «Classical Blitzkrieg: The Untimely Modernity of Schlieffen's Cannae Programme», *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Jul., 2003), pp. 745-771.
- 2004 Mickaël Guichaoua, «Lecture critique de Luttwak, *La grande stratégie de l'Empire romain*», In Jean-Pierre Bois (dir.), *Dialogues militaires entre Anciens et Modernes*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004, pp. 169-.
- 2005 Corinne Bonnet, «Carthage, l'«autre nation» dans l'historiographie ancienne et moderne», *Anabases - Traditions et réceptions de l'Antiquité*, 1, 2005, pp. 139-160.
- 2006 Tim Rood, «'Je viens comme Thémistocle'. Napoleon and national identity after Waterloo», in Thorsten Fögen / Richard Warren (Eds.), *Graeco-Roman Antiquity and the Idea of Nationalism in the 19th Century*, Berlin-Boston, de Gruyter, 2006, pp. 71-112.

- 2007 Luigi Loreto, *La grande strategia di Roma nell'età della prima guerra punica. L'inizio di un paradosso*, (Storia politica costituzionale e militare del mondo antico 3), Napoli, Jovene, 2007.
- 2009 Clifford J. Rogers, «The Idea of Military Revolutions in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Texts», *Revista de Historia das Ideias*, 30, 2009, pp. 395-415.
- 2009 Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Harvard University Press; Belknap Press, 2009.
- 2010 Béatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 2010 Luciano Canfora, *L'uso politico dei paradigmi storici*, Roma-Bari, Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 2010.
- 2012 Helen Roche, «The Spartan Paradigm in Prussian Military Thought during the Long Nineteenth Century», *New Voices in Classical Reception Studies* Issue 7 (2012), pp. 25-39.
- 2012 Barry Strauss, *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership*, Simon and Schuster, 2012 (*L'arte del comando: Alessandro, Annibale, Cesare*, Roma-Bari, Editori Laterza, 2015).
- 2011 John Andreas Olsen / Colin S. Gray (Eds.), *The Practice of Strategy, from Alexander the Great to the Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 2012 Victor Davis Hanson, *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- 2012 Francisco Javier González García / Pedro Lopez Barja de Quiroga, «Neocon Greece: V. D. Hanson's war on history», *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 19, No. 3, June 2012, pp. 129-151.
- 2013 Sebastian Dobson, «Lieutenant-Colonel Everard Ferguson Calthrop (1876-1915)», in Hugh Cortazzi (Ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Vol. VIII, Leiden / Boston, Brill, 2013, pp. 85-101.
- 2014 Yann Le Bohec, *Géopolitique de l'Empire romain*, Paris, Ellipses, 2014 (It. trans. Gorizia, Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2019).
- 2015 Kee Il Choi Jr, «Portraits of Virtue: Henri-Léonard Bertin, Joseph Amiot And The 'Great Man' Of China», Lecture given by on Tuesday 13th October 2015, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, Vol. 80, 2015-16, pp. 49-65.
- 2016 Edward Luttwak, «Preface to 2016 Edition» of *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, Johns Hopkins, 2016, pp. ix-xiv.
- 2017 Virgilio Ilari, «*Civis Romanus sum*. La protezione diplomatica degli investimenti stranieri» [Don Pacifico Affair & Gunboat Diplomacy], in Id. / Giuseppe Della Torre (cur.), *Economic Warfare*, Quaderno Sism 2017, Roma, Nadir Media, pp. 155-170.
- 2018 Emma Yeomans, «The far right is using antiquity to re-brand itself – but classicists are fighting back», *The New Statesman*, 4 July 2018.
- 2018 R. A. Maguire, *Napoleon's Commentaries on the Wars of Julius Caesar: A New*

- English Translation*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2018.
- 2018 John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, Penguin Books, 2018.
- 2018 Luigi Loreto, «Per una conclusione. Paradigmi moderni, paradigmi antichi e limiti dell'analogia storica» [A ], pp. 815-820.
- 2019 Naoise MacSweeney et al. «Claiming the Classical: The Greco-Roman World in Contemporary Political Discourse», *Council of University Classical Departments Bulletin* 48 (2019), pp. 1-19.
- 2019 Raffaele Tondini, «La quarta guerra punica. Analogie storiche all'indomani della prima guerra mondiale», *Futuro Classico*, n. 5, 2019, pp. 282-304.
- 2021 V. Ilari, «Caio Giulio, o Tiberio Gracco Trump? Tiranno, 'dittatore democratico' o tribuno della plebe?», *Limes*, 2021, No. 1, pp. 113-119.
- 2022 James Lacey, *Rome: Strategy of Empire*, Oxford U. P., 2022. [Lacey was director of the course in "World Policy and Strategy, Economics and National Power" at the Marine Corps War College.]
- 2022 Virgilio Ilari, «Thucydides' Traps. The Peloponnesian War in America Political Rhetoric and in Senior Military Education», in Luca Iori, Ivan Matijašić (eds.), *Thucydides in the Age of Extremes and Beyond. Academia and Politics*, Newcastle upon Tyne and Venice: History of Classical Scholarship, Supplementary Volume 5, 2022, pp. 263-299.
- 2023 Peter Lorge, *Sun Tzu in the West. The Anglo-American Art of War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023.
- 2023 Immacolata Eramo, *Il mondo antico in 20 stratagemmi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2023.
- 2024 Nino Luraghi (Ed.), *Geoffrey de Ste. Croix and the Peloponnesian War*, Special Issue of *Polis, The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, 41, 2024, Issue 1. N. Luraghi, «50 Years after OPW: History and Historiography» (p. 5). Robin Lane Fox, «OPW and de Ste. Croix: the Past and Present Views of a Pupil» (p. 9). Leah Lazar, «Old Comedy and Athenian Power» (p. 51). Polly Low, «The *Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, the Origins of the Peloponnesian War and Theories of International Relations » (p. 76). Andrew Meadows, «Origins and Ends: Money and Power in and beyond Thucydides' Peloponnesian War» (p. 92). Stephen Hodgkinson, «The Origins of the Peloponnesian War, Chapter IV, and the Development of Spartan Historical Studies» (p. 141). Mirko Canevaro / David Lewis, «Between 'The Character of the Athenian Empire' and The Origins of the Peloponnesian War (and beyond) » (pp. 176-202).
- 2024 Jeremy Black (ed.), *The Practice of Strategy. A Global History*, Fucina di Marte No. 19, SISM Nadir Media, 2024.
- 2024 Luca Iori, «Usi e abusi di Tucidide», *Limes*, 12, 2024, pp. 133-148.

Appendix  
 German *Dissertationes* on Ancient Military History  
 from the 1894 Fock *Catalogus*

MILITÄRWESEN<sup>2</sup>

2556. Albracht, F., *Kampf und Kampfschilderung bei Homer. Ein Beitrag zu den Kriegsaltertümern*. 4°. Pr. 1886. (52 S.)
2557. Babucke, *Die Entwicklung d. röm. Heeres - Organisation u. der Stand d. Armee unter dem ersten Kaiser*. 1872. (39 S.)
2558. Balck, W., *Althellenisches Kriegswesen zur Söldnerzeit*. S.-A. 1882. (32 S.)  
 — Beniamin, C., *De Justiniani imp. aetate quaestt. milit.* 1892. s. Nr. 730.
2559. Berger, F., *Üb. d. Heerstrassen d. röm. Reiches*. 4°. Pr. 1882. (24 S.)
2560. — I. II. *Die Meilensteine*. 4°. Pr. 1883. (21 S.) \_
2561. Blüml, C., *Waren die römischen Legionen seit Marius Söldnerscharen? War Kaiser Augustus der Schöpfer des stehenden Heeres im römischen Reiche*. Pr. 1889. (26 S.)
2562. Boeckh, A., *De militaribus epeborum tirociniis disputatio*. 4°. Pr. 1819. (8S.)
2563. Bohn, O., *Über die Heimat der Prätorianer*. 4°. Pr. 1883. (24 S.)
2564. Bohstedt, E., *Über d. Söldnerwesen bei den Griechen*. 4°. Pr. 1873. (16 S.)
2565. Braun, *Der Wüstenroder Leopard, ein römisches Cohortenzeichen*. 4°. Pr. 1857. (35 S. und kol. Tafel.)
2566. Brunn, L., *Akatoc*. Pr. 1881. (34 S.)
2567. Campe, J. F. C., *Aus Polybios, über das Kriegswesen der Römer*. 4°. Pr. 1861. (30 S.)
2568. Cramer, F., *Kriegswesen und Geographie zur Zeit Caesars* (Einleitungen in die *Comment. de B. G.*) 4°. Pr. 1892. (30 S. u. 1 Abb.)
2569. Dalichau, O., *Entwickl. d. römischen Heerwesens*. I. *Die Zeit der Bürgerheere*. 4°. Pr. 1873. (23 S. u. 1 Taf.)
2570. Doebbelin, A., *De auxiliis socium ac Latini nominis* fasc. I. Diss. 1851. (28 S.)
2571. Domin-Petrushevecz, H. v., *Über die Geschichte der Kriegs-Contrebande im Alterthum, namentlich b. Griechen u. Römern*. S.-A. 1865. (29 S.)
2572. Eichhorst, O., *De cohortibus urbanis imperat. Rom.* 4°. Pr. 1865. (24 S.)
2573. Eisenmann, F., *Elephas artibus belli serviens Europaeis innotescit gentibus*. 4°. Pr. 1848. (7 S.)

---

<sup>2</sup> *Catalogus Dissertationum Philologicarum Classicarum*, Leipzig, Gustav Fock, 1894. *Particula* III. Alte Geschichte u. Altertumswissenschaften, «d. Militärwesen» (NN. 2556-2651, pp. 76-78).

2574. Fiegel, M. M., *Historia legionis III. Augustae*. Diss. 1882. (48 S.)
2575. Fröhlich, F., *Die Gardetruppen d. römischen Republik*. 4°. Pr. 1882. (50 S.)
2576. *Feldherren und Feldherrentum im alten Rom z. Z. der Republik*. S.-A. 1885. (22 S.)
2577. — *Das Kriegswesen Caesars . I. Schaffung u . Gestaltung d. Kriegsmittel*. 1889. (V, 100 S.)
2578. Fütterer, C., *De licentia triumphali militum Romanorum commentariolum* 40. Pr. 1851. (19 S.)
2579. Geppert, P., *De tribunis militum in legionibus Romanorum*. Diss. 1872. (48 S.)
2580. Gerathewohl, C., *Die Reiter und die Centuriae equitum z. Z. d. röm. Republik*. I. Diss . 1883. (34 S.)
- 2580a. Gessler, F., *De legionum Romanar. apud Livium numeris*. Diss. 1866. (29 S.)
2581. Giesing, F., *D. Entwicklung d. röm. Manipular-Taktik*. 4°. Pr. 1891. (30 S.)
2582. Götting, C., *Commentatio de Amazonibus inprimisque de Amazone Polycleti*. 4°. Pr. 1848. (10 S.)
2583. Graser, B., *De veterum re navali* . 4°. Gel . 1864. (95 S. u . 5 Tafeln.)
2584. Groneman, S. A. J., *De militum Praetorianorum apud Romanos historia*. Gekr. Pr. 1832. (102 S.)
2585. Gülde, O., *Die Kriegsverfassung des ersten attischen Bundes*. 4°. Pr. 1888. (22 S.)
2586. Haase, F., I. *De nostrorum temporum discordiis a Graecorum vita alienis*. II. *De artis tacticae apud Graecos historia*. 4°. Pr. 1860. (23 S.)
2587. Hankel, F., *Die Ernennung und soziale Stellung der römischen Kriegstribunen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des röm. Kriegswesens*. 4° . Pr. 1890. (34 S.)
2588. Hartung, *Römische Auxiliar-Truppen am Rhein*. I. 4° . Pr. 1870. (37 S. ) 1.50
2589. Hasse, C. W., *De equitatu veterum in primis Romanorum comment.* 49. Pr. 1803. (14 S.)
2590. Hassencamp, R., *De cohortibus Romanorum auxiliariis*. Diss . 1869. (69 S.)
2591. Heinrichs, J. E., *D. Kriegsdienst bei den Athenern*. 4° . Pr. 1864. (25 S.)
2592. Herbst, *Über Festungen u. Festungskrieg d . Griechen von d . ältesten Zeiten bis a. d. Schl. b . Chäronea*. 4° . 1872. (25 S.)
2593. Hollaender, L., *De militum coloniis ab Augusto in Italia deductis*. Diss. 1880. (38 S.); II. 4°. Pr. 1880. (25 S.); III. 4°. Pr. 1882. (23 S.)
2594. Kenner, F., *Über ein bei Kustendje gefundenes römisches Militärdiplom*. 40. S.-A. s. a. (8 S.) Kirchner, K. , *Bemerk. üb . d . Heere Justinians*. 1886. s. Nr. 731.
2595. Kniepen, H., *D. röm. Kriegswesen b. Caesar*. Pr. 1880. (22 S.)
2596. Kreenen, J. J. , *Spec. literar. in cohortis sacrae apud Thebanos historiam*. Diss. 1837. (74 S.)
2597. Kuthe, A., *Röm. Kriegsaltertümer*. 4° . Pr. 1884. (30 S.)
2598. Lammert, E. , *Polybius u . die römische Taktik*. 4°. Pr. 1889. (24 S. m. Fig.)
2599. Langen, A., *D. Heeresverpflegung d . Römer im letzten Jahrh. d . Republik*. I. 4°. Pr.

1878. (27 S.)
2600. — II. 4°. Pr. 1880. (25 S.)
2601. — III. 4°. Pr. 1880. (23 S.)
2602. Lejeune Dirichlet, G., *De equitibus atticis*. Diss. 1882. (40 S.)
2603. Liers, H., *Annahme und Verweigerung der Schlacht im Altertum*. 4°. Pr. 1893. (16 S.)
2604. Lindenschmit, H., *Röm. Waffen a. d. Kaiserzeit*. S.-A. 1883. (8 S. u. 1 T.)
2605. Lorenz, A., *Ein. Bemerkungen üb. d. Söldnerei bei d. Griechen (bis zur Zeit d. Schlacht bei Leuktra)*. Pr. 1877. (51 S.)
2606. *Weitere Bemerk. üb. d. Söldnerei b. d. Griechen (von d. Schlacht b. Leuctra bis zum Tode d. grossen Alexander)*. Pr. 1880. (77 S.)
2607. Luebeck, E., *Das Seewesen der Griechen u. Römer*. 4°. Pr. 1890. (VIII, 55 S. u. 1 Taf.) II. TI. 4°. Pr.
2608. 1891. (48 S. u. 3 Taf.)
2609. Marcks, E., *De alis qualis in exercitu Romano tempore liberae rei publicae fuerint*. S.-A. 1886. (44 S.)
2610. Marquardt, J., *Historiae equitum Romanorum libri IV*. 4°. 1840. (98 S.)
2611. Menser, C. F., *De annua equitum Romanorum transvectione et de eorundem recognitione seu censura*. 4°. Diss. 1734. (51 S. m. Titelvign.)
2612. Miller, O., *Römisches Lagerleben*. 1892. (55 S. u. 1 Plan.)
2613. Müller, A., *Waffen (d. Griechen u. Römer)*. Aus Baumeister, *Denkm.* 4°. S.-A. s. a. (63 S. m. 141 Abbild. u. 2 Taf.)
2614. *Das Cingulum militiae*. 4°. Pr. 1873. (28 S. u. 1 Tafel.)
2615. Nöthe, H., *Bundesrat, Bundessteuer und Kriegsdienst der Delischen Bänder*. 4°. Pr. 1890. (18 S.)
2616. Uhlenschlager, F., *Das römische Militärdiplom von Regensburg*. S.-A. (38 S. u. 3 Taf.)
2617. — *D. röm. Truppen im rechtsrhein. Bayern*. Pr. 1884. (95 S.) 1.1874. *Lager-Verzeichnis Paulus, W., Wahl d. att. Strategen in d. Z. d. pelop. Kr.* 1883. s. Nr. 1817.
2618. Pfister, J. G., *Ueber römische Schleudergeschosse*. 4°. S.-A. 1864. (11 S.)
2619. Pfitzner, W., *Commentatio quot quibusque numeris insignes legiones inde ab Augusto usque ad Vespasiani principatum in oriente tetenderint*. 4°. Pr. 1844. (12.)
2620. W. H., *Allgemeine Geschichte der römischen Kaiserlegionen bis Hadrian*. 4°. Pr. 1854. (32 S.)
2621. Planck, M., *D. Verfall d. röm. Kriegswesens am Ende d. IV. Jahrh. n. Chr. E. kriegsgeschichtl. Studie nach Vegetius*. 4°. Pr. 1877. (9 S.)
2622. Planer, H., *De castris Romanis*. Diss. 1842. (81 S. u. 1 T.)
2623. Recke, J. F., *Das röm. Kriegswesen in einer Uebersicht für Schüler zur Unterstützung der Schriftstellerlectüre*. 4°. Pr. 1847. (37 S.)
2624. Ritterling, E., *De legione Romanorum X gemina*. Diss. 1885. (127 S.)

2625. Schambach, *Die Reiterei bei Caesar*. 4°. Pr. 1881. (36 S.)
2626. *Ein. Bemerk. üb. d. Geschützverwendung bei d. Römern, besonders zur Zeit Caesars*. 4°. Pr. 1883. (19 S.)
2627. Schilling, O., *De legionibus Romanorum I. Minervia et XXX. Ulpia*. Diss. 1893. (74 S.)
2628. Schön, A., *Der Verfall der italienischen Wehrkraft in d. Kaiserzeit, beleuchtet nach d. Rheininschriften*. Pr. 1877. (34 S.)
2629. Schönstedt, K., *Kurze Darstellung d. röm. Kriegswesens*. 4°. Pr. 1857. (23 S.)
2630. Schultze, E., *De legione Romanorum XIII gemina*. Diss. 1887. (114 S. u. 1 Karte.)
2631. Schuenemann, O., *De cohortibus Romanorum auxiliariis*. Diss. 1883. (58 S.)
2632. Schwartz, H., *Ad Atheniensium rem militarem studia Thucydidea*. 4°. 1877. (59 S.)  
Diss.
2633. Sonklar, C. v., *Von der Phalanx und von der Legion*. S.-A. 1877. (22 2 Tafeln.)
2634. Stehfen, H., *De Spartanorum re militari*. Diss. 1881. (31 S.)
2635. Stein, H. K., *Das Kriegswesen der Spartaner*. 4°. Pr. 1863. (33 S.)
2636. Steinike, H., *De equitatu romano*. Diss. 1864. (47 S.)
2637. Steinwender, T., *Ueb. die Stärke der röm. Legion u. die Ursache ihres allmählichen Wachsens*. 4°. Pr. 1877. (16 S.)
2638. *Ueb. das numerische Verhältnis zwischen cives und socii im röm. Heere u. -die militär. Organisation d. bundesgenöss. Gemeinden*. 4°. Pr. 1879. (25 S.)
2639. *Die röm. Bürgerschaft in ihrem Verhältnis zum Heere*. 4°. Pr. 1888. (30 S.)
2640. Stille, W., *Historia legionum auxiliorumque inde ab excessu divi Augusti usque ad Vespasiani tempora*. 4°. Diss. 1877. (162 S.)
2641. Stolle, F., *Das Martyrium der thebaischen Legion*. Diss. 1891. (112 S.)
2642. Sumpff, O., *Cäsars Beurteilung seiner Offiziere in d. Commentarien vom gallischen Kriege*. 4°. Pr. 1892. (26 S.) II. 4°. Pr. 1893. (33 S.)
2643. — II. 4°. Pr. 1893. (33 S.)
2644. Unger, G. F., *Das Strategenjahr der Achaier*. S.-A. 1879. (76 S.)
2645. Vaders, J., *De alis exercitus romani, quales erant imperatorum temporibus. Quaestionis epigraphicae*. Pars. I. Diss. 1883. (37 S.)
2646. *De alis exercitus Romani quales erant imperatoribus temporibus*. 4°. Pr. 1893. (18 S.)
2647. Wilmanns, G., *Die römische Lagerstadt Afrikas*. 4°. S.-A. s. a. (25 S.)
2648. Witkowski, A. M., *De numero tribunorum militum consulari potestate*. Diss. 1857. (77 S.)
2649. Wollner, D., *Die auf das Kriegswesen bezüglichen Stellen bei Plautus und Terentius*. I. Pr. 1892. (58 S.)
2650. Zander, C. L. E., *Andeut. zur Gesch. des röm. Kriegswesens*. II. 4°. Pr. 1846. (18 S.)
2651. Zoeller, R., *De veterum re navali*. Diss. 1867. (30 S.)

*Articles*

*Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina*





# The dog barks around the hedgehog

## Reassessing the κύκλος in ancient naval warfare

by ALESSANDRO CARLI

alessandro.carli2@unisi.it - alessandro.carli.96@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to analyze at length what has been defined as one of the tactical formations of naval warfare in the Classical period: the κύκλος. Taking the distance from the reading mainstream among scholars, the following contribution intends to review the battle of Artemision, Patras and Corcyra, seeking to understand the reasons behind the employment of this tactic.

**KEYWORDS:** NAVAL WARFARE, ΚΥΚΛΟΣ, ARTEMISION, PHORMIO, PATRAS, CORCYRA.

### *Introduction*

**T**he winds intensified their blow and the sea rippled, rendering the Peloponnesian fleet unable to maintain their position anymore. As Phormio had expected, the situation shifted in their favour: the enemy was obstructing each other losing the formation carefully researched. What ensued became a sort of nightmare for the men embarked: the Athenians, displaying their naval skills, started to row around their circular formation and, upon Phormio's signal, rammed an enemy flagship. Then the complete disorder took place and the Athenians kept on ramming other ships which were rendered unusable. The first naval battle of the Peloponnesian war ended with a victory of only twenty Athenian triremes against the Peloponnesians who doubled them. The formation called κύκλος turned into a disaster.

It is not unchallenging to have an idea of what happened. A very realistic analogy, which inspired the title of this paper, was proposed many years ago by Bernard W. Henderson: «Imagine a dog trying to get at hedgehog rolled into a

ball»<sup>1</sup>. In some situations, certain Greek fleets, adopting the posture analogous to the hedgehog, opted for the κύκλος, which is usually rendered as “circle”. Extant sources describe this formation in only three naval battles: Artemision in 480, Patras in 429 and Corcyra 427. Reading these battles’ accounts, Herodotus and Thucydides respectively, scholars have established a substantial connection between the battle of Patras and the Herodotus’ account regarding the Artemision<sup>2</sup>. The battle of Patras, which provides the most detailed narrative of this tactic – as sketched at the beginning and subsequently examined at length - has become the starting-point through which scholars interpret the Herodotean description. According to this prevailing reading, the naval engagement against the Persians represents the first time where this tactic appeared in ancient naval warfare among the Greeks. Moreover, according to the mainstream interpretation, the κύκλος emerged as a possible option<sup>3</sup> to face the opponent who opted for the more well-attested and, as a consequence, more studied battle manoeuvre: the so-called διέκπλους.

The aim of this paper is to offer a reading of these three battle focusing on the presence, real or presumed, of this tactic, in order to set the κύκλος in the broader field of naval warfare during classical period.

- 
- 1 Bernard W. HENDERSON, *The Great War between Athens and Sparta*, New York, Arno Press, 1927, p. 98.
  - 2 Cf. William L. RODGERS, *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare. A Study of Strategy, Tactics, and Ships Design from Salamis (480 b.c) to Actium (31 b.c)*, Annapolis, The United States Naval Institute, 1937, p. 132; Donald KAGAN, *The Archidamian War*, Ithaca – London, Yale University Press, 1974, p. 109; Simon HORNBLLOWER, *A Commentary on Thucydides. Volume I. Book I-III*, 1991, p. 364; John S. MORRISON – John F. COATES – Boris RANKOV, *The Athenian Trireme. The History and Reconstruction of an Ancient Greek Warship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 68-69; John R. HALE, *Lord of the Sea. The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*, London, Penguin Publishing Book, 2009, pp. 159-160; Jennifer T. ROBERTS, *Athens, Sparta and the Struggle for Ancient Greece*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 92; RAHE Paul A., *The Second Attic War. The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta 446-418 B.C.*, New Heaven – London, Yale University Press, 2020, p. 109.
  - 3 John S. MORRISON – John F. COATES – Boris RANKOV, *The Athenian Trireme*, cit. pp. 71-72; Owen REES, *Great Naval Battles of the Ancient Greek World*, Pen & Sword Maritime, Philadelphia, 2019, pp. xiii-xiv.

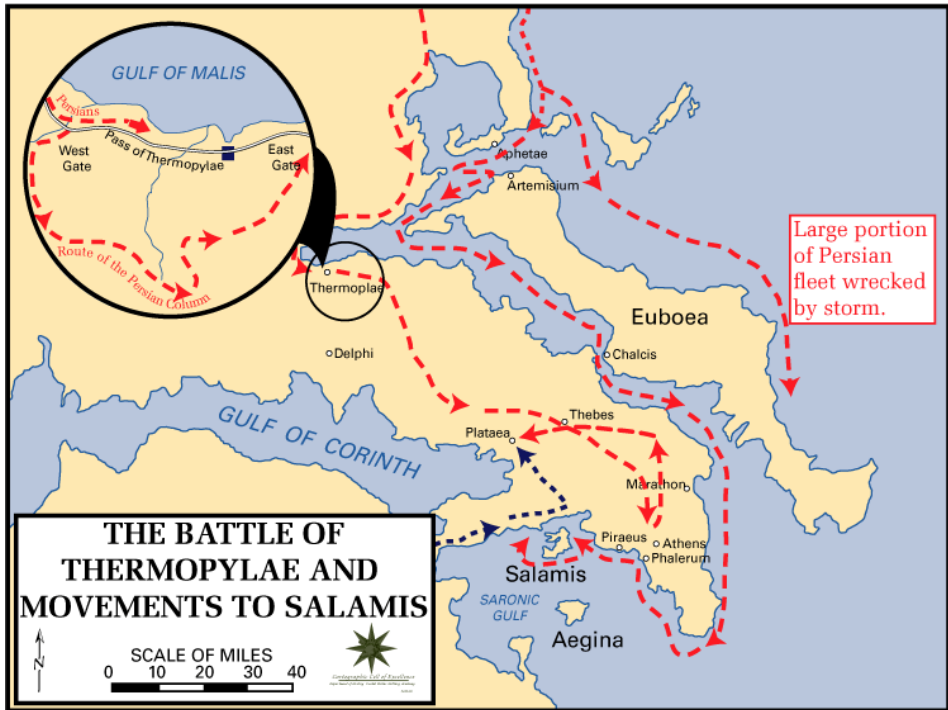


Fig. 1. Battle of Thermopylae and movements to Salamis, 480 BC. The Department of History, United States Military Academy. Public Domain. Wikimedia Commons.

### *Artemision, first day*

Meanwhile, the Persians were inspecting the remaining triremes<sup>4</sup> when, as soon as the opportunity arose, a renowned deep-sea diver, whose name was Scillias of

4 Hdt. VIII 8.1. At the beginning, the Persians had 1207 triremes (Hdt. VII 89.1; 184.1), helped by 120 other from the area of Thrace. But, after the first storm, they lost 400 ships (Hdt. VII 190) and 15 were captured by the Greeks (Hdt. VII 194.1). Cf. Pietro VANNICELLI, *Resistenza e Intesa. Studi sulle guerre persiane in Erodoto*, Bari, Edipuglia, 2013, pp. 50-62; Christopher TUPLIN – Bruno JACOBS, «Military Organization and Equipment», in Bruno Jacobs – Robert Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Volume II*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2021, pp. 1175-1177 with further references. For the logistic of a such mobilization John HYLAND, «The Achaemenid Military System and Its Campaign Logistics», in John Hyland – Khodadad Rezakhani (eds.), *Brill's Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*, Leiden, Brill, 2024, pp. 174-175. On the localization of their naval base vd. Paul W. WALLACE, «Aphetai and the Battle of Artemisium», in Alan L. Boegehold et al. (eds.), *Studies Presented to Sterling Down on his eightieth birthday*, Durham, Duke University, 1984, pp. 106-110.

Scione, deserted to bring up to date the Greeks on the enemy's manoeuvres. Despite Herodotus' rational scepticism regarding the story of Scyllias' adventurous escape from the Persian side<sup>5</sup>, the Greeks gathered a frightening development: two hundred triremes had already set sail to circumnavigate the eastern side of Euboea and round the southern headland, aiming to reach the Hellenic fleet from the south<sup>6</sup>. Although scholars have entertained doubts about the feasibility of this strategy in broad terms and the logistical timing for such circumnavigation<sup>7</sup>, the Greeks did not know otherwise and were not able to verify the Scyllias' account in a short time. If the Persians carried their deceptive plan out, the Greek coalition, which was already outnumbered, would be helpless. Then it is no wonder that they started to discuss viable alternatives before it got too late. After an extensive debate – during which the possibility of withdrawal may have come up again<sup>8</sup> –, the Greeks camped for that day. As midnight passed, they resolved to sail southward to pre-empt the encircling fleet. However, within the Herodotus' elaborate timeline which tracks what happened at Thermopylae at the same time<sup>9</sup>, the exact moment when the Greeks did not encounter the two hounded trireme remains unclear. Yet, by late afternoon<sup>10</sup>, they had revised their strategic plans.

5 Hdt. VIII 8.2: «οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ἀτρεκέως». Vd. Donald LATEINER, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, Toronto – Buffalo – London, University of Toronto Press, 1989, p. 63.

6 At Thermopylae, Artemision and Salamis the Persians always attempted to carry out an encirclement (cf. Hdt., VII 213-218; VIII 7-13; 76; 79-82).

7 For the debate cf. Charles HIGNETT, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, Oxford, Oxford Clarendon, 1963, pp. 386-392; George CAWKWELL, *The Greek Wars. The Failure of Persia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 93-94. For a major confidence in Herodotus' account cf. Andrew R. BURN, *Persia and the Greeks. The Defence of the West, c. 546-478 B.C.*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1962, pp. 395-399; Peter GREEN, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 128-129. Cf. Herbert HÖRHAGER, «Zu den Flottenoperationen am Kap Artemision», *Chiron*, 3, (1973), pp. 51-59 for further topographical problems.

8 Hdt. VIII 9.1: «Τοῦτο δὲ ἀκούσαντες οἱ Ἕλληνες λόγον σφίσι αὐτοῖσι ἐδίδοσαν. Πολλῶν δὲ λεχθέντων ἐνίκα τὴν ἡμέρην ἐκείνην αὐτοῦ μείναντάς» cf. Hdt. VIII 4-6. Steven SIDEBOTHAM, «Herodotus on Artemisium», *The Classical World*, 75, 3, (1982), pp. 177-186 has risen doubt on the possible withdrawal, arguing that the Greek tried to trap the Persians in the “narrow waters”.

9 Vd. the table made David ASHERI, *Erodoto. Le Storie. Libro VIII. La vittoria di Temistocle*, Milano, Mondadori, 2010<sup>2</sup> pp. 216-218 with further references.

10 Hdt. VIII 9.1-2: «δειλὴν ὄψιν γινομένην τῆς ἡμέρης φυλάξαντες αὐτοὶ ἐπανάπλεον ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους». If we translate δειλή as “afternoon”, it will be misleading, since we miss an interesting detail: δειλή does not mean the hours after the midday but when it's already

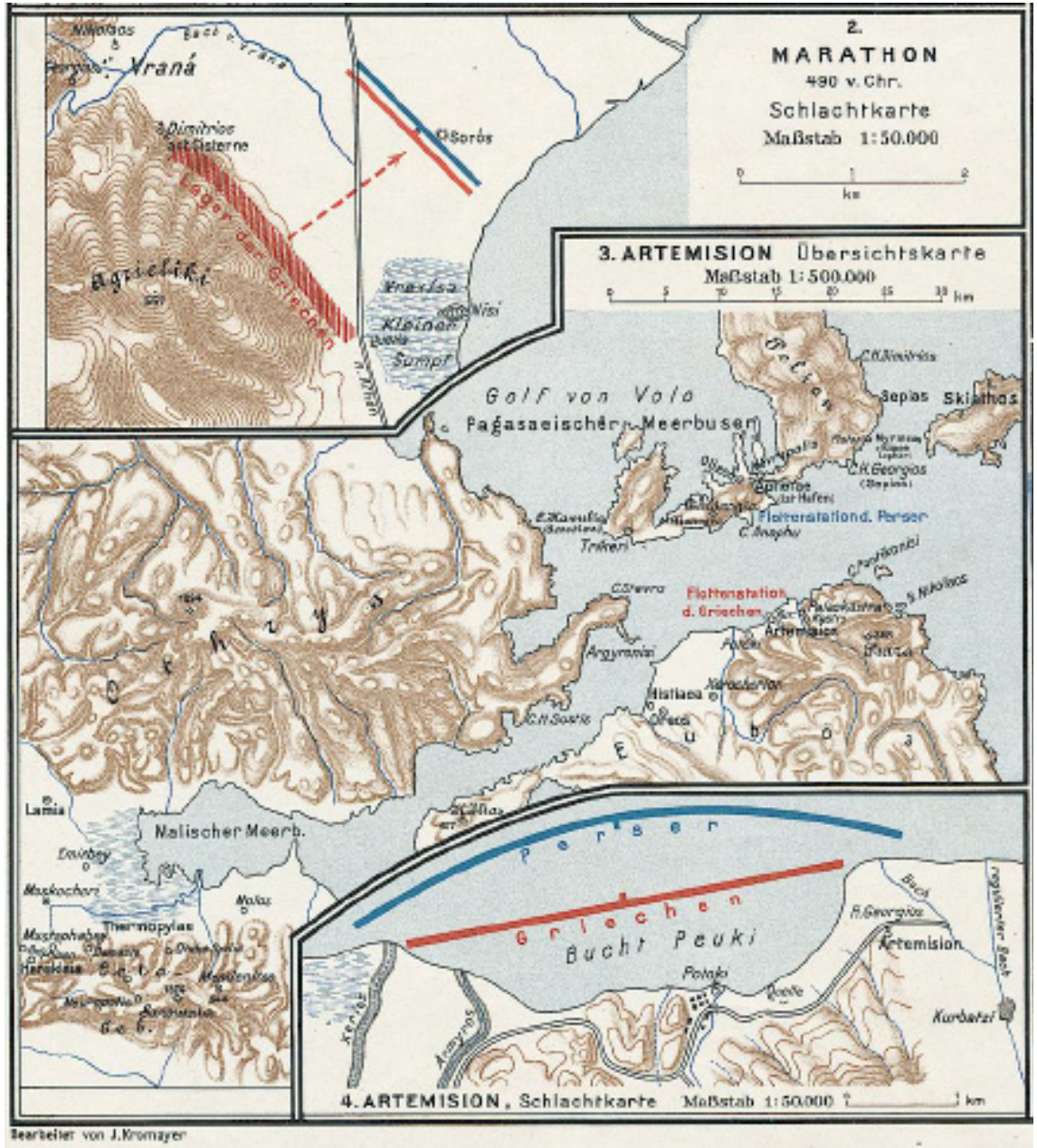


Fig. 2. Battle of Artemision, from Johannes Kromayer u. Georg Veith, *Schlachten-Atlas zur Antiken Kriegsgeschichte*, Vierte Lieferung, Griechische Abteilung, I, Leipzig, Wagner & Debes, 1926.



Fig. 3. Battle of Sybota. From Thucydides, *Maps and Plans illustrative of Thucydides, containing Northern Greece, Southern Greece, Coast of Asia Minor, etc.* Oxford: J. Vincent, ca.1825

What next followed was the first day of indecisive engagements, which enclosed all the problems that arose for the question of κύκλος and his purported first emergence in ancient naval warfare. According to Herodotus, the Greeks started rowing against the Persians with a main strategic intent: they wanted to try out the enemies (ἀπόπειραν αὐτῶν ποιήσασθαι), their way of war (τῆς τε μάχης) and their διέκπλους, essentially testing how the Persians might breach their battle line. At first sight, this motive might seem rash and thoughtless, but, given the absence of the expected two hundred triremes and cognizant of their numerical inferiority, the Greeks might grab the chance playing the disadvantages down<sup>11</sup>.

getting darker, just before the night (cf. Hdt. VII 167.4; VIII 9.6; IX 101.8; Thuc. III 74.2; IV 69.3; VIII 26.1; Xen. *Hell.* I 1.5; *Anab.* I 8.8; II 2.74; III 3.1; VII 2.16; *Cyr.* V 4.16). However, it is not night but the moment when every military actions stop (cf. Xen. *Anab.* III 4.34; 5.2) and the soldiers have dinner (Xen. *Hell.* IV 1.22; 6.6; *Anab.* IV 2.1; VII 3.1). If so, the Greeks opted for a short engagement before the night.

11 Cf. John LAZENBY, «The Strategy of the Greeks in the Opening Campaign of the Persian

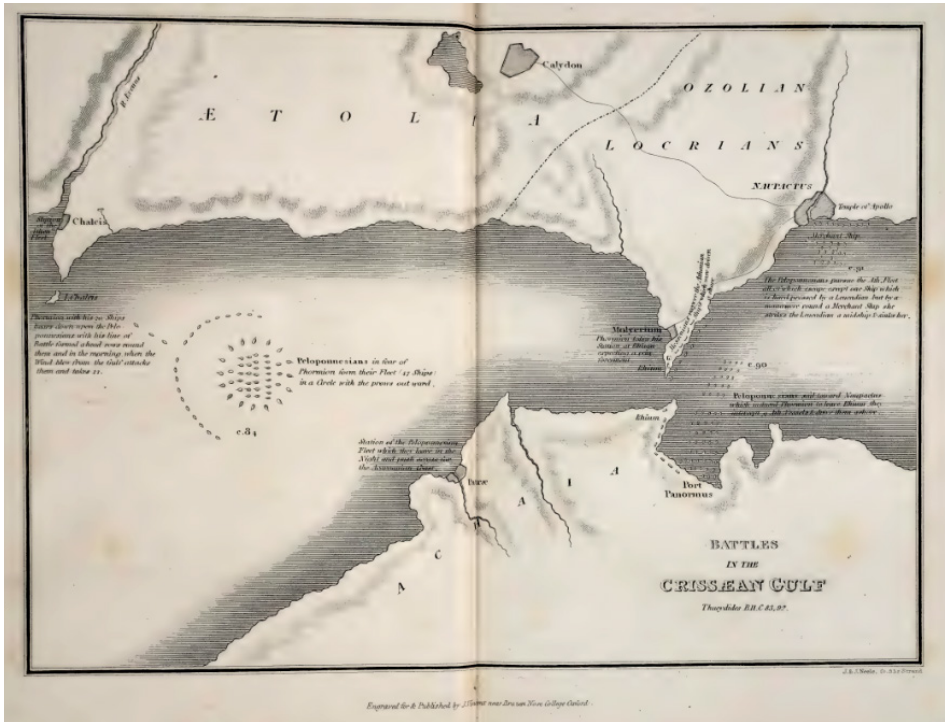
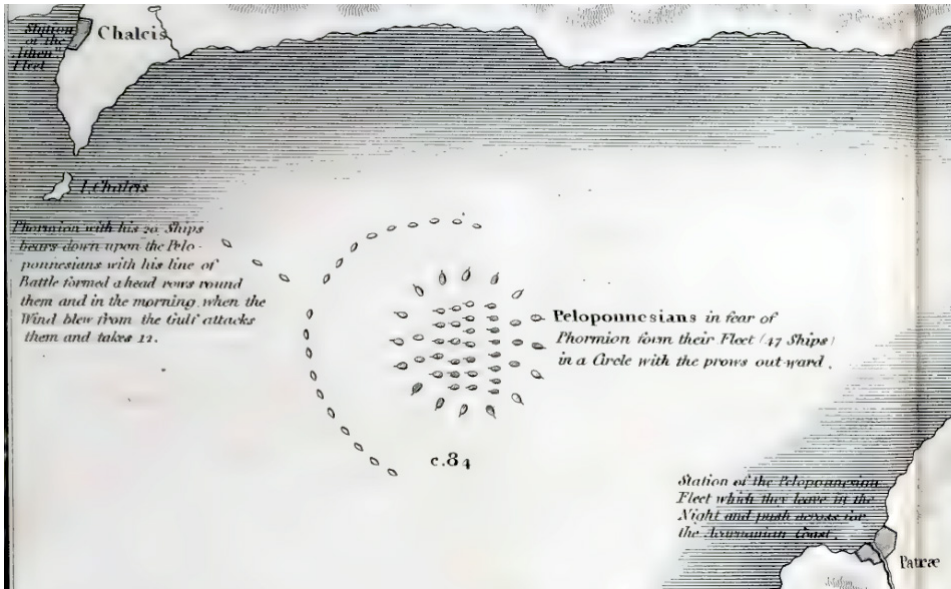


Fig. 4 a. Battles in the Crissaeon Gulf. From Thucydides, *Maps and Plans*, cit.

Fig. 4 b. Particular, showing the Peloponnesian kyklos,



Through this enterprise, they avoided the risk of being too much outnumbered: this is not the only occasion that a naval battle started earlier than expected and one of the two opponents aimed to try the enemy out<sup>12</sup>. In this regard, the Persian reaction was predictable: cognizant (such as the Greeks) of their superior rowing capabilities as well as their numerical advantage, then, as Herodotus highlights and his reader would expect, they disregarded the enemy's action<sup>13</sup>. The Persians, as a consequence, began to "encircle" the Greek fleet. Considering the hundreds of ships involved in this action, it is likely the Persians attempted to outflank their opponents. The Greeks, however, opted for the following escamotage: upon the first signal – as common practice for communications and issuing orders in ancient naval warfare too<sup>14</sup> – they turned ship sterns toward enemy triremes, moving their poops closer together. This preliminary countermeasure, at first sight, could resemble what we know of the κύκλος employed in the other two occasions we will scrutinize in the next sections: as we have seen in the introduction, the majority of scholars have put forward this parallel, linking the Artemision battle with the events of 429. According to them, the same strategy took place in both episodes even the situations had some noteworthy dissimilarity. What followed in the battle, however, should be approached with circumspection. Indeed, as John

---

War», *Hermes*, 92, 3 (1964), pp. 274-275; Christopher PELLING, «Speech and narrative in the *Histories*», in Carolyn Dewald – John Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 110-111 n. 30, pp. 103-121.

- 12 In the context of naval warfare, the verb ἀποπειράω is employed by the ancient historians whenever one fleet tried to engage the enemy when the latter did not have the full fleet (Thuc. IV 24.3; cfr. the reflection put forward by Gylippos in Thuc. VII 21.2; VII 36.1) or was at a disadvantage (Thuc. VII 17.4).
- 13 Hdt. VIII 10.1: «Ὅρωντες δὲ σφεας οἱ τε ἄλλοι στρατιῶται οἱ Ξέρξεω καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἐπιπλέοντας νηυσὶ ὀλίγησι, πάγχυ σφι μανίην ἐπενείκαντες ἀνήγον καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰς νέας». This behaviour, where the Persians looked the Greek strategy as a sign of madness, was the same at Marathon (Hdt. VI 112.2) and the opinion of Mardonios (Hdt. VIII 140). On this topic vd. the study of Harry C. AVERY, «Herodotus 6.112.2», *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 103, (1972), pp. 15-22.
- 14 Hdt. VIII 111.1: «Τοῖσι δὲ Ἑλλησι ὡς ἐσήμηνε... δεῦτερα δὲ σημήναντος». For the verb σημαίνω in classical warfare see Peter KRENTZ, «The Salpinx in Greek Warfare», in Victor D. Hanson (ed.), *The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 110-120 who argues for the employment of a trumpet in naval warfare too. For the σάλπιγξ vd. Elena FRANCHI, «La Salpinx a Sparta antica tra realtà e rappresentazione», in Guido Raschieri (ed.), *Il terzo suono. Dialoghi al crocevia delle tradizioni orali. Vol. 2*, Trento, Università degli Studi di Trento, 2023, pp. 161-182 with further bibliography.



Fig. 5 a. Corcyra, From Thucydides, *Maps and Plans*, cit.

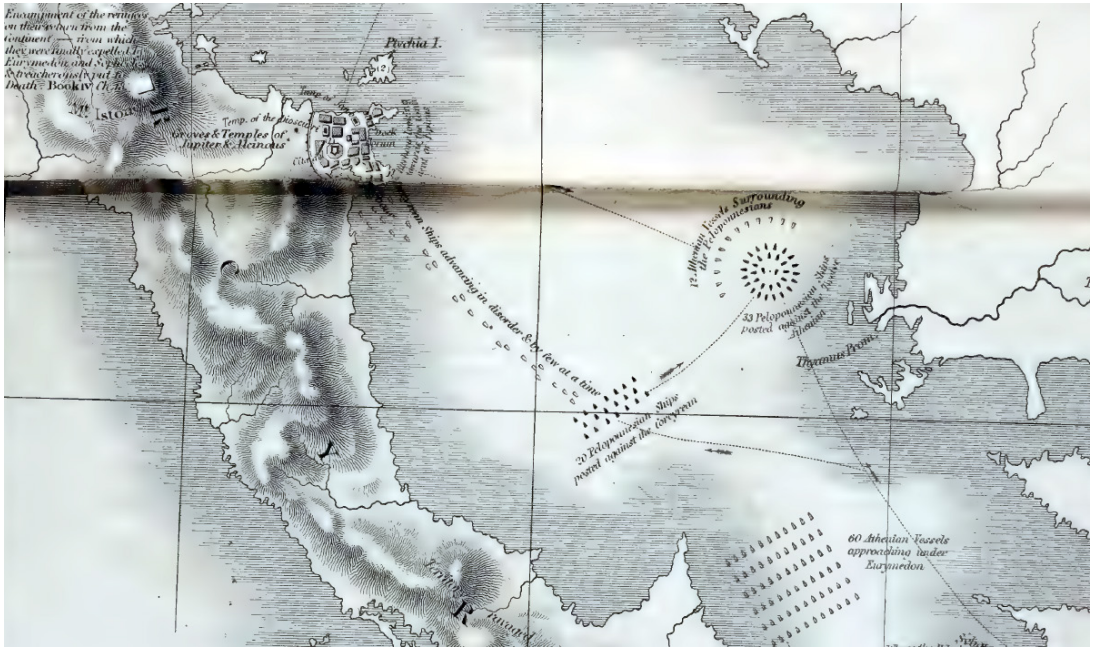


Fig. 5 b. Particular, showing the Peloponnesian kyklos,

Lazenby has persuasively argued on more than one occasion<sup>15</sup>, if the pattern was the Thucydidean account of 429, at Artemision the execution of a complete circle with 270 triremes stationaries would have required a radius of 4 km.

Thereafter, we are inclined to argue that the Greeks aimed to prevent the Persian triremes from rowing around their wings. The deeply-rooted idea of a first definite κύκλος in ancient naval warfare begins to fall apart. Moreover, despite several criticism on his nautical expertise<sup>16</sup>, Herodotus inserts further explicative details which corroborate the reading just advanced. Since the Greeks had already deployed their triremes closer together, following the second signal – while we cannot assert it was a well-established practice, it was a clear evidence of

15 John F. LAZENBY, «Essays and Reflections: Naval Warfare in the Ancient World: Myth and Realities», *The International History Review*, 9, 3, (1987a), p. 450; ID., «The Diekplous», *Greece & Rome*, 34, 2, (1987b), p. 174 n. 15; ID., *The Defence of Greece 490-479 B.C.*, Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 1993 pp. 138-140

16 The critic of George B. GRUNDY, *The Great Persian War and Its Preliminaries. A Study of the Evidence, Literary and Topographical*, London, John Murray, 1901, pp. 333-334 on Artemision is illustrative.

some planification before this enterprise – they took part in the action. Through the expression ἔργου εἶχοντο, Herodotus does not suggest the Greeks went into action maybe rowing toward the enemy, as some reconstructions supposes, but more simply that, given the inescapable proximity to the Persians, they were engaged in the fight<sup>17</sup>. The Greeks either sustained this initial clash or a simply initial moment had to deal with the solely tempted διέκπλους. Thought parallel traditions are inclined for a plan dreamed up for the first time by single person<sup>18</sup>, the countermeasure opted by the Greek fleet had the triremes kept stationary and with the rams turned toward the enemies. No additional actions seem to have been planned, such as the intervention of faster triremes or similar as we will see. The Greeks only sought to withstand the situation as possible invalidating the enemy's manoeuvres. Still, the following consequence of this plan was not completely clear: as Herodotus notices, the battle's outcome in that day remained inconclusive. Perhaps influenced by their previous experience at the battle of Lade<sup>19</sup>, the Persians were unprepared for this way of war. It should not be forgotten that Greeks captured thirty triremes before the day went out. Regarding other details on this preliminary fight, especially concerning tactics and battle's developments, Herodotus is sparing and remains consistent with his well-known approach to warfare<sup>20</sup>. Besides the fact that the father of History does not call

17 We do not follow the accounts of George N. L. HAMMOND, «The Expedition of Xerxes», in John Boardman – George N. L. Hammond – David M. Lewis – Martin Ostwald (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. Second Edition. Volume IV. Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C.*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 554 and, more recently, Paul A. RAHE, *The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta. The Persian Challenge*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press, 2015, pp. pp. 230-232 which are a sort of free interpretations of Herodotus' account in order to fully reconstruct this battle.

18 For the question of Heracleides of Mylasa vd. the debate and the bibliography in David ASHERI, *Erodoto. cit.* pp. 210-211.

19 Hdt. VI 12. Cf. John MYRES, «The Battle of Lade, 494 B.C. (Herodotus VI. 6-17. With map)», *Greece & Rome*, 1, (1954), pp. 50-55; Donald LATEINER, «The Failure of the Ionian Revolt», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 31, 2, (1982), pp. 149-150; Herman T. WALLINGA, «The Ionian Revolt», *Mnemosyne*, 37, 3/4, (1984), pp. 401-437.

20 On this topic cf. Suzanne SAÏD, «Guerre, intelligence et courage dans les histoires d' Hérodote», *Ancient Society*, 11/12, (1980), pp. 83-117; J. COBET, «Herodotus and Thucydides on War», in Ian S. Moxon – John D. Smart – Anthony J. Woodman (eds.), *Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing. Paper presented at a conference in Leeds, 6-8 April 1983*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 1-18; Laurence TRITLE, «Warfare in Herodotus», in Carolyn Dewald – John Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 209-223.

this plan as κύκλος, a main clue that he is talking about a different arrangement as compared with a known contemporary formation, we can summarise what is emerged as follows: classifying what happened at Artemision as a “classical” κύκλος disposition would be misleading, indeed the Greeks were organised for sustain the short fight cognizant of their enemies and how they fought due to a superior fleet. The reader in front of the Artemision’s account rightly asks what purpose the Greeks carried out this measure and, following the narrative arranged by Herodotus, it seems they did not want to defeat the enemy. The situation could not afford this goal and they opted for a confined fight which enabled them to capture some enemy ships.

### *Patras and the first emergence of the κύκλος*

In the late summer of 429, the Spartan-allied fleet owing forty-seven triremes departed from Patras to reach the other troops already involved in Acarnania, where Cnemus, the appointed navarch for that year, should have waited for them. The original plan encompassed a double expedition against the Acarnanias owing the army and the fleet, with the latter joining Cnemus as soon as possible<sup>21</sup>. On the opposing coastline, however, the Athenian strategos Phormio<sup>22</sup>, commanding only twenty triremes, was cognizant that the enemies were about to cross the gulf over at any moment. Despite the Peloponnesians’ attempts at concealment through nocturnal departure, the Athenians started sailing along the coast waiting for the opponents offshore in the centre of the gulf. The allies of Sparta did not expect any engagement with Phormio given their superior number, but the Athenian strategos was waiting for that moment, self-confident of the renowned Athenian naval skills<sup>23</sup>. When they glimpsed that the Athenians would not back down,

21 Thuc. II 80-81; The Spartiate, however, did not wait the fleet, choosing to advance. The result was the inconclusive battle of Stratos: Thuc. II 81.3-8. Michael P. FRONDA – Chandra GIROUX, «Spartan Strategy in the Early Peloponnesian War, 431-425 B.C.E», *Phoenix*, 73, 3/4, (2019), p. 305; Paul A. Rahe, *Sparta’s Second Attic*, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

22 On this strategos cf. John R. HALE, «General Phormio’s Art of War: a Greek Commentary on a Chinese Classic», in Charles D. Hamilton – Peter Krentz (eds.), *Polis and Polemos: Essays on Politics, War, and History in Ancient Greece in Honour of Donald Kagan*, Claremont, Regina Books, 1997, pp. 85-103; Ugo FANTASIA, «Formione in Acarnania (Thuc. II 68, 7-8) e le origini della guerra del Peloponneso», *Incidenza dell’Antico*, 4, (2006), pp. 59-98; Elisabetta BIANCO, «Formione, stratego nautikotatos», *Historikà*, 13, (2023), pp. 53-84.

23 The generals often valued if it was safe or not to engage battle against a superior enemy vd. Roel KONIJNENDIJK, «Playing Dice for the Polis: Pitched Battle in Greek Military



Fig. 6. *Olympias*, a reconstruction of an ancient Athenian trireme. Athens, Park of Maritime Tradition in Floisvos, in Palaio Faliro. Credit Jackson 2022. CC-BY-SA-4.0.

the Peloponnesians, guided by three Corinthian generals, opted for a formation distinctly identified as κύκλος by Thucydides. As soon as the Peloponnesians started moving for that formation, the Athenian historian provides a clear-cut and detailed account<sup>24</sup>. The Peloponnesians obtained the κύκλος from the standard navigation line-ahead, where the admiral ship stopped first, so to be followed by “dominoes” of the other triremes. Each triremes, in turns, positioned themselves, one by one, pointing its rams outward (τὰς πρόρας μὲν ἔξω), whilst the stern was oriented inward (ἔσω δὲ τὰς πρύμνας). Based on the side where the circle was drawn, the stern was then tilted in part towards starboard or port, as much as it was sufficient in the direction of nearby triremes. The orientation aimed to create a sort of large perimeter in which the triremes represented their rams at end

---

Thought», *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 151, 1, (2021), pp. 17-18 with further bibliography.

24 In order to give a reading of this tactic, scholars simply translate Thuc. II 84. Cf. Bernard W. HENDERSON, *The Great War*, op. cit., p. 97; William L. RODGERS, *Greek and Roman*, op. cit. pp. 131; Karl-Joachim HÖLKESKAMP, «La guerra e la pace», in Salvatore Settis (ed.), *I Greci. Storia cultura arte e società. 2. Una storia greca. II. Definizione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997, pp. 508-509; Boris RANKOV, «Ancient Naval Warfare, 700 BC-AD 600», in Michael Whitby – Harry Sidebottom (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Battles*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2017, p. 29

of each ray. In the middle of this “hedgehog”, five triremes, which Thucydides identifies as τὰς ἄριστα πλεούσας – to put in another way: these triremes were better rowed<sup>25</sup> – were ready to take part in the action (ὅπως ἐκπλέοιεν διὰ βραχέος παραγιγνόμενοι, εἴ πη προσπίπτειεν οἱ ἐναντίοι). Whenever the Athenians tried to ram the Peloponnesians stationed to form the κύκλος, the five triremes would have help ramming in turn. In the end of this description, Thucydides limits himself to draw attention to the aim of this formation, reporting that the Peloponnesians avoided providing any chance for the enemy διέκπλους (ὡς μέγιστον οἷοί τ’ ἦσαν μὴ διδόντες διέκπλουν). This latter detail is pivotal to getting the Thucydidean point: while some scholars have argued that the κύκλος was the defensive countermeasure against the Athenians, it raises up the problem of how there was the further Peloponnesian step in order to overwhelm the enemy or simply to drive him apart. Thucydides’ silence on this matter has led us to a reassessment of traditional interpretation where the κύκλος was the classical countermeasure against the διέκπλους. The silence of the historian, however, is not complete, providing a crucial insight. At the beginning of the battle’s account, Thucydides expressly states that the Peloponnesians were sailing not to engage in a naval battle but were organised to transport troops<sup>26</sup> and then, when Phormio was preparing the battle, they were compelled to face it<sup>27</sup>. The situation, repeatedly emphasized by the historian throughout the account, bringing his reader to deduce to the following conclusion: the κύκλος was not simply a defensive formation itself but the only one feasible countermeasure to adopt under the circumstances. We can even call the κύκλος a surviving effort.

25 Cf. Thuc. I 48.4; 48.7; VII 34.3; VIII 104.3; Xen. *Hell.*, I 6.16; 6.19; Diod. XIII 39.3.

26 Thuc., II 83.2: «οἱ δὲ Κορίνθιοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι ἔπλεον μὲν οὐχ ὡς ἐπὶ ναυμαχίᾳ, ἀλλὰ στρατιωτικώτερον παρεσκευασμένοι ἐς τὴν Ἀκαρνανίαν» is pivotal. For the expression στρατιωτικώτερον παρεσκευασμένοι cf. John S. MORRISON – Robert T. WILLIAMS, *Greek Oared Ships 900-322*, 1968, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 247-248; Lionel CASSON, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, pp. 92-93; John S. MORRISON – John F. COATES – Boris RANKOV, *The Athenian Triremes*, op. cit. 151-152; Matteo ZACCARINI, «Dalla “triere leggera” alla “triere pesante”: l’evoluzione della flotta ateniese tra Temistocle e Cimone», *Rivista di Studi Militari*, 2, (2013), p. 23 n. 49.

27 Thuc., II 83.1: «ἀλλ’ ἠναγκάσθησαν περὶ τὰς αὐτὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἐν Στράτῳ μάχης ναυμαχῆσαι πρὸς Φορμίωνα» where the keyword is ἀνάγκη repeated then in Thuc., II 83.3: «οὕτω δὴ ἀναγκάζονται ναυμαχεῖν κατὰ μέσον τὸν πορθμόν». For the concept of ἀνάγκη during battles in Thucydides vd. Martin OSTWALD, *ANAGKH in Thucydides*, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1988, p. 13

*Corcyra: the stasis on the sea*

When the civil strife at Corcyra had reached a complicated turn, the internal factions remained unsuspecting of a coming fleet from Sparta and her allies overnight. On this point, Thucydides simply writes that the Peloponnesians, under the navarch Alcidas and the advisor Brasidas<sup>28</sup>, had dropped the anchors at the Sybota's port on the mainland<sup>29</sup>. When it was nearly dawn, Thucydides reports that fifty-three triremes sailed toward Corcyra (ὀρμισάμενοι δὲ ἐξ Σύβοτα λιμένα τῆς ἠπείρου ἅμα ἔφ' ἐπέπλεον τῇ Κερκύρᾳ). The reader, however, gropes in the dark regarding their real will, whether the Peloponnesians intended to engage in a naval battle or rather to conduct operations on the island. In the city, the citizens were in turmoil unsure of how to face the coming enemy. They started to embark on the sixty triremes and set sail against the enemies: time losing all the Athenian attempts to dissuade the islanders from taking time to sail together. As soon as some triremes were scattered around two of them defected, meanwhile in the other triremes the crews fought among themselves<sup>30</sup>: the civil strife transposed on the fleet would suggest possible preexisting arrangements between Peloponnesians and the oligarchic faction. On the opposite side, as soon as it was ascertained what was taking place, the Peloponnesians launched only twenty triremes against a superior fleet which was in complete confusion. The remaining Peloponnesian thirty-three triremes sailed against the Athenian ones which had only twelve ships, including the notorious *Salaminia* and *Paralos*<sup>31</sup>.

Facing the numerical disadvantage, the Athenians avoided breaking through the enemy line so as to not be outnumbered and overwhelmed, instead focus-

28 On these two Spartiates vd. Joseph ROISMAN «Alcidas in Thucydides», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 36, 4, (1987), pp. 385-421 and the final the appendix regarding the advisors' role. On Brasidas with further bibliography see Ian PLANT, «Brasidas and Thucydides: Hero and His Historian», *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*, 49, 2, (2023), pp. 11-36.

29 For the topography vd. George N. L. HAMMOND, «Naval Operations in the South Channel of Corcyra 435-433 B. C.», *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 65, (1945), pp. 26-37.

30 On the identification of these persons Ugo FANTASIA, «Corcira, 427-425 a.C.: anatomia di una stasis», in Cinzia Bearzot – Franca Landucci (eds.), «Partiti» e fazioni nell'esperienza politica greca, Milano, 2008, pp. 187-189.

31 Cf. Lionel CASSON, *Ships and Seamanship*, op. cit. pp. 92-93; Vincent GABRIELSEN, *Financing the Athenian Fleet. Public Taxation and Social Relations*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, p. 109; John NASH, *Rulers of the Sea. Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece 550-321 BCE*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2023, p. 65.

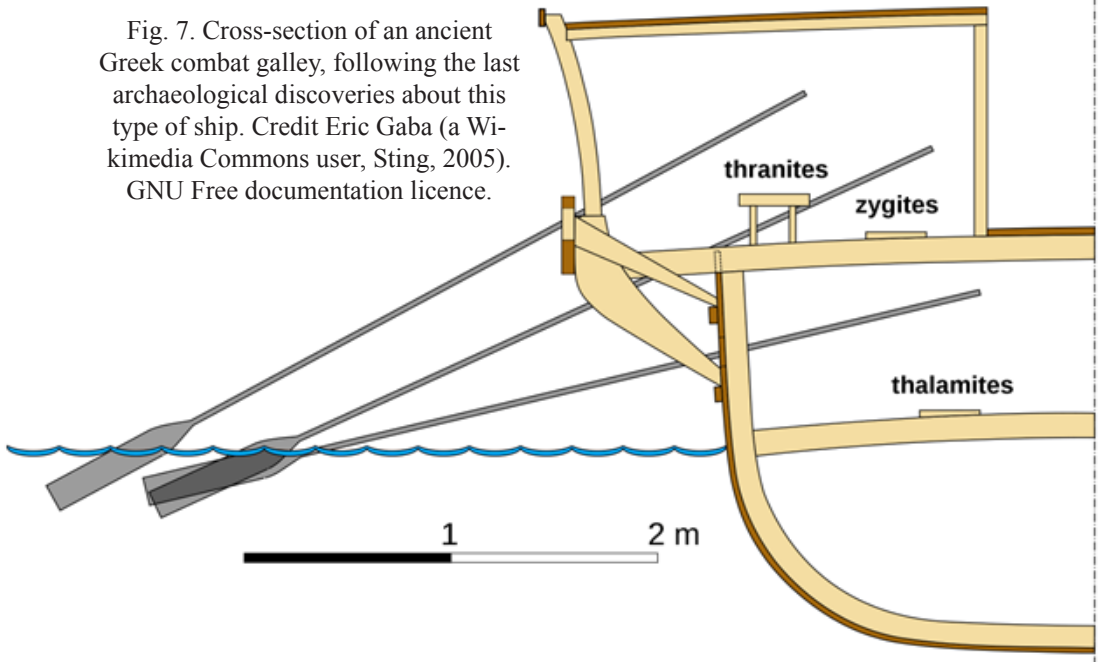
ing the manoeuvres against one wing. Following the loss of only one trireme, the Peloponnesians, quite unexpectedly, adopted a circle formation, marking the second and last one κύκλος of which we have information among sources. What cause this choice remains unclear: the Peloponnesians might still be traumatised by the nightmarish crossing two years before<sup>32</sup> or, as we are more inclined to believe without excluding both options, this choice indicates their limited preparedness for naval engagement. The Athenians, as expected given the last time, responded by encircling the enemy (περιέπλεον καὶ ἐπειρῶντο θορυβεῖν). On the opposite wing, the twenty Peloponnesian triremes became at first cognizant of the impending perils, so they joined their fellows<sup>33</sup>. In front of the ensued enemy, the Athenians judged it preferable to pull out avoiding risks. At this point, Thucydides highlights that the Peloponnesians instead of sailing against Corcyra – maybe this was the fear of the Athenians and their allied islanders – opted for coming back to Sybota. During this fight, they had captured thirteen triremes. The next day, the Athenians and the islanders were ready for the worst, embarking themselves to fight again but the Peloponnesians did not sail against Corcyra for a second time. They likely thought the thirteen triremes were a good haul, since, from the beginning, the Spartan authorities had sent Alcidas to increase their fleet (πλέον τὸ ναυτικὸν ποιήσαντες ἐς τὴν Κέρκυραν πλεῦσαι στασιάζουσιν)<sup>34</sup>. Given the Peloponnesians' reaction in front of their superiority and the problems which had arisen in the opposite side, we can draw some conclusions regarding the circle employed in that battle. Sparta and her allies were not in a position to defend themselves despite their superior number and, in light of their behaviour the next day too, it is likely they were not really prepared for the naval battle which was won through the defections and the strives on the enemy side. On this point, it is not to be excluded that some pre-arrangement and premeditation in agreement

32 Bernard W. HENDERSON, *The Great War*, op. cit. p. 118: “*Phormio’s drum was still beating in their ears*”. The psychological trauma during that occasion is highlighted by John LAZENBY, *The Peloponnesian War. A Military Study*, London – New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 56

33 Thuc., III 76.3: «γνόντες δὲ οἱ πρὸς τοῖς Κερκυραίοις καὶ δέισαντες μὴ ὄπερ ἐν Ναυπάκτῳ γένοιτο, ἐπιβοηθοῦσι, καὶ γινόμεναι ἄθροαι αἱ νῆες ἅμα τὸν ἐπίπλουν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἐποιοῦντο». We do not follow the critics against Alcidas by Barry S. STRAUSS, «Sparta’s Maritime Moment», in Andrew S. Erickson – Lyle J. Goldstein – Carnes Lord (eds.), *China goes to Sea. Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspectives*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2009, p. 42 since Thucydides is silent on this point

34 Thuc. III 69.2. Vd. Peter A. BRUNT, «Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War», *The American Historical Review*, 87, 1, (1965), p. 272.

Fig. 7. Cross-section of an ancient Greek combat galley, following the last archaeological discoveries about this type of ship. Credit Eric Gaba (a Wikimedia Commons user, Sting, 2005). GNU Free documentation licence.



with the Peloponnesians. In conclusion, even at Corcyra such as a Patras, κύκλος should be regarded differently compared to major scholars' agreement.

### *Conclusion*

In order to summarize the historical events that emerged in the previous pages, we believe it is compelling to retrace some points. At Artemision, a real circle, as it is described by Thucydides, did not take place: the analogies, even at first sight fitting for some points, do not hold the different situation and the Herodotean description. On that occasion, the Greeks withstand the fight as possible nullifying the enemy's manoeuvres on their wings, but a complete circle was not achieved and maybe not even researched. The κύκλος had only two real occurrences at a single two-year interval, challenging prevailing scholarly interpretations of its role as a standard defensive counter to the διέκπλους. As a consequence, the κύκλος was not a defensive escamotage employed whenever the enemy used the breaking through, yet, following the precise description advanced by Thucydides, it was a sort of survival strategy employed by a fleet compelled into an unplanned naval engagement.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- ASHERI David, *Erodoto. Le Storie. Libro VIII. La vittoria di Temistocle*, Milano, Mondadori, 2010<sup>2</sup>.
- AVERY Harry C., «Herodotus 6.112.2», *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 103, (1972), pp. 15-22.
- BIANCO Elisabetta, *Formione, stratego nautikotatos*, «Historikà», 13, (2023), pp. 53-84.
- BRUNT Peter A., «Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War», *The American Historical Review*, 87, 1, (1965), pp. 255-280.
- BURN Andrew R., *Persia and the Greeks. The Defence of the West, c. 546-478 B.C.*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1962.
- CASSON Lionel, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971.
- CAWKWELL George, *The Greek Wars. The Failure of Persia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- COBET J., «Herodotus and Thucydides on War», in Ian S. Moxon – John D. Smart – Anthony J. Woodman (eds.), *Past Perspectives. Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing. Paper presented at a conference in Leeds, 6-8 April 1983*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 1-18.
- FANTASIA Ugo, «Formione in Acarnania (Thuc. II 68, 7-8) e le origini della guerra del Peloponneso», «Incidenza dell' Antico», 4, (2006), pp. 59-98.
- FANTASIA Ugo, «Corcira, 427-425 a.C.: anatomia di una *stasis*», in Cinzia Bearzot – Franca Landucci (eds.), «Partiti» e fazioni nell'esperienza politica greca, Milano, 2008, pp. 167-201.
- FRANCHI Elena, «La Salpinx a Sparta antica tra realtà e rappresentazione», in Guido Raschieri (ed.), *Il terzo suono. Dialoghi al crocevia delle tradizioni orali. Vol. 2*, Trento, Università degli Studi di Trento, 2023, pp. 161-182.
- FRONDA Michael P., – GIROUX Chandra, «Spartan Strategy in the Early Peloponnesian War, 431-425 B.C.E.», *Phoenix*, 73, 3/4, (2019), pp. 293-312.
- GREEN Peter, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 1998.
- GRUNDY George B., *The Great Persian War and Its Preliminaries. A Study of the Evidence, Literary and Topographical*, London, John Murray, 1901.
- HALE John R., «General Phormio's Art of War: a Greek Commentary on a Chinese Classic», in Charled D. Hamilton – Peter Krentz (eds.), *Polis and Polemos: Essays on Politics, War, and History in Ancient Greece in Honour of Donald Kagan*, Claremont, Regina Books, 1997, pp. 85-193.
- HALE John R., *Lord of the Sea. The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*, London, Penguin Publishing Book, 2009.
- HAMMOND George N. L., «Naval Operations in the South Channel of Corcyra 435-433 B. C.», *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 65, (1945), pp. 26-37.
- HAMMOND George N. L., «The Expedition of Xerxes», in John Boardman – George N. L. Hammond – David M. Lewis – Martin Ostwald (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient Histo-*

- ry. *Second Edition. Volume IV. Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C.*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 518-591.
- HENDERSON Bernard W., *The Great War between Athens and Sparta*, New York, Arno Press, 1927.
- HIGNETT Charles, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, Oxford, Oxford Clarendon, 1963.
- HÖLKESKAMP, «La guerra e la pace», in Salvatore Settis (ed.), *I Greci. Storia cultura arte e società. 2. Una storia greca. II. Definizione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997, pp. 481-539.
- HÖRHAGER Herbert, «Zu den Flottenoperationen am Kap Artemision», *Chiron*, 3, (1973), 43-59.
- HYLAND John, «The Achaemenid Military System and Its Campaign Logistics», in John Hyland – Khodadad Rezakhami (eds.), *Brill's Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*, Leiden, Brill, 2024, pp. 157-186.
- KAGAN Donald, *The Archidamian War*, Ithaca – London, Yale University Press.
- KONIJNENDIJK Roel, «Playing Dice for the Polis: Pitched Battle in Greek Military Thought», *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 151, 1, (2021), pp. 1-33.
- KRENTZ Peter, «The Salpinx in Greek Warfare», in Victor D. Hanson (ed.), *The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 110-120.
- KROMAYER, Johannes, u. Georg VEITH, *Schlachten-Atlas zur antiken Kriegsgeschichte: 120 Karten auf 34 Tafeln ; mit begleitendem Text* (4. Lieferung, Griechische Abteilung 1): Von Marathon bis Chaeronea, Leipzig 1926.
- LATEINER Donald, «The Failure of the Ionian Revolt», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 31, 2, (1982), pp. 129-160
- LATEINER Donald, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, Toronto – Buffalo – London, University of Toronto Press, 1989.
- LAZENBY John, «The Strategy of the Greeks in the Opening Campaign of the Persian War», *Hermes*, 92, 3 (1964), pp. 264-284.
- LAZENBY John F., «Essays and Reflections: Naval Warfare in the Ancient World: Myth and Realities», *The International History Review*, 9, 3, (1987a), pp. 438-455.
- LAZENBY John F., «The Diekplous», *Greece & Rome*, 34, 2, (1987b), pp. 169-177.
- LAZENBY John F., *The Defence of Greece 490-479 B.C.*, Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 1993.
- MYRES John, «The Battle of Lade, 494 B.C. (Herodotus VI. 6-17. With map)», *Greece & Rome*, 1, (1954), pp. 50-55.
- MORRISON John S. – COATES John F. – RANKOV Boris, *The Athenian Trireme. The History and Reconstruction of an Ancient Greek Warship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- MORRISON John S. – Robert T. WILLIAMS, *Greek Oared Ships 900-322*, 1968, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- NASH John, *Rulers of the Sea. Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece 550-321 BCE*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2023.
- OSTWALD Martin, *ANAKH in Thucydides*, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1988.
- PELLING Christopher, «Speech and narrative in the *Histories*», in Carolyn Dewald – John

- Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 103-121.
- PLANT Ian, «Brasidas and Thucydides: Hero and His Historian», *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*, 49, 2, (2023), pp. 11-36.
- RAHE Paul A., *The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta. The Persian Challenge*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press, 2015.
- RAHE Paul A., *The Second Attic War. The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta 446-418 B.C.*, New Heaven – London, Yale University Press, 2020.
- RANKOV Boris, «Ancient Naval Warfare, 700 BC-AD 600», in Michael Whitby – Harry Sidebottom (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Battles*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, pp. 3-41.
- REES Owen, *Great Naval Battles of the Ancient Greek World*, Pen & sword Maritime, Philadelphia, 2019.
- ROBERTS Jennifer T., *Athens, Sparta and the Struggle for Ancient Greece*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.
- RODGERS William L., *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare. A Study of Strategy, Tactics, and Ships Design from Salamis (480 b.c) to Actium (31 b.c)*, Annapolis, The United States Naval Institute, 1937.
- ROISMAN Joseph, «Alkidas in Thucydides», *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 36, 4, (1987), pp. 385-421.
- SAÏD Suzanne, «Guerre, intelligence et courage dans les histoires d' Hérodote», *Ancient Society*, 11/12, (1980), pp. 83-117.
- TRITLE Laurence, «Warfare in Herodotus», in Carolyn Dewald – John Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 209-223.
- TUPLIN Christopher – JACOBS Bruno, *Military Organization and Equipment*, in Bruno Jacobs – Robert Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Volume II*, Hoboken, Wiley Blackwell, 2021, pp. 1161-1182.
- SIDEBOTHAM Steven, «Herodotus on Artemisium», *The Classical World*, 75, 3, (1982), pp. 177-186.
- STRAUSS Barry S., «Sparta's Maritime Moment», in Andrew S. Erickson – Lyle J. Goldstein – Carnes Lord (eds.), *China goes to Sea. Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspectives*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2009, pp. 315-326.
- VANNICELLI Pietro, *Resistenza e Intesa. Studi sulle guerre persiane in Erodoto*, Bari, Edipuglia, 2013.
- WALLACE Paul A., «Aphetai and the Battle of Artemisium», in Alan L. Boegehold et al. (eds.), *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow on his eightieth birthday*, Durham, Duke University, 1984, pp. 106-110.
- WALLINGA Herman T., «The Ionian Revolt», *Mnemosyne*, 37, 3/4, (1984), pp. 401-437.
- ZACCARINI Matteo, *Dalla "trieme leggera" alla "trieme pesante": l'evoluzione della flotta ateniese tra Temistocle e Cimone*, «Rivista di Studi Militari», 2, (2013), pp. 7-27.

## Tra guerra e politica il caso dei mille *logades* di Argo

by ALESSANDRO BRAMBILLA

**ABSTRACT:** The corps of the thousand *logades* of Argos, active between the 420s and 410s BCE, exhibits distinctive characteristics that render it a particularly significant case within the landscape of elite military forces in Classical Greece. Its numerical strength makes it the second most sizeable elite formation attested in the sources from the Classical period. The history of this military unit highlights the risks associated with the establishment of such formations for the stability of the existing political order, particularly when the latter was already compromised or inherently fragile. Finally, this corps represents the earliest instance for which the sources unequivocally attest both state-funded maintenance and state-regulated training.

**KEYWORDS:** ARGOS, LOGADES, EPILEKTOI, ELITE, PICKED TROOPS

**L**eggendo le fonti antiche capita di imbattersi in riferimenti a scontri fra gruppi di combattenti qualificati come “gli scelti” sin dall’età arcaica. Pausania racconta un episodio, forse risalente all’epoca della seconda guerra messenica, in cui cento uomini selezionati provenienti da Orestasio sacrificarono la propria vita in combattimento per permettere agli abitanti di Figela di rientrare in possesso della propria città, sottratta loro dagli Spartani, adempiendo così a un oracolo delfico<sup>1</sup>. Intorno alla metà del VI secolo<sup>2</sup> trecento Argivi scelti combatterono contro un analogo contingente di Spartani per risolvere la secolare contesa fra le due città per il possesso della Tireatide<sup>3</sup>. Ancora Pausania fa menzione del sacrificio di trecento focesi scelti per difendere la propria terra dall’attacco dei Tessali<sup>4</sup>.

1 PAUS. VIII, 39 e 41.

2 Tutte le date sono da intendersi a.C., salvo diversa indicazione.

3 HDT. I, 82; PLUT., *Mor.* 306ab; PAUS. III, 7, 5.

4 PAUS. X, 1, 4-6.

È, tuttavia, a partire dalle Guerre persiane che il fenomeno assunse dimensioni particolarmente rilevanti, diffondendosi su vasta scala. Le fonti spesso fanno riferimento a piccoli gruppi di combattenti scelti ai quali venivano affidati compiti di carattere diverso. Dal punto di vista terminologico, gli uomini che andavano a costituire questi distaccamenti temporanei vengono qualificati dalle fonti con il termine *logades* o, a partire da Senofonte, *epilektoi*, ma anche ricorrendo a perifrasi più ampie che fanno riferimento all'aspetto della selezione.

Col passare del tempo, tuttavia, accanto a queste realtà dall'esistenza effimera iniziarono a vedere la luce formazioni dal profilo più definito. Si trattava sempre di contingenti composti da opliti cittadini la cui esistenza, tuttavia, non si limitava a un singolo evento. Molte realtà statali del mondo greco, soprattutto a partire dalla seconda metà del V secolo, si dotarono di corpi permanenti d'élite di fanteria. Significativamente, le fonti continuano a descrivere questi uomini come *logades* o *epilektoi*, una traccia della continuità ideale tra queste realtà stabili e i distaccamenti temporanei. Talvolta, però, viene preservato quello che sembrerebbe essere il nome ufficiale di queste forze d'élite<sup>5</sup>. Il numero di componenti di ciascun corpo poteva variare e le fonti testimoniano un intervallo che va da trecento fino a cinquemila uomini. Dal punto di vista pratico, queste forze militari permanenti d'élite potevano operare in coordinamento con altri contingenti oplitici all'interno della falange, ma anche con reparti di cavalleria, con arcieri o fanti armati alla leggera; potevano inoltre condurre singole azioni o, addirittura, campagne in isolamento. In buona sostanza, questi corpi d'élite potevano rappresentare un'importante risorsa tattica a disposizione del comandante<sup>6</sup>. Al contempo erano una forza in grado di esercitare una profonda influenza, positiva o nefasta,

5 Ad esempio nel IV secolo il Battaglione Sacro tebano o gli Epariti del *koinon* degli Arcadi. Sui primi, cfr. James DeVOTO, «The Theban Sacred Band», *Ancient World*, 23, 1992, pp. 3-19; sui secondi cfr. Alessandro BRAMBILLA, «Epariti. Il koinon degli Arcadi e i suoi soldati», *Rationes Rerum*, 6, 2015, pp. 9-32. Sull'esistenza in Beozia di una formazione stabile chiamata *heniochoi kai parabatai* nel V secolo, cfr. Alessandro BRAMBILLA, «Élites militari in Beozia: la tradizione sugli ἠνίοχοι καὶ παραβάται», *Rationes Rerum*, 8, 2016, pp. 11-28. Sulla presenza di formazioni di *epilektoi* ad Atene, cfr. Lawrence TRITLE, «Epilektoi at Athens», *Ancient History Bulletin*, 3, 1989, 54-59. Sui guerrieri d'élite della confederazione etolica alla fine del V secolo, cfr. Jacek RZEPKA, «The Aetolian Elite Warriors and Fifth Century Roots of the Hellenistic Confederacy», *Akme. Studia Historica*, 4, 2009, pp. 18-19.

6 Cfr. Roel KONIJNENDIJK, *Classical Greek Tactics. A Cultural History*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 178-205.

sul quadro politico. I membri di questi reparti, peraltro spesso appartenenti a loro volta a una cerchia sociale ristretta e benestante, avendo la possibilità di trascorrere lungo tempo uno a contatto con l'altro, talvolta vivendo anche separati dal punto di vista fisico dal resto della comunità, finivano per sviluppare un potente spirito di corpo che, come è stato notato anche dai moderni, costituiva un elemento disgregante e, di conseguenza, una potenziale minaccia nei confronti dell'autorità statale<sup>7</sup>. Tuttavia non è necessario pensare che l'influenza politica di queste formazioni sia da considerare un effetto imprevisto dello sviluppo di un *esprit de corps* particolarmente pericoloso per lo Stato. In altre parole, il forte legame che si andava a stabilire fra questi uomini era non solo, o non tanto, una conseguenza della decisione da parte dello Stato di dotarsi di un corpo scelto, ma un elemento di cui le autorità erano consapevoli e che tentarono di sfruttare a proprio favore o, perlomeno, di contenere per dare una risposta efficace a esigenze immediate<sup>8</sup>.

Il corpo dei mille Argivi scelti attivo a cavallo fra gli anni '20 e gli anni '10 del V secolo mostra caratteristiche significative, che ne fanno un caso particolarmente interessante nel quadro delle forze d'élite del mondo greco in età classica. Innanzitutto la sua consistenza numerica, mille uomini, rende questi *logades* la truppa d'élite più imponente attestata dalle fonti, eccezion fatta gli Epariti del *koinon* degli Arcadi<sup>9</sup>. In secondo luogo la loro vicenda rivela quali rischi poteva

7 Cfr. Giovanna DAVERIO ROCCHI, 1990, pp. 28-31 «Promachoi ed epilektoi: ambivalenza e ambiguità della morte combattendo per la patria», in Marta SORDI (cur.), *Dulce et decorum pro patria mori: la morte in combattimento nell'antichità*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1990, pp. 33-34; Peter HUNT., «Military Forces», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES e Michael WHITBY (cur.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, I, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 145.

8 Faccio cenno qui all'idea espressa da Marcel DETIENNE, «La phalange. Problèmes et controverse», in Jean-Pierre VERNANT (cur.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne (à la mémoire d'André Aymard)*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton & Co., 1968, pp. 134-135, secondo il quale la nascita di queste formazioni di "scelti" reintroduceva all'interno della città greca un'autentica classe guerriera che si riallacciava al passato stesso della *polis* greca, finanche alle sue stesse origini. Sul rapporto fra gli *epilektoi* e i *phylakes* platonici, cfr. Victor ALONSO TRONCOSO e Klaus FREITAG, «Prolegomena zur Erforschung der Bedeutung der Eliteinheiten im archaischen und klassischen Griechenland», *Gerión*, 19, 2001, pp. 217-218. Sul peculiare rapporto fra gli "scelti" e l'autorità statale, cfr. anche Geneviève HOFFMANN, «Les choisis: un ordre dans la cite grecque?», *Droit et Cultures* 9-10 (1985), p. 18.

9 Si noti, tuttavia, che contingenti di mille Argivi non sono così rari. HDT. I, 61, 4 e ARISTOT., *Ath. Pol.* 17, 4, riferiscono dell'aiuto portato da un gruppo di mille soldati argivi, che Erodoto qualifica come *misthotoi* e che secondo Aristotele erano comandati da un tal Egesistrato, a Pisistrato che cercava di tornare al potere in Atene; cfr. Marco BETTALLI, *Merce-*

comportare la creazione di una formazione di questo genere per l'assetto politico vigente, soprattutto quando questo era già piuttosto fragile. Infine è opportuno ricordare che i Mille sono il più antico corpo di soldati scelti per il quale le fonti attestano chiaramente un mantenimento a spese pubbliche e un addestramento curato dallo stato.

### *Il contesto storico*

All'indomani delle guerre persiane, che videro Argo non prendere parte agli scontri e finire per essere sospettata di avere intavolato trattative segrete con Serse<sup>10</sup>, la città si trovò in una posizione isolata rispetto ai tentativi d'intesa fra Sparta e Atene. Dal punto di vista politico, intorno al 470 si era ormai compiuto il processo di democratizzazione; nel frattempo la città era riuscita a unificare nuovamente sotto il suo controllo la pianura circostante ed era entrata a fare parte di una vasta alleanza peloponnesiaca antispartana ispirata forse da Temistocle, allora in esilio proprio in quel luogo. Questa coalizione, tuttavia, era assai fragile e Argo, come spesso accadde nella sua storia, si dimostrò incapace di mantenere l'iniziativa<sup>11</sup>. A seguito dell'alleanza con Atene e i Tessali del 462/1, la città riuscì a rilanciarsi nel quadro politico panellenico come elemento catalizzatore delle forze anti-spartane nel Peloponneso<sup>12</sup>. Ancora una volta, però, l'alleanza non si dimostrò all'altezza del compito e nel 451 Atene concluse una tregua quinquennale con Sparta, il che portò Argo a fare lo stesso, ma su base trentennale<sup>13</sup>. Nel

---

*nari. Il mestiere delle armi nel mondo greco antico: età arcaica e classica*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2013, p. 43. Inoltre HDT VI, 92, parla di un corpo di circa mille volontari argivi che nel 490 aiutarono gli Egineti nella guerra contro Atene; dal momento che, dal punto di vista formale, Argo aveva rifiutato di aiutare Egina, è stata suggerita, pur con tutte le cautele, la possibilità che essi fossero di orientamento antidemocratico; cfr. Cinzia BEARZOT, «Argo nel V secolo: ambizioni egemoniche, crisi interne, condizionamenti esterni», in C. BEARZOT e Franca LANDUCCI (cur.), *Argo. Una democrazia diversa*, Milano, Vita e pensiero 2006, pp. 113-114.

10 HDT. VII, 148-152; Pietro VANICELLI, «Eraclidi e Perseidi: aspetti del conflitto tra Sparta e Argo nel 5° sec. a.C.», in Paola ANGELI BERNARDINI (cur.), *La città di Argo: mito, storia, tradizioni poetiche*, Atti del convegno internazionale (Urbino, 13-15 giugno 2002), Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 2004, pp. 279-294.

11 BEARZOT, cit., pp. 117-118.

12 Su quest'alleanza, cfr. Luigi PICCIRILLI, 1973, «Su alcune alleanze fra poleis. Atene, Argo e i Tessali - Atene e Megara - Sparta e Megara», *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 3, 3, 1973, pp. 717-725.

13 THUC. V, 14, 4; *Staatsverträge* 144; Richard TOMLINSON, *Argos and the Argolid, from the*

446/5 anche Atene concluse una tregua trentennale con la storica rivale peloponnesiaca, mentre Argo, per non rimanere isolata, pur non prendendo parte al trattato volle ribadire la propria amicizia con gli Ateniesi<sup>14</sup>. Seguì un periodo di equilibrio interno e internazionale che diede modo alla città di rifiorire.

Allo scoppio delle ostilità fra Atene, Sparta e i rispettivi alleati nel 431, Argo mantenne una posizione di neutralità, non schierandosi con gli Spartani<sup>15</sup>, pur non rinunciando ad alcuni comportamenti ambigui nei confronti degli Ateniesi, che sono stati interpretati dai moderni come il segnale di un'inquietudine politica interna alla stessa Argo<sup>16</sup>. La conclusione della pace di Nicia diede corpo, da un lato, a una fragile e temporanea intesa fra le due grandi potenze in lotta, dall'altro generò non poca insoddisfazione e una certa preoccupazione negli alleati di Sparta, soprattutto i Beoti, i Megaresi, i Corinzi e gli Elei<sup>17</sup>. Contestualmente era giunta a scadenza la tregua trentennale fra Argivi e Spartani stipulata nel 451, con i primi che già da qualche tempo avevano manifestato forti dubbi in merito al rinnovo<sup>18</sup>. Essi, preoccupati dall'accordo fra le due contendenti e sostenuti dai Corinzi, presero l'iniziativa, divenendo per un breve lasso di tempo l'ago della bilancia nella politica internazionale. Già prima della conclusione della pace di

---

*End of the Bronze Age to the Roman Occupation*, London, Routledge, 1972, pp. 114-115.

14 PAUS. V, 23, 4; cfr. BEARZOT, cit., pp. 120-121.

15 THUC. II, 9, 2; DIOD. XII, 42, 4; ARISTOPH., *Pax* 475. Sulla neutralità argiva e sui conseguenti benefici per la condizione economica di Argo, cfr. anche THUC. II, 28, 2; DIOD. XII, 75, 6; Thomas KELLY, «Argive Foreign Policy in the Fifth Century B.C.», *Classical Philology*, 69, 2, 1974, pp. 88-89; Victor ALONSO TRONCOSO, *Neutralidad y neutralismo en la guerra del Peloponeso (431-404 a. C.)*, Madrid, Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1987, pp. 139-193; Charalampos KRITZAS, «Aspects de la vie politique et économique d'Argos au Ve siècle avant J.-C.», in Marcel PIÉRART (cur.), *Polydipsion Argos: Argos de la fin des palais mycéniens à la constitution de l'État classique*, Actes de la table ronde Fribourg, Suisse (7-9 mai 1987), Fribourg, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, 1992, pp. 231-240.

16 Fra i componenti di un'ambasceria inviata dagli Spartani, con la partecipazione di Corinzi e Tegeati, in Persia nell'estate del 430 si trovava, a titolo personale, anche un argivo di nome Pollide (THUC. II, 67, 1), mentre nel 425 i Corinzi furono avvisati dell'arrivo degli Ateniesi grazie a una soffiata proveniente da Argo (THUC. IV, 42, 3).

17 THUC. V, 17, 2.

18 Sulle vicende di questi anni e sul contesto politico-diplomatico ricostruito nella testimonianza tucididea, cfr. Henry D. WESTLAKE, «Thucydides and the Uneasy Peace: A Study in Political Incompetence», in Henry D. WESTLAKE (cur.), *Studies in Thucydides, and Greek History*, Bristol, Bristol Classical Press, 1989, pp. 84-96; Tim ROOD, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 83-108; Ugo FANTASIA, *La guerra del Peloponneso*, Roma, Carocci, 2012, pp. 115-124.

Nicia gli Argivi avevano posto agli Spartani come condizione per il rinnovo del patto la restituzione della Cinuria<sup>19</sup>, un territorio che Sparta aveva nel frattempo concesso agli Egineti che erano stati espulsi dalla loro isola<sup>20</sup>; si trattava di una richiesta tanto provocatoria da tradire la volontà dei primi di non proseguire sulla strada della non belligeranza e di mirare invece alla realizzazione di un progetto più ampio, un'intesa con gli alleati scontenti dei Lacedemoni allo scopo di destabilizzare il nuovo equilibrio di forze<sup>21</sup>. Non erano estranee a questi progetti le antiche rivendicazioni egemoniche argive sul Peloponneso, sulle quali le fonti non mancano di insistere<sup>22</sup>. Le condizioni erano sicuramente favorevoli per Argo: la neutralità nei primi dieci anni di guerra aveva permesso alla città di godere di un certo benessere economico, evitando inoltre i problemi demografici generati da una partecipazione attiva al conflitto. Nonostante alcuni segnali di una certa vivacità della minoranza oligarchica, il progressivo avvicinarsi di Atene e Sparta, suscitando non poche perplessità in tutti gli schieramenti politici cittadini, anche in quello oligarchico, potrebbe avere spinto le parti a trovare una qualche forma di accordo già prima della conclusione della pace di Nicia. La regia occulta dei Corinzi, che Tucidide dipinge come le vere "eminenze grigie" impegnate a tessere in gran segreto le trame dell'accordo tra le terze forze<sup>23</sup>, servì a solleticare le ambizioni dei democratici al potere in Argo, che furono in tal modo in grado di tornare a nutrire la speranza di ottenere per la città l'antico ruolo di dominatrice del Peloponneso. D'altro canto la fazione oligarchica argiva, ancora troppo debole per prendere un'iniziativa alla luce del sole, non poteva che guardare con preoccupazione a un accordo fra Spartani e Ateniesi che avrebbe potuto privarla del necessario sostegno esterno: la proposta dei Corinzi, per quanto potenzial-

---

19 THUC. V, 14, 4.

20 THUC. II, 27, 2; ID. IV, 56, 2.

21 THUC. V, 25-27; DIOD. XII, 75; cfr.; KELLY, cit., pp. 89-90; Robin SEAGER «After the Peace of Nicias: Diplomacy and Policy, 421-416 B.C.», *Classical Quarterly*, 26, 2, 1976, pp. 252-256; BEARZOT, cit., pp. 123-133.

22 THUC. V, 28; DIOD. XII, 75, 6-7.

23 THUC. V, 27, 2, insiste sulla necessità di segretezza ribadita dai Corinzi a quegli Argivi con cui erano entrati in trattative. Secondo Donald KAGAN, «Corinthian Diplomacy after the Peace of Nicias», *American Journal of Philology*, 81, 3, 1960, pp. 295-296, questa prudenza da parte dei Corinzi sarebbe spiegabile alla luce dell'incerta situazione interna di Corinto e di Argo. Accanto a problemi di questo genere, BEARZOT, cit., pp. 127-129, evidenzia anche il desiderio da parte dei Corinzi di non esporsi per non trovarsi isolati e minacciati dagli Spartani in caso di fallimento del progetto.

mente dannosa per i loro interessi nel lungo periodo, poteva servire da sprone nei confronti di Sparta che sarebbe stata costretta ad abbandonare l'idea dell'asse con Atene per evitare di soccombere nel Peloponneso, tornando così a fornire appoggio ai suoi sostenitori nelle varie città della regione<sup>24</sup>. Seppure con punti di vista e obiettivi diversi, dunque, la rivendicazione dell'egemonia peloponnesiaca da un lato, il tentativo di farsi guida delle terze forze ai danni dell'intesa fra le due grandi contendenti dall'altro potevano essere considerati con favore, anche se temporaneamente, da entrambe le parti. Si noti, peraltro, che fra i potenziali componenti dell'alleanza, oltre a Corinto, figuravano anche la Beozia e Megara, il che ha spinto i moderni a suggerire il proposito da parte dei Corinzi di dare all'intesa una coloritura meno spiccatamente democratica<sup>25</sup>. Se queste erano le intenzioni, a maggiore ragione gli oligarchici argivi avrebbero potuto guardare lo sviluppo degli eventi con favore o, almeno, senza ostilità.

Fu conclusa, dunque, un'alleanza difensiva alla quale aderirono Argivi, Mantinesi, Elei, Corinzi<sup>26</sup>, e Calcidesi di Tracia. Beoti e Megaresi, invece, decisero di non entrarvi, preoccupati dal probabile orientamento democratico di una intesa a guida argiva<sup>27</sup>. Il prosieguo degli eventi fu all'insegna del continuo rimescolarsi delle posizioni. A Sparta gli efori Cleobulo e Senare, favorevoli alla ripresa delle ostilità con Atene, cercarono di riavvicinare Argo per il tramite dei Beoti e dei Corinzi; il piano fallì, ma gli Argivi, paventando l'isolamento, inviarono in Laconia due ambasciatori molto graditi agli Spartani, Eustrofo ed Esone, per cercare di negoziare una tregua di compromesso incentrata sulla risoluzione regolamentata della questione relativa al possesso della Cinuria<sup>28</sup>. Gli Spartani, nonostante un'iniziale esitazione, accolsero le richieste e le misero per iscritto, ponendo come condizione che queste venissero approvate anche dal popolo argivo prima di renderle ufficiali. Nel frattempo, tuttavia, ad Atene aveva ripreso forza il partito della guerra: Alcibiade convinse i suoi concittadini a promuovere un'alleanza

24 THUC. V, 27, 2 e 29, 3, sottolinea la preoccupazione dei popoli del Peloponneso che Sparta, con il benessere di Atene, puntasse a ridurli in schiavitù.

25 KAGAN, *Corinthian Diplomacy*, cit., pp. 297-300; BEARZOT, cit., p. 130.

26 Questi ultimi meno entusiasti di quanto fossero inizialmente. Donald KAGAN, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition*, Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press, 1981 pp. 42-43, suggerisce l'esistenza di un'opposizione interna a Corinto. SEAGER, cit., pp. 254-255, pensa invece a semplice prudenza da parte dei Corinzi.

27 THUC. V, 31, 6.

28 THUC. V, 40-41.

con Mantineesi, Elei e, appunto, Argivi; questi ultimi, ancora una volta e a dispetto delle trattative intavolate con Sparta, mutarono atteggiamento, avvicinandosi nuovamente agli Ateniesi in nome dell'affinità costituzionale. Si giunse così alla stipulazione di una quadruplice alleanza, che tuttavia non includeva Corinto, circostanza, quest'ultima, che pose le basi per i successivi sviluppi<sup>29</sup>. In questo contesto si inserisce la creazione del corpo militare argivo d'élite dei mille *logades*.

### *Le fonti*

È opportuno innanzitutto fornire una rapida panoramica delle fonti, addentrando in un secondo momento nei problemi che esse pongono. Per quanto sia Tucidide a fare menzione di questa formazione per la prima volta nel contesto della battaglia di Mantinea del 418, è Diodoro a esplicitare il collegamento fra la genesi di questa formazione, creata selezionando i più giovani e valenti nel fisico tra i cittadini, e le rinnovate ambizioni egemoniche argive<sup>30</sup>.

Tucidide, dal canto suo, nel descrivere le forze impegnate sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea ricorda che all'ala destra dello schieramento antispertano si trovavano i mille uomini scelti che ricevevano da tempo addestramento per la guerra a spese dello stato<sup>31</sup>.

Nel corso dello scontro i *logades*, insieme ai Mantineesi e ai loro alleati, attaccarono le linee nemiche laddove si trovavano gli Sciriti e i reduci delle campagne di Brasida in Tracia, avendo facilmente la meglio e costringendo gli avversari a ripiegare fino alle retrovie e ai bagagli. Non altrettanto valorosamente si comportò il resto dell'esercito argivo, particolarmente sui "cinque λόχοι" formati da veterani, che fu messo quasi istantaneamente in rotta dall'avanzata degli Spartani e, in particolare, di Agide e dell'élite degli *hippeis*<sup>32</sup>.

Sfondate le linee argive, i Lacedemoni, con l'aiuto dei Tegeati, accerchiarono

29 THUC. V, 43-48; sulla posizione di Sparta cfr. César FORNIS VAQUERO, «Esparta y la Cuadruple Alianza, 420- 418 A. C.», *Memorias de Historia Antigua*, 13-14, 1992-1993, pp. 77-103.

30 DIOD. XII, 75, 7.

31 THUC. V, 67, 2.

32 THUC. V, 72, 3-4; sugli *hippeis* spartani, cfr. Thomas FIGUEIRA, «The Spartan Hippeis», in Stephen HODKINSON e Anton POWELL (cur.), *Sparta & War*, Swansea, Classical Press of Wales, pp. 57-84.

gli Ateniesi ed erano pronti ad attaccarli se l'intervento della cavalleria non avesse ostacolato le operazioni. Nel frattempo Agide, accortosi di quanto stava accadendo sul versante opposto del suo schieramento, ordinò ai suoi uomini di non proseguire nell'azione contro gli Ateniesi, ma di marciare in soccorso alla propria ala sinistra che era stata costretta a ripiegare. Resisi conto dell'accaduto e di fronte all'avanzata spartana, i Mantineesi e i mille Argivi iniziarono a ritirarsi, ma, mentre molti furono i caduti tra i primi, i *logades* registrarono poche perdite<sup>33</sup>.

Se Tucidide è particolarmente generoso nel fornire dettagli in merito a quanto accadde sul campo di battaglia quel giorno, il resoconto diodoreo risulta invece compendiato e parziale, concentrandosi quasi esclusivamente sul valoroso comportamento della formazione d'élite dell'esercito argivo in questa occasione, ma aggiungendo, rispetto a Tucidide, un retroscena su cui vi sarà modo di ritornare. Secondo lo storico di Agirio, infatti, di fronte al coraggio dimostrato dai *logades* il re spartano, su consiglio di un suo consigliere di nome Farace, lasciò ai combattenti argivi una via di fuga<sup>34</sup>.

Molto sintetico e attento soprattutto al ruolo degli Argivi e, in particolar modo, dei Mille, il riferimento alla battaglia di Mantinea in Diodoro risulta funzionale a introdurre la narrazione degli eventi relativi alla stasis che si verificò ad Argo dopo la bruciante sconfitta subita e a inquadrare il colpo di stato perpetrato ai danni della democrazia.

All'indomani della battaglia di Mantinea, Argivi e Spartani conclusero un trattato di pace e un'alleanza che costrinse anche i Mantineesi a sottomettersi alla potenza laconica. In tale contesto, rivela Diodoro, i *logades* si accordarono fra di loro e sovvertirono il governo democratico, instaurando in Argo un regime di breve durata. Poterono fare ciò in quanto godevano dell'appoggio di molti collaboratori, dal momento che questi mille si distinguevano per ricchezza e coraggio. In questo passo Diodoro insiste sul fatto che i Mille, facendo leva sul clima di terrore, abolirono le leggi e gestirono in maniera diretta le cariche pubbliche per otto mesi, fino a quando non furono rovesciati da un movimento di popolo che ristabilì la democrazia<sup>35</sup>.

---

33 THUC. V, 73, 2-4; su quanto accadeva al momento della ritirata nelle battaglie del mondo greco in età classica, cfr. KONIJNENDIJK, cit., pp. 178-205.

34 DIOD. XII, 79, 4-7.

35 DIOD. XII, 80.

Questa contrapposizione fra i componenti della formazione d'élite dell'esercito argivo e il popolo emerge anche da un racconto di carattere anedddotico e moraleggiante trasmesso da Pausania, guidati il quale ci rivela anche il nome del leader dei Mille, un tale Briante, la cui descrizione è corredata da dettagli alquanto scabrosi<sup>36</sup>.

Il legame fra i mille *logades* e il colpo di stato oligarchico è ribadito anche da Plutarco in un passo della *Vita di Alcibiade*, in cui l'autore sottolinea il ruolo avuto dal protagonista della biografia nella fase di normalizzazione e ripristino della democrazia ad Argo in seguito agli eventi<sup>37</sup>.

Stando alla tradizione riportata da questi autori, dunque, approfittando della condizione in cui versava la parte democratica al potere in Argo dopo la sconfitta subita a Mantinea, i mille *logades* decisero di sovvertire il sistema politico con l'appoggio degli Spartani, instaurando un dominio oligarchico particolarmente cruento, per quanto di breve durata, che dopo alcuni mesi venne a sua volta rovesciato dal popolo, esasperato dalle continue prevaricazioni, con il contributo più o meno diretto degli Ateniesi. Si tratta di un quadro certamente interessante, con notevoli ricadute sull'interpretazione dell'impatto che una formazione di questo tipo poteva avere su un quadro politico caratterizzato da una certa instabilità e da spinte contrastanti.

Alle notizie trasmesse dalle fonti appena prese in esame si aggiunge la testimonianza di Aristotele, il quale, riflettendo su come ciascun individuo, magistratura o parte di città, una volta assunto particolare rilievo, possa diventare causa di una rivoluzione e di un cambiamento di regime politico, elenca una serie di esempi a sostegno di questa osservazione. Fra questi, anche quello di Argo, dove i notabili che avevano guadagnato fama dopo la battaglia di Mantinea cercarono di rovesciare la democrazia<sup>38</sup>. A ben vedere, il termine usato da Aristotele, *gnorimoi*,

36 PAUS. II, 20, 2. Secondo il Periegeta, Briante si sarebbe dimostrato spesso tracotante nei confronti degli uomini del popolo e si sarebbe macchiato di violenza nei confronti di una giovane donna nella notte stessa del matrimonio di costei. Proprio questo avvenimento avrebbe scatenato l'ira del popolo, che si sarebbe sollevato contro i Mille, sterminandoli. Su questo brano cfr. le osservazioni di Umberto BULTRIGHINI, *Pausania e le tradizioni democratiche (Argo e Elide)*, Padova, Programma, 1990, pp. 126-141.

37 PLUT., *Alc.* 15, 2.

38 ARISTOT., *Pol.* 1304a. Sul passo in questione, cfr. le osservazioni in Maria Elena DE LUNA, Cesare ZIZZA, Michele CURNIS (cur.), *Aristotele, La Politica. Libro V-VI*, Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2016, pp. 331-333).

è particolarmente denso di significato<sup>39</sup>, ma non è chiaro se dietro a questi “notabili” si possano identificare i mille *logades*, oppure se lo Stagirita stia facendo riferimento in maniera più generale ai membri della fazione oligarchica argiva.

A complicare le cose interviene Tucidide. Anche lo storico ateniese, infatti, dopo avere dedicato ampio spazio alla descrizione delle conseguenze diplomatiche della sconfitta del fronte anti-spartano a Mantinea<sup>40</sup>, riferisce gli avvenimenti relativi alla *stásis* che travolse Argo nel 417, attribuendo però in maniera generica il colpo di stato e l’instaurazione di un regime oligarchico a un gruppo di mille uomini argivi che godevano dell’appoggio di un contingente spartano altrettanto numeroso. In ultima analisi, dunque, lo storico ateniese non attesta in maniera esplicita alcun legame fra questi mille e i soldati scelti addestrati e mantenuti dallo stato di cui aveva già parlato e che tanto bene si erano comportati sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea<sup>41</sup>.

Ci si trova di fronte a un caso non raro in cui la fonte più vicina agli eventi, peraltro ben informata sulle vicende argive soprattutto per quanto riguarda questi anni, riporta una versione dei fatti che, se confrontata con quanto riferito da autori di epoca successiva, pone alcune difficoltà di interpretazione. Sorgono, dunque, alcune domande: quale ruolo ebbero i mille *logades* nel corso della guerra civile? Furono loro ad instaurare l’oligarchia rovesciando il regime democratico, come la maggioranza degli studiosi è propensa a ritenere<sup>42</sup>, oppure si trattava di un

39 Cfr. e.g. ARISTOT., *Pol.* 1291b.

40 THUC. V, 75-80.

41 THUC. V, 81, 2.

42 Cfr. e.g. W. Kendrick PRITCHETT, *The Greek State at War*, vol. II, Berkeley - Los Angeles, California University Press, 1974, pp. 222-223; Ephraim DAVID, «The Oligarchic Revolution in Argos, 417 BC», *L’Antiquité Classique*, 55, 1986, pp. 115-116; DAVERIO ROCCHI, cit., pp. 28-31; César FORNIS VAQUERO, «La stasis argiva del 417 a.C.», *Polis*, 5, 1993, 73-89; ALONSO TRONCOSO e FREITAG, cit., p. 205; Hans van WEES «Tyrants, Oligarchs and Citizen Militias», in Angelos CHANIOTIS e Pierre DUCREY (cur.), *Army and Power in the Ancient World*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002, pp. 77-78; BEARZOT, cit., pp. 136-138; Pierre SAUZEAU, «Guerriers d’élite, rôdeurs nocturnes et chasseurs noirs en Grèce ancienne: Aristomenes, Damon et les Mille d’Argos», *Almanach de la recherche franco-russe*, 2, 2008. BULTRIGHINI, cit., p. 128, ritiene che la creazione del corpo dei mille *logades* sia da mettere in collegamento con l’azione del collegio degli Ottanta, che lui interpreta come un residuo pre-democratico e gentilizio, di forti simpatie oligarchiche. Sull’interpretazione degli Ottanta come un relitto dell’epoca aristocratica, cfr. Michael WÖRRLE, *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte von Argos im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, München, 1964, p. 56; TOMLINSON, cit., p. 196. Per l’opinione più recente secondo la quale essi costituivano una se-

altro gruppo di mille uomini? A ciò si aggiungono altri punti oscuri. Innanzitutto non è facile ricostruire in quale momento esatto questo corpo d'élite dell'esercito argivo fu creato. Inoltre, se questi combattenti furono realmente i protagonisti del colpo di stato, è possibile pensare che, come è stato suggerito sulla scorta del racconto di Diodoro, sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea vi sia stato un episodio di collusione<sup>43</sup>?

### *I Mille e la stásis*

Il silenzio di Tucidide riguardo alla possibile identità fra i mille uomini che sovvertirono la democrazia in Argo con l'aiuto degli Spartani e i mille *logades* che da tempo ricevevano addestramento a spese pubbliche, ed erano dunque posti sotto il patrocinio delle istituzioni a guida democratica, e la sfiducia nei confronti della tradizione eforea riflessa in Diodoro<sup>44</sup> hanno spinto alcuni moderni a dubitare del fatto che siano stati proprio i componenti del corpo d'élite a rendersi protagonisti del breve e cruento colpo di stato del 417. Arnold Gomme, per esempio, pensava che non vi fossero ragioni valide per supporre che il corpo dei Mille fosse formato da cittadini di estrazione aristocratica e suggeriva invece la possibilità che si trattasse più semplicemente di un gruppo di uomini di varia estrazione sociale, dotati di privilegi tali da spingerli a percepirsi come un qualcosa di separato e superiore rispetto al resto del corpo civico<sup>45</sup>. Dal canto suo

---

zione della *boulé* o una magistratura composta da venti uomini per ciascuna delle quattro tribù argive, cfr. Marcel PIÉART, 2000, *Argos: une autre démocratie*, in Pernille FLENSTED-JENSEN, Thomas Heine NIELSEN, Mogens Hermann HANSEN e Lene RUBINSTEIN (cur.), *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History Presented to Mogens Herman Hansen on his Sixtieth Birthday (August 20, 2000)*, Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanum Press, 2000, pp. 304-305.

- 43 Cfr. Daniel GILLIS, «Collusion at Mantinea», *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo*, 97, 1963, pp. 199-226. Anche Donald KAGAN, «Argive Politics and Policy after the Peace of Nicias», *Classical Philology* 7, 1962, pp. 212-215, ritiene che vi fossero una serie di considerazioni di carattere politico dietro le scelte compiute da Agide a Mantinea e anche in precedenza.
- 44 Persino Andrewes, che pure prendeva in parte le distanze dal Gomme nell'interpretazione del ruolo avuto dai mille *logades* argivi, riconosceva che i dettagli della versione non tucididea non ispiravano fiducia; cfr. Arnold W. GOMME, Antony ANDREWES e Kenneth DOVER, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, IV, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 105-106.
- 45 GOMME, ANDREWES e DOVER, cit., p. 105. Contro l'identificazione fra i due gruppi si è espresso anche TOMLINSON 1972, p. 181, mentre DAVERIO ROCCHI, cit., pp. 30-31, ha suggerito la possibilità che nella tradizione storiografica si sia sovrapposto il ricordo dei gruppi

Aristotele, secondo Gomme, avrebbe mutuato il quadro che riporta direttamente da Eforo<sup>46</sup>. Analogamente, Simon Hornblower ha più di recente ribadito che la mancata identificazione fra i due gruppi da parte di Tucidide, ben lungi dall'essere frutto di una semplice svista, è in realtà una scelta consapevole compiuta sulla base della documentazione contemporanea che lo storico aveva raccolto, laddove la ricostruzione eforea sarebbe frutto di deduzioni eccessive e ingiustificate<sup>47</sup>. Egli, pur predicando una certa cautela nel respingere con troppa fretta il materiale derivante da Eforo, soprattutto laddove quest'ultimo trasmette elementi del tutto assenti in Tucidide e non in contraddizione con il suo racconto, ha ribadito che il vero elemento non conciliabile fra i resoconti dei due autori in merito ai mille *logades* è proprio l'attitudine politica di questi ultimi, un punto su cui risulta preferibile la versione di Tucidide.

In parziale risposta a questi pareri critici, Anthony Andrewes esprimeva maggiore fiducia non tanto nei confronti della tradizione eforea nel suo complesso, che sarebbe comunque da guardare con sospetto, quanto piuttosto di alcuni elementi in essa contenuti. Lo studioso, infatti, sottolineava che Eforo poteva bene avere avuto fra le mani notizie valide di matrice non-tucididea. Inoltre egli non riteneva affatto inverosimile che i Mille fossero di estrazione sociale elevata, il che lo portava a concludere che un loro ruolo attivo e di primo piano nel colpo di stato del 417 era quantomeno possibile, evidenziando come, su questo punto, il racconto di Tucidide non sia in aperta contraddizione con la versione riportata da Diodoro<sup>48</sup>. Come si è già avuto modo di dire, nonostante il silenzio dello storico ateniese i moderni sono in maggioranza propensi ad ammettere l'identità fra i due gruppi di uomini, spesso, però, senza entrare nel merito dei dubbi sollevati. È necessario, dunque, prendere nuovamente in esame le fonti per cercare di valutare eventuali punti critici della tradizione e suggerire alcuni spunti di riflessione.

In primo luogo è opportuno sottolineare come il fatto che i componenti di que-

---

di *logades* argivi più antichi.

46 Secondo DAVID, cit., pp. 115-116, invece, non è corretto concludere che Aristotele abbia attinto direttamente da Eforo; piuttosto sarebbe opportuno pensare a una fonte comune che guardava con maggiore interesse rispetto a Tucidide al ruolo dei Mille a Mantinea. Di tradizione comune a Eforo, Aristotele e Plutarco parla anche BULTRIGHINI, cit., p. 138.

47 SIMON HORNBLOWER, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, III, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 177-179.

48 GOMME, ANDREWES e DOVER, cit., p. 106.

sto corpo d'élite fossero di estrazione sociale elevata, giovani uomini benestanti, non sia di per sé una condizione sufficiente per mettere in dubbio la validità della tradizione eforea. Spesso, infatti, i membri di analoghe formazioni, indipendentemente dal regime politico vigente, provenivano dalle fasce più alte della popolazione, avendo, almeno in teoria, la possibilità di dedicarsi con continuità all'allenamento fisico nelle palestre, alla lotta e all'esercizio di quanto sarebbe potuto tornare utile in battaglia. Questa dinamica è ovviamente presente in realtà governate da un'oligarchia, come testimonia il caso di Elide e dei suoi Trecento negli anni '60 del IV secolo<sup>49</sup>. Tuttavia, laddove le fonti permettono di osservare più in dettaglio la composizione di una formazione d'élite di uno stato governato in maniera democratica, si nota che anche tra le fila di questi corpi la presenza di uomini facenti parte degli ceti più agiati della popolazione è preminente, se non esclusiva. Quando Gorgida si rese conto dell'esigenza di radunare un certo numero di combattenti scelti in grado di battersi con maggiore efficacia rispetto alla grande maggioranza dei cittadini tebanici per fare fronte alla minaccia spartana, egli si rivolse in primo luogo a quei giovani con cui lui, Epaminonda e gli altri oppositori del regime filospartano rimasti in città durante il periodo dell'occupazione della Cadmea avevano mantenuto stretti legami e che avevano avuto un ruolo di primo piano nell'aiutare Pelopida e gli altri esuli che erano rientrati in patria con un sotterfugio a cacciare la guarnigione spartana dalla rocca. Questi giovani erano i rampolli delle famiglie più ricche e influenti della città. Accanto a loro vi erano uomini più maturi che Plutarco descrive come *hoi beltistoi*<sup>50</sup>. Fu questo gruppo di combattenti nel pieno delle loro forze a costituire l'élite militare tebana che si sviluppò col passare degli anni, divenendo più formalizzata e prendendo il nome di *hieros lochos*<sup>51</sup>. Alla stessa maniera, nelle fila degli Epariti del *koinon* degli Arcadi vi era una componente di uomini facoltosi e di estrazione sociale elevata, simili a quel Licomede di Mantinea che tanta parte ebbe nello spingere gli Arcadi ad unirsi e a nutrire ambizioni egemoniche. Questi ricchi combattenti costituivano, con tutta probabilità, il nucleo originario del corpo e rimasero fedeli

49 XEN., *Hell.* VII, 4, 15-16 e 31; cfr. ALONSO TRONCOSO e FREITAG, cit., p. 211; Claudia RUGGERI, *Gli stati intorno a Olimpia: storia e costituzione dell'Elide e degli stati formati dai perieci elei (400-362 a.C.)*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004, pp. 54-55.

50 PLUT., *Pelop.* 12, 2.

51 Cfr. DEVOTO, cit.,. Per altre formazioni d'élite del *koinon* beotico, cfr. BRAMBILLA, *Élites militari in Beozia*, cit., pp. 11-28.

ai magistrati federali e alla loro politica antispartana fino in ultimo<sup>52</sup>. Guardando l'episodio argivo da una prospettiva più ampia, dunque, non sorprende che le autorità cittadine, pur di orientamento democratico, allorché avvertirono la necessità di creare una formazione militare sufficientemente abile da potere affrontare gli Spartani in battaglia in maniera efficace così da avere qualche chance di potere dare seguito alle proprie aspirazioni egemoniche sul Peloponneso, si siano rivolte a uomini facenti parte degli strati più agiati della società argiva, i quali, almeno in teoria, avevano maggiore dimestichezza con le armi ed erano più preparati al combattimento, potendo quindi garantire maggiori speranze di successo<sup>53</sup>.

Il vero punto problematico, dunque, non è tanto l'estrazione sociale dei componenti del corpo dei mille *logades*, quanto piuttosto la loro affiliazione politica e, in questo senso, sorge spontaneo domandarsi se sia stato realmente possibile che le autorità democratiche argive abbiano dato vita a una potente realtà militare arruolando nelle sue fila tutti i componenti dell'opposizione oligarchica. A prima vista, in effetti, quella compiuta dal governo argivo sembrerebbe una mossa quantomeno azzardata, se non palesemente suicida. Vi sono tuttavia alcune considerazioni che possono permettere di inquadrare meglio il perché di una tale scelta e, dunque, possono ulteriormente avvalorare la versione eforea.

### *Una cooperazione possibile?*

Secondo Aristotele gli *gnorimoi* argivi, avendo dato buona prova di sé sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea e trovandosi così in una posizione favorevole rispetto alla controparte democratica, presero la decisione di rovesciare il regime vigente. L'uso di *gnorimoi* da parte di Aristotele non lascia spazio a dubbi sull'estrazione sociale e sull'orientamento politico di coloro che sovvertirono l'ordine democratico<sup>54</sup>. Che questi *gnorimoi* fossero i mille *logades* non viene detto in maniera esplicita, ma vi sono alcuni elementi da considerare.

52 Sulle vicende di questo corpo d'élite, cfr. BRAMBILLA, *Epariti*, cit., pp. 9-32.

53 La fuga dell'esercito cittadino argivo a Mantinea non fu un episodio isolato: nel 394 a Coronea gli Argivi, nuovamente schierati di fronte agli Spartani, si fecero prendere dal panico ancora prima di entrare in contatto con questi ultimi e si diedero alla fuga, trovando riparo sull'Eliconia; cfr. XEN., *Hell.* IV, 3, 17.

54 Si veda, a titolo d'esempio, l'uso che Aristotele fa del termine in altri passi della *Politica*; cfr. ARISTOT., *Pol.* 1296b; 1302b; 1304b; 1305b; 1306b; 1307a; 1309a; 1319b; 1321a. Cfr. anche ARISTOT., *Ath. Pol.* 28, 2.

Innanzitutto la ricostruzione proposta dallo Stagirita risulta coerente con il quadro storico che è possibile ricavare dalla testimonianza di Tucidide. Al momento della stipulazione della pace di Nicia, Argo, che era rimasta neutrale per tutta la prima fase del conflitto, già da qualche tempo aveva mostrato i segni di una progressiva insofferenza nei confronti degli Spartani e del desiderio di non rinnovare il trattato trentennale. Tucidide racconta che proprio questo atteggiamento da parte degli Argivi spinse Sparta ad accelerare sull'intesa con Atene<sup>55</sup>. A loro volta i Corinzi e gli altri alleati peloponnesiaci, che non vedevano di buon occhio la piega che gli eventi avevano preso e anzi temevano, o almeno così lasciavano intendere<sup>56</sup>, di trovarsi alla mercé delle due superpotenze, iniziarono una politica volta a spezzare l'intesa fra Spartani e Ateniesi. Gli Argivi, dal canto loro, si trovavano in una posizione potenzialmente molto favorevole. Grazie alla neutralità mantenuta durante i primi dieci anni di guerra la loro economia era florida, al contrario di quella della maggior parte dei belligeranti, e questo probabilmente aveva permesso a molti in città di arricchirsi notevolmente. Indipendentemente dal ruolo avuto dai Corinzi nel far rinascere o nell'accrescere in Argo le antiche ambizioni egemoniche mai realmente sopite, l'indebolimento della posizione spartana non solo nel quadro internazionale, ma soprattutto fra gli alleati peloponnesiaci apriva agli Argivi uno spazio di manovra non indifferente. La possibilità di farsi guida di un nuovo sistema di alleanze e di porsi come alternativa a Sparta quale potenza leader nel Peloponneso dovette allettare non poco le autorità democratiche che, in quel momento, godevano all'interno della città di una posizione di assoluta preminenza. Nel corso dei primi dieci anni di guerra, infatti, la fazione oligarchica argiva era attiva, ma apparentemente non così forte da potere costituire una reale minaccia per la democrazia. Poco dopo lo scoppio della guerra un argivo di nome Pollide prese parte a una missione diplomatica diretta in Asia che vedeva coinvolti legati di Corinto, Sparta e Tegea; l'obiettivo di questa delegazione era quello di ottenere il sostegno economico persiano per la causa dei Peloponnesiaci<sup>57</sup>. Tucidide rivela che Pollide non agiva in virtù di un incarico ufficiale, ma a titolo privato. La sua presenza in questa ambasceria testimonia il tentativo da parte della fazione oligarchica argiva di mantenersi in stretti contatti con Sparta, sperando forse di ottenerne l'aiuto al momento oppor-

---

55 THUC. V, 22, 2.

56 Cfr. KELLY, cit., pp. 91-92; SEAGER, cit., p. 254.

57 THUC. II, 67.

tuno. Nel 425, inoltre, i Corinzi furono avvertiti dell'arrivo di una flotta ateniese, comandata da Nicia e composta da ottanta navi, grazie a una soffiata giunta da Argo. È difficile pensare che dietro a questa delazione a favore di una potenza oligarchica vi fossero i democratici argivi<sup>58</sup>.

Nonostante questi episodi isolati, l'opposizione alle autorità cittadine non si concretizzò mai in un programma più articolato, o quantomeno di un tale progetto non vi è traccia nelle fonti. Nel 421 gli Spartani scesero a patti con i rivali ateniesi generando perplessità e timori nelle città alleate, anche e soprattutto in quelle a guida oligarchica. Costretti a rimanere in una posizione marginale nel contesto politico cittadino, gli oligarchici argivi vedevano ora venire meno anche la possibilità di ottenere un sostegno esterno alle proprie ambizioni. I democratici, d'altro canto, si trovavano in quel momento ad essere padroni della situazione. A causa delle esitazioni e dei molteplici cambiamenti del quadro internazionale negli anni seguenti, tuttavia, gli Argivi non furono mai in grado di farsi realmente guida di un sistema di alleanze fra stati peloponnesiaci in funzione antispartana, riavvicinandosi invece ad Atene grazie anche all'azione di Alcibiade. Sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea le autorità democratiche argive si giocavano le proprie possibilità: una vittoria avrebbe permesso ad Argo di diventare la nuova potenza leader nel Peloponneso e avrebbe nuovamente consolidato la loro posizione in città; una sconfitta, invece, non solo avrebbe cancellato qualsiasi chance di dare seguito alle aspirazioni egemoniche, ma avrebbe fortemente indebolito la fazione democratica argiva, esponendola al pericolo di una rivoluzione oligarchica. Questo è esattamente quello che successe poco dopo la vittoria Spartana, anche se la revanche oligarchica non fu immediata<sup>59</sup>.

Proprio rivolgendo l'attenzione allo scontro decisivo che ebbe luogo a Mantinea è possibile ricavare ulteriori elementi che sembrerebbero avvalorare la ricostruzione di matrice eforea. Sul campo di battaglia gli Argivi dovevano essere presenti con un contingente numeroso, dal momento che erano state mobilitate, oltre ai mille *logades*, anche tutte le divisioni dell'esercito cittadino, i cosiddetti "cinque *lochoi*", formati da combattenti descritti come "più anziani"<sup>60</sup>. Diodoro

58 THUC. IV, 42, 3.

59 THUC. V, 76-81 ricorda una fase di trattative che precedettero il colpo di stato.

60 Sull'articolazione dell'esercito argivo in cinque divisioni a fronte di una suddivisione del corpo civico in quattro tribù, cfr. Nicholas F. JONES, *Public Organisation in Ancient Greece: A Documentary Study*, Philadelphia, The American Philological Society Press, 1987,

(XII, 75, 7), dal canto suo, descrive i membri dell'élite militare argiva come i più giovani tra i cittadini. Affiancando Diodoro e Tuciddide, sembrerebbe emergere un contrasto generazionale tra i Mille e la restante parte dell'esercito argivo, composta da veterani.

Per quanto riguarda la cifra esatta dei combattenti coinvolti, Tuciddide sembra cercare di giustificare il fatto di non essere stato in grado di riportare numeri esatti sottolineando come, da un lato, egli non fosse a conoscenza del totale degli Spartani a motivo della segretezza della loro organizzazione politica e, dall'altro, come non ritenesse opportuno prestare fede alle cifre fornite dagli avversari, in quanto sospettabili di facile esagerazione<sup>61</sup>. Sappiamo, tuttavia, che gli Argivi persero, unitamente agli Orneati e ai Cleonei, un totale di settecento uomini<sup>62</sup>, oltre tre volte il numero dei caduti mantineesi in quell'occasione, per la maggior parte o, forse, esclusivamente schierati nelle fila della milizia cittadina. Il totale degli opliti su cui Argo poteva contare è stato stimato fra i sei e i settemila uomini<sup>63</sup>. Supponendo che dei settecento caduti almeno i due terzi fossero argivi e tenuto conto del fatto che i mille *logades* subirono perdite davvero minime, ne consegue che sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea trovò la morte circa un decimo della popolazione maschile argiva in età militare, al netto di quanti prestavano servizio nel corpo scelto. Anche solo dal punto di vista strettamente numerico, dunque, nel bilancio interno delle forze militari argive i *logades* uscivano particolarmente rafforzati.

A questo punto è necessario domandarsi dove potrebbero essere stati schierati gli *gnorimoi* aristotelici, nel caso in cui non siano da identificare con i mille *logades*. Dal momento che poco tempo dopo essi ebbero la forza necessaria per sovvertire la democrazia, due sono le possibili conclusioni: che fossero presenti in numero ridotto o, cosa più probabile, che fossero schierati in una posizione che consentì loro di non subire perdite, dunque presumibilmente non nelle fila dei "cinque *lochoi*". Già questa constatazione sembra rafforzare l'impressione che la ricostruzione diodorea possa essere ritenuta valida. In realtà vi è di più.

---

pp. 112-118, e, più di recente, Marcello LUPI., «I cinque *lochoi* dell'esercito spartano (e quelli argivi)», *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*, 42, 2014, pp. 131-136.

61 THUC. V, 68, 2.

62 THUC. V, 74, 3.

63 Cfr. Marcel PIÉRART e Gilles TOUCHAIS 1996, *Argos: une ville grecque de 6000 ans*, Paris, CNRS Editions, pp. 43-44.

Se, infatti, supponessimo che i componenti di questa formazione d'élite fossero di estrazione sociale diversa e che i *logades* non fossero gli stessi mille che poco tempo dopo rovesciarono la democrazia, bisognerebbe concludere che ad Argo vi erano altri mille uomini i quali, oltre a essersela cavata egregiamente a Mantinea, erano sufficientemente forti da imporre il proprio dominio.

A questo punto, però, verrebbe da domandarsi che fine abbiano fatto i filodemocratici: visto che i *logades* furono gli unici ad uscire dal campo di battaglia di Mantinea non solo pressoché intatti, ma addirittura paradossalmente rafforzati, una circostanza su cui Tucidide e Diodoro concordano, lascia perplessi la totale assenza di una immediata opposizione armata al colpo di stato oligarchico del 417. In altre parole, se il corpo scelto fosse stato composto da sostenitori della democrazia, il fatto di essere riusciti a sopravvivere alla sconfitta per mano degli Spartani avrebbe dovuto fare di loro un baluardo per le autorità cittadine, che dal punto di vista politico si trovavano certamente in una condizione di grande debolezza<sup>64</sup>. Al contrario, invece, gli oligarchici ebbero gioco facile a sovvertire la costituzione democratica e ad instaurare un loro regime particolarmente violento. D'altro canto la testimonianza di Aristotele esclude che ad instaurare l'oligarchia siano stati personaggi di estrazione sociale inferiore. Tutto questo porta a pensare che l'identificazione fra i due gruppi di mille uomini sia ben più che probabile e che non si debba porre troppo l'accento sul presunto silenzio tucidideo, che potrebbe anche essere frutto della fretta con cui lo storico ateniese fa riferimento al colpo di stato vero e proprio.

### *Le ragioni di una decisione pericolosa*

È necessario a questo punto contestualizzare una scelta compiuta dalle autorità democratiche che, alla luce di quanto accadde in seguito, assume i contorni di una mossa fortemente dannosa, ovvero quella di costituire un corpo militare stabile composto da uomini scelti di estrazione sociale elevata, benestanti e di forti simpatie oligarchiche. Al di là di una possibile spiegazione più semplice e immediata, l'assoluta miopia dei leader argivi, vi sono alcune circostanze che

---

<sup>64</sup> Si ricordi che molti degli uomini che erano rimasti a presidiare la città, allorché il grosso dell'esercito era partito alla volta di Mantinea, erano stati uccisi da un'improvvisa incursione degli Epidauri che, sperando di approfittare del momento favorevole, avevano attaccato Argo con tutte le loro forze; cfr. THUC. V, 75, 4.

potrebbero suggerire come essi fossero perfettamente coscienti dei rischi che avrebbero corso dando vita a una formazione di questo tipo, ma che, alla luce di una valutazione presumibilmente consapevole, essi decisero di proseguire su quella strada.

L'esigenza fondamentale era, come detto, il cercare di dare sostanza alle proprie aspirazioni egemoniche sul Peloponneso. Per raggiungere questo scopo prima o dopo sarebbe stato necessario affrontare Sparta sul campo di battaglia e questo era certamente un pensiero preoccupante per gli Argivi, tanto più che, a quanto sembra, la milizia cittadina a cavallo tra l'ultimo ventennio del V e i primi anni del IV secolo non sembra brillare per affidabilità. La scelta delle autorità di reclutare in formazioni d'élite uomini robusti nel fisico e molto ricchi non rappresenta un caso isolato e, anzi, poteva essere una prassi piuttosto comune. In primo luogo gli appartenenti alle fasce più alte della popolazione, i notabili, erano, almeno in teoria, più avvezzi a maneggiare le armi e ad esercitarsi rispetto a un qualunque cittadino di estrazione inferiore. Vi era poi un secondo elemento da non sottovalutare, il tempo: reclutare un migliaio di uomini dalla massa dei cittadini, fornire loro un equipaggiamento adeguato se non erano in grado di procurarselo autonomamente, mantenerli e addestrarli fino a renderli una formazione coesa, capace e sufficientemente coraggiosa da affrontare faccia a faccia gli Spartani sul campo di battaglia, facendosi carico di tutte le speranze di vittoria, era una cosa tutt'altro che semplice e certamente non rapida. A ciò si aggiunga che i dieci anni di neutralità non dovevano avere aiutato a sviluppare le abilità belliche della gran parte della popolazione argiva: la maggioranza dei giovani fra i venti e i trent'anni, ad esempio, non doveva avere mai visto un campo di battaglia e il comportamento della milizia cittadina a Mantinea ne è una spia. I membri dell'alta società, invece, non solo erano più avvezzi all'uso delle armi e ad allenarsi nelle palestre grazie allo stile di vita che conducevano, ma erano pronti a combattere senza grosse perdite di tempo e, forse, alcuni di loro si erano addirittura mantenuti in esercizio combattendo in quegli anni come mercenari<sup>65</sup>.

65 È possibile che, durante i primi dieci anni della guerra del Peloponneso alcuni cittadini argivi, coloro che avevano a disposizione tempo a sufficienza e, dunque, non dovevano essere impegnati da attività lavorative di sorta, avessero prestato servizio come mercenari e avessero accumulato una certa fortuna; cfr. ALONSO TRONCOSO, cit., pp. 173-174 e César FORNIS VAQUERO, «Corinto, Beocia y la alianza argiva tras la Paz de Nicias», *Habis*, 26, 1995, pp. 50-51.

Se, dunque, i ricchi notabili erano l'opzione migliore a disposizione delle autorità democratiche dal punto di vista pratico, la loro vicinanza alle idee oligarchiche, in certi casi più esplicita, in altri casi forse meno manifesta, era comunque un grosso problema. Come ignorare il fatto che con questa decisione si dava in mano agli avversari politici lo strumento per compiere il misfatto? La scelta, in effetti, fu rovinosa, ma è possibile che, nel momento in cui questo corpo venne creato, il bilancio fra rischi e benefici si chiudesse, perlomeno agli occhi dei leader democratici, a favore di questi ultimi. Da un lato vi potevano essere considerazioni di carattere generale: se Argo avesse ottenuto un ruolo egemonico nel Peloponneso, anche gli *gnorimoi* avrebbero potuto trarne beneficio, tanto più che nel 421 Sparta, accordandosi con Atene, sembrava avere tradito le speranze dei suoi sostenitori. Dall'altro una circostanza riportata da Diodoro potrebbe fare pensare a un tentativo da parte delle autorità di garantirsi la fedeltà dei *logades* facendo leva su un argomento particolarmente caro ai ricchi: il denaro. Secondo quanto riferito dallo storico di Agirio, infatti, i componenti di questa formazione non solo erano finanziati a spese dello stato, ma erano esentati da ogni pubblica incombenza così da potersi allenare con continuità<sup>66</sup>

L'impatto delle liturgie sostenute da mille fra gli uomini più ricchi della città sul bilancio dello stato argivo doveva essere considerevole; eppure le autorità cittadine erano pronte non solo a farsi carico del mantenimento di questi uomini, pratica attestata anche altrove, ma che per Argo doveva rappresentare un capitolo di spesa particolarmente rilevante, ma avrebbero deciso di accollarsi ulteriori oneri corrispondenti a tutte quelle prestazioni normalmente assolte da questi cittadini benestanti. Per quale motivo concedere una tale esenzione a uomini ricchi, per i quali già lo stato investiva una somma considerevole?

Al netto dei problemi messi in luce in precedenza, dal punto di vista strettamente economico le autorità cittadine avrebbero potuto risparmiare arruolando un migliaio di nullatenenti. Se, da un lato, il costo giornaliero per il mantenimento di uno di questi uomini sarebbe stato relativamente alto, raggiungendo potenzialmente anche una dracma, dall'altro l'ammontare totale del denaro investito per una formazione composta da questi soldati non avrebbe superato gli oneri che lo stato dovette sostenere esentando i suoi cittadini più ricchi dallo svolgimento delle liturgie.

---

66 DIOD. XV, 75, 7; cfr. KRITZAS, cit., p. 238.

A questo punto, però, dovettero subentrare considerazioni di carattere diverso. Innanzitutto si è già avuto modo di dire come creare una truppa di questo genere e addestrarla tanto da renderla capace di affrontare gli Spartani con successo sul campo di battaglia avrebbe richiesto del tempo che gli Argivi, presumibilmente, non avevano. In secondo luogo la creazione di una formazione militare composta da uomini di orientamento democratico radicale avrebbe provocato una frattura con la classe benestante, generando così un duro contrasto all'interno della città che avrebbe potuto minare alle fondamenta qualsiasi speranza argiva di ottenere l'egemonia sul Peloponneso, sottraendola agli Spartani. La scelta di arruolare i membri delle classi abbienti, d'altro canto, era certamente un azzardo dal punto di vista politico, ma avrebbe fornito maggiori speranze di vittoria sul campo, cosa che poi accadde a Mantinea almeno per quanto riguarda i *logades*; tale scelta coinvolgeva inoltre questi uomini nel progetto egemonico e, in certa misura, li responsabilizzava. Era tuttavia necessario trovare una maniera per assicurarsi ulteriormente la fedeltà di questi benestanti e le autorità cittadine dovettero pensare di fare leva sul denaro. Cooperando con i democratici, anche gli oligarchici avrebbero così avuto grandi benefici, riuscendo addirittura ad arricchirsi ulteriormente proprio in un momento in cui, con l'accordo fra Sparta e Atene, le fazioni oligarchiche delle varie città si trovavano prive del supporto esterno della grande potenza peloponnesiaca.

Accogliendo la testimonianza diodorea, l'esenzione dei mille *logades* dallo svolgimento di tutte le liturgie potrebbe essere interpretata come un tentativo da parte delle autorità democratiche di garantirsi la lealtà del reparto d'élite, una sorta di prezzo da pagare nella speranza di ottenere la cooperazione di tutte le componenti del corpo cittadino al fine di conquistare la supremazia sul Peloponneso. Una scelta tremendamente rischiosa, ma necessaria.

Vi è, però, un ulteriore elemento da considerare. Come detto, affiancando la testimonianza tucididea e quella diodorea emergerebbe un contrasto generazionale tra i mille *logades*, descritti da Diodoro come giovani, e i membri dei cinque *lochoi* dell'esercito argivo, che Tucidide qualifica come anziani. Se, tuttavia, nei Mille erano arruolati solo ed esclusivamente ricchi cittadini di orientamento oligarchico, che fine avevano fatto i giovani di estrazione sociale più umile e, presumibilmente, sostenitori della democrazia? In primo luogo è da notare che l'uso del termine *neoterói* da parte di Diodoro è abbastanza ambiguo, dal momento che nella sua opera egli indica con questo termine non solo uomini relativamente gio-

vani, fra i venti e i trent'anni, ma più in generale tutti gli uomini in età da servizio militare attivo, mentre con *presbuteroi* fa riferimento agli uomini troppo anziani per combattere di norma al di fuori della città.<sup>67</sup> In questo caso specifico, dunque, Diodoro potrebbe avere usato *neoteroi* nella seconda accezione, dal momento che poco dopo (XII, 80, 2) egli dice che costoro erano scelti a partire dall'intero corpo cittadino. Se così fosse, l'impressione di una contrapposizione generazionale andrebbe a stemperarsi. È altresì possibile che nelle fila dei Mille vi fossero anche dei giovani di estrazione sociale non elevata, seppure in percentuale ridotta. A questo punto, però, viene da domandarsi come questi giovani abbiano potuto prendere parte al colpo di stato se, come ipotizzabile, costoro erano di orientamento politico affine a chi in quel momento governava la città. In effetti, l'arruolamento nelle fila dei *logades* poteva dare a questi cittadini l'opportunità di una scalata sociale. Affiancati ai loro coetanei abbienti, trascorrendo con loro lungo tempo nell'esercizio in preparazione alla battaglia e condividendo almeno in parte il loro stile di vita, è possibile che anche questi giovani abbiano finito per subire il fascino del sistema valoriale degli *gnorimoi*, arrivando a mettere in dubbio l'efficacia e l'opportunità delle scelte compiute da chi era al governo, particolarmente alla luce della sconfitta di Mantinea.

### *Il regime dei logades: violenze, soprusi e rivalsa democratica*

Per quanto buone fossero le intenzioni, nella pratica il risultato fu decisamente nefasto per i democratici al potere in Argo. Riguardo alle azioni compiute dai *logades* durante i pochi mesi in cui essi furono al potere non abbiamo molte informazioni. Diodoro riferisce di numerosi collaboratori che aiutarono i Mille a consolidare un regime che si rivelò improntato alla violenza<sup>68</sup>. La testimonianza dello storico di Agirio suggerisce, dunque, l'esistenza di un ampio consenso iniziale, motivato, forse, anche dall'insoddisfazione di molti Argivi nei confronti dei leader cittadini e democratici che non erano stati in grado di dare seguito ai progetti egemonici sul Peloponneso e che, anzi, avevano esposto la città a gravi pericoli, probabilmente dissipando anche molte delle ricchezze accumulate grazie al periodo di neutralità. Una volta saliti al potere, i Mille arrestarono e condannarono a morte gli avversari, abrogarono le leggi in vigore e iniziarono a

67 Cfr. e.g. Diod. XIII, 55, 3-4; XV, 65, 1-2; XVII, 27, 1-2; XVII, 46, 4.

68 Diod. XII, 80, 3.

governare secondo il proprio orientamento politico.

A questo punto è necessario aprire una breve parentesi su un aneddoto riportato da Enea Tattico. Nel capitolo diciassettesimo dei suoi *Poliorketiká*, Enea evidenzia come, in una città dove non vi sia la concordia fra le parti, sia necessario prestare particolare attenzione a organizzare eventi pubblici o a celebrare feste religiose, dal momento che questi avvenimenti possono presentarsi come ottime opportunità per quanti hanno intenzione di sovvertire l'ordine costituito. A riprova di questa sua affermazione egli narra un episodio di cui fu protagonista la città di Argo<sup>69</sup>. Nel corso di una processione cerimoniale in armi, alcuni congiurati mescolati tra la folla assassinarono molte autorità cittadine, prendendo poi il controllo della città.

Nonostante Enea Tattico non fornisca alcun elemento decisivo che permetta una facile collocazione cronologica di questo episodio, molti tra i moderni riconoscono in questo passo la descrizione di quanto avvenne nel 417, allorché i mille *logades* instaurarono un regime oligarchico con l'aiuto degli Spartani<sup>70</sup>. Qualche perplessità in merito è stata però sollevata da alcuni studiosi. Già nel 1974, Jules Labarbe aveva sottolineato le forti somiglianze, anche nel lessico usato, fra questo racconto e la descrizione della presa di potere di Policrate a Samo intorno al 538 narrata da Polieno, il che portava lo studioso a riferire l'episodio del capitolo diciassettesimo dei *Poliorketiká* non al colpo di stato che ebbe luogo in Argo, bensì alla vicenda del signore samio<sup>71</sup>. Nel suo commento all'opera di Enea, Marco Bettalli ha in parte accolto la proposta di Labarbe, pur ammettendo la possibilità che entrambi gli autori abbiano attinto a una fonte comune, Eforo, e sottolineando anche come non si possa escludere del tutto che sia stato Enea Tattico a fare confusione, includendo nella lunga serie di leggende relative a Policrate un episodio che con questo personaggio non aveva nulla a che fare<sup>72</sup>. Ulteriori

69 AEN. TACT. XVII, 2-4.

70 Così, e.g., Hans-Joachim GEHRKE, *Stasis. Untersuchungen zu den inneren Kriegen in den griechischen Staaten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, München, C. H. Beck Verlag, 1985, p. 28, n. 33; DAVID, cit., pp. 119-121; SAUZEAU, cit., pp. 12-14, il quale identifica queste celebrazioni con le feste in onore di Era argiva.

71 POLYAEN. I, 23, 2; Jules LABARBE, «Un putsch dans la Grèce antique. Polycrate et ses frères à la conquête du pouvoir», *Ancient Society*, 5, 1974, pp. 21-41.

72 Marco BETTALLI, *Enea Tattico, La difesa di una città assediata (Poliorketika)*, Pisa, ETS Edizioni, 1990, pp. 270-272. In merito alla posizione di Labarbe si è espresso anche Dean WHITHEAD 2002, *Aineias the Tacticians. How to Survive under Siege*, Bristol, Bristol

dubbi sono stati avanzati da Cesar Fornis Vaquero, il quale ha posto l'accento sul fatto che i Mille non avevano alcuna necessità di ricorrere alla segretezza e ad azioni clandestine, vista la fama di cui essi godevano in città dopo l'esito della battaglia di Mantinea<sup>73</sup>.

Proprio quest'ultimo punto consiglia, in effetti, di adottare una certa prudenza nel riconoscere in questo passo una descrizione del metodo utilizzato dai mille *logades* per sovvertire la democrazia. Dalle altre fonti sappiamo che essi godevano dell'appoggio esterno di un contingente composto da un ugual numero di Spartani e che in città non erano pochi quanti simpatizzavano per loro; inoltre l'esito di Mantinea lasciava fortemente indebolita la parte democratica, aprendo invece a questi uomini la possibilità di prendere il potere; infine, risulta ben difficile pensare che, dopo una sconfitta così clamorosa e con la minacciosa presenza dei *logades*, le autorità argive abbiano commesso un altro, clamoroso errore di valutazione permettendo il regolare svolgimento di queste celebrazioni e lasciando che il popolo deponesse le armi, ben sapendo che il nemico non era solo alle porte, ma all'interno della città. Alla luce di queste circostanze si può ben pensare che i Mille non avessero alcun bisogno di ricorrere a sotterfugi, tanto più che, a quanto sappiamo, le violenze e l'uccisione degli avversari politici iniziarono dopo la creazione del regime oligarchico, mentre la vera e propria presa del potere avvenne, così sembra, senza grandi scontri armati.

In merito al destino del regime istituito dai *logades*, Diodoro rivela che essi furono in grado di mantenere il potere per otto mesi, salvo poi subire la reazione violenta del popolo, che ripristinò la democrazia<sup>74</sup>. Tucidide fornisce qualche dettaglio in più sull'abbattimento dell'oligarchia e sul ripristino della democrazia<sup>75</sup>. L'azione condotta dal popolo sarebbe avvenuta il giorno in cui gli Spartani stavano celebrando le Gimnopedie. Siamo quindi durante l'estate<sup>76</sup>. I Lacedemoni, una volta giunta la notizia della sollevazione dei democratici argivi, si dimostrarono

---

Classical Press, pp. 146-147, definendola ingegnosa e ben argomentata, ma sottolineando la mancanza di prove certe a sostegno dell'ipotesi di riferire il racconto di Enea Tattico a Policrate di Samo.

73 FORNIS VAQUERO, *La stasis argiva*, cit., pp. 80-81.

74 DIOD. XII, 80, 3.

75 THUC. V, 82, 2.

76 Cfr. Noel ROBERTSON, *Festivals and legends: the formation of Greek cities in the light of public ritual*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996, pp. 147-165.

particolarmente esitanti nel correre in aiuto di un regime che pure, nelle parole di Tucidide, faceva i loro interessi<sup>77</sup>. Essi, infatti, lasciarono trascorrere del tempo prima di prendere la decisione di posticipare le Gimnopedie e di muovere su Argo<sup>78</sup>; tuttavia, arrivati a Tegea e raggiunti dalla notizia portata dai fuoriusciti argivi che i democratici avevano avuto la meglio, presero la decisione di tornare in patria e celebrare le feste. Successivamente giunsero a Sparta due distinte delegazioni argive, una ufficiale in rappresentanza della città nuovamente democratica e l'altra composta dagli esuli oligarchici; l'udienza avvenne in presenza degli alleati e alla fine i Lacedemoni riconobbero la necessità di intervenire, salvo poi perdere ulteriore tempo<sup>79</sup>. L'esitazione da parte degli Spartani nell'intervenire a favore degli oligarchici argivi è in certa misura sorprendente, visto che loro stessi avevano aiutato in maniera sostanziale l'instaurazione del regime dei Mille in città. Forse Sparta si era accorta che per dare aiuto a questi suoi sostenitori sarebbe stata costretta a impegnare un cospicuo numero di uomini in una città che, peraltro, aveva comunque forti tradizioni democratiche e che, infatti, si riavvicinò presto ad Atene.

D'altro canto il comportamento degli oligarchici argivi fu tutt'altro che improntato alla conciliazione. Di queste forti tensioni interne e delle violenze perpetrate da questo fragile regime fa cenno già Diodoro, ma tracce ben più consistenti si possono trovare in un passo di Pausania a cui già abbiamo fatto riferimento<sup>80</sup>. Descrivendo il santuario urbano di Apollo Lykios ad Argo e prendendo spunto da una statua seduta in marmo bianco di Zeus Meilichios, opera di Policletto, Pausania apre una parentesi sul motivo che spinse gli Argivi a realizzare una tale scultura e, in essa, riporta un racconto che, se anche sospettabile di avere un carattere fortemente aneddótico, rivela comunque la brutalità del regime oligarchico

---

77 THUC. V, 81, 2.

78 Si noti che vi è qui una discrepanza fra Tucidide e Diodoro per quanto riguarda la durata del regime oligarchico argivo. Se da un lato lo storico di Agirio parlava di otto mesi, secondo Tucidide il lasso di tempo era molto più ridotto: l'abbattimento della democrazia, infatti, sarebbe avvenuto all'inizio della primavera del 417, mentre la cacciata degli oligarchici avrebbe avuto luogo al momento della celebrazione delle Gimnopedie spartane, ovvero luglio, per un totale di circa cinque mesi.

79 THUC. V, 82, 3-4.

80 PAUS. II, 20, 2. Non molto si può ricavare, invece, da PLUT., *Alc.* 15, 2, che si limita a registrare l'instaurazione dell'oligarchia con l'aiuto degli Spartani e la successiva reazione del popolo che, armi in pugno, ripristinò la democrazia.

instaurato in Argo nel 417. Il comandante dei *logades*, un tale Briante, uomo violento e tracotante, usò violenza a una giovane sposa, strappandola ai suoi congiunti; la ragazza, attesa la notte, accecò il suo molestatore e, una volta scoperta, si rifugiò supplice sotto la protezione del popolo. Fu questa la goccia che fece traboccare il vaso già colmato da mesi di soprusi: il popolo insorse in difesa della fanciulla, sconfisse i Mille e li trucidò fino all'ultimo uomo, purificando poi l'area con i riti previsti. Ora, se i dettagli di questo racconto non sono del tutto inventati e hanno qualche fondamento storico, Pausania ci rivela il nome del comandante dei mille *logades*, un tale Briante<sup>81</sup>. Altro non sappiamo sulla catena di comando del corpo scelto<sup>82</sup>. Sembra possibile affermare, sulla scorta di quanto accadde a Mantinea, che sul campo di battaglia i Mille costituissero un contingente separato e ben distinto rispetto all'esercito cittadino<sup>83</sup>.

Rimane ora da affrontare un'ultima questione, quella relativa alla data di creazione di questa formazione. Secondo Diodoro gli Argivi presero la decisione di dare vita a un corpo d'élite formato da mille uomini scelti, di grande vigore fisico e particolarmente ricchi, contestualmente alla stipulazione della pace di Nicia nel 421 e con l'obiettivo di contendere agli Spartani l'egemonia sul Peloponneso<sup>84</sup>. Dal canto suo Tucidide non fornisce un'indicazione precisa in merito, ma, descrivendo le forze schierate sul campo di battaglia di Mantinea, si limita

---

81 Pausania usa il termine ἡγεμών, ma non sappiamo se questo fosse il titolo ufficiale del comandante dei *logades*.

82 Non è chiaro, infatti, se il quinto componente del collegio degli strateghi, attestato da THUC. V, 59, 5, avesse il compito di comandare i Mille, come ipotizzato da PIÉRART, *Argos*, cit., pp. 305-306, su cui cfr. Paolo TUCI, «Il regime politico di Argo e le sue istituzioni tra fine VI e fine V secolo a.C.: verso un'instabile democrazia», in C. BEARZOT e Franca LANZUCCI (cur.), *Argo. Una democrazia diversa*, Milano, Vita e pensiero 2006, pp. 250-251.

83 Così WÖRRLE, cit., pp. 129-130; PRITCHETT, cit. pp. 222-223; DAVERIO ROCCHI, cit., p. 30; ALONSO TRONCOSO e FREITAG, cit., p. 205.

84 DIOD. XII, 75. L'opinione dei moderni è divisa fra quanti, come Marcel PIÉRART, «Qu'est-ce qu'être Argien? Identité civique et régime démocratique à Argos au Ve s. avant J.-C.», in Silvio CATALDI (cur.), *Poleis e Politeiai: esperienze politiche, tradizioni letterarie, progetti costituzionali, Atti del convegno internazionale di storia Greca (Torino, 29 maggio-31 maggio 2002)*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004, p. 169, non ritengono attendibile la datazione diodorea e chi invece la ammette, come ad esempio KAGAN, *The Peace of Nicias*, cit., p. 40, e BULTRIGHINI, cit., p. 130. Si noti che PAUS. II, 20, 2, sembra collocare la creazione dei Mille subito prima l'instaurazione dell'oligarchica, una versione che non trova riscontro nelle altre fonti e che potrebbe essere frutto del carattere compendioso del riferimento di Pausania.

a dire che questi mille *logades* ricevevano addestramento a spese pubbliche da molto tempo<sup>85</sup>. Il problema è stabilire con esattezza cosa intendesse Tucidide con l'espressione *ek polloû*. Secondo alcuni moderni questa indicazione ben difficilmente si adatterebbe a un periodo di tempo di soli tre anni<sup>86</sup>. È possibile, in effetti, che il momento esatto in cui questa formazione vide la luce non sia da identificare precisamente con la stipulazione della pace di Nicia. Già da qualche tempo, in effetti, in città serpeggiava un certo malcontento nei confronti degli Spartani e la volontà di non rinnovare la tregua trentennale doveva essere argomento di dibattito già prima della primavera del 421<sup>87</sup>. È possibile, dunque, che la creazione del corpo dei mille *logades* non sia da intendersi come conseguenza immediata della stipulazione della pace di Nicia, ma che anzi vada collocata negli anni immediatamente antecedenti alla temporanea cessazione delle ostilità. Detto questo, in mancanza di ulteriori elementi non sembra opportuno risalire di molto rispetto al 421, dal momento che il quadro internazionale non mostrava ancora segni sufficienti da potere permettere alle autorità argive di nutrire concrete aspirazioni egemoniche. A ciò si aggiunga che una rapida rassegna dell'uso di *ek polloû* da parte di Tucidide permette di accorgersi come lo storico ateniese sia solito ricorrere a questa locuzione non solo per riferirsi a periodi di tempo molto prolungati, ma anche per indicare poche settimane o pochi mesi, a seconda del contesto<sup>88</sup>.

### Conclusioni

Creato non molto tempo prima della conclusione della pace di Nicia, che pose fine a un decennio di scontri fra gli Ateniesi, gli Spartani e i rispettivi alleati, il corpo dei mille *logades* rappresenta il tentativo delle autorità argive di ottenere uno strumento efficace per potere contendere a Sparta, sul piano militare, il predominio sul Peloponneso. Non sorprende che i componenti di questa formazione fossero di estrazione sociale elevata, cosa che è attestata anche in altre realtà analoghe, né che si provvedesse a spese pubbliche alle loro necessità, garantendo loro la possibilità di dedicarsi con continuità alla preparazione per il com-

85 THUC. V, 67, 2.

86 Cfr. e. g. HORNBLLOWER, cit., p. 177.

87 THUC. V, 14, 4.

88 Cfr. THUC. I, 58, 1; I, 68, 3; IV, 67, 3. In tutti e tre i casi il lasso di tempo indicato con *ek polloû* non doveva superare la durata di qualche mese o, al più, un anno.

battimento. Quello che sorprende è, tuttavia, l'esenzione da ogni liturgia che lo stato a guida democratica garantiva a questi uomini benestanti e di forti simpatie oligarchiche, forse spiegabile come un tentativo di assicurarsi la loro piena collaborazione. In questa maniera le autorità democratiche potevano concretamente nutrire la speranza di riuscire ad affrontare nel migliore dei modi gli Spartani ed avere la meglio; d'altro canto gli oligarchici argivi, messi in difficoltà dalla decisione di Sparta di concludere una tregua con Atene, ottenevano un'inaspettata opportunità per rafforzare la propria posizione. La sconfitta argiva a Mantinea segnò, da un lato, il crollo di ogni ambizione e l'indebolimento di quanti avevano spinto nella direzione dello scontro con Sparta, dall'altro diede agli oligarchici la possibilità di mettersi alla guida di un nuovo regime, rovesciando la democrazia. Il colpo di stato attuato da questi uomini fu breve e cruento, tanto che essi persero ben presto anche l'appoggio degli Spartani e furono sopraffatti dal popolo, che si vendicò uccidendone molti e condannandone altri all'esilio. L'esperienza di questa formazione dalle dimensioni particolarmente significative dovette servire da monito agli altri Greci sull'importanza di assicurarsi che i componenti di una forza militare d'élite, visto la sua importanza all'interno del contesto cittadino, fossero profondamente legati al regime politico vigente, così da evitare di fornire agli avversari uno strumento decisivo per mettere in atto un colpo di stato.

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- ALONSO TRONCOSO, Victor, *Neutralidad y neutralismo en la guerra del Peloponeso (431-404 a. C.)*, Madrid, Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1987.
- ALONSO TRONCOSO, Victor e Klaus FREITAG, «Prolegomena zur Erforschung der Bedeutung der Eliteeinheiten im archaischen und klassischen Griechenland», *Gerión*, 19, 2001, pp. 199-219.
- BEARZOT, Cinzia, «Argo nel V secolo: ambizioni egemoniche, crisi interne, condizionamenti esterni», in Cinzia BEARZOT e Franca LANDUCCI (cur.), *Argo. Una democrazia diversa*, Milano, Vita e pensiero 2006, pp. 105-146.
- BETTALLI, Marco, *Enea Tattico, La difesa di una città assediata (Poliorketika)*, Pisa, ETS Edizioni, 1990.
- BETTALLI, Marco, *Mercenari. Il mestiere delle armi nel mondo greco antico: età arcaica e classica*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2013.
- BRAMBILLA, Alessandro, «Epariti. Il koinon degli Arcadi e i suoi soldati», *Rationes Rerum*, 6, 2015, pp. 9-32.

- BRAMBILLA, Alessandro, «Élites militaires in Beozia: la tradizione sugli ἡνίοχοι καὶ παραβάται», *Rationes Rerum*, 8, 2016, pp. 11-28.
- BULTRIGHINI, Umberto, *Pausania e le tradizioni democratiche (Argo e Elide)*, Padova, Programma, 1990.
- DAVERIO ROCCHI, Giovanna, «Promachoi ed epilektoi: ambivalenza e ambiguità della morte combattendo per la patria», in Marta SORDI (cur.), *Dulce et decorum pro patria mori: la morte in combattimento nell'antichità*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1990, pp. 13-36.
- DAVID, Ephraim, «The Oligarchic Revolution in Argos, 417 BC», *L'Antiquité Classique*, 55, 1986, pp. 113-124.
- DETIENNE, Marcel, «La phalange. Problèmes et controverses», in Jean-Pierre VERNANT (cur.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne (à la mémoire d'André Aymard)*, Paris-La Haye, Mouton & Co., 1968, pp. 119-142.
- DEVOTO, James, «The Theban Sacred Band», *Ancient World*, 23, 1992, pp. 3-19.
- FIGUEIRA, Thomas, «The Spartan Hippeis», in Stephen HODKINSON e Anton POWELL (cur.), *Sparta & War*, Swansea, Classical Press of Wales, pp. 57-84.
- FORNIS VAQUERO, César, «Esparta y la Cuadruple Alianza, 420- 418 A. C.», *Memorias de Historia Antigua*, 13-14, 1992-1993, pp. 77-103.
- FORNIS VAQUERO, César, «La stasis argiva del 417 a.C.», *Polis*, 5, 1993, 73-89.
- FORNIS VAQUERO, César, «Corinto, Beocia y la alianza argiva tras la Paz de Nicias», *Habis*, 26, 1995, pp. 47-66.
- GEHRKE, Hans-Joachim, *Stasis. Untersuchungen zu den inneren Kriegen in den griechischen Staaten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, München, C. H. Beck Verlag, 1985.
- GILLIS, Daniel, «Collusion at Mantinea», *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo*, 97, 1963, pp. 199-226.
- GOMME, Arnold W., Antony ANDREWES e Kenneth DOVER, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, IV, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970.
- HOFFMANN, Geneviève, «Les choisis: un ordre dans la cite grecque?», *Droit et Cultures* 9-10 (1985), pp. 15-26.
- HORNBLOWER, Simon, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, III, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- HUNT, Peter, «Military Forces», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES e Michael WHITBY (cur.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, I, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 108-146.
- JONES, Nicholas F., *Public Organisation in Ancient Greece: A Documentary Study*, Philadelphia, The American Philological Society Press, 1987.
- KAGAN, Donald, «Corinthian Diplomacy after the Peace of Nicias», *American Journal of Philology*, 81, 3, 1960, pp. 291-310,
- KAGAN, Donald, «Argive Politics and Policy after the Peace of Nicias», *Classical Philo-*

- logy 7, 1962, pp. 209-218,
- KAGAN, Donald, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition*, Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press, 1981.
- KELLY, Thomas, «Argive Foreign Policy in the Fifth Century B.C.», *Classical Philology*, 69, 2, 1974, pp. 81-99.
- KONIJNENDIJK, Roel, *Classical Greek Tactics. A Cultural History*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018.
- KRITZAS, Charalampos, «Aspects de la vie politique et économique d'Argos au Ve siècle avant J.-C.», in Marcel PIÉRART (cur.), *Polydipsion Argos: Argos de la fin des palais mycéniens à la constitution de l'État classique*, Actes de la table ronde Fribourg, Suisse (7-9 mai 1987), Fribourg, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, 1992, pp. 231-240.
- LABARBE, Jules «Un putsch dans la Grèce antique. Polycrate et ses frères à la conquête du pouvoir», *Ancient Society*, 5, 1974, pp. 21-41.
- LUPI., Marcello, «I cinque lochoi dell'esercito spartano (e quelli argivi)», *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*, 42, 2014, pp. 131-136.
- PICCIRILLI, Luigi, «Su alcune alleanze fra poleis. Atene, Argo e i Tessali - Atene e Megara - Sparta e Megara», *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 3, 3, 1973, pp. 717-730.
- Marcel PIÉRART e Gilles TOUCHAIS, *Argos: une ville grecque de 6000 ans*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 1996.
- Marcel PIÉRART, 2000, «Argos: une autre démocratie», in Pernille FLENSTED-JENSEN, Thomas Heine NIELSEN, Mogens Hermann HANSEN e Lene RUBINSTEIN (cur.), *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History Presented to Mogens Herman Hansen on his Sixtieth Birthday (August 20, 2000)*, Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanum Press, 2000, pp. 297-314.
- PIÉRART, Marcel, «Qu'est-ce qu'être Argien ? Identité civique et régime démocratique à Argos au Ve s. avant J.-C.», in Silvio CATALDI (cur.), *Poleis e Politeiai: esperienze politiche, tradizioni letterarie, progetti costituzionali, Atti del convegno internazionale di storia Greca (Torino, 29 maggio-31 maggio 2002)*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004, pp. 167-185.
- PRITCHETT, W. Kendrick, *The Greek State at War*, vol. II, Berkeley - Los Angeles, California University Press, 1974.
- ROBERTSON, Noel, *Festivals and legends: the formation of Greek cities in the light of public ritual*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- RUGGERI, Claudia, *Gli stati intorno a Olimpia: storia e costituzione dell'Elide e degli stati formati dai perieci elei (400-362 a.C.)*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004.
- RZEPKA, Jacek, «The Aetolian Elite Warriors and Fifth Century Roots of the Hellenistic Confederacy», *Akme. Studia Historica*, 4, 2009, pp. 7-34.
- SAUZEAU, Pierre, «Guerriers d'élite, rôdeurs nocturnes et chasseurs noirs en Grèce ancien-

- ne: Aristomenes, Damon et les Mille d'Argos», *Almanach de la recherche franco-russe*, 2, 2008.
- SEAGER, Robin, «After the Peace of Nicias: Diplomacy and Policy, 421-416 B.C.», *Classical Quarterly*, 26, 2, 1976, pp. 249-296.
- TOMLINSON, Richard, *Argos and the Argolid, from the End of the Bronze Age to the Roman Occupation*, London, Routledge, 1972.
- TRITLE, Lawrence, «Epilektoi at Athens», *Ancient History Bulletin*, 3, 1989, 54-59.
- TUCI, Paolo, «Il regime politico di Argo e le sue istituzioni tra fine VI e fine V secolo a.C.: verso un'instabile democrazia», in C. BEARZOT e Franca LANDUCCI (cur.), *Argo. Una democrazia diversa*, Milano, Vita e pensiero 2006, pp. 209-271.
- VANICELLI, Pietro, «Eraclidi e Perseidi: aspetti del conflitto tra Sparta e Argo nel 5° sec. a.C.», in Paola ANGELI BERNARDINI (cur.), *La città di Argo: mito, storia, tradizioni poetiche*, Atti del convegno internazionale (Urbino, 13-15 giugno 2002), Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma, 2004, pp. 279-294.
- VAN WEES, Hans «Tyrants, Oligarchs and Citizen Militias», in Angelos CHANIOTIS e Pierre DUCREY (cur.), *Army and Power in the Ancient World*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002, pp. 61-82.
- WHITHEAD, Dean, *Aineias the Tacticians. How to Survive under Siege*, Bristol, Bristol Classical Press, 2002.
- WÖRRLE, Michael, *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte von Argos im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, München, 1964.

# Early Roman Cavalry in Combat

## (6<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE)

by JEREMY ARMSTRONG AND GIANLUCA NOTARI

**ABSTRACT.** The early *equites*, or citizen cavalry of early Rome, have traditionally been viewed as the impractical, aristocratic complement to the community's core force of heavy infantry. Based largely on the testimony of Polybius, Rome's early cavalymen were understood to have been brave and elite, but also – and confusingly – equipped with substandard equipment and seemingly ineffective in battle until c. 200 BCE. This article argues that Polybius' account offers a skewed vision of the early *equites*, shaped by his own literary goals and experience. In contrast to the negative image he offers, a growing body of evidence suggests that early Roman cavalymen were actually relatively well-equipped and effective in battle. However, the nature of that equipment and the style of battle they engaged in were not those that Polybius was familiar with. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, they also did not align with his vision for Rome's military and society. This article, therefore, offers a reappraisal of the practical capabilities of early Roman cavalry in combat, looking beyond Polybius' account.

**KEYWORDS:** ARCHAIC ITALY. ROMAN REPUBLIC. CAVALRY. EQUITES. POLYBIUS.

**P**olybius (6.25.1-10), writing in the middle of the second century BCE, famously noted the following concerning the Roman cavalry:

In like manner, [the Romans] divide the cavalry into ten squadrons (ἵλας) and from each they select three officers (ἰλάρχα), who themselves appoint three subordinates (οὐραγούς). The first commander (ἰλάρχης) chosen commands the whole squadron, and the two others have the rank of decuriones (δεκαδάρχων), all three bearing this title. If the first of them should not be present, the second takes command of the squadron.

The equipment of the cavalry is now similar to that of the Greeks, but in the past they had no cuirasses (θώρακας) but fought in light undergarments (περιζώμασιν), the result of which was that they were able to dismount and mount again at once with great dexterity and facility, but were exposed to great danger in close combat, as they were nearly naked. Their spears (δόρατα), too, were unserviceable in two respects. In the first place, they made them so slender and flexible that it was im-

possible to take a steady aim, and before the head stuck in anything, the shaking due to the mere motion of the horse caused most of them to break. Next, as they did not fit them with sauroters (σαυρωτήρων),<sup>1</sup> they could only deliver the first stroke with the point and after this, if they broke, they were of no further service. Their shield (θυρεὸν) was made of oxhide, similar in shape to the round cakes (ποπάνοις) used at sacrifices. They were not of any use against attacks, as they were not firm enough; and when the leather covering peeled off and rotted owing to the rain, unserviceable as they were before, they now became entirely so.

Since therefore their arms did not stand the test of experience, they soon took to making them in the Greek fashion, which ensures that the first stroke of the spear-head shall be both well aimed and telling, since the spear is constructed as to be steady and strong, and also that it may continue to be effectively used by reversing it and striking with the sauroter. And the same applies to the [Greek] shields (θυρεῶν), which are solid and firm and do good service against both missiles and in close-quarters combat. The Romans, when they noticed this, soon imitated it; for they are as good as any others in adopting new fashions and instituting what is better.<sup>2</sup>

- 
- 1 A sauroter is also known as a ‘spear-butt’ or ‘spear foot’ and typically represented a sturdy metal point attached to the bottom of the spear haft. The name literally means something like ‘lizard killer’ in Greek (σαύρα- or “lizard” + ἴ-τήρ), and so was presumably intended to deliver a strong, downward thrust to finish off a defeated or prone enemy as well as providing a backup weapon. It was also referred to as a οὐρίαχος or ferrule, amongst other names.
- 2 Παραπλησίως δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἵππεῖς εἰς ἴλας δέκα διεῖλον, ἐξ ἑκάστης δὲ τρεῖς προκρίνουσιν ἰλάρχας, οὗτοι δ’ αὐτοὶ τρεῖς προσέλαβον οὐραγούς. ὁ μὲν οὖν πρῶτος αἰρεθεὶς ἰλάρχης ἡγεῖται τῆς ἴλης, οἱ δὲ δύο δεκαδάρχων ἔχουσι τάξιν, καλοῦνται δὲ πάντες δεκουρίωνες. μὴ παρόντος δὲ τοῦ πρώτου ἄλλιν ὁ δευτέρος ἰλάρχου λαμβάνει τάξιν. ὁ δὲ καθοπλισμὸς τῶν ἵππεων νῦν μὲν ἐστὶ παραπλήσιος τῶν τῶν Ἑλλήνων· τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν πρῶτον θώρακας οὐκ εἶχον, ἀλλ’ ἐν περιζώμασιν ἐκινδύνεον, ἐξ οὗ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καταβαίνειν καὶ ταχέως ἀναπηδᾶν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἐτοιμῶς διέκειντο καὶ πρακτικῶς, πρὸς δὲ τὰς συμπλοκάς ἐπισφαλῶς εἶχον διὰ τὸ γυμνοὶ κινδυνεύειν. τὰ δὲ δόρατα κατὰ δύο τρόπους ἄπρακτ’ ἦν αὐτοῖς, καθ’ ἃ μὲν ἦ λεπτὰ καὶ κλαδάρᾳ ποιοῦντες οὔτε τοῦ προτεθέντος ἠδύνατο σκοποῦ στοχαζέσθαι, πρὸς τοῦ τε τὴν ἐπιδορατίδα πρὸς τι προσερεῖσαι, κραδαινόμενα δι’ αὐτῆς τῆς ἵππων κινήσεως τὰ πλείστα συνετριβετο· πρὸς δὲ τοῦτοις ἄνευ σαυρωτήρων κατασκευάζοντες μᾶ τῆ πρώτῃ διὰ τῆς ἐπιδορατίδος ἐχρῶντο πληγῆ, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα κλασθέντων λοιπὸν ἦν ἄπρακτ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ μάταια. τὸν γε μὴν θυρεὸν εἶχον ἐκ βοείου δέρματος, τοῖς ὀμφαλωτοῖς ποπάνοις παραπλήσιον τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰς θυσίας ἐπιτιθεμένοις· οἷς οὔτε πρὸς τὰς ἐπιβολὰς ἦν χρῆσθαι διὰ τὸ μὴ στάσιν ἔχειν, ὑπὸ τε τῶν ὄμβρων ἀποδερματούμενοι καὶ μυδῶντες δύσχρηστοὶ καὶ πρότερον ἦσαν καὶ νῦν ἔτι γίνονται παντελῶς. διόπερ ἀδοκίμου τῆς χρείας οὔσης, ταχέως μετέλαβον τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν κατασκευὴν τῶν ὄπλων, ἐν ἧ τῶν μὲν δοράτων τὴν πρώτην εὐθὲς τῆς ἐπιδορατίδος πληγὴν εὐστοχον ἅμα καὶ πρακτικὴν γίνεσθαι συμβαίνει, διὰ τὴν κατασκευὴν ἀτρεμοῦς καὶ στασίμου τοῦ δόρατος ὑπάρχοντος, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐκ μεταλήψεως τοῦ σαυρωτήρος χρεῖαν μόνιμον καὶ βίαιον. Translation lightly modified from Paton’s in the 2010 Loeb Classical Library edition.

This represents the most complete literary description we have of early-mid Republican Roman cavalry, relating to their practical capabilities. Livy, in his description of the organization of the Roman army of the middle Republic, in book 8 of the *Ab Urbe Condita*, barely mentions the cavalry. He notes only that each legion of 5000 men contained a contingent of 300 cavalry (8.8.14) – a figure also supported by Polybius (6.19.7). While Livy regularly mentioned the cavalry in his battle descriptions (e.g. Livy 4.34 or, famously, at Cannae in 22.44-47)<sup>3</sup>, and discussed the cavalry at various points in his narrative of the regal period (most notably its organization and expansion under various *reges*),<sup>4</sup> these have always been considered of dubious value – at least when it comes to concrete, tactical details. Indeed, most scholars have discounted both the regal details and later battle descriptions as little more than antiquarian speculation and literary embellishment.<sup>5</sup> While it is unlikely that later authors were inventing material from scratch, and, in fact, they were probably working from a rich oral tradition that – not coincidentally – seems to find some support in early iconography (as we shall see), most of the details for early Roman warfare found in the literary narrative have been rightly questioned.<sup>6</sup> As a result, we have been left with Polybius’ rather negative portrayal of Roman cavalry as our primary evidence for how they may have equipped themselves and behaved on the battlefield in the early and middle Republic. While he suggests they had improved in recent years, c. 200 BCE, following the example of the Greeks (and adopting their equipment and customs), the early Roman cavalry are presented as being almost comedically inept.<sup>7</sup> Although doubtlessly brave, the equipment of the early cavalry was seemingly substandard, and they seemed to have been wholly ineffective in battle.<sup>8</sup>

---

3 Daly (2002) 178.

4 See Armstrong and Notari (2024) for discussion and references.

5 The debates on the nature and reliability of the literary tradition for early and middle Republican Rome are extensive. See Cornell and Rafflaub in Raaflaub (2005) for a broad outline and history of the issue. See Bradley (2020) for a recent synthesis.

6 This is the (very good) reason why McCall began his study c. 300 BCE, and even still focused largely on the period c. 200 BCE and after. See also Armstrong (2016) for discussion of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE..

7 This is usually seen as a singular ‘reform’ from light cavalry to heavy cavalry – see McCall (2001) 26-52.

8 While one might charitably call this a transition from ‘light’ to ‘heavy’ cavalry (see, for example, *ibid.* 26), the early Roman ‘light’ cavalry seem to have lacked a practical purpose or function on the archaic Italian battlefield.



Figure 1: Cista from Praeneste with a line drawing of top decoration (after Battaglia [1979] Vol. 1, Tav. IVa). Likely fourth century BCE. British Museum, Inv. 1873,0820.263.

This understanding of the early Roman cavalry, as a small and rather ineffectual wing of the early Republican army, has stood for generations – in large part because we have had very little to put against it. As McCall noted in 2001, “Polybius may have been mistaken in his account; certainly, there are inconsistencies. Nevertheless...the kernel of his account must be accepted as essentially accurate.”<sup>9</sup> However, the more we have learned about warfare in the ancient Mediterranean basin during this period, and indeed war and society in Italy, the more we have come to realize that it is unlikely to be the full story – as it exists in tension with virtually everything else we know. Horses were symbols of elite status, and it is likely that the Roman cavalry was composed of the community’s wealthiest and, at least potentially, best-equipped warriors.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, we know from both

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

<sup>10</sup> Petitjean (2022) 24-25.

mortuary evidence and iconography that military equipment was an important part of elite self-representation. Fighting on horseback, or at least with horses as part of their equipment, seems to have been important for early Italian elites.

We must also consider the wider context that Italian elites, communities, and their armies were operating in. Armies in the ancient Mediterranean basin did not operate or develop in isolation. While military systems were always products of their society,<sup>11</sup> shaped by local (and often quite conservative) cultural norms, the ancient Mediterranean region featured a deeply connected military landscape.<sup>12</sup> Armies, military groups, and soldiers moved around quite a bit, and not just when engaging in open warfare. Networks of friendship, obligation, alliances, and mercenarism, evident from at least the Bronze Age onward, meant that armies were always at least exposed to developments and trends from elsewhere in the region.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the composite nature of many armies, from the fifth century BCE onward, often resulted in the regular integration of ‘foreign’ troops. The recently excavated finds from the western (Buonfornello) necropolis at Himera on Sicily, connected with the battle at the site in 480 BCE, give hints as to what this may have looked like in practical terms. The site has yielded almost 11,000 burials including two mass graves plausibly associated with fifth-century battles in 480 and 409 BCE.<sup>14</sup> While the literature (Diod. 11.20) reports the forces in 480 BCE contained allies, it does not indicate anything particularly unusual about their composition. However, isotopic work on the preserved remains indicates that combatants not only contained a very high level of ‘non-locals’ but that they came from across an incredibly wide region, from North Africa to the Caucasus and the Levant to Iberia.<sup>15</sup> The armies active across the ancient Mediterranean basin, even as early as 480 BCE, seem to have been incredibly diverse and pulled from a very wide region. From Persia in the east to Carthage in the west, war was a multicultural phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> These outside influences were always existing in tension with local norms, and the same must have been true of Roman cavalry.

---

11 Famously, see Keegan (1993).

12 Trundle (2017).

13 Echeverría (2011).

14 Lonoce et al (2018) and Viva et al (2020).

15 Reinberger et al (2021), Petitjean (2022), and Reitsema et al (2022).

16 *Ibid.* Much of this builds off of the seminal work of Horden and Purcell (2000), Morris (2003), and Broodbank (2013).



Figure 2: Ivory horse heads and frieze fragment, likely North Africa in origin. Barberini Tomb. Praeneste, Italy. 675-660 BCE. Photos: J. Armstrong.



Throughout this broad region, cavalry was important – indeed, arguably central – to the way war was pursued.<sup>17</sup> This is particularly true when considering the period from the fifth century BCE onward. Already the elite in Persian armies, cavalry also formed the strike wing of the armies of Philip II and Alexander III in Macedon, and were increasingly prominent in the south and west of the Mediterranean basin as well.<sup>18</sup> Although infantry was also important, and often takes pride of place in modern discussions,<sup>19</sup> cavalry was key – in no small part because it was consistently composed of the wealthiest and most influential members of society. However, its importance was not strictly due to this socio-economic and

<sup>17</sup> See Rene (2018) and Konijnendik (2021) for discussion.

<sup>18</sup> Wrightson (2019) 184-5. For the example of Spain, see Quesada Sanz (2016).

<sup>19</sup> Famously see Hanson (2009). See also Kagan and Viggiano (2015).

political aspect. As has been increasingly demonstrated in scholarship over the past 20 years, ancient cavalry was quite important practically and tactically as well.<sup>20</sup> Their actions, in victory or defeat, often decided the ultimate outcome of battles. While it is likely the Romans were always aware of these developments, they would have been directly impacted by them as they integrated south Italic communities and came into direct conflict with Hellenistic powers in the late fourth and third centuries. The allied soldiers, who made up over half of Rome's forces in the middle Republic (as well as an increasing number of the community's citizens), were being drawn from the elite segments of society within communities and contexts that were already firmly integrated into a Hellenistic mode of warfare.<sup>21</sup> It is highly unlikely that this warrior elite would have chosen to equip themselves and operate in a way that would sideline or marginalize them.

Given this situation, Polybius' depiction of early Roman cavalry is, therefore, long overdue for reappraisal. This article will suggest that, while Polybius is not wholly incorrect, he was presenting a skewed image based on a (perhaps conscious) misunderstanding of how Roman cavalry looked and operated in battle in earlier periods. While the nature of Roman and Italian cavalry was changing, the shift was not from 'ineffective' to 'effective', or even from 'light' to 'heavy' (as sometimes argued), but from 'elite and individual' to 'state-based and cohesive'. This transition was also not a singular reform, but a gradual process shaped by both the wider military landscape Romans and Italians operated in, and the changing composition of Rome's armed forces themselves.

### *Polybius and Warfare c. 200 BCE*

As with all aspects of early Roman history, the problematic nature of the literary sources sits 'front and center' in this debate. Our singular reliance on Polybius for the nature of early Roman cavalry means that his specific argument and model have had an outsized impact on our understanding of this group. Polybius' goal was not, of course, to present a sober and objective description of the factual reality of the Roman army, but rather to argue a specific set of points concerning

---

<sup>20</sup> See Sidnell (2006) for discussion of the effectiveness of cavalry across the ancient Mediterranean, especially as a 'shock' element.

<sup>21</sup> Tagliamonte (1994).

Rome's rise to power c. 200 BCE and the Roman system of government.<sup>22</sup> While we often fixate upon his detailed military descriptions, we must remember that this was only a means to an end. Within this, Polybius, like many other ancient historians, prioritized infantry in his model, as this segment of the army embodied the principles of order, organization, and power he sought to present as being at the core of the Roman approach.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, for Polybius, the evolution of the Romans' cavalry could be seen as part of a wider set of developments, all of a similar type (typically 'learning' and 'adapting' from their neighbors), that were key to the Romans' meteoric rise to power c. 200 BCE. The suggested improvement of the Roman cavalry in the third and second centuries BCE, learning from Greek cavalymen (incidentally a group which Polybius, as a *hipparchus* of the Achaean League 170/169 BCE, would have had a personal attachment to), was symptomatic of a wider phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> Similar principles can be seen in his discussion of the Roman navy, where the aspiring Romans supposedly learn from other peoples, ultimately becoming better than their teachers. However, we should not take this argument at face value. Just as Polybius' comparable arguments about the early Roman navy have come under fire in recent years,<sup>25</sup> his model of early Roman cavalry misrepresents the situation. Polybius presented a highly theorized and idealized version of events that aligned with his overall goals and argument. In short, Polybius does not present the reader with concrete historical details, which he then explains and contextualizes, but rather with a historical model, designed to reinforce his more philosophical points and built upon comparisons with Greek military models. While this does not mean we should discount the details he gives us, we must always remember why he is giving them and the purpose they serve.

In addition to these more rhetorical points, Polybius' grasp of the realities of early Roman cavalry was likely shaped by relatively recent shifts within the nature of both the cavalry and the *equites* in Rome. Even if he had wanted to relate

---

22 See Baronowski (2011) for discussion. This is symptomatic of the wider approach to the Roman cavalry in our literary sources – see Petitjean (2022).

23 Champion (2004, 135), for instance, comments on Polybius' use of infantry formations as a representation of social and political unity. See Konijnendik (2021) for discussion of the Greek context.

24 Polyb. 28.6.9.

25 See, for example, Steinby (2007) and more recently Harris (2017).



Figure 3: The Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun, in Pompeii. c. 100 BCE. National Archaeological Museum, Naples. Photo: J. Armstrong

the true nature of early Roman cavalry, he may not have been able to. As Rome expanded across the Italian peninsula during the fourth and third centuries BCE, the nature of the Roman army changed – shaped by the massive influx of new citizens and allies.<sup>26</sup> What had previously (c. 400 BCE) been a local force, drawn from around the urban area of Rome, became a Latin force c. 338 BCE, and, ultimately, a pan-Italian force by c. 250 BCE. This was not a stable entity, but an evolving conglomeration. In addition, the nature of warfare the Roman army engaged in also shifted across these centuries, moving from local raids against other local communities and clans, to years-long wars against increasingly far-flung powers and states.<sup>27</sup> This changing reality resulted in marked changes on the ground, especially for the cavalry.

To summarize the forthcoming argument, it will be suggested that, in the late regal period and early Republic (sixth through third centuries BCE), Roman and

26 See Helm (2021) on Roman expansion and the development of Roman citizenship and alliances in this period.

27 These shifts have been discussed at length in recent scholarship. See Armstrong (2016) and Helm (2021) for the fourth century BCE. See particularly Rosenstein (2005) and (2012) for the third.

Italic cavalry operated in a fundamentally different manner to how they functioned in later years (and in the age of Polybius). Warfare in Italy in the early period was evidently a much looser activity, dominated by raiding, dueling, and individual feats of bravery. With the recent deconstruction of the ‘Roman hoplite phalanx’, and the use massed heavy infantry in general in the early period, it is increasingly likely that early central Italian battles were much more dynamic affairs.<sup>28</sup> Rather than having two blocks of infantry crash into each other (an idealized situation that likely only rarely occurred, even in the Greek context),<sup>29</sup> battles were likely more fluid and open, with individual units – and indeed individual soldiers – operating in a more independent manner. In this context, central Italy’s warrior elite seemed to have engaged in a form of warfare that often involved quite a bit of movement, both across the battlefield and jumping on and off of horseback. This does not mean that early Roman cavalry was equipped more lightly – and indeed the reverse may have been true – although it is likely that their equipment did reflect this more fluid and individualistic form of combat. Although often operating as part of a group, they also fought independently, regularly dueling and jumping off and onto their mounts as they engaged opposing elites. Despite this seemingly chaotic character, cavalry formed a vitally important – and indeed, arguably, the central – part of Italic combat. In these cavalry clashes, individual elites were able to achieve personal renown and glory against (and at the expense of) other elites, gain wealth (in the form of armor and personal spoils), as well as strike definitive blows against the enemy army by defeating its leadership. In many ways, this was the entire point of archaic Italian warfare. These were not yet wars focused on the acquisition of land or the domination of communities and populations, but an arena for much more individual and familial displays of valor and the acquisition of spoils.

At the end of the fourth and beginning of the third century BCE, however, the Romans were influenced by the wider shifts in warfare occurring across the Mediterranean, whereby the role of cavalry changed. Rather than operating independently, in a more fluid form of warfare, cavalry increasingly formed an important part of a wider military system. War was changing across the region, with larger armies, featuring more specialized parts, operating in a more orga-

---

<sup>28</sup> Rosenstein (2010), and now many others.

<sup>29</sup> Famously, see van Wees (2004). See also the debates in Kagan and Viggiano (2015).

nized and planned fashion, for longer periods. We see the rise of a ‘combined arms’ approach to combat.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of Roman warfare also shifted, moving away from the more personal and clan-based approaches seen in earlier periods and towards a coherent, state-based approach, increasingly focused on conquest and control.<sup>31</sup> In this environment, Roman cavalry shifted towards what we might consider a more ‘Hellenistic’ mode of operating – although this label should be understood as a product of the evidence (i.e. best attested in evidence from the ‘Hellenistic world’), rather than a true point of origin. Indeed, this change did not occur through the Romans learning new techniques or modes of operating, or at least not primarily, but rather through their integration of new soldiers and units as part of the Romans’ wider expansion in Italy.

During the 16-year period from 339 to 323 BCE alone, Rome’s citizen population supposedly rose from a reported 165,000 (Euseb. *Ol.* 110.1) to 250,000 (Livy 9.19). By 251 BCE, it was almost 300,000 (Livy *Epit.* 18). Most of these men would have come from central and southern Italy, as part of Rome’s settlement after the so-called Latin War and the creation of new tribes and citizen colonies during this century of expansion. This does not include the huge number of allies (*socii*) Rome added during this period from the same regions, all of which were firmly enmeshed in the wider Hellenistic military landscape – having regularly supplied mercenaries for armies across the Mediterranean basin.<sup>32</sup> This was not so much a case of ‘traditional Romans’ changing their behavior, although that did happen as we will see (albeit not on the battlefield), but a case of ‘new Romans’ bringing their traditional mode of battle with them. Most notably, they may have moved towards fulfilling certain specific functions, including protecting the sides of the main infantry formations – from which they likely earned the name *alae* or ‘wings’<sup>33</sup> – and serving as the main strike force to break opposing infantry formations and pursue retreating forces. In this context, cavalrymen needed to stay in formation, and on horseback, in order to fulfill their set roles.

As the Romans began to fight in this way, the nature of their cavalry shifted,

30 See Wrightson (2019) for a wider discussion of the phenomenon.

31 See Armstrong (2016) for discussion.

32 Tagliamonte (1994).

33 It is also a possibility that the Latin *alae* may have been connected to the Greek ἄλας, or that this term for cavalry may have had a fortuitous double-meaning.

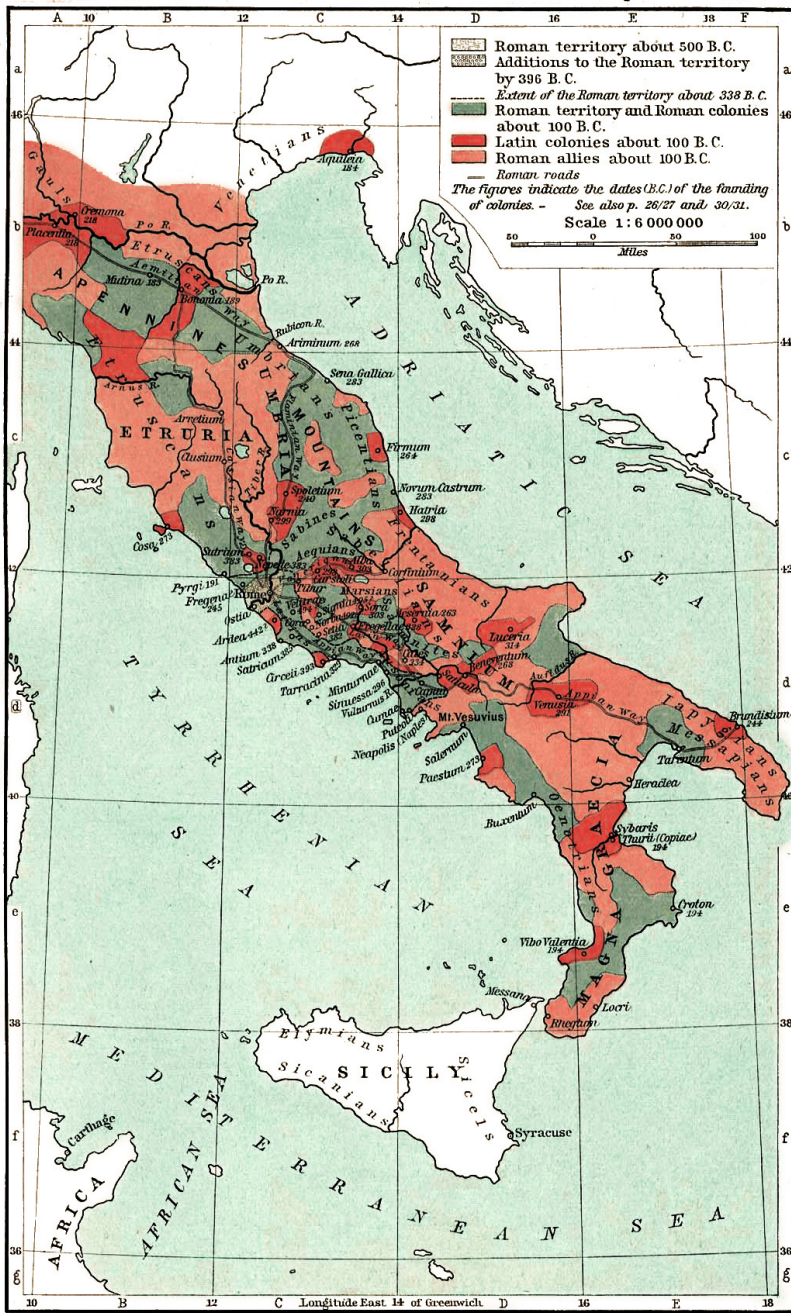


Figure 4: Indicative map of Roman and allied territory by c. 100 BCE. Map courtesy of the USMA, Department of History. Used with permission.

and they also integrated new (and more) cavalry forces – largely from the *socii* – that were able to operate in this context. While the cavalry was still an elite segment of the army, due to its traditional prestige and the increased costs and investment involved in owning and maintaining a horse, it was now more fully integrated into a state-based military system. Independent actions were curtailed, and equipment slowly shifted to suit this new context.

In this period, we also see the beginnings of a split between the elite *equites* as a socio-economic class, who clung to their traditional prerogatives and shifted many of their traditions to the social, political, and religious realms, and the military *equites*, who became more homogeneous in equipment and organization, in a certain sense more like ‘soldiers’ and less like ‘warriors’, and were strongly supported by the state. Rituals associated with the *equites* became public festivals. Famously, the *transvectio equitum* – a parade of the *iuventus* of the Roman *equites* which supposedly dated back to the early fifth century BCE<sup>34</sup> – was transformed into a public festival in 304 BCE, as part of reforms brought in by the censor Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus.<sup>35</sup> While there was always significant overlap, they were no longer a single, unified group.

### *Nature of (Cavalry) equipment in the early Republic*

The overall goals and nature of Roman and Italic warfare in the early and middle Republic have been extensively discussed in recent scholarship and are beyond the scope of this article.<sup>36</sup> While the details are still debated, there is a growing consensus that most early Republican warfare was focused on raiding for portable wealth with very little, if any, territorial conquest until the fourth century BCE. It is also clear that clan-based groupings played a vitally important role, both organizationally and tactically, far later than traditionally supposed. While we used to think that the sixth-century BCE reforms of Servius Tullius severed many of the familial bonds that underpinned Roman politics and warfare previously, this is no longer the case. If the reforms actually occurred in the sixth century (admittedly, a big IF), they were likely neither complete nor a fundamen-

34 Liv. 2.9.; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.3; Cic. *Nat.* 2.6

35 Liv. 9.46,15; *Vir. ill.* 32,2.

36 See, particularly, Armstrong (2016).

tal shift but rather part of a gradual organization and acknowledgment of existing practices.<sup>37</sup> Clans, many incorporated as ‘tribes’ (*tribus*) in the state-based system, remained the key organizing principle of the Roman military system that continued to operate following age-old norms – albeit now in an increasingly unified fashion under the banner of ‘Rome’.<sup>38</sup>

The roles of cavalry and infantry in this early Republican context are hard to pin down and likely varied quite a bit depending on the context and situation. Warfare in this period operated on a smaller scale, both in terms of the size of the forces involved and the length of time they were in the field. Wars may have only involved a few thousand men on each side, may have often taken place over the course of a week or two (rather than months or years), and occurred in theatres that were close to home. While most warfare likely occurred at specific times of year, coinciding with particular points on the agricultural, pastoral, religious, and political calendars, it was also more firmly embedded in everyday life. At least the threat of violence, both individual and group, was an ever-present concern.<sup>39</sup> As a result, it is likely that roles and positions that different individuals held in everyday civilian life, and the relationships that supported them, were continued on the battlefield.

All our evidence suggests that all early Italian warriors should probably be considered ‘elite’ in some sense. Because warriors, or more accurately warriors’ families, would have supplied their own equipment, all of them must have come from families with enough wealth, resources, and connections where this was a possibility. Within this, however, there were clearly gradations. While it is likely that the specific panoplies associated with the different classes of the centuriate assembly (see Fig. 5 below) are highly idealized, this broad system found in our literary evidence does demonstrate a clear awareness that warriors would often come equipped with different equipment based on their socio-economic status.

---

37 *Ibid.* 75-86.

38 Armstrong (2020) and Helm (2022).

39 Lintott (1999).

Class	No. of Centuries	Required wealth ( <i>asses</i> )	Assigned Military Equipment
<i>Equites</i>	18	100,000(?) <sub>1</sub>	Cavalry
1 <sup>st</sup>	80 + 2 <sub>2</sub>	100,000	Helmet, round shield, greaves, breast-plate, all of bronze, sword, and spear
2 <sup>nd</sup>	20	75,000	Helmet, oblong shield, greaves, sword and spear
3 <sup>rd</sup>	20	50,000	Helmet, oblong shield, sword and spear
4 <sup>th</sup>	20	25,000	Spear and javelin [oblong shield, sword] <sub>3</sub>
5 <sup>th</sup>	30 + 2 <sub>2</sub>	11,000 [12,500] <sub>3</sub>	Slings and stones [javelin] <sub>3</sub>
<i>Capite Censi</i>	1	<11,000 [12,500] <sub>3</sub>	<u>N/A</u>

In each class, half of the centuries would be labeled *seniores* (composed of men aged 46-60) and half *iuniores* (composed of men aged 17-45). 1. Equites were required to be of 'highest birth' (Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 4.18), or the 'principal men of the State' (Livy 1.43), however, the text does seem to hint at a required level of wealth as well. 2. Two centuries of engineers and two of trumpeters are included respectively in the first and fifth class. 3. Square brackets denote variations present in Dionysius' account, but not Livy's.

Fig. 5: An outline of the Servian Constitution as given in Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Adapted from Armstrong (2008) 62.

This is not to say, however, that warfare was conducted by undifferentiated and unorganized mobs of warriors. Although Roman Republican soldiers would have equipped themselves, wars (and armies) still required quite a bit of central organization and planning. It is likely that warriors were recruited based on what they could provide, that they shared broad social-cultural norms (many may have been linked by family or socio-religious interests), and that they could be expected to behave in broadly comparable – or at least complementary – manners. Armies, and especially those that were only together for a few short days or weeks, must have relied on existing relationships and hierarchies in order to

operate effectively. Leaders needed to know that their men would come equipped appropriately and would follow orders if a war was to be successful. In this era and context, there was no time to institute new hierarchies or create new systems of control and command. Men showed up, fought, and returned home in relatively short order.

For cavalymen, this would have obviously meant owning a horse that was capable of operating in a military setting – so of the right age, size, and health. It would have also meant having armor and bearing weapons appropriate to their social station. Cavalymen would have also likely had a groom or other support personnel and would have needed to have thought about the supply of food and water for their animals and men – even after the advent of *tributum* and *stipendium* c. 400 BCE.<sup>40</sup> It meant being able to use that horse appropriately and likely already being part of an existing unit or tactical group – or at least being able to be quickly integrated into one. It was likely that the men in the early citizen cavalry were well acquainted with one another before mobilizing and required little centralized support or direction upon arrival.

Polybius' disdainful description of the traditional equipment of early Roman cavalry has long been accepted as accurate, despite the fact that it is not supported by either the archaeological or iconographic evidence. While this evidence must always be interpreted with some caution, there is an ever-growing corpus of material pointing towards Italic cavalry wearing quite a lot of armor – relatively speaking. For instance, the disc with the cavalryman (*desultor*) from the 'Tomb of the Warrior' at Lanuvium (c. 500 BCE) shows a warrior with a linen cuirass, and (presumably bronze) helmet and greaves (see Figure 6). Alternatively, the sixth-century BCE disc from Ancona shows two comparably equipped cavalymen, here fighting from horseback against a downed infantryman carrying an *aspis* (see Figure 7).

A key point in this discussion is that the nature of ancient bronze armor has all too often been misunderstood. Scholars have assumed that it functioned in a similar way to iron or steel armor, which relies on high strength, impact re-

---

40 See Roth (1999) 78-79 for discussion of cavalry rations, and 91-93 for support personnel. The extra costs associated with these are likely reflected in the varying levels of *stipendium*, with Polybius (6.39.12) indicating that by the second century BCE Roman infantrymen received the equivalent of two obols per day, while cavalymen received the equivalent of one drachma per day. See Rosenstein (2016) for discussion.

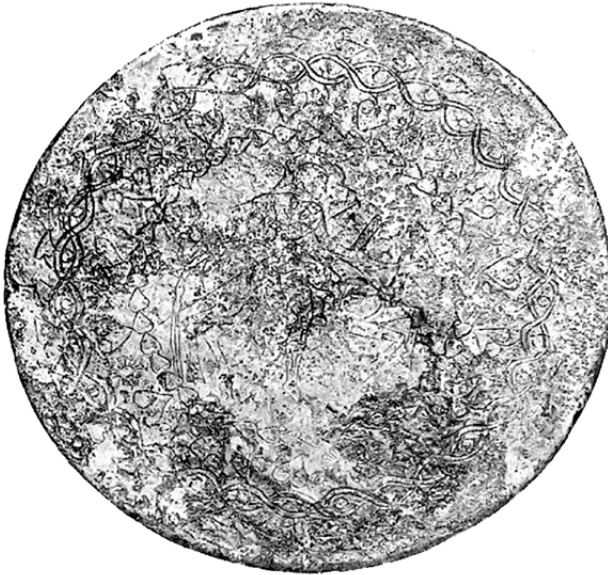
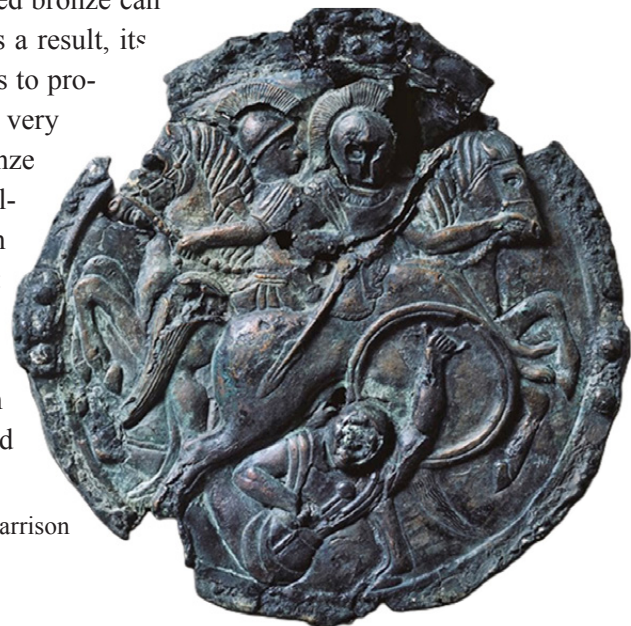


Figure 6: Disc with the desultor from the Lanuvium warrior burial. c. 475 BCE. Inv. no. 360111 317480; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Roma. After Zevi (1993) Fig. 9.

silience and rigidity to protect its wearer. Bronze armour, however, works a little differently. Bronze can function effectively as armor despite being quite thinly hammered, provided it is part of an armour system that also uses organic elements – most notably wood, leather, felt, and linen.<sup>41</sup> Bronze is naturally quite malleable, and thus sheeted bronze can be bent or dented relatively easily. As a result, its primary function in ancient armor was to protect against piercing, which even a very thin layer can do. Consequently, bronze actually formed a highly visible but relatively small part of armor systems in the Classical period, down to about 200 BCE, when cast bronze, iron, and eventually mail began to be used more widely. Prior to this, most armor, worn by both cavalry and infantry, was based

Figure 7: Disc or pectoral/cardiophylax from Ancona. Sixth century BCE, Ancona. Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche. Inv. 1100090086.



41 De Groote (2016) and Armstrong and Harrison (2021a, and 2021b).

around organic elements and layers, which only sometimes had a thin layer of highly polished bronze on the outside to protect against piercing.<sup>42</sup> The iconic Greek *hoplon/aspis* is a prime example of this, with its core of wood, backed by leather, and only a very thin – typically less than 0.5mm thick – layer of bronze on the outside. Accordingly, a ‘heavily armored’ cavalryman from the fourth century BCE may not have looked as Polybius, writing in the second century BCE, or a modern observer may have imagined – when iron mail was more prevalent (as seen with the cavalrymen on the ‘Altar of Domtius Ahenobarbus’, Figure 8).

Even so, this should not be pushed too far, as the differences between sixth/fifth century BCE equipment and fourth/third century BCE equipment may not have been extreme. As the current authors discussed elsewhere,<sup>43</sup> it is likely that the early fifth-century BCE warrior burial from Lanuvium was a cavalryman, and his equipment is fascinating in that context as he was buried with an anatomical bronze breastplate, a splendid helmet, two light throwing spears, a thrusting lance, an axe, as well as a large (over 80cm in length) *machaira/kopis*-style sword (Figure 9).<sup>44</sup> The sword is particularly interesting, as it is of a type that Xenophon (*Eq.* 12.11) deemed particularly useful for cavalry and of a length that effectively precluded its use by infantry.<sup>45</sup> This was an incredibly well-equipped warrior, demonstrating at least one end of the cavalryman spectrum. It is also not a dramatically different panoply from that found at Forentum (Lavello), dating to the first half of the third century BCE (Figure 10).<sup>46</sup> This is clearly a cavalryman, due to the presence of a chanfron for the horse, and he was evidently buried with a range of spears with sauroters. Although the grave assemblage from Lavello dates more than two centuries later, the changes are minimal. The helmet is of the new, Montefortino type and construction, and the spearheads show a marked shift in type, size, and quantity. However, the body armor is of the same basic type – a thinly hammered bronze, bi-valve, muscled cuirass. It is worth returning to the spears, though, which are noteworthy as they both support an aspect of Polybius’ narrative – with the spearheads being more robust and coming with sauroters as

42 Mödlinger (2016).

43 Armstrong and Notari (2024).

44 Zevi (1990) and (1993).

45 See Quesada Sanz (1997) and Verčič(2011) for discussion.

46 Initially dated to the fourth century BCE, this burial has now been backdated to the first half of the third century BCE. See Bottini, et al (2018).



Figure 8: Scene from the so-called ‘Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus’. Musée du Louvre in Paris. Late second century BCE. Photo: J. Serrati

he describes – and also how this may not indicate a wider ‘reform’, so much as a gradual set of shifts which saw different changes occurring at different times. Polybius, if he was aware of this at all, seems to have simplified things for his narrative.

These basic principles are also visible when it comes to shields and spears described as being poorly constructed, but this likely reflected three different issues. First, it relates to the overall nature of military equipment before c. 250 BCE, which favored more organic elements, relative to that of c. 150 BCE when Polybius was writing, which was of a different construction. One was not necessarily

Figure 9: Cuirass and helmet from the Lanuvium Warrior Burial. C. 500 BCE. Museo Nazionale Romano - Terme di Diocleziano. Photo: J. Armstrong.



more effective than the other, although their construction would have been noticeably different.<sup>47</sup> Oxhide, or boiled leather (*cuir-bouilli*) is actually very effective at stopping edged weapons – with testing suggesting it requires 90J of force to be defeated by a sword and 30J for a more focused point like that of a spear.<sup>48</sup> A 30J strike with an iron spearhead is also enough to split and pierce a bronze-faced

47 See Devereaux (2022) for discussion of Roman armour changes in this period.

48 Williams (2003) 948.

Figure 10: Cuirass, helmet, chanfron for a horse, along with spear points and likely sauroters (the three on the far right). Third century BCE. Forentum (Lavello) tomb 669.

Photo: J. Armstrong.



*aspis*.<sup>49</sup> We should not assume the shield with metal is more effective. Second, the examples of early cavalry equipment that Polybius saw (if, indeed, he personally saw any) likely came from ritual contexts, such as the *transvectio equitum*, and so may have represented lighter and more stylized versions. Polybius explicitly notes that Roman cavalry no longer used the earlier, and seemingly inferior, equipment he describes, so it is not entirely clear how he would have known about it. Presumably, this information would have come from non-military contexts, like

<sup>49</sup> De Groote (2016) 208.



Figure 11: Frieze fragments from the *Forum Romanum*. Museo Nazionale Romano - Terme di Diocleziano  
Photo by J. Armstrong.

seeing it in ritual processions, or simply word of mouth. Third, as previously mentioned, Polybius was consciously trying to show development and improvement over time in Rome's armed forces, often through adoption and emulation of Greek models for cavalry, as part of his wider argument.

Bearing this in mind and reconsidering the wider body of (especially archaeological) evidence which now exists, a rather different view of early Roman and Italian cavalry equipment emerges. Terracotta reliefs from across Etruria and Latium show us horsemen equipped with a large round shield, possibly an *aspis*, and a single spear.<sup>50</sup> Three of the four fragments of frieze from archaic Rome attest to the use of large circular shields by Roman cavalry (see Figure 11). In two fragments one can see warriors on horseback carrying circular shields and long spears, while a third depicts a warrior on horseback wearing a large crested helmet. Polybius does not mention the sword, but swords are common in both graves associated with cavalymen and depictions of them from Italy. For instance, they can be found on fourth-century Praenestine *cistae* (see e.g. Figures 1, 12, and 13) and the famous fifth-century warrior burial from Lanuvium (see Figure 9 above). But looking more broadly, from iconography and mortuary evidence at least, it appears that most cavalymen were well-protected by a shield, helmet, and body armor and armed with a sword or spear. So much so, in fact, that they have often been described as “mounted infantry”.<sup>51</sup> This term, however, does the cavalry a severe disservice. They are not mount-

<sup>50</sup> Crouwel (2012).

<sup>51</sup> Furet (2012).

ed infantry, but simply well-equipped cavalymen. The fact that these could be mistaken, however, does highlight the fact that the approach to battle utilized by these two groups may have overlapped more than in later periods.

*Nature of (Cavalry) Battle in the Early Republic*

In terms of their behavior, how these men acted on the battlefield would have varied significantly based on context, but in the early period, it seems to have involved feats of individual heroism and the pursuit of wealth and glory. While they are very difficult to trust, early battle narratives are full of monomachy (single combat) and dueling. The fa-

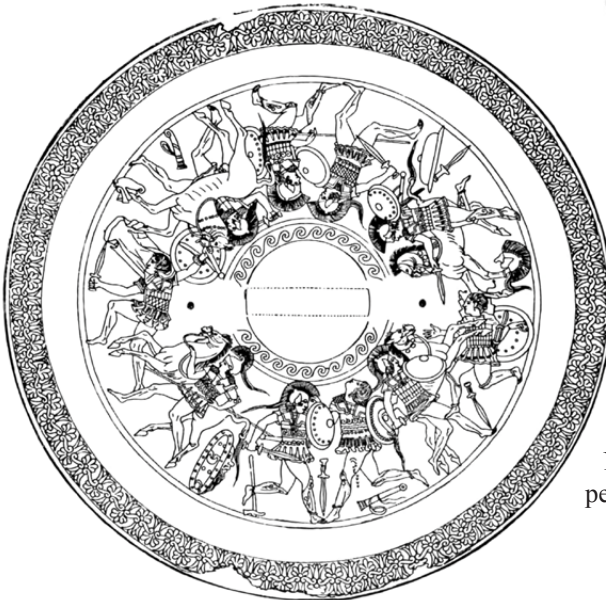


Figure 12: *Cista* from Praeneste with a line drawing of top decoration (after Battaglia [1979] Vol. 1, Tav. VII). Likely fourth century BCE. NY Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

mous duel between Lucius Junius Brutus and Arruns Tarquin in 509 BCE offers a prime example. Livy (2.6.6-9, trans. Foster) notes:

So it came about that two armies, representing two nations, followed Tarquinius, to regain his kingdom for him and to chastise the Romans. When they had come into Roman territory the consuls went out to meet the enemy: Valerius led the foot in defensive formation; Brutus, with the cavalry, went ahead to scout. In the same fashion the enemy's horse headed their march, commanded by Arruns Tarquinius, the king's son, while the king himself followed with the legions. Arruns, perceiving a long way off by the consul's lictors that it was he, and then, as they drew nearer together, recognizing Brutus more unmistakably by his countenance, blazed with resentment. "Yonder," he cried, "is the man who drove us into exile from our native land. Look! He is himself decked out with our trappings, as he comes proudly on! O gods, avengers of kings, be with us!" Spurring his horse, he charged straight at the consul. Brutus saw that he was the object of the man's attack. In those days it was to a general's credit to take part in the actual fighting, so he eagerly accepted the challenge, and they rushed at one another with such desperation, neither of them taking thought for his own defence if only he might wound his adversary, that each was pierced right through his shield by the other's thrust, and, impaled upon the two spears, they fell dying from their horses.<sup>52</sup>

Accounts like this are almost certainly also – or, indeed, primarily – narrative devices and contain a high degree of elaboration on the part of ancient authors. Although, if the oral tradition was going to preserve any factual details of early warfare, duels amongst the elite represent one of the more likely options. This approach to warfare amongst the elite also makes quite a lot of sense given what else we know. Warfare seems to have been a vital part of early elite self-representation and power, as seen particularly through the burial and display of arms and armor, and even in later periods the demonstration of *virtus*, display of battle scars, and tradition of the *spolia opima* all hint at the importance of monomarchy

52 *Valerius quadrato agmine peditem ducit; Brutus ad explorandum cum equitatu antecessit. eodem modo primus eques hostium agminis fuit; praeerat Arruns Tarquinius, filius regis; rex ipse cum legionibus sequebatur. Arruns ubi ex lictoribus procul consulem esse, deinde iam propius ac certius facie quoque Brutum cognovit, inflammatus ira "ille est vir," inquit, "qui nos extorres expulit patria. ipse en ille nostris decoratus insignibus magnifice incedit. Di regum ultores adeste." concitat calcaribus equum atque in ipsum infestus consulem derigit. sensit in se iri Brutus. decorum erat tum ipsis capessere pugnam ducibus; avide itaque se certamini offert, adeoque infestis animis concurrerunt, neuter, dum hostem volneraret, sui protegendi corporis memor, ut contrario ictu per parmam uterque transfixus duabus haerentes hastis moribundi ex equis lapsi sint.*

amongst members of this group.<sup>53</sup> This is broadly supported by the nature of cavalry equipment, which seems to emphasize individual protection and, indeed, was arguably designed for dueling.<sup>54</sup>

This is not to say, however, that cavalrymen operated entirely independently. It has been argued, based in part on the later Roman use of maniples and similar divisions, that most Roman (and Italic) armies were divided up tactically into small groups – likely representing the families, clans, and communities that made them up.<sup>55</sup> Rather than attempting to integrate the various groups that contributed to the army, or indeed break up and redistribute the individual warriors into new groups or formations, it is far more likely that these pre-existing entities operated as distinct units on the battlefield. What this means for the cavalry, in particular, is unclear. While the literary sources give us some information on the organization of the *equites*, it is likely that much of it relates more to political contexts than military ones – most notably the division into centuries, which were connected to voting practices. In battle narratives, the cavalry are often described as an undifferentiated mass – e.g. “There the Tusculan horse were stationed, under the command of Geminus Maecius, who was in command [of the Tusculan cavalrymen], a man of high reputation amongst his own people, recognized the Roman cavalry and the consul’s son at their head, for they were all — especially the men of distinction — known to each other.” (*ibi Tusculani erant equites; praeerat Geminus Maecius, vir cum genere inter suos tum factis clarus. Is ubi Romanos equites insignemque inter eos praecedentem consulis filium — nam omnes inter se, utique illustres viri, noti erant — cognovit.* Livy 8.7.2-3, adapted from Foster’s translation). However, when horsemen are described as operating in smaller or tactical groups, these are mostly commonly referred to as *turmae* by the sources.<sup>56</sup>

53 Oakley (1985) and Burns (2003).

54 A key component here is the large circular *aspis*. Although this is typically associated with infantry formations, like the hoplite phalanx, van Wees (2004) has convincingly argued for its origins and utility in dueling. The same is true for the rest of the armour, which seems to be designed for full-body protection, as would be required in a duel. Cavalry weapons also seem to be quite diverse, with panoplies having swords, spears (both throwing and thrusting), as well as knives and axes. None of these seem to indicate a specific form of group combat.

55 Armstrong (2019).

56 *Acies*, meaning simply ‘unit’, is also sometimes used, as at Livy 8.39.1 and 25.6.20 – both times “*acies equitum*”. *Turma* appears more frequently in Livy’s second pentad (15 times) than in the first (4 times – including the reference to the enlistment of the Albanians

Intriguingly, *turma* has the same root as *turba*, meaning both “a crowd” and “tumult”, which seems to emphasize both dynamic aspects – the word is ultimately derived from the Proto-Indo-European *\*(s)twerH*, meaning “to rotate” or “swirl” – as well as the socially and ethnically indistinct character of its members.<sup>57</sup> By the late Republic, it is clear that *turma* had become more formalized, and related to a group of c. 30 men, led by three *decuriones* – each commanding ten men, with one of them also providing overall command.<sup>58</sup> While it is likely that these men shared bonds of kinship (broadly understood), and indeed may have been from the same tribe or clan,<sup>59</sup> there is evidence to suggest they were also bound by some form of religious-military connections – which may have helped to bind together warriors fighting together from separate clans or communities.<sup>60</sup>

How this is related to combat is, yet again, uncertain. As noted above, it is likely that most combat was individual, as revealed by both the equipment the cavalry used and the traditions and activities they are associated with. However, the close proximity of men from the same social group was likely important, as appropriate witnesses and audience of their actions. It is also likely that the wider group supported their comrades, and there are depictions – most famously, in the form of handles on *cistae* (see Figure 13 below) – that seem to show comrades either protecting the wounded cavalryman or, more often, bringing his body back.

---

[1.30.3], the Fabians in 480 BCE [2.47.3], the episodes of Cosso [4.19.2], and Tempanius [4.38.3]). This may simply be a stylistic choice, although it may also indicate the increasing importance of such units and divisions in this later period.

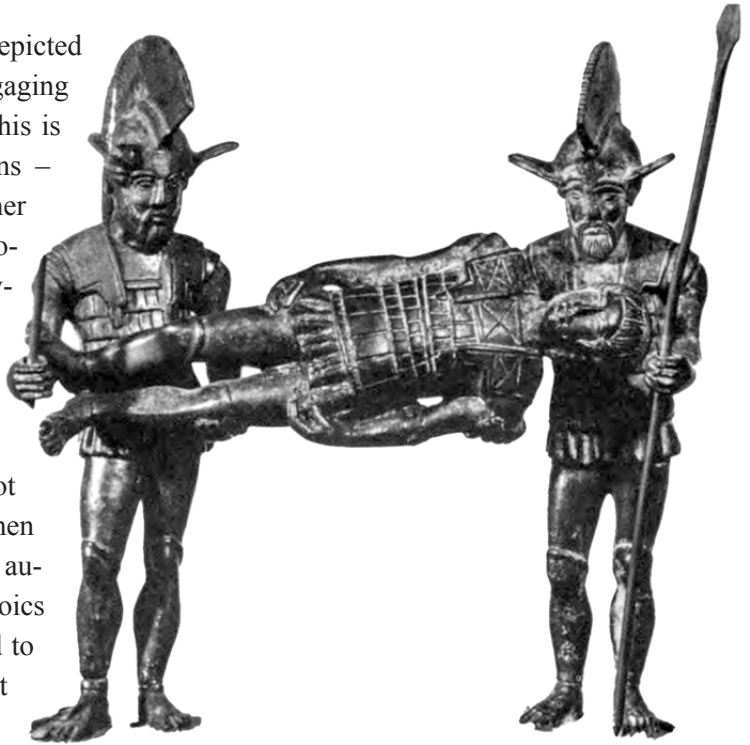
57 Livy (8.8) uses a similar term, *turba scutatorum*, when referring to the light infantry (*leves*) who supported the maniples of hastati of the maniples, as part of his broader discussion of the mid-Republican army in the lead up to the battle of the Vesperis River in 340 BCE. This term seems to indicate a distinct group, but one lacking rigid order.

58 Festus 485L. See also Varr. *LL* 5.16.26; *Veg. Mil.* 2.14; Caes. *BG* 4.33 etc.

59 Our sources consistently connected with *equites* with the original *tribus* of Romulus (Livy 1.13, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.13, Var. *LL* 5.91, Plin. *NH* 33.9), perhaps hinting at this tribal/familial association.

60 The most obvious association would be with the cult of the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux), which was common throughout central Italy, with early evidence from sites like Lavinium (the Dioscuri are attested on one of the famous altars) and a strong tradition within Rome (Gartrell 2021). Religious rites and beliefs are also hinted at in iconography, as in the Pre-nestine *cistae*, although the connection of role of horses and cavalry to the rites are uncertain. These sorts of connections may also be applicable to the infantry, possibly inferred by some of the various rituals associated with the *comitia centuriata* (which seem to have gone further than simple political and legal formula – for instance the *lustrum*), although they seem to be much stronger and more visible within the elite groups of the *equites*.

Cavalry is often depicted and described as engaging with other cavalry. This is likely for two reasons – one social and the other practical. The first, social reason is that cavalymen were likely interested in engaging with their peers, both as comrades and as opponents. Not only did cavalymen want an appropriate audience for their heroics in battle, they needed to perform them against appropriate rivals.

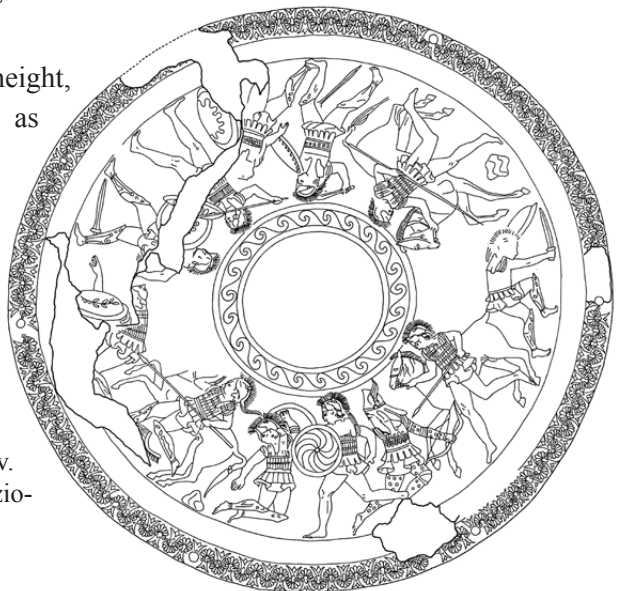


This seems to be true across many periods, and not just archaic Italy. The Homeric parallels are most obvious here.<sup>61</sup> The second reason is practical and relates to maximizing the benefits that being on horseback brings, while also minimizing its weaknesses.

Horses provide greater speed, height, and bulk for cavalymen, as well as

<sup>61</sup> See Sears (2019) 1-30 for discussion.

Figure 13: Handle and lid from a *cista*. Handle depicts two warriors carrying an injured/dying third, while the lid contains a battle scene with cavalry (after Battaglia [1979] Vol. 1, Tav. XVII and XIX). Praeneste. Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia. Inv. 25210.



adding the horse's natural weapons to their own – there is iconographic evidence, especially from the Praenestine *cistae* and disc like that from Ancona (see Figure 7), showing horses trampling or kicking to keep the enemies at bay. They were, in modern terminology, a true “weapon system” that combined and multiplied the capabilities of the horse and rider. However, cavalry were of limited value against organized infantry. Cavalry would typically only be able to charge an infantry formation that lacked strength and was in disorder. While being on horseback gave the rider significant benefits, it also limited his reach and nimbleness and offered a larger target for his opponent – and would have particularly left the legs exposed (a point emphasized in much later medieval treatises on cavalry warfare).<sup>62</sup> Indeed, as particularly well demonstrated by later evidence, men on horseback, along with their valuable mounts, are actually quite vulnerable when stationary.<sup>63</sup> As a result, cavalymen, at least while on horseback, likely sought to keep moving while fighting.

Operating in this way, cavalry may have been able to effectively engage the more dispersed infantry formations that seemed to be used in Italy, in contrast to the larger and more cohesive blocks of infantry favored in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. However, even here, the benefits would be limited. When engaging these forces, they would typically not have been creating new gaps, but simply riding into existing ones. Our sources do discuss cavalry charges against infantry on occasion and, provided these were supported by infantry, they may have been effective. For instance, see Livy 8.30.6-7 (trans. Foster):

The cavalry, too — at the suggestion of Lucius Cominius, a tribune of the soldiers — after charging a number of times without being able to break the enemy's lines, pulled the bridles off their horses and spurred them on so hotly that nothing could resist the shock, and arms and men went down before them over a wide front. The foot soldiers, following up the cavalry charge, advanced on the disordered enemy.<sup>64</sup>

However, these sorts of references seem to be both relatively late – the above relating to the battle at the Vesperis River in 340 BCE (a point and battle we will

<sup>62</sup> Harbinson (2021).

<sup>63</sup> Harbinson (2023) esp. 189-201.

<sup>64</sup> *Eques etiam auctore L. Cominio tribuno militum, qui aliquotiens impetu capto perrumpere non poterat hostium agmen, detraxit frenos equis, atque ita concitatos calcaribus permisit ut sustinere eos nulla vis posset; per arma, per viros late stragem dedere; secutus pedes impetum equitum turbatis hostibus intulit signa.*

come back to) – and rather exceptional. Most cavalry engagements with infantry were likely focused on pursuing fleeing or isolated groups. In general, cavalry engaged with other cavalry.

When attacking infantry, and especially a broken infantry formation, it is likely the cavalry would have made the most of their increased size and speed, riding down fleeing infantry and stabbing them from behind and from their elevated position. It is also likely that cavalry made use of the natural advantages being on horseback brought when facing off against each other. However, given the absence of stirrups or even the Gallic horned saddle, combat from horseback would have looked markedly different from that envisaged by many modern readers used to imagining medieval cavalymen with couched lances. Italic cavalymen seem to have ridden either bareback or using a simple blanket (see Figure 14), meaning that their position on the horse was somewhat precarious. Without anything to keep them firmly on the horse's back, it would have been difficult to use the momentum of a charge to increase the force of a blow or strike without risking being unhorsed in the process. Charging with a couched lance would have quickly unseated the ancient cavalymen, pushing him off the rear of the animal. As a result, while some aspects of combat may have been conducted on horseback, they likely involved using the horse as a vehicle to get close to an opponent, as a platform to fight from, and as a co-combatant.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, in combat itself, cavalymen may have wheeled and pushed with their horse, but probably did not charge or ride past slashing. There is no evidence for the use of sabers or similar weapons favored by later cavalymen after the adoption of saddles and stirrups. In fact, the iconic *kopis* or *machaira*-style sword is actually the reverse of a saber – a hacking or chopping weapon (with the cutting edge on the inside, rather than the outside of the curve), which would have been decidedly ill-suited to the usual, slashing stroke favored by more modern cavalry units.

It is also likely that some aspects of combat may have occurred on foot, and

---

<sup>65</sup> It is worth emphasizing that combat was not just between warriors; it involved the horse as well. As demonstrated by modern horseback police in 'crowd control' situations, the mass of a horse can be very effective in pushing people together. Its defensive role is also evident, able to act as a type of shield at times. However, it could also be an offensive weapon, using hooves and teeth – see, for instance, Figure 7 for an example of this. The value of a warhorse is explicitly highlighted in the episode of Coriolanus being rewarded for his bravery with a warhorse captured from the enemy (Plut. *Cor.* 10)

indeed the distinction between cavalry and infantry may not be as clear as often assumed – at least in some contexts. Most notably, there is a strong tradition in Italy of ‘*desultores*’, or cavalymen who are shown jumping from the horse to the ground and back onto the horse again. These are mentioned by Polybius and seem to have been particularly common in southern Etruria, Latium, and Picenum, but can also be found more widely – for instance in Corinth.<sup>66</sup> We can see in the already mentioned *cistae* from Praeneste (Figures 1, 12, and 13), cavalymen depicted in the characteristic pose of dismounting from the horse, a pose that can also be found on one of the faces of the Lanuvian warrior disc. Here, the precariousness of the cavalryman’s position on the horse becomes an advantage, as it allows and indeed encourages him to dismount and mount quickly. This would have been a particularly important technique when engaging individually against an active opponent on foot – and one which is found in use in later periods, as well, in this sort of context.<sup>67</sup> In combat between two, relatively stationary opponents, being on horseback offered both benefits and risks. While it increased the height of the warrior, it also offered a much larger target to hit. The choice to stay on one’s horse was, therefore, an important and contextual one.

When early Roman cavalry engaged other elite warriors, as part of the wider context of battle focused on individual heroism and spoils, horses likely represented an important part of the battle. Riding into battle on horseback, the mounts would have been a highly visible and impactful part of their military equipment. Alongside their gleaming bronze armor, feathered and crested helmets, and bright clothes, the horses would have enhanced the image and visibility of these men – reinforcing their status and position on the battlefield. As noted above, the horse itself would have also represented a powerful addition to the warrior’s arsenal, not only increasing his height and mass, but adding new weapons, like hooves and teeth. Additionally, when engaging other cavalymen, equipped in a comparable fashion, the practical benefits and risks of being on horseback were, in many ways, equalized. Once engaged in combat, however, it is likely that a range of practical considerations came to bear. As noted, it is likely that cavalymen fought quite a lot on foot, and not only when facing off against infantry. If a horse was killed or wounded, a cavalryman would obviously need to dismount. Some

---

66 Brouwers (2007).

67 Harbinson (2023).



Figure 14: Tomb painting depicting a warrior's return  
(Paestum, Tomba Adriuolo 12 – eastern slab, 375-370 BCE)  
Picture from the National Archaeological Museum of Paestum.  
Photo by Francesco Valletta and John Grippo.

may have also preferred to fight on solid ground. Further, as noted, there is a wide body of evidence from other, better documented periods of warfare, indicating that, in a fight between two stationary opponents, a warrior on horseback may not have the advantage against a warrior on foot – and indeed, the reverse may be true.<sup>68</sup> For all their performative and display elements, one must also remember that these were quite violent fights to the death, and warriors were likely in constant search of advantage to both save their own skin and defeat their opponents. Some of this is likely captured in iconography like that seen on the Prenestine *cistae*. These consistently present quite dynamic scenes of combat, where men and horses intermix in a complex set of duels – interestingly, with the combat depicted almost entirely on foot. Clearly the intent is to depict the messy chaos of hand-to-hand combat with fallen or wounded warriors, while others who have just dismounted from their horse run with their weapons outstretched and shields, scabbards, helmets, and other parts of their equipment on the ground.

Thus, in the early period, while cavalymen obviously fought on the same side as their infantry, Roman and Italian cavalry seem to have operated in way that only sometimes included the infantry, and often only at the end of the battle when the opposing infantry had broken. This was a conscious decision, based on both social and practical considerations. Cavalymen sought to engage their peers in a specific type of combat, and also sought to avoid fighting against infantry, who were not only of a different class but also represented an unacceptable risk to them. Early cavalry combat was much more chaotic, disjointed, and individual compared to norms in the Greek and Hellenistic worlds. However, this is because this more individual approach suited their needs at that time.

### *Changing Nature of (Cavalry) Battle in the Middle Republic*

While the traditional Roman military reforms of the fourth century BCE, and the notional shift to a ‘new’ manipular structure, have been called into doubt – as it is likely that the Romans and Italians had always fought in something resembling this manner – there were significant changes occurring across Italy, and in Rome, during this period. Most notably, the Roman military system was expanding, incorporating new peoples across Latium, Campania, and the rest of

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

central and southern Italy. More importantly, the wider military context within which the Romans were operating was also changing, with the rise of Macedon and then the Hellenistic kingdoms in the east. Armies were getting bigger, often composed largely of allies and mercenaries, and wars were lasting longer and occurring further away from home against more distant enemies. These factors had a gradual but profound impact on how the Romans engaged in warfare, particularly amongst the elite.

In this new context, elite cavalymen were no longer consistently facing off against other local elites that they knew. Instead, they were increasingly facing cavalry from much further afield, and perhaps not even drawn from the elite – or at least not an ‘elite’ they would recognize – but made up of soldiers pulled from across the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Near East. This was not the type of engagement where they could show their mettle against social equals, as they might have hoped, but a more pragmatic affair where the glory and spoils would be won and held more corporately. While individual feats still carried some merit, the shifting nature of warfare had changed the equation. Increasingly, elites won glory through leading armies and units, rather than individual combat. Cavalry also formed an important tactical wing of armies in this period, used more holistically and in synergy with infantry, often supplying a decisive charge to capitalize on an emerging weakness to break opposing formations.<sup>69</sup> This is the more conventional use of cavalry, seen throughout the medieval period as well, where horsemen would ride *en masse* and as part of a formation, and the sheer weight of the moving body of horses and men would force opposing formations apart. This is seen most clearly in the well-documented campaigns of Alexander the Great and the Wars of the Successors. However, it was evident in Italy as well. As we near the end of the fourth century, the number of references to cavalry charges on infantry formations increases in Livy – and it is here that we find the account, like that given above, of the cavalry breaking the infantry at the battle of the River Veseris.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, despite Polybius’ general disdain for Roman cavalry before c. 200 BCE, other scholars (going back to Helbig in the early twentieth century) have commented on the shift we seem to see in Roman cavalry in the late fourth century.<sup>71</sup>

---

69 For a discussion of this approach and its importance in a later Roman context, see Petitjean (2022) esp. 30-33.

70 Livy 8.30.6-7.

71 Helbig (1904). See Humm (2005) for the likely importance of the reforms of Appius Clau-

This is also the point in time where we seem to have an increased focus on cavalry discipline. Indeed, in Livy's account of this same battle, we have another important instance showing changes in cavalry tactics, this one associated the great Roman commander Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus. Famously, in 361 BCE, Livy (7.10) records that Manlius won great renown by dueling and defeating a Gallic warrior in single combat, taking his golden torc as a spoil of war and consequently the name 'Torquatus' for his family. However, in 340 BCE, in the lead up the battle of the River Veseris, Manlius' son also sought out single combat, with a very different result. Livy (8.7) records that the young Titus Manlius was part of the Roman cavalry, which was facing off against a group of cavalry from Tusculum. In a passage already referenced above, Livy (8.7.2-3) explicitly notes that "Geminus Maecius, who was in command [of the Tusculan cavalrymen], a man of high reputation amongst his own people, recognized the Roman cavalry and the consul's son at their head, for they were all — especially the men of distinction — known to each other." He then challenged Manlius to a duel. Livy (8.7.8-12, adapted from Foster's translation) records that:

The rest of the cavalry retired to remain spectators of the fray; the two combatants selected a clear space over which they charged each other at full gallop with levelled spears. Manlius' lance passed above his adversary's helmet, Maecius' across the neck of the other's horse. They wheeled their horses round, and Manlius, raising himself up, was the first to get in a second stroke; he thrust his lance between the horse's ears. Feeling the wound, the horse reared, shook its head violently, and threw its rider off. Whilst he was trying to rise after his heavy fall by supporting himself with his lance and shield, Manlius drove his lance right through his body and pinned him to the earth. After despoiling the body he returned to his men, and amidst their exulting shouts entered the camp and went straight to his father at the headquarters' tent, not in the least realizing the nature of his deed or its possible consequences, whether praise or punishment.<sup>72</sup>

---

dus Caecus to the cavalry in this period. See Petitjean (2022) 25-49 for general discussion.

72 *Movet ferocem animum iuvenis seu ira seu detractandi certaminis pudor seu inxsuperabilis vis fati. oblitus itaque imperii patrii consulumque edicti, praeceps ad id certamen agitur, quo vinceret an vinceretur haud multum interesset. Equitibus ceteris velut ad spectaculum submotis, spatio quod vacui interiacebat campi adversos concitant equos; et cum infestis cuspidibus concurrissent, Manli cuspis super galeam hostis, Maeci trans cervicem equi elapsa est. Circumactis deinde equis cum prior ad iterandum ictum Manlius consurrexisset, spiculum inter aures equi fixit. ad cuius volneris sensum cum equus prioribus pedibus erectis magna vi caput quateret, excussit equitem, quem cuspide parmaque innixum attollentem se ab gravi casu Manlius ab iugulo, ita ut per costas ferrum emineret, terrae*

Livy, therefore, indicates that this was a classic cavalry duel, of a type which would have been common in Italy for centuries. From the known combatants to the audience of peers, this fits the stated model of early cavalry combat quite well. However, unluckily for Manlius, the rules seemed to be changing. Livy (8.6.9-10) reports that, before the armies had arranged themselves, the Roman generals had made a very specific order: “it was also urged in the council that if ever any war had been conducted with stern authority, now was the occasion of all others for recalling military discipline to its ancient courses...the consuls proclaimed that no man should quit his place to attack the foe” (*agitatum etiam in consilio est ut, si quando unquam severo ullum imperio bellum administratum esset, tunc utique disciplina militaris ad priscos redigeretur mores....ne quis extra ordinem in hostem pugnaret*). This represents a marked shift in behavior, and a plausibly historical one. With the rise of larger armies, and more organized tactics and approaches, the ability to break opposing infantry formations into smaller (and perhaps more isolated) groups was increasingly important. This required a change in approach and much more unity of purpose and tactical cohesion, but the benefits on the battlefield were made clear by the success of the armies that adopted it. Unfortunately for the young Manlius, who was trying to achieve renown in single combat as his father had done, this sort of individual behavior was no longer allowed. The elder Manlius, in a famous anecdote demonstrating ‘Manlian discipline’, ordered his son to be executed as a result.<sup>73</sup>

Despite this extreme example placed in the narrative for 340 BCE, it is likely that the transition to this new mode of cavalry combat was neither quite so early, so immediate, or so drastic. Any shift in tactics was almost certainly contextual (as it required facing an opponent where staying in formation and disrupting an infantry formation was an advantage), as well as being both gradual and never complete.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, we continue to have evidence suggesting that Roman cavalry

---

*adfixit; spoliisque lectis ad suos revectus, cum ovante gaudio turma in castra atque inde ad praetorium ad patrem tendit, ignarus fati3 futurique, laus an poena merita esset.*

73 See Phang (2008) 111-52 for discussion.

74 As Dionysius of Halicarnasus (2.13) noted of the early *Celeres* “They fought on horseback where there was level ground favourable for cavalry manoeuvres, and on foot where it was rough and inconvenient for horses.” (ἰππεῖς μὲν ἔνθα ἐπιτήδειον εἶη πεδίον ἐνιπτομαχῆσαι, πεζοὶ δὲ ὄπου τραχὺς εἶη καὶ ἀνιπτος τόπος). While referring to the archaic cavalry of Romulus, this likely held true in later periods as well. See also Petitjean (2022) 32-39 for the importance of dismounting and fighting on foot amongst the cavalry down into the second

sought to fight relatively stationary battles of hand-to-hand combat on foot – and perhaps in a dueling context. Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 20.2) describes the Roman cavalry at the Battle of Asculum in 279 BCE in remarkably similar terms to early battles, with the Roman cavalry regularly dismounting and remounting, preferring to fight on foot in contrast to Pyrrhus' cavalry. Also at Asculum, we have the famous incident of Oplax the Ferentian, leader of a cavalry unit amongst the Roman *socii*, who sought out Pyrrhus on the battlefield. While the Italian Oplax seems to have wanted to engage Pyrrhus in a duel and managed to kill his horse, he was quickly cut down by Pyrrhus' companions – perhaps highlighting how things had changed. Moving further in time, we continue to see some of these 'archaic tendencies' in evidence in Roman cavalry forces – albeit increasingly interspersed with more cohesive and 'Hellenistic' actions. In Polybius' narrative (2.27) for the battle of Telamon, he describes how the cavalry and infantry fought "mixed with each other", and likely on foot. Livy (31.35) describes a skirmish in 200 BCE between Macedonian and Roman cavalry, where some of the Roman cavalry (probably Roman-Latin citizens and not Campanian ones) dismounted to fight alongside the light infantry, which surprised the Macedonians. This was evidently not the standard way for cavalry to operate in Greece. However, it may have been more common elsewhere. For instance, when Polybius (3.115) describes the battle of Cannae, he points out that both Carthaginian (Spanish and Celtic) and Roman cavalry dismounted and fought on foot.<sup>75</sup> This is intriguing, both because of how late it is, and how Polybius evidently considered this technique contrary to the regular practice of cavalry. However, the Romans were changing their ways as in the same year as the example above (and in marked contrast), in 200 BCE, Livy (31.22) reports the other Roman consul used his cavalry to break the infantry formation of a group of Gauls in Italy.

---

century BCE.

75 This makes practical sense, for the reasons noted above about the benefits and risks of fighting from horseback. There are parallels for this in later periods, as dismounting was always a common strategy amongst cavalry in certain situations – and especially those involving more static combat. See Harbinson (2023) for detailed discussion.

### *The Changing Nature of the Roman Cavalry and Equites*

The most significant change in Roman cavalry during the fourth and third centuries BCE likely relates to its composition, and the increasing reliance on allied forces to supply horsemen instead of Roman citizens. By the second century BCE, Polybius (6.20-26) claims that while each Roman legion contained a contingent of 300 citizen cavalry, the allies were required to supply 900, to bring the total up to 1200. These figures are interesting, as despite the growing size of the army in terms of manpower (incl. cavalry) during the fourth and third centuries, Roman citizens evidently played a smaller role in cavalry operations. This may reflect a recognition of stronger cavalry traditions in areas of Italy that were not integrated as citizens, although given how widely dispersed and intermixed citizen and allied communities were (see Figure 4 above), this probably does not explain the overall phenomenon. Rather, it likely reflects the limited value that cavalry service had for Roman citizen elites during this period.

While cavalry actions were still important parts of Roman military operations in the middle Republic, the nature of cavalry combat had changed, and it no longer afforded elites consistent opportunities to gain glory and status through combat with other elites. Cavalrymen were now expected to fight against both opposing cavalry and infantry in a more holistic fashion and in service of larger tactical and strategic aims. Cavalrymen were still members of the social and economic elite, at least relatively speaking, and would gain some level of status through service and networking while on campaign. However, many men could advance their careers further through non-military means, especially as military service increasingly meant long periods of time away from home – and eventually away from Italy. Those who occupied the true upper echelons of Roman society would likely serve as legates or tribunes, and not as regular cavalrymen.

Due to this shifting character, and the changing nature of battle for cavalrymen, the equipment would have also changed. While soldiers would have evidently still needed to be able to fight on and off horseback, their important function as part of larger, ‘combined arms’ forces and the need to be able to engage with heavy infantry likely resulted in shifts in equipment as noted by Polybius. He is almost certainly correct that, as Roman cavalry began to fight like Greek and Hellenistic cavalry, they began to favor similar equipment that suited this environment. Alongside this are wider shifts in military equipment production,

which saw the move away from armor made of thinly hammered bronze over organic layers, and towards more cast bronze and iron options – including the increasingly widespread use of mail.<sup>76</sup> Javelins and *machaira/kopis*-style swords also gave way to stronger thrusting spears and lances across the Mediterranean. While these changes may have been particularly obvious in Italy, given their contrast to previous equipment, they were not exclusive to it.

With the decline of Roman cavalry as a venue for elite display and *camaraderie*, the nature of the *equites* shifted as well. This socio-political group, which had once been synonymous with the cavalry, gradually transitioned into a slightly different role. Elite display and *camaraderie* were still central, but increasingly performed within a ritual context. The *equites* and their associated festivals and rituals, like the *transvectio*, became increasingly important for young members of this class. It performed similar functions to the practices of archaic equestrians, with public displays of athleticism and a strong sense of elite group membership. It was within this increasingly expansive class of citizens that the socio-economic and political class of the *equites*, as understood in the late Republic and early Empire, developed. This group numbered in the thousands, and formed the backbone of Rome's emerging imperial bureaucracy. While its connection to the strictly military aspects seems to have waned, its importance to the emerging empire seems to have grown.

Within this context, the *equites equo publico* has always caused issues for scholars. Out of all the *equites*, the Roman censors only granted 1800 the *equus publicus*, or 'public horse'. However, as many have argued, it seems unrealistic that the *ordo equester* only contained 1800 men, given all of their importance and duties.<sup>77</sup> So, with the *equites*, there evidently existed at least two groups – the wider class, which included all of those with over 400,000 sesterces (by the late Republic at least), and the 1800 to whom the censors granted the *equus publicus*. Why this group was granted a public horse is never stated, as the institution seems to have been largely vestigial by the late Republic, but there are some clues. As Mouritsen has suggested, the *equites equo publico* seem to have been younger, and were often those engaged in the more militaristic displays and festivals asso-

---

76 Deveraux (2022).

77 See, most recently, Mouritsen (2022) 60, amongst others, including Davenport (2019) 66.

ciated with the *ordo equester*.<sup>78</sup> It is, therefore, possible that *equus publicus* was introduced to ensure a Roman cavalry citizen contingent was available, possibly as part of the myriad reforms to the census in the late fourth century BCE, as the Roman elite began to move away from martial displays on the battlefield – and risking their own life, limb, and property. The *equus publicus* was possibly granted to 1,800 of the *equites* – enough to support six legions (each with 300 citizen cavalry), or requiring service every two to three years – as the designated military subsection of the *ordo*. This obviously did not preclude members of the senate or wider equestrian class from participating in warfare if they chose, although it is clear that most did not. Instead, it created a form of social, political, and economic obligation amongst a certain group to regularly participate in warfare, while also alleviating some of the personal risk. The men were paid the *aes equestre* and the *aes hordearium*, and in exchange were expected to serve the state militarily, just like the *milites*. But whether composed of the *equites equo publico* or not, it seems clear that, by the middle Republic, active cavalymen formed only a subset of the wider equestrian class.<sup>79</sup>

### Conclusions

Polybius, writing in the middle of the second century, sought to make sense of the reality of the Roman military and political order he saw around him, and contextualize it within an historical and analytical framework. He would have seen, first-hand, Roman cavalry in the field and knew them to be an effective military force. He was himself a cavalry commander (ἵππαρχος) in the Achaean league in either 170 or 169 BCE, and would have been very aware of the Roman cavalry forces during the Third Macedonian War. He would have also been aware of the nature of battle in this period, and the vital importance of solid equipment and the associated tactics necessary to engage with contemporary cavalry and infantry. However, Polybius was either ignorant of or chose to consciously ignore the long history of the *equites* in Rome – perhaps because of their oligarchical nature. They did not align with his model for the success of the imperial Roman state and army. Thus, he misconstrued their early character, and the reputation of the early

<sup>78</sup> Mouritsen (2022) 61-63.

<sup>79</sup> See also Petitjean (2022) 25-27.

Roman cavalry has suffered ever since.

In contrast to the testimony of Polybius, we can now say that Rome's early cavalry formed an important part – perhaps the most important part – of early Roman battle. In this, they were comparable to cavalry forces from across the ancient Mediterranean. The men who made up Rome's *equites* were the community's social and economic elite, were likely equipped with high-quality (and relatively heavy) armor, and were able to operate as effective soldiers both on horseback and on foot. While they seem to have preferred to engage other cavalymen on the battlefield, especially in duels, in pursuit of personal glory and spoils, this should not diminish their practical and tactical importance. These were engagements between elites who knew each other, and who represented the upper echelon of their societies. As a result, rather than a “sideshow,” these engagements between each army's elites were the “main event” and, in the early periods, may have actually decided the outcome of the entire battle.

As warfare shifted in Italy and Rome during the fourth century BCE, however, the role of cavalry – and its appeal for members of the Roman elite – also changed. For the Roman citizen elite, the risks seemed to have increased while the benefits decreased, as cavalry were expected to fight against larger and increasingly mercenary forces, much further from home, and against both infantry and cavalry. Certainly, some members of *equites* still sought to fight, and especially lead units of cavalry. Participation in Roman warfare offered opportunities to increase personal wealth and connections, and remained an important mechanism for social and political advancement. However, by the middle Republic, it was not the only mechanism and it seems as if many members of the growing equestrian class opted for more peaceful (and less risky) approaches. As a result, Roman citizen cavalry seems to have become a much smaller and heavily subsidized segment of the Roman army, with the Romans increasingly relying on allies to supply this segment of their forces.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armstrong, J. (2008) “Breaking the Rules: Recruitment in the Early Roman Army (509-450 BC)” in Bragg, E. et al (eds.) *Beyond the Battlefields: New Perspectives on Warfare and Society in the Graeco-Roman World*. 47-66. Cambridge.
- Armstrong, J. (2016) *War and Society in Early Rome: From Warlords to Generals*. Cambridge.
- Armstrong, J. (2019) “Organized Chaos: *Manipuli, Socii*, and the Roman army c. 300 BC” in Armstrong, J. and M. Fronda (eds.) *Romans at War: Citizens, Soldiers, and Society in Republican Rome*. 76-98. London.
- Armstrong, J. (2020) “Beyond the Pomerium: Expansion and Legislative Authority in Archaic Rome” in P. du Plessis and S. Bell (eds) *Roman Law before the Twelve Tables: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. 133-152. Edinburgh.
- Armstrong, J., and N. Harrison (2021a) “The Armorer’s Craft: Using Experimental Archaeology to Explore the Production of Bronze Armour in Italy c. 550 - 400 BCE” *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 22: 15-33.
- Armstrong, J., and N. Harrison (2021b) “The Armorer’s Craft: Using Experimental Archaeology to Explore the Production of Bronze Armour in Italy c. 400-300 BCE” *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 22: 45-70.
- Armstrong, J. and G. Notari (2024) “Early Roman Cavalry (8th-4th centuries BCE), A Reappraisal” *Nuova Antologia Militare: Revista Interdisciplinare della Societa Italiana di Storia Militare* 5.18: 91-124.
- Baronowski, D. (2011) *Polybius and Roman Imperialism*. London.
- Battaglia, G. (1979) *Le Ciste Prenestine*. Florence.
- Bottini, A, et al. (2018) “L’Ulimto Cavaliere: Una Nuova Datazione della Secunda Depositione della Tomba 669 di Lavello” in *Bolletino di Archeologia On-Line* 9.2-3:39- 69.
- Bradley, G. (2020) *Early Rome to 290 BC: The Beginnings of the City and the Rise of the Republic*. Edinburgh.
- Broodbank, C. (2013) *The Making of the Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean from the Beginning to the Emergence of the Classical World*. London.
- Brouwers, J. (2007) “From Horsemen to Hoplites Some Remarks on Archaic Greek Warfare” *Babesch* 82: 305-319.
- Burns, M. (2003) “Visible Proofs of Valour: The Trophy in South Italic: Iconography of the Fourth Century BC” *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 14: 42-56.
- Crouwel, J. (2012) *Chariots and Other Wheeled Vehicles in Italy Before the Roman Empire*. Oxford.
- Daly, G. (2002) *Cannae: The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War*. London.
- Davenport, C. (2019) *A History of the Roman Equestrian Order*. Cambridge.
- De Groote, K. (2016) “‘Twas when my shield turned traitor!’ Establishing the Combat Effectiveness of the Greek Hoplite Shield” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 35: 197-212.

- Devereaux, B. (2022) “The Adoption and Impact of Roman Mail Armor in the Third and Second Centuries BCE” *Chiron* 52: 135-166.
- Echeverría, F. (2011) “Weapons, Technological Determinism, and Ancient Warfare” in Fagan, G. and M. Trundle (eds.) *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*. 21-56. Leiden.
- Gartrell, A. (2021) *The Cult of Castor and Pollux in Ancient Rome: Myth, Ritual, and Society*. Cambridge.
- Hanson, W.V. (2009) *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Berkeley.
- Harbinson M. (2021) “Coureurs and Their Role in Late Medieval Warfare” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 19: 147-190.
- Harbinson, M. (2023) “To Fight on Horse or Foot? Dismounting in the Age of Chivalry” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 21:181-226
- Harris, W.V. (2017) “Rome at Sea: The Beginnings of Roman Naval Power” *Greece & Rome* 64: 14–26.
- Helbig, W. (1904) “Contribution à l’histoire de l’Equitatus romain” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’année - Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 48: 190–201.
- Helm, M. (2021) *Kampf um Mittelitalien. Roms ungerader Weg zur Großmacht*. Stuttgart.
- Helm, M. (2022) “Between urbs and tribus, The expansion and organization of the ager Romanus in the Early Republic” *The Ancient History Bulletin* 36: 81-98.
- Horden, P. and N. Purcell (2000), *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*. Oxford.
- Humm, M. (2005) *Appius Claudius Caecus : La République accomplie*. Rome.
- Kagan, D. and G. Viggiano (2015) *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece*. Princeton.
- Keegan, J. (1993) *A History of Warfare*. New York.
- Konijnendijk, R. (2021) “Cavalry and the Character of Classical Warfare” in Konijnendijk, R., C. Kucewicz, and M. Lloyd (eds) *Brill’s Companion to Greek Land Warfare Beyond the Phalanx*. 169 – 204. Leiden.
- Lintott, A. (1968) *Violence in Republican Rome*. Oxford.
- Lonoce, N., et al. (2024) “The Western (Buonfornello) necropolis (7th to 5th BC) of the Greek colony of Himera (Sicily, Italy): Site-specific discriminant functions for sex determination in the common burials resulting from the battle of Himera (ca. 480 BC)” *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 28: 766–774.
- McCall, J. (2001) *The Cavalry of the Roman Republic: Cavalry combat and elite reputations in the middle and late Republic*. London.
- Mödlinger, M. (2016) “Technological studies on Bronze Age metal body armour: from the Aegean to Western Europe” *Technè* 43: 90-93.
- Morris, I. (2003) “Mediterraneanization” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18.2: 30–55.
- Mouritsen, H. (2022) *The Roman Elite and the End of the Republic: The Boni, the Nobles*

and Cicero. Cambridge.

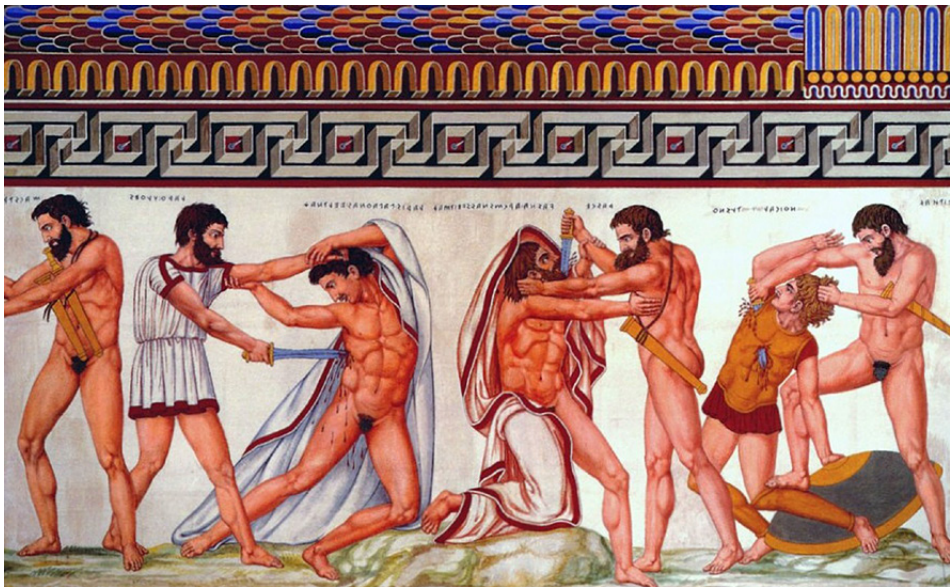
- Oakley, S. (1985) “Single Combat in the Roman Republic” *The Classical Quarterly* 35: 392-410.
- Petitjean, M. (2022) *Le combat de cavalerie dans le monde romain*. Leuven.
- Phang, S. (2008) *Roman Military Service*. Cambridge.
- Quesada Sanz, F. (1997) *El armamento ibérico. Estudio tipológico, geográfico, funcional, social y simbólico de las armas en la Cultura Ibérica (siglos VI-I a.C.)*. Montagnac.
- Quesada Sanz, F. (2016) *Weapons, Warriors and Battles of Ancient Iberia*. Burnley.
- Raaflaub, K. (ed.) (2005) *Social struggles in archaic Rome: New Perspectives on the Conflict of the Orders. Second Edition*. Malden.
- Reinberger, K., et al. (2021) “Isotopic evidence for geographic heterogeneity in Ancient Greek military forces” *PLoS ONE* 16. 5: e0248803.
- Reitsema, L.J., et al. (2022) “The diverse genetic origins of a Classical period Greek army” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 119(41): e2205272119.
- Rene, A. (2018) *Greek Riders of War: Cavalrymen of Ancient Greece*. PhD Thesis from the University of Auckland. Auckland.
- Rosenstein, N. (2005) *Rome at War: Farms, Families, and Death in the Middle Republic*. Chapel Hill.
- Rosenstein, N. (2010) “Phalanges in Rome?” in Fagan, G. and M. Trundle (eds.) *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*. 289-303. Leiden.
- Rosenstein, N. (2012) *Rome and the Mediterranean 290 to 146 BC: The Imperial Republic*. Edinburgh.
- Rosenstein, N. (2012) “Tributum in the Middle Republic” in J. Armstrong (ed.) *Circum Mare: Themes in Ancient Warfare*. 80-97. Leiden.
- Roth, J. (1999) *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 BC – AD 235)*. Leiden.
- Sears, M. (2019). *Understanding Greek Warfare*. London.
- Sidnell, P. (2006) *Warhorse: Cavalry in Ancient Warfare*. London.
- Steinby, C. (2007) *The Roman Republican Navy from the Sixth Century to 167 B.C.* Helsinki.
- Tagliamonte, G. (1994) *I Figli di Marte: Mobilità, mercenari e mercenariato italici in Magna Grecia e Sicilia*. Rome.
- Trundle, M. (2017) “War and the Ancient Mediterranean” in Muehlbauer, M. and D. Ulbrich (eds) *The Routledge History of Global War and Society*. London.
- Van Wees, H. (2004) *Greek Warfare: Myth and Realities*. Bristol.
- Verčik M. (2011) *Die barbarischen Einflüsse in der griechischen Bewaffnung [Barbarian Influence on Greek Weaponry]*. Rahden, Westf.
- Viva, S, N. Lonoce, G. Vincenti, et al. (2020) “The mass burials from the western necrop-

olis of the Greek colony of Himera (Sicily) related to the battles of 480 and 409 BCE” *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 30: 307–317.

Williams, A. (2003) *The Knight and the Blast Furnace: A History of the Metallurgy of Armour in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*. Leiden.

Zevi, F. (1990) “Tomba del Guerriero di Lanuvio” in Cristofani, M. (ed.) *La Grande Roma dei Tarquini*. 264-69. Rome.

Zevi, F. (1990) “La tomba del Guerriero di Lanuvio” in A.a. V.v. (eds) *Spectacles sportifs et sceniques dans le monde etrusco-italique. Actes de la table ronde (Rome, 3-4 mai 1991)*. 409-442. Rome.



Carlo Ruspi (1798-1863), copia (1862) dall'affresco nella Tomba François di Vulci.  
Wikimedia Commons.

# The republican legionary cohort once again. Tactical reform in the Roman republic?

by GABRIELE BRUSA

**ABSTRACT.** This paper aims to reassess the problem of the introduction of the legionary cohort in the Roman republican army. Following a status quaestionis that considers scholarly opinions from the late sixteenth century up to recent years, the relevant mentions in ancient authors referring to the period from the second Punic war to the age of Caesar are analysed. The main contention of this article is that no ancient sources provide evidence of a tactical reform during this period. It is argued, on the other hand, that the period of the social war and of the civil wars brought about a partial change in the recruitment practices of the Romans, which in turn led to an increase of the importance of the cohort within the Roman army.

**KEYWORDS.** COHORTS, MANIPLES, REPUBLICAN ARMY, TACTICAL UNITS, REFORM

## *Introduction*

“**A**t some date between the time of Polybius and that of Julius Caesar, a major tactical reform of the Roman army took place”. This is the beginning of an important paper by M.J.V. Bell, written in 1965.<sup>1</sup> The main change, according to the author, was the switch from the arrangement of the legion by maniples to one by cohorts. The idea of a reform consisting in the introduction of the legionary cohort as the main tactical unit of the Roman army was nothing new in 1965. It had been put forth by scholars as early as the sixteenth century, and was the established opinion at least since the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Bell himself took this idea as a given and as the starting point of his discussion. However, as he recognises, no ancient source examines the details of this reform, or even mentions any innovation in the Roman army in relation to the cohort. Despite this, the idea has been widely accepted and, at most, very rarely nuanced. The grounds for this line of reasoning seem to be

1 M.J.V. Bell, «Tactical Reform in the Roman Republican Army», *Historia*, 14 (1965), pp. 404-22 (p. 404).

sound and can be summarised by the two chronological termini taken by Bell: Polybius and Julius Caesar. In his discussion of the Roman army in his sixth book, Polybius never mentions the legionary cohorts and makes the maniples (and the centuries) the centre of the deployment by the Romans. Julius Caesar, in turn, very rarely mentions the maniples, takes the cohort as the principal unit of the legions, and often reckons the strength of his own armies in terms of cohorts. It is very difficult to gauge the reasons behind this change. As J. Lendon wrote, “we can only recollect the army of Aemilius Paullus, then examine the army of Julius Caesar, see what has changed, and venture a guess at the reasons why”.<sup>2</sup> In modern historiography, this “guess” has always consisted in the idea of a tactical reform or, at the very least, of a major progressive change. In this paper, I would like to re-examine this issue. First, however, it is useful to review the different positions expressed by scholars about the precise nature, reasons, authors, and dates of the reform.<sup>3</sup>

In modern accounts, J. Marquardt is often said to have been the first to tackle the problem. In reality, the debate on this issue goes back to at least the last decade of the sixteenth century. While in 1560 C. Sigonio (Sigonius) just stated that the Roman legion was divided, since Romulus, into cohorts and maniples,<sup>4</sup>

2 J.E. Lendon, *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, New Haven, 2005, p. 212.

3 The following status quaestionis is not exhaustive. Roman cohorts are treated, for instance, in any manual of Roman military history. I have only tried to take into account the most important papers and theories. Most of the opinions expressed here have already been presented, in a larger but rougher form, in G. Brusa, *Le coorti nell'esercito romano di età repubblicana*, Pisa, 2020. Where relevant, I reference the longer discussion of some issues in that book.

4 C. Sigonio, *De antiquo iure civium Romanorum Italiae provinciarum, Romanae iurisprudentiae iudiciis, tum privatis, tum publicis, eorumque ratione, libri IX*, Paris, 1576, p. 60 (I have been unable to consult the original 1560 edition): “ut autem pedites in cohortes, equites in turmis distributi, sic cohortes in manipulos, turmae in decurias, manipuli in centurias”. Scholars of the Italian Umanesimo seem to have generally adopted a similar, synchronic view. Already F. Petrarca, in his *De viris illustribus* (around 1343) stated (*Scipio Maior*, 6.47) that Syphax divided the soldiers into cohorts following the “consuetudinem Romane militie”. Flavius Biondus, in the VI book of his *Roma triumphans* (1459) followed Gellius dividing the legion into ten cohorts, thirty maniples, sixty centuries, and only commented that “ex pluris manipulis copulatur cohors”. N. Machiavelli, in his *Dell'arte della guerra* (1521), in the analysis of the formations employed by the Romans at the beginning of the third book, commented (3.25-26) “Usavano i Romani nel principio le falangi, e instruirono le loro legioni a similitudine di quelle. Dipoi non piacque loro questo ordine e divisero le legioni in più corpi, cioè in coorti e in manipuli”. Machiavelli's aim was

two years earlier (1558) O. Panvinio (Panvinius) had already proposed Marius as a military reformer, who created the cohorts.<sup>5</sup> In 1591 H. Savile (Savilius) already noted most of the elements exploited by later scholars, most notably the absence of mentions of the cohort in Polybius' sixth book, the mentions in the context of the early republic in Livy, and Caesar's focus on cohorts. His conclusion, expressed with a good degree of caution, was that Caesar's army, organised by cohorts, was fundamentally different from the previous manipular army. Cohorts, however, might have occasionally been formed, as a detachment of the legion, even before the first century.<sup>6</sup> The difference between the army described by Polybius and Caesar's legions was again stressed, soon later, by F. Patrizi (Patricius).<sup>7</sup> Two years later, J. Lips (Lipsius) proposed a different perspective. According to him, cohorts were a normal feature of the manipular army; the only difference between the middle and the late republic was that, with the increase of the number of legions, intervals and gaps in the formation started to be created between cohorts rather than maniples.<sup>8</sup> Lips' most interesting contribution was his idea that cohorts, being simple sums of three maniples, could easily be formed in the context of a manipular army:<sup>9</sup> indeed, a very similar view will be put forward in this paper. In 1614, du Praissac set forth a reconstruction along the same lines of Lipsius'.<sup>10</sup> The presence of cohorts in the middle-republican army was again negated, around forty years later, by C. Saumaise (Salmasius), who neatly

---

to propose a model army, in which he wanted to divide "il battaglione in dieci battaglie, come i Romani la legione in dieci coorti" (3.32). These cohorts were structured by *ordines*, each with its maniples.

- 5 O. Panvinio, *Reipublicae Romanae commentariorum libri tres*, Venezia, 1558, p. 813: "legio vero in decem cohortes divisa est a C. Mario primum, ut opinor, neque enim ante Marii tempora ulla cohortium in legione, neque apud Polybium, neque apud alios mentio est".
- 6 H. Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba, Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus, the Life of Agricola*, Oxford, 1591, p. 52.
- 7 F. Patrizi, *Paralleli militari*, Roma, 1594, pp. 207-8.
- 8 J. Lips, *De militia Romana libri quinque, commentarius ad Polybium*, Antwerp, 1598, pp. 153-5. I have been unable to consult the first edition of the text, which appeared in 1596.
- 9 Lips, cit., p. 155: "quid enim facilius quam manipulos iungere, disiungere, abducere?" A similar view seems to be present in a work that appeared the following year, G. Valtrini, *De re militari veterum Romanorum libri septem*, Cologne, 1597. In his discussion "de peditum legionariorum ordinibus", although not delving into the problem in detail, he wrote that "cum autem cohortes instituendae erant, eae tribus ex manipulis, uno hastatorum, altero principum, tertio triariorum, velitibus adiunctis fiebant" (p. 98).
- 10 Du Praissac, *Les discours militaires dediez à sa Majesté*, Paris, 1614, pp. 200-6

separated the Roman army of the time of the Scipios from the formation adopted “sub Caesaribus”,<sup>11</sup> and again supported, soon later, by H. Schele (Schelius). The fifteenth section of his book on Roman castrametation, a digression “De cohortibus legionis antiquae”, is again extremely interesting. Not only did Schele notice a real debate among his predecessors on this issue; to support Lips’ theories, he also offered, for the first time, a collection of passages mentioning the cohorts, mainly taken from Livy.<sup>12</sup>

This early debate was centred on the possibility to recognise a clear difference in the structure of the armies of the middle and late republic.<sup>13</sup> Discussions went on, in the following century, along the same lines, and often with quite bitter tones. In 1724, J.-C. de Folard criticised Lips (and Machiavelli) because of their description of the middle-republican army arranged in three lines (*ordines*). Applying the evidence he found in Caesar to the earlier times, he stated that the cohortal formation was the only existing one both in the middle and in the late republic, rather than a possible mutation of the manipular formation.<sup>14</sup> J. Rouillé may have had de Folard’s account in mind when he criticised, two years later, “plusieurs modernes” that had assumed the existence of the cohort in the early and middle republic. In his footnotes to F. Catrou’s sixth book of the *Histoire romaine*, Rouillé wrote that the first mentions of Roman cohorts are found in relation to Julius Caesar’s army.<sup>15</sup> De Folard’s position (and his book in general)

11 C. Saumaise, *De re militari Romanorum liber*, Leiden, 1657, pp. 8-29. The author seems to have placed the change in the times of Caesar. He also expressed a peculiar theory according to which, of the ten cohorts of a legion, three came from the old *ordo* of the *hastati*, three from the *principes*, three from the *velites*, and one from the *triarii*.

12 R.H. Schele, *Hygini gromatici et Polybi Megalopolitani de castris Romanis quae extant, cum notis et animadversionibus, quibus accedunt dissertationes aliquot de re eadem militari populi Romani*, Amsterdam, 1660, pp. 312-17.

13 It should be noted, however, that other works on the Roman army or Roman antiquities of the same period continued to adopt a more simplistic synchronic view, just stating that there were ten cohorts in a legion, each composed of three maniples (for instance, P.-J. Cantel, *De Romana republica, sive de re militari et civili Romanorum*, Paris, 1684, p. 263; B. Kennett, *Romae antiquae notitia, or the antiquities of Rome, in two parts*, London, 1696, pp. 185-6).

14 J.-C. de Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre dans une dissertation sur Polybe*, Paris, 1724, pp. 55-8.

15 F. Catrou and J. Rouillé, *Histoire romaine depuis la fondation de Rome*, vol. 6, Paris, 1726, pp. 135-8: “dans les tems que nous parcourons, les légions étoient divisées par manipules. Alors on ne connoissoit point encore la distribution des soldats légionnaires par cohortes.

was explicitly criticised by C. Guischart, who again postulated a huge difference between the army of Aemilius Paulus and that of Caesar. He also stated that the last battle fought in a manipular formation was the battle of the Muthul river, fought by Metellus. He thus placed the switch from the manipular to the cohortal organisation firmly in 107.<sup>16</sup> De Folard's *Découvertes* were defended by R. De Lo-Looz. On the issue of the cohorts, however, while supporting de Folard's theory of the persistence of a checkerboard disposition, he still distinguished the "deux époques des manipules et des cohortes", again placing the switch in the time of Marius.<sup>17</sup> In the meantime, in 1767, P.-J. Joly de Maïzeroy had proposed a similar theory, again based on a switch, in the age of Marius and Sulla, from the manipule to the cohort as the basic tactical unit of the Roman army.<sup>18</sup> A few years later, J.F. von Rösch revisited the issue, founding his interpretation on Vegetius' description of two lines of five cohorts each. Having identified Cato the Elder as Vegetius' source, he theorised an intermediate stage between the Punic wars and the age of Marius, in which the army was deployed in this way. The last stage begun in the age of the civil wars, when soldiers were hastily recruited in mass and enrolled into bigger cohorts.<sup>19</sup>

---

On n'en trouve les premiers commencements que dans la milice de Jules César". The author took it for granted that each cohort was composed of three maniples of the same *ordo*, and therefore assumed that a cohortal division was incompatible with a traditional manipular structure. It is interesting to note that, in the two previous volumes (both from 1725), this opinion had been completely contradicted: in volume three (p. 18), in an excursus on the republican army, the reader finds that "chaque légion avait dix cohortes. [...] Une cohorte comprenait trois manipules" (cf. p. 315). In volume four, in a digression about the legions of Manlius Torquatus, it is argued that the lines were arranged "sans aucune espace, qui distinguât entr'elles les cohortes, ou autrement les ordres, les centuries, et les manipules". Even after the sixth book, Roman cohorts are sometimes mentioned before the time of Caesar. The confusion might be partially due to the composite nature of the work.

- 16 C. Guischart, *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains*, vol. 1, La Haye, 1763, pp. 13-14: "d'exactes observations fixent l'époque de la naissance de la nouvelle [tactique] après le consulat de Metellus, et en font attribuer l'honneur à Marius".
- 17 R. de Lo-Looz, *Récherches d'antiquités romaines, avec la défense du chevalier Follard, contre les allegations insérés dans les Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains*, Paris, 1770, pp. 103-4; 149-57 and 160-1 (with nt. 1).
- 18 P.-G. Joly de Maïzeroy, *Traité de tactique pour servir de supplément au cours de tactique théorique, pratique et historique*, vol. 1, Paris, 1767, pp. 38-9. His reconstruction involved peculiar statements, such as the division of all cohorts into five centuries and the disposition for battle in three lines of five, three, and two cohorts (later, two lines of five cohorts each).
- 19 Rösch in J.J.H. Nast and J.F. von Rösch, *Römische Kriegsalterthümer aus ächten Quellen geschöpft: ein Beitrag zur Aufklärung der römischen Taktik*, Halle, 1782, pp. 126-37.

In the third decade of the nineteenth century, B.G. Niebuhr tackled the issue of the mutations in the Roman republican army in his lessons delivered at the University of Bonn.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, Niebuhr identified three different stages of the existence of the cohort. In the first of these, which he identified as the army created by Camillus, or around his time, each of the three “Abtheilungen der Legion” of the *principes*, *hastati*, and *triarii* was called a cohort.<sup>21</sup> Polybius, however, describes a different scenario. In the army of the late third and second centuries BC, the *velites* were introduced, the *hastati* lost their spears and took up the *pila*, and each *ordo* was divided into ten maniples. One maniple of each of these *ordines*, together with a tenth of the light infantry, built up a cohort,<sup>22</sup> which, in Niebuhr’s reconstruction, was a sort of miniature legion, which could be detached to fight alone. This tendency was taken to the extreme by Marius. On the occasion of his campaign against the Cimbri and Teutones, he abolished the *velites*, cancelled any distinction between the three *ordines*, and made the cohorts truly uniform and independent units: as Niebuhr noted, from the first century BC onwards, the strength of the armies starts to be reckoned by cohorts.<sup>23</sup> While cohorts had existed for a long time before him, it was Marius, according to Niebuhr, that truly turned them into proper tactical units.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, L. Lange again proposed Marius as the reformer who introduced cohorts in the Roman army.<sup>24</sup> By this time, the view that Marius was responsible for this reform had clearly become the prevailing opinion. It was accepted, very briefly, by Mommsen in his *Römische Geschichte*,<sup>25</sup> It was taken as such by Marquardt, whose *Römische Staatsverwaltung*

20 These lessons were only published after Niebuhr’s death. For his discussion of the Roman “Kriegswesen”, see his 1825-1830 lessons, published in B.G. Niebuhr, *Vorträge über römische Alterthümer, an der Universität zu Bonn gehalten*, Berlin, 1858, pp. 482-560 (see esp. pp. 485-504).

21 Niebuhr, cit., pp. 491-7. Each cohort, therefore, was an *ordo*, but there were also two *ordines*, those of the *ferentarii* and of the *accensi velati*, that “did not count as cohorts” (p. 496). Only the soldiers of the first of these three cohorts (probably the *principes*) carried *pila*, while the other two were structured as phalanxes.

22 Niebuhr, cit., pp. 497-501: “Die ganze Legion bildete zehn Cohorten, und jede dieser Cohorten bestand aus einem Zehntel der Schwerverüsteten und einem Zehntel der Velites”.

23 Niebuhr, cit., pp. 501-4.

24 L. Lange, *Historia mutationum rei militaris Romanorum inde ab interitu rei publicae usque ad Constantinum Magnum*, Göttingen, 1846, pp. 14-19.

25 T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 2 (viertes Buch), Berlin, 1855, pp. 185-6. This

had a huge influence over subsequent research. According to Marquardt the term *cohors* already existed in Polybius' time as a way to define three maniples taken together; these units, however, "hatten nur im *agmen*, nicht in der *acies*, eine Bedeutung".<sup>26</sup> His reasoning was that, as Polybius employs the term to define a column of three maniples on the march, but then never mentions the cohort in his sixth book, this word did not define a tactical unit. According to him, once again, C. Marius should be credited with the introduction of the cohort as a tactical unit; this reform was just part of a wider programme, whose main point was the recruitment of the *proletarii*. The specific reason for the innovation was the need to build up stronger units to face the powerful charges of the Cimbri and Teutones more effectively. Marquardt's theory was largely reminiscent of Niebuhr's reconstruction, and it found immediate and widespread support (the notable, if partial, exceptions of J.N. Madvig<sup>27</sup> and A. Von Domaszewski should be noted<sup>28</sup>), although many historians, drawing on the occurrences of the term *cohors* (referring to Roman soldiers) in Livy, especially in Spain, theorised a transition phase, as done by scholars before Marquardt as well, in which the cohort was sometimes used as a special tactical device on a few occasions.<sup>29</sup> This trend was accentuated

---

opinion was repeated, ten years after the publication of Marquardt's work, in T. Mommsen, «Zu Domaszewski's Abhandlung über die römischen Fahnen», *Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn*, 10 (1886), pp. 1-11 (pp. 7: "Dass die Cohorte erst im Laufe des siebenten Jahrhunderts zur ständigen Unterabtheilung der Legion geworden ist, ist bekannt und unbestritten").

26 J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1876, pp. 421-4.

27 J.N. Madvig, *Kleine philologische Schriften*, Leipzig, 1875, pp. 506-7; J.N. Madvig, *Die Verfassung und Verwaltung des römischen Staates*, Leipzig, 1882, pp. 490-3. While starting from Marquardt's same premises, Madvig criticised Niebuhr, Lange, and Marquardt himself, and put the transition in the context of the social war, underplaying the importance of Marius and suggesting that the change itself might not have been particularly important.

28 A. von Domaszewski, *Die Fahnen im römischen Heere*, Wien, 1885, pp. 18-21. The author refused as wrong or anachronistic every mention of the legionary cohort before Sallust, and placed the switch from the maniple to the cohort around the same time as Marquardt, but before Marius (p. 20: "die erste sichere Nachricht über die Legionscohorte findet sich bei Sallustius, b.J. 51, 3. [...] Demnach ist sie keine Neuerung der marianischen Heeresreform"). This reconstruction was criticised by Mommsen, *Zu Domaszewski's*, cit., pp. 7-11.

29 See, most notably, M. Jähns, *Handbuch einer Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance, Technischer Theil: Bewaffnung, Kampfweise, Befestigung, Belagerung, Seewesen*, Leipzig, 1880, pp. 235-7; Mommsen, *Zu Domaszewski's*, cit., pp. 7-11; W. Votsch, *Caius Marius als Reformator des römischen Heerwesens*, Berlin, 1886, pp. 31-7; A.E. Masquelez, «Cohors», in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio (eds.), *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, vol. 1.2, Paris, 1887, pp. 1287-9; F. Fröhlich, *Das*

by Bell's 1965 paper. According to Bell, the cohort was not only introduced, but also consistently employed in Spain from the end of the third century. Starting from a review of the ancient evidence about the presence of cohorts in Spain from the Second Punic War, Bell contended that this tactical unit was introduced as a way to deal with Spanish warfare and not as a measure against the Germans.<sup>30</sup> In the Iberian military theatre, the Romans had to face both the threats of guerrilla warfare and pitched battles between heavily armed formations. The cohort was thus introduced as a way to build up more compact units and make the Roman army both flexible and tough. This theory was supported and developed first by I. Kertész<sup>31</sup> and then by G. Brizzi. The latter rejected the idea of a progressive

---

*Kriegswesen Cäsars*, vol. 1, Zürich, 1889, pp. 13-14; T. Steinwender, «Zur Kohortentaktik», *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 70 (1915), pp. 416-40 (pp. 416-17); E. Lammert and F. Lammert, «Schlachtordnung», *RE* 2.A.1 (1921), pp. 436-94 (pp. 487-8); W. Kubitschek, «Legio», *RE* 12.1 (1924), pp. 1186-210 (pp. 1201-2); G. Veith in J. Kromayer and G. Veith, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer*, München, 1928, pp. 376-7; F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 2, Oxford, 1967, p. 302; E. Gabba, *Esercito e società nella tarda repubblica romana*, Firenze, 1973, p. 1; P. Fraccaro, «L'ordinamento a coorti», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 4, Pavia, 1975 (posthumous), pp. 137-60; P. Connolly, *Greece and Rome at war*, London, 1981, pp. 213-15; L. Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire*, London, 1984, pp. 63-4; L. Keppie, «The Roman Army of the Later Republic», in J. Hackett (ed.), *Warfare in the Ancient World*, London, 1989, pp. 169-91 (pp. 171-2); J.M. Roldán Hervás, *El ejército de la república romana*, Madrid, 1996, p. 48; P. Erdkamp, «The Transformation of the Roman Army in the Second Century BC», in I. Arrayás and T. Naco del Hoyo (eds.), *War and Territory in the Roman World – Guerra y territorio en el mundo romano*, Oxford, 2006, pp. 41-51 (p. 45); P. Cagniard, «The Late Republican Army (146 – 30 BC)», in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, 2007, pp. 80-95 (pp. 85-6); G. Breccia, *I figli di Marte: l'arte della guerra nell'antica Roma*, Milano, 2012, pp. 66-70. There were also more “traditional” accounts, with a more exclusive focus on the role of Marius: H. Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1900, pp. 378-81; W. Liebenam, «Exercitus», *RE* 6.2 (1909), pp. 1587-679 (p. 600); T. Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*, Oxford, 1911, pp. 43 and 563; H.M.D. Parker, *The Roman Legions*, Oxford, 1928, pp. 26-7; M. Marin y Peña, *Instituciones militares romanas*, Madrid, 1956, pp. 55-9; A.J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy: the Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life*, vol. 1, London, 1965, p. 516, nt. 3. However, the difference between those who put emphasis on Marius and on Spain is often just a matter of degree. J. Harmand, *L'armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère*, Paris, 1967, pp. 236-7, despite his very traditional approach to the Marian reforms, does not conclusively decide about his supposed introduction of the cohort.

30 Bell's arguments against a Marian reform are the mentions by Polybius, the fact that Marius' military career is well documented, the presence of cohorts in Sallust before Marius, and the contention that German tactics did not differ from that of, say, the Gauls.

31 I. Kertész, «The Roman Cohort Tactics: Problems of Development», *Oikumene*, 1 (1976),

evolution, instead crediting Scipio the Elder with the invention of this formation and its name.<sup>32</sup>

This Spanish/Scipionic theory has found supporters,<sup>33</sup> although the older Marian theory still has its advocates,<sup>34</sup> and is still widespread in manuals, textbooks, and general works about Roman republican history,<sup>35</sup> as well as in common popular culture and among enthusiasts.<sup>36</sup> Both theories were, however, recently chal-

---

pp. 89-97. Kertész started to attribute much importance to Scipio (but also to L. Marcius).

32 G. Brizzi, «I *Manliana imperia* e la riforma manipolare: l'esercito romano tra ferocia e disciplina», *Sileno*, 16 (1990), pp. 185-206. Brizzi revisited the topic in many other contributions: most notable are G. Brizzi, «Roma e la Spagna: considerazioni su un fronte difficile», in V. Gennaro Lerda (ed.), *Le stelle e le strisce: studi americani e militari in onore di Raimondo Luraghi*, Milano, 1998, pp. 23-30; G. Brizzi, «Gli Iberi nell'armata di Annibale: armamento e funzioni», in A. Sartori and A. Valvo (eds.), *Hiberia-Italia, Italia-Hiberia*, Milano, 2006, pp. 157-66.

33 Y. Garlan, *La guerre dans l'antiquité*, Paris, 1972, p. 101; H. Aigner, «Gedanken zur sogenannten Heeresreform des Marius», in F. Hampl and I. Weiler (eds.), *Kritische und vergleichende Studien zur alten Geschichte und Universalgeschichte*, Innsbruck, 1974, pp. 11-23 (p. 16); C. Nicolet, *Rome et la conquête du monde méditerranéen*, vol. 1, Paris, 1977, p. 317; A.E. Astin, *Cato the Censor*, Oxford, 1978, p. 30; P. Connolly, «The Roman Army in the Age of Polybius», in J. Hackett (ed.), *Warfare in the Ancient World*, London, 1989, pp. 149-168 (pp. 163-165); A.K. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War, 100 BC – AD 200*, Oxford, 1996, p. 35, nt. 91; Y. Le Bohec, *Histoire militaire des guerres puniques: 264-146 avant J.-C.*, Monaco, 1996, pp. 235-6; D. Hoyos, «The Age of Overseas Expansion (264 – 146 BC)», in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, 2007, pp. 63-79 (p. 70). E. Rawson, «The Literary Sources for the pre-Marian Roman Army», *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 39 (1971), pp. 13-31 (p. 19) criticised Bell's theory in passing.

34 Most notably, C.A. Matthew, *On the Wings of Eagles: The Reforms of Gaius Marius and the Creation of Rome's first Professional Soldiers*, Newcastle, 2010, pp. 30-7: a very traditional reconstruction of "Marius' reforms".

35 Sticking with popular textbooks and general works in English, see e.g. M.T. Boatwright, D.J. Gargola and R.J.A. Talbert, *A Brief History of the Romans*, New York-Oxford, 2006, p. 104; K. Bringmann, *A History of the Roman Republic*, Cambridge-Malden, 2007, p. 174; D.M. Gwynn, *The Roman Republic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2012, p. 81; M. Dillon and L. Garland, *The Ancient Romans: History and Society from the Early Republic to the Death of Augustus*, London-New York, 2021, pp. 198-9. During my (admittedly, short) teaching experiences in Italian high schools, I have always seen the theme of the Marian reforms treated in a traditional way by textbooks. See, for instance, the manuals by G. Di Caro, N. Cristino, I. Castellano, I. Geroni, *Il tempo ritrovato*, vol. 1, Torino, 2010, p. 337; F. Cioffi, A. Cristofori, *Sette mari: corso di storia e geografia*, vol. 1, Torino, 2016, p. 394; E. Cantarella, G. Guidorizzi, *Oriente Occidente: corso di geostoria*, vol. 1, Milano, 2018, pp. 422-3; G. Cuniberti, A. Cazzaniga, C. Griguolo, *Meridiani e millenni: corso di geostoria*, vol. 1, Milano, 2019, p. 389; A. Barbero, S. Carocci, *Storia in chiaro*, vol. 1, Bari, 2023, pp. 333-4.

36 A simple web search looking for "Marian reforms" will lead to a plethora of pages, articles,

lenged. F. Cadiou criticised both theories and showed that the peculiarity of how the Spanish peoples waged war had been largely overestimated.<sup>37</sup> As for Marius, he again rejected, as Bell did, the novelty of the Germanic infantry charges, and challenged the very idea of a Marian reform of the army. On this last point, Cadiou's arguments seem convincing:<sup>38</sup> if one wants to credit Marius with the introduction of the cohort, this should be done without referring this measure to a wider reform of the organisation and, especially, the recruitment of the Roman legions. Cadiou's criticism was shared by F. Gauthier, who also maintained that Marius did not abolish the *velites*.<sup>39</sup> Lastly, M. Taylor proposed another theory, namely, that the disposition by cohorts was progressively adopted in the last century of the republic, taking as a model the cohorts of allied *extraordinarii*. The disappearance of the *velites* meant that the Roman legions became vulnerable to attacks while they were switching from marching to battle formation. At first, they employed four cohorts of *extraordinarii*, to act as a screen behind which the legions could deploy. With time – and especially after the social war – these allied cohorts were replaced with Roman legionary cohorts, which became the first line of a 4-3-3 *triplex acies*.<sup>40</sup> Taylor's theory, as will be discussed below, had two

---

blogs, and videos mainly repeating the more traditional opinions. It should be noted that the Wikipedia page “Marian reforms” is an exception. While it was until recently a summary of all the traditional opinions about these supposed “reforms”, it was updated around July 2023, and it now takes into account, with moderation, modern criticism against these “reforms” ([wikipedia.org/wiki/Marian\\_reforms](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Marian_reforms)). For a discussion on the older version, see the excellent page by B. Devereaux, “The Marian Reforms Weren't a Thing” ([acoup.blog/2023/06/30/collections-the-marian-reforms-werent-a-thing/](https://acoup.blog/2023/06/30/collections-the-marian-reforms-werent-a-thing/)), in which the author very clearly deconstructs common misconceptions about these supposed “reforms”. The page is a very good starting point for anyone interested in any of the developments and changes within the Roman army in the late republic.

37 F. Cadiou, «Les guerres en Hispania et l'émergence de la cohorte légionnaire dans l'armée romaine sous la république: une révision critique», *Gladius*, 21 (2001), pp. 167-82.

38 Cadiou, cit., pp. 167-8, and, above all, F. Cadiou, *L'armée imaginaire: les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la république*, Paris, 2018 (esp. p. 36, nt. 3): a comprehensive and compelling deconstruction of modern assumptions about a Marian reform of the recruitment.

39 F. Gauthier, «The Changing Composition of the Roman Army in the Late Republic and the so-called Marian Reforms», *The Ancient History Bulletin*, 30 (2016), pp. 103-20; F. Gauthier, «The Transformation of the Roman Army in the Last Decades of the Republic», in J. Armstrong and M.P. Fronda (eds.), *Romans at War: Soldiers, Citizens, and Society in the Roman Republic*, London-New York, 2020, pp. 283-96; F. Gauthier, «Did *Velites* Disappear in the Late Roman Republic? », *Historia*, 70 (2021), pp. 69-82.

40 M.J. Taylor, «Tactical Reform in the Late Roman Republic: The View from Italy», *Historia*, 68 (2019), pp. 76-94.

important merits – namely, the importance given to the *socii* and the social war, and the idea of a gradual evolution over time with the absence of a real “reform”. About this last point, it has to be noted that he was the first among recent historians,<sup>41</sup> although these arguments are not developed at length, to challenge the idea according to which the cohort was fundamentally different from the maniples in that it was more “phalangitic” in nature.<sup>42</sup> In this paper, I develop these two suggestions to contend that there was no such thing as a “tactical reform” in the middle and late Roman republic.

### *The legionary cohort in the third and second centuries BC*

Most discussions of the introduction of the cohort start with, or at least consider, two mentions by Polybius referring to the last decade of the third century. To be sure, it is well known that our sources mention cohorts starting much earlier. These occurrences, however, are generally described as anachronisms, especially by Livy,<sup>43</sup> who along with Frontinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, refers to the existence of the cohort way back to the early republic. These mentions are surely problematic, especially because of the imprecise or anachronistic way in which these historians employed military terms. While it is far from impossible that the early republic saw the occasional employment of bodies of troops larger than maniples called cohorts, this paper focuses on the middle and late republic.<sup>44</sup> A suitable starting point is the Spanish part of the Hannibalic war.

41 It is interesting to note that, while in the sixteenth and seventeenth (and partly the eighteenth) centuries the discussion was centred around the question *whether* a tactical reform could be detected, modern historians took the answer to this question for granted and instead debated *when* and *why* this tactical reform took place.

42 This approach is shared by all mentioned authors, most notably Bell and Brizzi, but also by E.L. Wheeler, «The Legion as Phalanx», *Chiron*, 9 (1979), pp. 303-18; Lendon, cit., pp. 229-32. Another view that I challenge is the idea that the cohort allowed for more elaborate manoeuvres than the maniples (Cadiou, *Les guerres*, cit., p. 179; Lendon, cit., pp. 224-8; Breccia, cit., p. 68). Behind these theories is the idea that the cohort was fundamentally different from a simple grouping of three maniples (Keppie, *The Making*, cit., p. 64; Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army*, cit., pp. 33-5).

43 E.g. R.M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy: Books 1-5*, Oxford, 1965, p. 261; Bell, cit., p. 407. A notable exception is D. Sierra Estornés, «La táctica del ejército romano centuriado a través de las fuentes literarias», *Aquila legionis*, 14 (2011), pp. 37-68 (p. 42), although this does not discuss the characteristics of the cohorts in the early republic.

44 On the cohort in the early republic, and on the occurrences in the mentioned works, see Brusa, cit., pp. 14-30.

The first commander credited with the employment of the cohort in Spain is L. Marcius, who reorganised and rallied the Roman forces after the defeat of the two Scipios. Livy writes that he hid a *cohors Romana*, together with some cavalrmen, in a wood, while he was attacking a Punic encampment so he could intercept any fugitives from the camp itself.<sup>45</sup> The same commander is also credited by Frontinus, in an unspecified battle against the Carthaginians, with the decision to *manipulos laxare* to let his enemies escape.<sup>46</sup> Bell thought that this manoeuvre proves that Marcius' maniples were united in larger and compact bodies – that is, cohorts. This will not do: this expression might just mean “to make the spaces between the maniples larger” and should probably just be translated, in a generic way, as “to open up the ranks”.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the cohort mentioned by Livy, hidden in a wood, deployed against fugitives, and fighting in tandem with cavalry, does not resemble at all the compact bodies of men fighting in close order theorised by Bell, and even less the phalanx-like units that Brizzi supposed.

By far the most interesting mentions of the cohort in the Spanish context, however, refer to the campaigns of Scipio, the future Africanus.<sup>48</sup> In 206, after the conquest of New Carthage, he faced the Punic army led by Hasdrubal, son of Gisco, at Ilipa. Livy and, above all, Polybius have left us detailed accounts of the movements of Scipio's army.

Polybius writes that Scipio deployed his army with his Spanish allies in the centre and the Romans (and Italian *socii*?) in the wings, while Hasdrubal's Punic soldiers were stationed in the centre and the Spanish infantrymen in the wings.<sup>49</sup> Scipio's army was clearly deployed by maniples, as Polybius twice employs the corresponding term, *σημαία*. However, in the first phase of the battle, Scipio ex-

45 Liv. 25.39.

46 Frontin. *Strat.* 2.6.2 (Frontinus wrongly calls this commander Titus).

47 Bell, cit., p 408-9; cf. Kertész, cit., 93-4. Bell compares this manoeuvre to the order given by Caesar to his own soldiers against the Nervii (Caes. *Gall.* 2.25.2) to *manipulos laxare, quo facilius gladiis uti possent*. In context, however, this phrase shows that Caesar did not just want to distance its maniples: he tried to open the order of the men within each maniple (so they could fight with their swords more effectively). The phrase (as other similar ones, *laxare ordines* and *laxare agmen*, found in Frontin. *Strat.* 1.5.16; 2.6.6; 4.7.42) must be generically translated as “to open up the ranks”.

48 The first mention is in the context of the battle of Baecula (Liv. 27.18; cf. Polyb. 10.38-39). It is impossible to decide, however, whether the *cohortes duae* detached by Scipio were Roman or allied units.

49 Polyb. 11.22-33; Livy's much simpler account: Liv. 28.14.

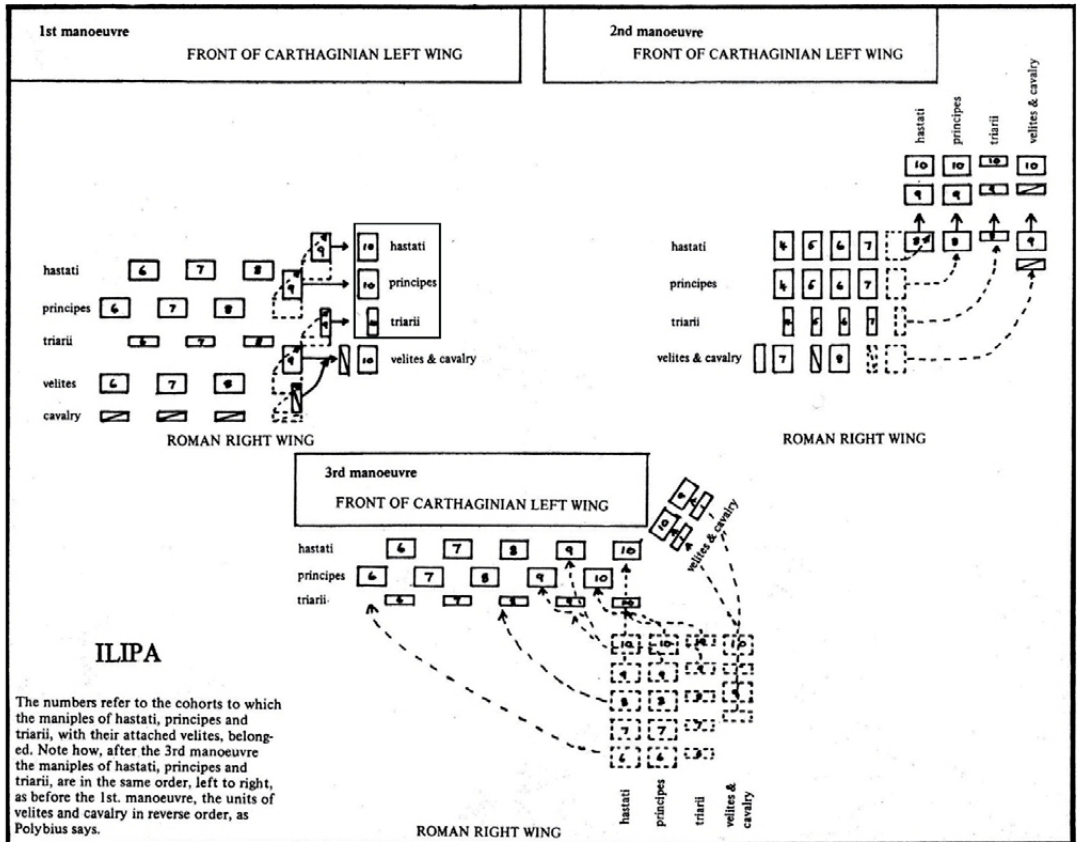


Table 1: Map of the battle of Ilipa, taken from Lazenby 1978, map 17. In my opinion, this is a very good schematic depiction of the movements of the Roman units

tended his wings and led them forward to attack the (supposedly weaker) wings of the enemy with his legionaries, while the Spaniards were ordered to advance very slowly, so that they did not come to blows with the Carthaginians. The wings were extended, with the soldiers making a conversion and marching outwards (*ἐπιστρέφειν, extendere cornu*); and this manoeuvre was also carried out by maniples (*παρήγγειλε τὰς σημαίας*), as well as by the troops of cavalry (*καὶ τὰς ἵλας*) stationed behind them. Then, after another conversion,<sup>50</sup> Scipio took the first three *σπεῖραι* of the column and marched against the enemy directly, in column, while the others followed (*προσέβαλλον τοῖς κέρασιν ἀμφοτέροις ἅμα τοῖς τῶν ὑπεναντίων ὀρθαίαις ταῖς Ῥωμαϊκαῖς δυνάμεσι*). Finally, he ordered a last conversion, through

50 Polybius describes this new conversion clearly: 1.23.2-3.

which the infantry found itself in line again, and advanced against the enemy wings, while the cavalrymen encircled them from behind. These manoeuvres have sometimes puzzled historians.<sup>51</sup> Polybius himself, however, clearly describes in his sixth book an order to march in column in which the Roman maniples advanced in the same way as Scipio's wings, ready to wheel left or right and to face attacks from both sides.<sup>52</sup> It should be assumed that this was the rationale behind Scipio's apparently overcomplicated manoeuvre. He was probably afraid of an advance of the Punic centre, of an attack by the enemy's cavalry, or, as Lazenby suggested, he wanted to prevent the Carthaginian centre from advancing: if it had done so, it would have been vulnerable on both flanks to attacks by the Roman columns. What is interesting is Polybius' description of the three units (σπεῖραι) that led the Roman column in the second phase: τοῦτο δὲ καλεῖται τὸ σύνταγμα τῶν πεζῶν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις κοόρτις. Scholars have sometimes been misled by Livy, who simplifies Polybius' account, about the nature of these units. Livy writes that Scipio advanced *cum ternis peditum cohortibus [...] sequentibus in obliquum aliis*.<sup>53</sup> The historian translated the term σπεῖρα as cohort, as was customary in his own time.<sup>54</sup> However, Polybius himself writes that he employed the words σπεῖρα and σημαία as synonyms, to translate the Latin *manipulus*.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, it makes sense that he defines the three leading maniples of the column – which, after the first conversion, were one maniple each of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* – as a cohort. This is exactly what the cohort was, at least in later times. Livy himself, after all, writes that the soldiers were advancing in column. It follows that in this case, the *cohors* was just a grouping of three maniples, without any change in their way of fighting: after the last manoeuvre, they found themselves deployed against the enemy in the customary *triplex acies*. This is indeed what led some scholars to assume that at

51 E.g. Connolly, *Greece and Rome*, cit., p. 201; Connolly, *The Roman Army*, cit., p. 167. There are, however, good accounts of this battle. Rather interestingly, most of these accounts make perfect sense of Polybius without mentioning the cohort. See Walbank, cit., p. 302; J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War*, Warminster, 1978, pp. 147-8; A.K. Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, London, 2000, pp. 282-3.

52 Polyb. 6.40.10-13.

53 Liv. 28.14.17.

54 Marquardt, cit., p. 435; Bell, cit., p. 407.

55 Polyb. 6.24.5. Polybius' employment of the term is often quite generic (and at times applied to non-Roman armies). When employed in a Roman context, however, it defines the maniple: in three instances out of four (2.29-33; 14.8; 15.9), the author mentions the three *ordines* of the maniples.

this stage the cohort was just a concept, a name to define three maniples, without any of the tactical peculiarities that it would only take up later.<sup>56</sup> Far from being proof that a tactical reform was happening at the end of the third century, the battle of Ilipa seems to point to the opposite conclusion: despite the existence of the concept of *cohortes*, the Roman armies were still deploying, manoeuvring, and fighting in their customary manipular way.

Cohorts are mentioned by the sources in two other Scipionic battles in Spain. The first mention comes in the context of a mutiny of a part of his soldiers in the camp at Sucro, during the same year, 206. Apparently, after Scipio promised them their overdue *stipendium* and summoned them to his headquarters, they started to discuss *singulae cohortes an universi ad stipendium petendum irent*.<sup>57</sup> Even if we accept this (and I am inclined to think that Livy generically meant that the soldiers were unsure whether to go together or in groups), and if we assume that these were Roman cohorts, this says nothing about their tactical organisation: the context was not “tactical” at all. Soon after, Scipio fought against Andobales and Mandonius, chiefs of Spanish populations that had fought together with the Romans against the Carthaginians. The battle was fought in a very narrow space, so Scipio could deploy only four cohorts for the direct assault against the enemies. Polybius writes that these cohorts were densely packed together (*ἄθροως ἄγων*).<sup>58</sup> This has led some scholars to assume that these tactical units were different from a simple sum of three maniples, and that they were more like a phalanx in nature.<sup>59</sup> As understood by Livy, however, it is better to believe that they were packed together because of the tight space (*quattuor cohortes in fronte statuit, quia latius pandere aciem non poterat*).<sup>60</sup> Again, it is difficult to understand whether these cohorts were organised in any peculiar way. It is remarkable, at any rate, that the sources do not highlight any tactical change by Scipio.

56 Marquardt, cit., p. 421 (“diese Cohorten hatten nur im *agmen*, nicht in der *acies* eine Bedeutung”); Delbrück, cit., pp. 378-81; Parker, cit., p. 28; Walbank, cit., p. 302. Interestingly, Rawson, cit., p. 19 expressed the opposite opinion: “the cohort was at the time a tactical but not yet an administrative unit”.

57 Liv. 28.25.15.

58 Polyb. 11.32.1-2.

59 Brizzi and Bell have employed this passage to support their theory of the emergence of the cohort as a densely packed formation that could withstand the attacks of the Spanish populations.

60 Liv. 28.33.12.

Skipping ahead by around a decade, mentions of cohorts are quite frequent in the context of Cato's expedition in Spain in 195-194, so much so that Connolly commented that "Cato's army in Spain appears to be divided totally into cohorts".<sup>61</sup> This conclusion appears to be supported by the first relevant passage. According to Livy, Cato had to decide at the start of his campaign whether or not to send a part of his troops, as requested, to help his allies. He chose to pretend to send a third of the army, but then recalled these soldiers back. To define this third part of the army, Livy employs the periphrasis *pars tertia ex omnibus cohortibus*.<sup>62</sup> Evidently, a maniple from each cohort, i.e. an entire *ordo* (whether that of the *hastati*, *principes* or *triarii*, we do not know) was sent and then recalled. This, again, proves that the cohort existed, at this stage, as a concept. This testimony is important, as it probably derives in some way from the writings of Cato himself.<sup>63</sup> However, not only do we not hear anything about any peculiar tactical features of the cohort, but, in this case, the maniples, and not the cohorts, are the units employed. Once again, then, the only suitable conclusion seems to be that, at this stage, a cohort was just a union of three maniples without any further peculiarity.

Cohorts were also employed by Cato in his most important battle, near Emporiae.<sup>64</sup> At the very beginning of the battle, the consul sent three cohorts to lure the

61 Connolly, *The Roman Army*, cit., p.165.

62 Liv. 34.12.6; cf. Frontin. *Strat.* 4.7.31 (*tertia pars militum*).

63 Livy himself mentions Cato, together with Valerius Antias, as one of his sources for Cato's campaign, at the end of the description of the battle of Emporiae. Astin, cit., pp. 28-9 notes the similarities between Livy's description of this campaign and Cato's oration *de consulatu suo*, but states that Livy probably took most of his material from the Origines. As a result, the description of Cato's campaign and of the battle of Emporiae is "not only more detailed, but patently more authentic" than Livy's usual conventional accounts. J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy: Books 34-37*, Oxford, 1981, pp. 63-5 agrees with Astin (although he maintains that Livy might have read both the oration and the *Origines*), and criticises the view according to which Livy did not read Cato directly but only through an annalistic account (as maintained by P. Fraccaro, «Catone il Censore in Tito Livio», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 1, Pavia, 1956, pp. 115-37 (pp. 123-5); P. Fraccaro, «Le fonti per il consolato di M. Porcio Catone», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 1, Pavia, 1956, pp. 177-226 (pp. 201-7)): see already T.J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History*, Princeton, 1977, pp. 162-5. For a fuller *status quaestionis*, see G. Brusa, «La battaglia di Emporiae, il *De re militari*, lo stratagemma: per una valutazione della fama militare di Catone il Censore», *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*, 10 (2021), pp. 177-216 (pp. 184-5), as well as the authors cited in the mentioned works.

64 Liv. 34.15. For a more in-depth analysis of this battle, see Brusa, *Le coorti*, cit., pp. 115-22, and G. Brusa, *La battaglia di Emporiae*, cit., pp. 183-94, with further bibliography.

enemies into attacking the well-ordered Roman legions. Then, during the battle, he sent *duas cohortes delectas* to attack the enemy's flank, and reinforced his own lines with *cohortes subsidiariae ex secunda acie*. The latter decision is probably also mentioned by Appian, according to whom Cato intervened μετὰ τριῶν τάξεων ἐφέδρων.<sup>65</sup> The *cohortes delectae* must be units of Italian *extraordinarii*. The others might be Roman cohorts. Even if they are, though, there is nothing implying that they are anything else than sums of maniples, fighting in the customary way. Indeed, Cato's legions surely fought by maniples, as later an attack by *ordines* of *hastati* and *principes* is mentioned. The battle of Emporiae is thus a good way to highlight the flexibility of the Roman manipular system, in which units could be regrouped into bigger formations as needed. Cohorts only appear to be one such formation.

This analysis of the mentions of the cohorts in Spain, therefore, leads one to think that no tactical reform was at work between the end of the third and the beginning of the second century. The cohort in Spain was not the revolutionary unit, fighting in close order, theorised by the "Spanish current". Legions, as highlighted by the battle of Ilipa, were still fighting in their regular *triplex acies*. Skilled generals such as Scipio and (to a far lesser extent) Cato were able to exploit the flexibility of the manipular formations, often building up ad hoc units, such as the cohorts. There is no indication, however, that these units fought in a peculiar way. This is not to say that the Roman army could not fight in a "phalangitic" (i.e., densely packed) formation on occasion. However, maniples surely allowed for such a disposition without issues:<sup>66</sup> there was, at this stage at least, no need for a tactical reform. Moreover, as has been noted, the concept itself of military reform in the Roman world is problematic.<sup>67</sup> There was no higher command that could impose durable reforms, and single commanders could employ ad hoc innovations as needed. It is very unlikely that the cohort was such an innovation, introduced by Scipio. Not only is this unit found before his arrival in Spain, but it is also very unlikely that Polybius, who held Scipio in such high esteem, would brush off this introduction with the simple phrase "this unit is called by the Romans a cohort", without any further mention of the impact of his hero. I would

65 App. *Hisp.* 40.

66 On this matter in general, see Wheeler, cit.; on the maniples as "building blocks" that allowed for such a disposition, see Taylor, cit., pp. 79-80. On both of these issues, see below.

67 Taylor, cit., p. 78. See also the conclusions below.

contend that, at this stage at least, the cohort was just a section of the legion, made up of three maniples.<sup>68</sup> This grouping was by no means, moreover, the only one that could be employed by Roman commanders. In the middle republic, the maniples appear to be very flexible and adaptable building blocks, suitable for both loose and tight formations, and employable for building up several kinds of larger units.<sup>69</sup>

The only argument left to support the Spanish theory is the widespread assumption that mentions of cohorts appear only in the accounts of wars in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>70</sup> This is, however, simply not true. While it is right to say that the mentions of maniples are much more frequent in the wars against the Hellenistic kingdoms, cohorts appear in Livy both in Italy, in the context of the Hannibalic war,<sup>71</sup> and, in the East, from the very first conflict against the Macedonians. As soon as Ser. Sulpicius Galba landed in Greece, near the Isthmus, there was a fight between the cavalry of Philip V and a *cohors Romana*, whose nature Livy does not specify in any way.<sup>72</sup> More interesting are the occurrences during the second Macedonian war. The first of these, for 199, refers to a fight between some *cohortes Romanae* of Galba, which were advancing *quadrato agmine*, and a body of Cretan archers, who were swept away by the closely packed Roman soldiers.<sup>73</sup>

68 The other occurrences concerning Cato are less interesting: according to Livy, after the battle of Emporiae, Cato first sent some *expeditae cohortes* to devastate the fields of the Turdetani, then led seven cohorts back *ad Hiberum* (Liv. 34.19.9-11). In Plutarch we find that, at the very end of his campaign, he waged a last campaign with *σπείρας ὀπλιῶν πέντε* (Plut. *Cato Mai.* 11.1). In all cases, these are just partitions of Cato's army, which is hardly telling about the tactical nature of these units.

69 Among the many examples that could be cited, one is particularly telling: in 181, L. Aemilius Paulus employed, against the Ligurians, a wide variety of units: a unit made up of four allied and two Roman cohorts; another with the *hastati* of one legion (one *ordo*); another with the *principes* of the same legion; another with *hastati* and *principes* of the other legion (two *ordines*); the last, in reserve, with the *triarii* of the two legions, plus two Roman cohorts. For a fuller treatment, see Brusa, *Le coorti*, cit., pp. 129-34.

70 Even Cadiou, *Les guerres*, cit., although challenging the idea of the specificity of the Spanish context, still accepts that mentions of cohorts are especially abundant in Spain (p. 168). For some statistics about the occurrences of maniples and cohorts in the sources, see Brusa, *Le coorti*, cit., pp. 135-6.

71 These mentions are not very relevant and are not discussed here: Liv. 22.5.7 (Trasimene); 27.49.4 (Metaurus); Liv. 30.33.1 and Frontin. *Strat.* 2.3.16 (Cannae). On this last battle (and on Livy's misunderstanding), see Brusa, *Le coorti*, cit., pp. 159-68.

72 Liv. 27.32.4.

73 Liv. 31.37.6. The Roman soldiers are also described as *conferti*.

In this instance, then, we find units similar to the phalanx-like bodies of troops theorised by both the Spanish and Marian views, but before Marius, and not in Spain. In the two following cases, however, things change quite a lot.

In 198, T. Quinctius Flamininus opened his campaign by laying siege to several Macedonian towns in Thessaly and Phocis. The siege of Atrax is particularly relevant. When the Romans managed to destroy a section of the wall, the garrison deployed on the breach in a densely packed phalanx. The consul, then,

*cohortes in vicem sub signis, quae cuneum Macedonum – phalangem ipsi vocant – si possent, vi perrumperent, emittebat. Sed ad loci angustias (haud late patente intervallo diruti muri) genus armorum pugnaeque hosti aptius erat. Ubi conferti hastas ingentis longitudinis prae se Macedones obiecissent, velut in constructam densitate clipeorum testudinem Romani pilis nequiquam emissis cum strinxissent gladios, neque congredi propius neque praecidere hastas poterant, et, si quam incidissent aut praefregissent, hastile fragmento ipso acuto inter spicula integrarum hastarum velut vallum explebat. Ad hoc et muri pars adhuc integra utraque tuta praestabat latera, nec ex longo spatio aut cedendum aut impetus faciendus erat, quae res turbare ordines solet.*<sup>74</sup>

Flamininus sent one cohort after another against the phalanx, whose flanks were protected by the remains of the wall. The legionaries of each cohort threw their *pila*, and then, with their swords, tried to break the tips of the sarissae, opening their ranks to try and penetrate the wall of the enemy pikes. The description of the behaviour of these units, then, conveys an impression opposite to that of Galba's dense formations. Because of the nature of the battlefield, the Roman units were not able, despite their superior flexibility, to break the enemy formation. The siege of Atrax shows, once again, that the cohort was just a section of the legion, which, in this case, was picked solely because of the narrow nature of the battlefield. Like the legion and the maniple, this unit appears to be very flexible, suited to different contexts and without precise and fixed tactical characteristics. The same conclusion follows from the siege of Elatea, which is described by Livy in the same way (phalanx on the breach, Roman cohort trying to dislodge it), with the only difference that, this time, Flamininus sent other soldiers to conquer another section of the wall.<sup>75</sup> Another Livian passage concerning Flamininus' campaign (this time against Nabis) is interesting. The historian twice

<sup>74</sup> Liv. 32.17.11-13.

<sup>75</sup> Liv. 32.24.

mentions Roman columns marching with *cohortes legionariae* in the front.<sup>76</sup> A quick comparison with Polybius' account of the movements of Scipio's army at the battle of Ilipa leads one to think that these columns marching into battle were just a regular *triplex acies*, with three parallel columns of *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*. Seen from the front, these columns built, as Livy writes, cohorts of one maniple of each of these *ordines*.

The fact that the cohort was just a section of the legion is shown by another passage from the subsequent campaign against the Macedonians, or rather, from its very end, back in Rome.<sup>77</sup> During Aemilius Paullus' triumph, the soldiers marched *equites turmatim et cohortes peditum suis quaeque ordinibus*.<sup>78</sup> If we believe Livy, the soldiers marched through Rome by cohorts, retaining, however, their division in *ordines* – that is by maniples. The reason why the legions were divided into cohorts must have been that the Roman streets would have been way too narrow otherwise. Once again, the cohort is just a partition of the legion that retains the further partition into maniples. Indeed, one passage from Polybius seems to provide, for this campaign, very similar evidence to those provided by Livy about Flaminius' sieges. Polybius writes that three maniples (i.e. a cohort, although the historian does not employ this term) formed a tortoise to besiege the Heracleium. The first maniple closed their ranks with their shields on top of their heads, and the other two ran over these shields and were able to mount the walls.<sup>79</sup> This seems to be another instance of three maniples fighting together; each, however, retained its tactical significance.

There is, to sum up, no evidence at all of a tactical reform, involving the cohort, in the middle republic. The passages analysed point to the fact that cohorts

76 Liv. 34.28.5 (*primi agminis cohortes*); 34.28.7 (*primae legionariae cohortes ibant*). The latter phrase proves that these were not allied cohorts. Another instance may be detected in Plut. *Flam.* 4.4, who writes of a march in three parallel columns of *σπεῖραι*. Given that the source is Polybius, it seems natural to translate these as maniples and to compare this text, once again, with Polybius' description of the march and of the battle of Ilipa.

77 Other occurrences from other campaigns in Greece are of less value. Livy twice mentions cohorts sent to accomplish special missions (the incarceration of some Aetolians in 190: Liv. 37.3.8; the looting of Epirote cities at the end of the war against Perseus: Liv. 45.34.1-6).

78 Liv. 45.40.4. The same marching disposition seems to have been employed in Scipio the Elder's triumph over Carthage as depicted by App. *Afr.* 66: the army marched *κατά τε ἴλας καὶ τάξεις*.

79 Polyb. 28.11. Polybius' text is fragmentary. The episode is told more fully by Liv. 44.8-9, who, however, only mentions the two maniples mounting on top of the tortoise.

were just groups of maniples. When our sources allow us to evaluate their actions in battle, we see that the presence of cohorts did not entail any change in how the Roman maniples fought; or rather, that they retained the high degree of flexibility and adaptability of the Roman maniples and legions. Once again, a tactical reform was simply not needed.

*Legionary cohorts in the first century. A tactical reform?*

As said at the beginning of the introduction, Caesar's age is generally taken as the *terminus ante quem* for the transformation of the Roman army from a manipular into a cohortal system. There is some merit to this line of reasoning, to be sure. As seen in the introduction, the cohort seems to have a much higher importance in Caesar's *commentarii* than in, say, Livy. The loss of Livy's books for the age of Caesar prevents commentators from understanding whether the growth of this importance was a feature peculiar to Caesar's writings, or it was shared by Livy in the latter part of his work. Given Caesar's importance as a military author, at any rate, it is hardly possible to deny that the cohort had become, at the middle of the first century BC, a major unit of the Roman legions. Caesar often reckons the strength of his own armies and of those of the enemy by cohorts, and in his descriptions of battles the cohorts appear to be the focus of his attention. The reasons and the steps that led to this change are difficult to understand, because of the paucity of relevant sources down to at least the war against Jugurtha.

From the time of the civil war between Marius and Sulla, the strength of Roman armies starts to be generally reckoned by cohorts. Not only do sources indicate the number of cohorts at the command of the generals, but, when they write about recruitment, they also generally specify how many cohorts were levied. While he was preparing to sail for Italy to fight against the Marian commanders, according to Plutarch, Sulla remarked that he was going to face πεντεκαίδεκα στρατηγούς πολεμίους πενήκοντα καὶ τετρακοσίας σπείρας ἔχοντας. In this case at least, the term σπείρα surely means cohort: instead of quantifying the enemy forces as 45 legions, he talked about 450 cohorts.<sup>80</sup> This same approach, as will be seen below, is detectable in other cases, both by Plutarch and by Appian, especially, as noted, during recruitment operations. Regarding this last point, a later

<sup>80</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 27.3. Plutarch attributes this phrase to Sulla himself (ὡς φησιν αὐτός).

passage by Cicero is interesting: according to Cicero, while Catiline was enlisting followers against the consular army of Antonius, he first built up all the cohorts of his two (very undermanned) legions, and he assigned officers to each cohort. Then, when other men joined his standards, he distributed them in his pre-built cohorts.<sup>81</sup> This highlights the importance of the cohort for recruiting purposes in the last century of the republic. This aspect will be dealt with in greater depth later; however, it is notable that at least one of the two changes highlighted for the age of Caesar seems to go back to the age of Marius and Sulla.

Whether or not this administrative change was paralleled by a tactical change, is another matter. Supporters of the Marian view traditionally ascribed the “death of the maniple” to the first part of the Numidian war, right before the period of the social and civil war, on the grounds that the maniple is still mentioned (together with the cohort) in Metellus’ campaign, while in Marius’ campaign we only find cohorts. Let us start with the former. The relevant battle was fought near the river Muthul (108).<sup>82</sup> Metellus was advancing in a column with *cohortes expeditae* (presumably of *extraordinarii*?) in the front, in a line of march that was perpendicular to that of the Numidians. When he saw the enemies, he ordered a conversion and deployed his men in a traditional *triplex acies*. This manoeuvre resembles, once again, Polybius’ description of the march of the army in three parallel columns of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii*, whose maniples were ready, through a conversion, to deploy in a triple line facing enemies from either side. Once they had turned against the enemy, the Romans clashed with the Numidians, who were, however, able to *conturbare ordines* of the Romans. A chaotic phase followed; at last, Metellus managed to *milites in unum conducere* and *ordines restituere*; he was therefore able to lead against the enemy *cohortis legionarias quattuor*. Bell wrote that the battle shows Metellus as a mild reactionary, still

---

81 Sal. *Cat.* 54.1-2 (*duas legiones instituit, cohortis pro numero militum complet; deinde, ut quisque voluntarius aut ex sociis in castra venerat, aequaliter distribuerat*). P.A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower: 225 BC – AD 14*, Oxford, 1971, p. 688 comments that this procedure was probably not exceptional, and was meant to build up the cadre of the officers.

82 Sal. *Iug.* 48.51. On this battle, see M.A. Levi, «La battaglia del Muthul», *Atene e Roma*, 6 (1925), pp. 188-203; A. Vachette, «La bataille de Muthul», *Les études classiques*, 5 (1936), pp. 574-83; G.M. Paul, *A historical commentary on Sallust’s Bellum Iugurthinum*, Liverpool, 1984, pp. 141-56. Both Vachette and Paul note the parallel between Metellus’ march and Polybius’ description.

an advocate of the maniple, but able to employ the cohort on occasion.<sup>83</sup> To my mind, the explanation is much simpler. The four cohorts must have been the only soldiers that Metellus was able to rally: in all likelihood, he regrouped the closest soldiers around the standard-bearers of the closest maniples (it must be remembered that the cohort did not have a standard). Indeed, Sallust writes that Metellus regrouped the soldiers by maniples (*ordines*), and this interpretation is the only way to make sense of the mention of cohorts in an army organised by *ordines*.

What about Marius, then? The reason why part of modern historiography has emphasised his role in the creation/standardisation of cohorts is essentially his supposed reform of the recruitment. It is well known that, according to the sources, Marius opened the recruitment for the Roman legions to the proletarians. It has been deemed natural that the abolition of the census threshold allowed for the abolition of the maniples. This conclusion is, in itself, far from compelling. Moreover, the significance of the Marian reform has been challenged to the point that, especially after Cadiou's seminal work, it is now no longer acceptable to regard Marius as a reformer.<sup>84</sup> Even if he was, there is still no evidence at all that he introduced a tactical reform.<sup>85</sup> The soldiers he led to Numidia had to be able to fight together with Metellus' old soldiers, who were used to fighting by maniples.<sup>86</sup> No source mentions the employment of cohorts by Marius as peculiar tactical units.<sup>87</sup> Even more interesting is the fact that, before the start of Marius' civil war against Sulla, Plutarch never mentions levies by cohorts. It appears, then, that not only did Marius not change the arrangement and tactical nature of

83 Bell, cit., pp. 415-16: "something of a military reactionary, though by no means an unmitigated one". Cohorts detached by Metellus (without any additional details) are also mentioned by Sal. *Iug.* 56. By a comparison with *Iug.* 58, it is probable that these were cohorts of *socii*.

84 Cadiou, *L'armée imaginaire*, cit.; Cadiou's focus is the supposed reform of the recruitment, and the deconstruction of the myth of the introduction of proletarian armies.

85 Fest. s.v. «*sex milium et ducentorum*» writes that Marius was the first to enrol a legion 6,200 men strong. While he may have levied a particularly high (though by no means unprecedented) number of men, he surely did not introduce a long-lasting reform on this matter: Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, cit., pp. 671-6 and 686-93.

86 Sal. *Iug.* 87.1: *expletis legionibus cohortibusque auxiliariis*; this was, in other words, a *supplementum*.

87 Indeed, contrary to what supporters of the "Marian view" believe, Roman cohorts are very rarely mentioned in the Marian phase of the Numidian war. We twice find some *cohortes expeditae* (maybe Roman? *Iug.* 90.2 and 103.1), and only once cohorts detached from the legions (surely Roman: *Iug.* 100.4).

the cohort, but also that the growth of the administrative importance of the cohort, as a recruitment unit, postdated both his Numidian and his German campaigns.

With the civil war, as mentioned, sources start to reckon the strength of the legions by cohorts. Is there any indication of a parallel tactical change? Unfortunately, the evidence is too scanty to allow for a definitive answer.<sup>88</sup> The only passage that may be employed is Frontinus' account of Sulla's battle against Archelaus (86 BC). According to the author,

*Triplicem deinde peditum aciem ordinavit [...] Tum postsignanis qui in secunda acie erant imperavit, ut densos numerososque palos firme in terram defigerent, intraque eos, appropinquantibus quadrigis, antesignanorum aciem recepit.*<sup>89</sup>

Livy consistently employs the terms *antesignani* and *postsignani* to define two ordines (the *hastati* and *principes*) of the Roman army.<sup>90</sup> If we assume that Frontinus employed the same terminology, then Sulla's army was still ordered by maniples in a *triplex acies*. There are a number of problems, though. In Caesar, the expression *triplex acies* generally defines three lines of cohorts, not maniples. It is also unclear, as shall be seen, whether Caesar employed the terms *antesignani* and *postsignani* in the Livian fashion. The meaning of these two terms in Frontinus is not clear. Lastly, this battle was fought before the massive recruitment of new legions and cohorts in the civil war; one might doubt whether the new legions were ordered differently than the old consular army. To decide whether or not a tactical reform had been/was being carried out, one has to turn to Caesar's *commentarii*, with the caveat that these works offer, as well, very scanty hints.

In his recent paper on the birth of the legionary cohort, Taylor argued that the main reason for this evolution was the disappearance of *velites* and the reduction

88 In the context of Sulla's Mithridatic war, Plutarch mentions cohorts four times (Plut. *Sull.* 17.3: units of account; 17.7: reserve cohorts; 21.2: cohorts from the right wing; 24.1: four cohorts as Sulla's bodyguard). From a tactical perspective, these mentions do not add anything to the matter. In Appian's account of the civil war, cohorts are mentioned only as units of account, mainly to specify the number of men who were killed or deserted in the battles.

89 Frontin. *Strat.* 2.3.17. The mention of *antesignani* and *postsignani* is particularly relevant, as Plutarch mentions cohorts both in the battle of Chaeronea and Orchomenus (see above).

90 Liv. 8.39.4; 9.39.7; 22.5.7; 23.29.3; 30.33.3. From Liv. 8.8.7-8 and 8.11.7, it is clear that the three ordines of *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* were distinguished by Livy between *pilani* (*triarii*) and *antepilani* (the other two). The latter were also separated between *postsignani* (*principes*) and *antesignani* (*hastati*).

of the importance of lightly armed troops in the armies of the late republic.<sup>91</sup> These soldiers were able to form a screen behind which the Roman legions could safely deploy for battle. With their disappearance, the switch from a marching formation to a fighting formation became dangerous. Until the social war, the Romans could obviate this issue by stationing the four cohorts of *extraordinarii* in the front.<sup>92</sup> After the enfranchisement of the Italians, according to Taylor, the legions were organised in cohorts, on the model of the *extraordinarii*. Four cohorts deployed in the first line, having the same function previously held by the *extraordinarii*, while the others formed two lines of three cohorts each (4-3-3). The reason why the Romans could not do the same with the maniple is, according to Taylor, the fact that the cohort had a much wider front. In his view, all the *centuriae* of each cohort fought side by side. Four cohorts, therefore, would have a front of 24 (6 x 4) centuries. Taylor's theory has, in my opinion, a huge merit – namely, the importance attached to the social war and to the Italian context. It also has, however, several weaknesses.

The first problem is that lightly armed soldiers were not absent from Caesar's army. Gauthier has argued that Roman citizens could be employed as lightly armed soldiers, and that, therefore, *velites* had not been abolished.<sup>93</sup> Even if one assumes that they were, however, one must notice that Caesar frequently mentions troops of *funditores*, *sagittarii*, and *milites levis armaturae* in general. In a few cases, he even stresses their importance; it would be too rash to assume that the Romans had to modify the organisation of their legions to account for the loss

91 Taylor, cit.; the disappearance of the *velites* is taken by Taylor as a given.

92 It should be noted that the total number of the cohorts of *extraordinarii* in the Roman armies is unclear. According to Polybius, the *extraordinarii* were around a fifth of the total number of *socii*, which he considers roughly equal in number to the legionaries. This would mean that each legion was accompanied by a total of two cohorts, and not four. Four cohorts may have been the usual complement of *extraordinarii* for a consular army, but this number is only attested once (Liv. 40.27.3) and is debated. See V. Ilari, *Gli Italici nelle strutture militari romane*, Milano, 1974, p. 145. On these *extraordinarii* in general, see Ilari, cit., pp. 143-6; C. Wolff, «Les *extraordinarii*», *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*, 9 (2020), pp. 167-79.

93 Gauthier, *Did Velites Really Disappear*, cit.; cf. Gauthier, *The Transformation*, cit.; and Gauthier, *The Changing Composition*, cit.; also, Taylor takes the passages in which Caesar mentions *expediti* legionaries as proof that he needed to obviate to the lack of light infantrymen by creating ad hoc corps of light soldiers. *Expeditus*, however, does not mean “lightly armed” but “unencumbered”; Caesar once (*Gall.* 2.19.2) mentions the soldiers of six entire legions as *expediti*.

of their light infantry.<sup>94</sup>

The arrangement of the cohorts of a Roman legion in three lines of four, three, and three cohorts, as argued by Taylor, is a very common assumption in modern historiography.<sup>95</sup> The evidence, however, at least from the time of Caesar, is simply not there. To be sure, the fact that the Roman army generally deployed, and also marched, in three lines (*triplex acies/tripertito*) is often stated by Caesar, although the author also mentions, in special cases, arrays in one or two lines.<sup>96</sup> In a few instances, it is also possible to understand clearly that these three lines were lines of cohorts, and not, as normal in Livy's books, of maniples (*ordines*).<sup>97</sup> Although this is not always the case,<sup>98</sup> it is best to assume that normally Caesar deployed his army in three lines of cohorts. However, it is far from certain that these lines contained four, three and three cohorts each. Caesar once mentions such a disposition, but this is meant by the author as an exception: in describing the arrangements for the battle of Ilerda against Afranius (49 BC), he writes:

*Acies erat Afraniana duplex legionum V, tertium in subsidiis locum alariae cohortes obtinebant, Caesaris triplex, sed primam aciem quaternae cohortes ex V legionibus tenebant. Has subsidiariae ternae et rursus aliae totidem suae cuiusque legionis subsequerantur. [...] Tali instructa acie tenere uterque propositum videbatur.*

The peculiar nature of this disposition is shown both by the *sed* (i.e., to Caesar,

94 The last of these categories is particularly interesting. Like the other two, it is quite frequently mentioned, but it is unclear whether these light soldiers were Romans. In some cases they surely were not (Caes. *Gall.* 7.65.4-5: Germans). In the *Bellum Hispaniense*, however, these men seem to be distinguished from both legionaries and auxiliaries (*Hisp.* 24; *Hisp.* 30).

95 E.g. W. Rüstow, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung C. Julius Cäsars*, Gotha, 1955, pp. 44-6; Marquardt, cit., p. 424; Rice-Holmes, cit., p. 587-8; Steinwender, cit., pp. 428-9; Parker, cit., p. 28; Fraccaro, cit., pp. 145-8; Keppie, *The Making*, cit., pp. 64-5; Lendon, cit., 224-5; A.K. Goldsworthy, *Caesar: the Life of a Colossus*, New Haven-London, 2006, p. 219; Cagniard, cit., p. 86; N. Rosenstein, «General and Imperialist», in M.T. Griffin (ed.), *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, Malden, 2009, pp. 85-99 (p. 95); Matthew, cit., pp. 29-31; Breccia, cit., p. 69. *Contra* already A.F. von Göler, *Caesars Gallischer Krieg und Theile seiner Bürgerkriegs*, vol. 2, Freiburg-Tübingen, 1880, p. 215.

96 *Caes. Gall.* 1.83.1 and 3.24 (*duplex acies*); but in both cases there was another *acies* of auxiliaries); *Afr.* 13.2 (*acies simplex*).

97 Especially in the passage quoted below. Cf. *Caes. Civ.* 3.89, on Pharsalus.

98 See, in particular, the arrays of Scipio and Caesar in *Afr.* 59-60. Scipio had two *acies*, one with his legions and one of auxiliaries. Caesar had his legions in his first *acies*, some cohorts in his second *acies*, and a *tertia acies* only on one wing.

this was not the usual *triplex acies*) and by the comment on the reason why this particular array was chosen. We have no idea about how Caesar's lines of cohorts normally deployed, and the phrase *sed primam aciem quaternae cohortes tenebant* might lead one to think that, normally, the *prima acies* comprised a different number of cohorts. The hypothesis that the first *acies* developed from the four cohorts of *extraordinarii* is, therefore, difficult to prove.

During the middle republic, the *extraordinarii* were most likely arranged into maniples, like the other *socii*.<sup>99</sup> This would again contradict the assumption that they influenced the evolution from the manipular to the cohortal legion. This also leads one to question Taylor's assumption that the shift was important because of the wider front of the cohort compared to the front the sum of three maniples of the earlier republic. There is no compelling evidence, once again, about the disposition of maniples and centuries in a cohort in the age of Caesar. As noted, it is probable that Sulla still deployed his maniples in the traditional three lines (*ordines*). In Caesar, however, the expression *triplex acies* generally refers to lines of cohorts. Although he still employs the term *ordo* to refer to maniples (or rather centuries), he only employs this word, as well as the terms *hastatus*, *princeps*, and *pilus* (*triaris*) in the context of the definition of the rank of his centurions. It is well known that the six centurions of a cohort were the *hastatus prior* and *posterior*, the *princeps prior* and *posterior*, and the *pilus prior* (*primipilus* for the first cohort) and *posterior*.<sup>100</sup> The fact that the leaders of the centuries retained their old names, however, is not proof that how the centuries themselves were deployed did not change. In a middle republican cohort, the maniples in a cohort were deployed one behind the other, each with their two centuries abreast.<sup>101</sup>

99 The normal cohorts of allies were surely equal to three Roman maniples (a Roman cohort), as Polybius mentions their maniples and *ordines* both in the context of the encampment (6.30) and while describing Roman practices in looting towns (10.16). Livy consistently writes that the *extraordinarii* were arranged in *cohortes delectae*. It is probable that these cohorts were modelled on the normal allied cohorts. On the composition of these allied cohorts, see Ilari, cit.; on the *extraordinarii*, see again Ilari, cit., pp. 143-6; Wolff, *Les extraordinarii*, cit.

100 The *primus pilus* is often mentioned by Caesar (*Gall.* 3.5; 5.35; 5.44; 6.38; *Civ.* 1.13.4; 1.46.5; 3.91.1); the others are much less represented (*Civ.* 3.64.4: *princeps prior*; 1.46.4: *hastatus prior*, in this case of the first cohort).

101 The standard description of the three *ordines* is Polybius' sixth book (cf. Liv. 8.8). Polyb. 6.24.8 specifically states that the two centuries of each maniple deployed abreast: the two centurions commanded the left and right part of the maniple.

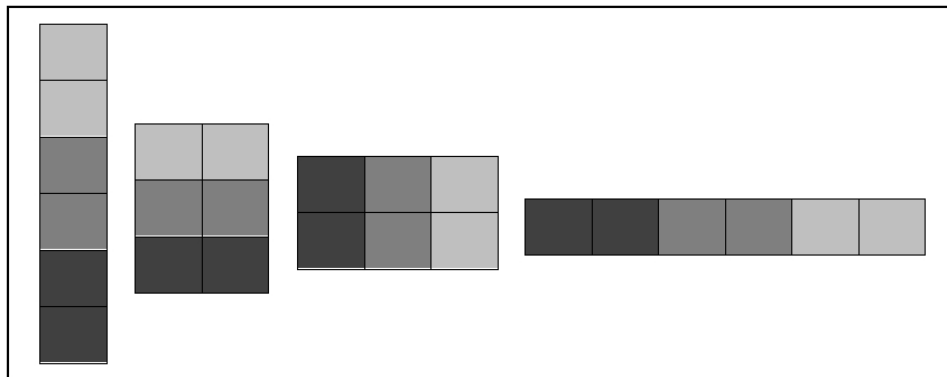


Table 2: Possible array of the six centuries in a cohort.  
The two cohorts of the same *ordo* are in the same shade of grey.

Unfortunately, Caesar does not discuss the arrangement of these units in his own age; undoubtedly, he took this matter for granted, and assumed that the readers would know. This makes it unlikely that he altered the convention in any way, but it is not impossible that someone between the age of Sulla and that of Caesar introduced a change. Such a change has often been assumed by modern authors, although opinions have varied widely. Four possible arrangements of the six cohorts are possible (width x depth):  $1 \times 6$ ,  $2 \times 3$ ,  $3 \times 2$ ,  $6 \times 1$ , as detailed in the very schematic table above.

Each of these possibilities has found its supporters in a debate that was particularly hot in less recent historiography.<sup>102</sup> In many cases, however, these opinions are unsupported by any evidence. As far as Taylor's reconstruction goes, as proofs of a  $6 \times 1$  disposition are mentioned the episodes of desertion during the battle by the soldiers (they must have fled from a single line; otherwise, they would have been stopped by the line behind them; however, similar things happened during the days of the "manipular disposition", and at any rate there were, normally, several lines of cohorts) and the disposition of cohorts in three lines (the array would have been too deep; however, we do not know how deep a single century was, and in some cases a higher depth of the legion might have been

<sup>102</sup>  $1 \times 6$ : Keppie, *The Making*, cit., p. 65;  $2 \times 3$ : von Göler, cit., p. 216;  $3 \times 2$ : Rüstow, cit., pp. 36-44; Votsch, cit., pp. 34-5; F. Fröhlich, *Das Kriegswesen Cäsars*, vol. 2, Zürich, 1890, pp. 144-8; Rice-Holmes, cit., pp. 587-8; Lammert and Lammert, cit., p. 488; Parker, cit., p. 31; Veith in Kromayer and Veith, cit., pp. 377-80; Marin y Peña, cit., p. 58; Breccia, cit., p. 69; this has been the most influential opinion;  $6 \times 1$ : Steinwender, cit., pp. 21-433; Fraccaro, cit., pp. 144-5.

preferable). The other factor often quoted is a statement by Frontinus about the battle of Pharsalus. Apparently, each of Pompey's three lines was ten men deep.<sup>103</sup> This would exclude both the 1×6 and 2×3 models, as ten is not divisible either by six or three. However, while the 1×6 model may be unlikely, the 2×3 is not. There is no evidence that the centuries had the same number of men, and therefore the same depth. During the middle republic, the centuries of *triarii* were half as big as those of *principes* and *hastati*. The fact that things had changed in the late republic is often assumed by modern historians, but never stated by ancient sources.

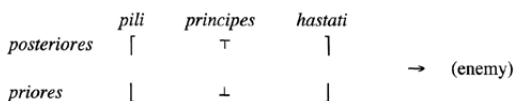
Some hints may be exploited to support the 2×3 model – that is, the idea that things had not changed. M.P. Speidel, studying the epigraphically attested signs to define each century's signs, arranged them in order to form a sort of rectangle.<sup>104</sup> The result would be a 2×3 disposition. However, it is not beyond doubt that these signs represent the outlay of a cohort while in battle, and even if they did, it would be equally possible to postulate a 3×2 formation (the one, indeed, most commonly assumed as correct by scholars).<sup>105</sup> One may also be tempted to turn to Hadrian's speech at Lambaesis, during which the emperor addressed the *principes*, *hastati* and *pili* separately, and apparently also praised a *hastatus* (the first centurion of the *hastati*?) for training his men.<sup>106</sup> However, these hints pertain to the imperial army and not to the late-republican one.

Another interesting hint may be provided by Caesar's mention of the *antesignani* fighting alone. As mentioned, Livy employed the term to define the *hastati* (while the *postsignani* were the *principes*), and it is probable that Frontinus, maybe drawing from Livy himself, applied these two terms, with the same meaning,

103 Frontin. *Strat.* 2.3.22: *Cn. Pompeius adversus C. Caesarem Palaepharsali triplicem intruxit aciem, quarum singulae denos ordines in latitudinem habuerunt.*

104 M.P. Speidel, «Centurial Signs and the Battle Order of the Legions», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 154 (2005), pp. 286-92.

105 Speidel's reconstruction, based on the attested centurial signs, is shown below (Speidel, cit., p. 290). The issue is that the arrow pointing to the enemies could equally be moved below: in this case, we would have a 2×3 formation. Indeed, J.C. Mann, «Roman Legionary Centurial Symbols», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 115 (1997), pp. 295-8 theorised this scenario, drawing from the same evidence analysed by Speidel.



106 On all these (and some other, less significant) hints, see Brusa, *Le coorti*, cit., pp. 225-228, with mentioned bibliography.

to Sulla's legions. Scholars have often discussed the nature of the corps of *antesignani* in Caesar. The most common view is that they were lightly armed soldiers used for fighting in tandem with cavalrymen.<sup>107</sup> I think that this interpretation should be rejected. Caesar defines them as *expediti*, that is, "unencumbered", not "lightly armed". In one of the two cases in which he describes them fighting together with the cavalry, he also writes that they had to get used to wielding lighter weapons and to fighting with the *equites*. For the rest, they are described as a picked group of expert (but not necessarily older) soldiers.<sup>108</sup> It is not completely clear whether they were part of the normal cohorts.<sup>109</sup> If, as more likely, they were, it is natural to assume that they were still an *ordo* of the cohorts, most likely the *pili/triarii*, and no longer the *hastati*.<sup>110</sup> If this is true, then it would be possible to detect (at least one of) the ancient ordines still fighting outside of the "cohortal organisation". This would lead to the supposition that the cohorts themselves still deployed by *ordines*, that is, with the maniples one behind the other. This would also be the most economical solution, as it would not compel the postulation of a change that is never mentioned by any source. It must be stressed, however, that this solution is also far from conclusive. The *argumentum e silentio* about the lack of mentions of a reform is far from compelling, and Caesar never clearly states who the *antesignani* were (and indeed Vegetius seems to consider them lighter infantrymen).<sup>111</sup> In very few cases, maniples and centuries are mentioned fighting

<sup>107</sup> Most recently, Taylor, cit., p. 86. This traditional theory, however, was developed at the end of the nineteenth century (A. von Domaszewski, «*Antesignani*», *RE* 1.2 (1894), pp. 2355-6).

<sup>108</sup> The four passages in which they are mentioned are *Civ.* 1.43.3 (the *antesignani unius legionis* are sent to occupy a hill, and fight against some cohorts of Afranius); 1.57.1 (Caesar selects the best men, among whom centurions and *antesignani*, to be embarked); 3.75.5 (Caesar mixes *antesignani expediti* with his cavalrymen); and 3.84.3 (the same happens, but Caesar specifies that the *antesignani* had to get used to the new way of fighting and to the lighter weapons; also, in this case the soldiers chosen are *adulescentes*).

<sup>109</sup> Caesar never equates them with any of the *ordines*, but he also does not talk about a distinct unit of *antesignani*. Cicero (*Phil.* 5.12) seems to distinguish them from the *manipulares*, but he might also be meaning that the *antesignani* were a distinct (and more important) category of *manipulares*.

<sup>110</sup> The *antesignani* seem to be the most prominent soldiers in the legions (see also Cicero's passage above), and so, if they still were an *ordo*, they must have been the *triarii*. This would entail that the *pili/triarii* were now in the front. Some historians have assumed such a switch (Harmand, cit., p. 396; Nicolet, cit., p. 314), but this is not attested by the sources. Indeed, Lendon, cit., p. 223 assumed that the *antesignani* were the *ordo* of the *hastati*.

<sup>111</sup> Vegetius' position is not perfectly clear. He counts the *antesignani* as heavy infantrymen

on their own, but they could be detachments from a larger cohort. It is necessary to acknowledge that, despite Caesar's importance as a military historian, details about the organisation of his army are even more difficult to grasp than the characters of the middle republican legions. It is also important to stress, though, that there is no evidence at all for a tactical reform, either by Caesar or by any other commander between the age of Sulla and the end of the republic. We simply do not know for certain whether Caesar's cohorts were arranged and fought in a different way than their middle-republican counterparts. Cohorts, to sum up, might well have remained simple groupings of three maniples, still arranged by *ordines*. Even the decision to deepen the array by deploying the cohorts in three lines is neither revolutionary nor inexplicable. Cohorts had been kept in the reserve as early as 195 (Cato's *subsidiaria acies*), and, with armies getting larger and larger in the late republic, it must have been natural to deepen the array instead of continuing to widen its front. A "major tactical reform", whether in the middle or the late republic, is not detectable.

Only two changes, as noted, can be highlighted. One of them is the employment of the cohort as a unit of account, both to express the strength of armies and in the context of recruitment. The other is the constant employment of cohorts, however they may have fought and deployed, as the most important tactical unit. While it had previously been normal to resort to a wide variety of groupings (*ordines*, sums of *ordines*, sums of maniples, cohorts, cohorts plus other maniples), it appears from Caesar's *commentarii* that cohorts and groups of cohorts were in the late republic by far the most common way in which detachments could be formed and sent out.<sup>112</sup> In the next section, I contend that these two changes were deeply interconnected.

---

(*Legio autem propriis cohortibus plena cum gravem armaturam, hoc est principes hastatos triarios antesignanos, item levem armaturam, hoc est ferrentarios sagittarios funditores ballistarios*), and in this case the term *antesignanos* might be meant as an attribute of *triarios*, or as a different category (2.2). Then, he states that the *antesignani*, as the *signiferi*, *quamvis pedites, loricas minores accipiebant et galeas ad terrorem hostium ursinis pellibus tectas* (2.14). He also writes that they were also called *campigeni*, *quia eorum opera atque virtute exercitii genus crescit in campo* (2.7).

<sup>112</sup> It is worth mentioning a significant example: during the middle republic, it seems to have been common to leave one or two of the *ordines* deployed for battle, while the other(s) fortified the camp (e.g. Liv. 7.23.7; 35.4.6). Caesar does the same, with groups of cohorts (*Gall.* 1.49; *Civ.* 1.41.5; *Alex.* 74.2).

*Legionary cohorts in the first century. An administrative reform?*

As mentioned, one of the great contributions of Taylor's paper is its focus on the Italian context. The switch from pre- to post-social war Italy coincides, in the sources, with the introduction of the habit of reckoning the strength of armies by cohorts, and, most importantly, of mentioning recruitment by cohorts. I do not consider this a mere coincidence.

The functioning of a regular mid-republican *dilectus* is described in detail by Polybius. To be sure, scholars disagree about the extent to which his depiction should be believed.<sup>113</sup> It seems clear, at any rate, that at least an important part of this procedure was centralised and carried out in Rome. At the same time, the Italian *socii* had to carry out a *dilectus* in their cities, and to send (allied) cohorts to the Romans. With the enfranchisement of the allies, both of these procedures had to change. It was impossible to summon the entire Italian male population to Rome for each recruitment, but the *socii*, now full Roman citizens, were no longer compelled to send allied soldiers.

From the start of the civil war between Marius and Sulla, our sources start to portray commanders sending their own officers in various locations of Italy to recruit soldiers. While Sulla's first march on Rome was carried out with the legions enrolled for the war against Mithridates, Cinna, after taking control of the remaining legion, apparently "made a tour" (διέθεται) of Italy himself to raise troops. Among the *novi cives*, he was able to recruit *trecentas amplius cohortes*.<sup>114</sup> Vast numbers of Italian allies were being enfranchised. The old system according to which local communities were bound to send cohorts of allies had been crumbling since the beginning of the social war. It was now impossible to conduct the *dilectus* as had been done before, in a centralised way, with a central role for Rome.<sup>115</sup> In these troubled circumstances Cinna seems to have tried to exploit

<sup>113</sup> The two classic opinions are those of Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, cit., pp. 625-7 (with a critique of Polybius' reconstruction) and Rawson, cit., p. 15, much more open to admit Polybius' credibility. Brunt's criticism has been followed by L. De Ligt, «Roman Manpower and Recruitment during the Middle Republic», in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, 2007, pp. 114-31 (pp. 115-16).

<sup>114</sup> App. Civ. 1.66.302; Vell. 2.20.4.

<sup>115</sup> Contra N. Rosenstein, «Integration and Armies in the Middle Republic», in S.T. Roselaar (ed.), *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, Leiden-Boston, 2012, pp. 85-103 (p. 93). A change is assumed, but discussed only in passing, by P.A.

the old decentralised system in Italy with the levy of cohorts from the various communities. The difference was that, as these soldiers were levied for a civil war, he was compelled to make a personal tour of Italy, whose new citizens he had also ingratiated by proposing their distribution among all the tribes. In the meantime, Marius was able to raise soldiers in Etruria;<sup>116</sup> together, they were able to put together the 450 cohorts mentioned by Sulla. Once masters of Rome – and once the news of Sulla's peace with Mithridates reached them – Cinna and Carbo were again compelled to recruit troops: they thus sent their officers throughout Italy requesting money, soldiers, and grain (*χρήματα καὶ στρατιᾶν καὶ σῖτον*).<sup>117</sup> Again, this was nothing new in itself: Italian towns had long been compelled to send at least *χρήματα καὶ στρατιᾶν*. Although they were now Roman communities, because of the long distances involved, this system was kept in place. In the meantime, a *dilectus* was carried out in Rome.<sup>118</sup> Evidently, this *dilectus* did not concern the new citizens, who, although Roman citizens, were too far away from Rome to take part in this traditional levy. In Italy, levies continued to be held in this way, and Sulla also employed this same model, while Pompey was recruiting a legion in Picenum.<sup>119</sup> As noted, starting from here, both the strength of the armies and the entity of the levies start to be reckoned by cohorts. It is significant that no source mentions cohorts in the context of Marius' recruitments for the Numidian or German wars: the turning point was the social war, or rather, the complex overlap between the social and the civil war.

One may well suppose that this pattern of decentralised levies was an exceptional measure, determined by this overlap between the social and civil war – namely, between the ruin of the traditional system of recruiting allies and the need to find many soldiers quickly. Brunt's in-depth study of recruitment in the period after this civil war, however, shows that most recruitments were regional

---

Brunt, «The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 52 (1962), pp. 69-86 (pp. 74-5).

116 App. *Civ.* 1.67.306; Plut. *Mar.* 41.2.

117 App. *Civ.* 1.76.348.

118 App. *Civ.* 1.82.373. It was possible that this *dilectus* was rather a *tumultus*. In the meantime, however, another levy was held throughout Italy, with the same method used before (*Civ.* 81.372).

119 App. *Civ.* 1.77.354; 1.86.393; Vell. 2.29; Plut. *Pomp.* 6. Plutarch mentions a tour among the cities of the region.

levies:<sup>120</sup> this decentralised approach to the levies seems to have persisted. Cicero sometimes mentions *conquistores*, officers sent by Rome tasked with levying soldiers from a particular place.<sup>121</sup> It has been assumed that their employment became standard practice, although this is not stated by the sources.<sup>122</sup> It is not impossible that this kind of recruitment went on to be carried out by the magistrates of the individual cities. Despite the scarcity of the sources it is possible to glean that sections of armies and individual cohorts could be recruited from specific areas, especially, but not only, in Italy. Caesar sometimes mentions recruitments *in provincia*, presumably meaning, when he talks about legionaries, from Roman communities.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, in one case he mentions two *cohortes colonicae*, whose men must have been composed of Roman colonists in Spain.<sup>124</sup> During the civil war, it was common both for him and for Pompey to levy cohorts from various communities.<sup>125</sup> During Curio's unfortunate expedition to Africa, both Curio's and Varus' soldiers (all of whom had been recruited in the region of Corfinium) came from the same peoples, the Marsi and Paeligni. Caesar also mentions a Paelignian centurion and two cohorts of Marrucini.<sup>126</sup>

These passages are telling. The Marsi, Paeligni, and Marrucini were no longer allies: they were full Roman citizens. However, they seem to have kept supplying the Roman army with "local" cohorts as they had done before. To my mind, we must suppose that, after the social war, the Romans tried to keep in place the old system of recruitment of Italians as much as possible. During civil wars, levies could be more chaotic, but in all cases the persistence of a decentralised approach

120 Brunt, *The Army*, cit. (see in particular the table at pp. 85-6). Cf. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, cit., pp. 448-51.

121 Cic. *ad Att.* 7.21.1; *Mil.* 25.67; *Prov. cons.* 3.5 (where a *conquisitio* is mentioned); cf. [Caes.] *Alex.* 2.1.

122 E.g. Gabba, cit., p. 59; Harmand, cit., pp. 245-247; Cadiou, *L'armée*, cit., pp. 145-6. On these *conquistores* see in part. C. Wolff, «À propos des *conquistores*», *Latomus*, 68 (2009), pp. 1050-2. The author emphasises the growth of the importance of these men after the social war, for the recruitment of Roman citizens all throughout Italy.

123 E.g. Caes. *Gall.* 1.7.2; 1.15.1 (cavalrymen); 2.2.1; 3.9.1 (rowers); 3.20.2 (volunteers); 5.1.6 (in Illyria); 7.1.1; 7.65.1; 8.54.2. On these recruitments, see Keppie, *The Making*, cit., pp. 97-8.

124 Caes. *Civ.* 2.19.3. In the following pages, Caesar mentions a *legio vernacula*, probably a legion built up in the province and consisting of men from Roman communities.

125 E.g. Caes. *Civ.* 1.14.4; 1.24.

126 Caes. *Civ.* 2. 28-29; 2.34.3.

to the problem of managing the Italian manpower remains important. It is only to be expected that they continued, as they had always done, to recruit their soldiers by cohorts, sort of “small legions”, each with its three *ordines* and six centurions. If this interpretation is correct, the reason why sources start to reckon the strength of Roman armies by cohorts becomes obvious. Indeed, in some cases, levied cohorts could not be formally assembled into proper legions.<sup>127</sup>

This interpretation, incidentally, also seems to make sense of a doubt expressed by N. Rosenstein. In an article focusing on the Roman *socii*, Rosenstein maintained that a relatively low level of ability to speak Latin should be assumed among republican *socii*. He also wondered why the enfranchisement after the social war did not reduce the effectiveness of the Roman armies, which now comprised non-Latin speakers fighting shoulder to shoulder with Romans and Latins.<sup>128</sup> I would assume that this problem was very much mitigated by the fact that units within the legions remained mostly linguistically homogenous. It must have been largely sufficient that the centurions (the office of *praefectus cohortis* was no more) were able to understand and translate Latin orders.

The only adaptation to the Roman reality of this Italian panorama seems to have been the abolition of the rank of *praefectus cohortis*, the old Italian commander of a cohort.<sup>129</sup> Taylor considered this a “lost opportunity”,<sup>130</sup> as this reduced the potentiality of the new Roman cohort as a tactical unit. This once again entails, at any rate, a low level of change, as the Roman cohorts retained the structure and officers of the mid-republican cohort with its three maniples.

If this theory is accepted, then one can understand the reasons behind the growth of the importance of cohorts in the first century. It is also probable that, as mentioned, this change promoted a growth in the tactical importance of the cohort. As cohorts of *socii* had often been deployed during middle-republican cam-

---

127 This is evident from all passages in which the recruitment of numbers of cohorts not divisible by ten are mentioned. Among the most telling passages, see Caes. *Gall.* 7.65.1; *Civ.* 1.15-18. In these passages, other local levies are mentioned.

128 Rosenstein, *Integration and Armies*, cit., pp. 92-3. According to Rosenstein, who does not review the evidence in full (cf. again Brunt, *The Army*, cit.), regional levies only happened in special cases: hence his wonder. As a possible solution, he supposes that crash courses in Latin might have been set up.

129 On these officers, see Ilari, cit., pp. 137-40. They were local magistrates, while the *praefecti sociorum* were Roman citizens.

130 Taylor, cit., pp. 89-91.

paigns, it was probably natural to keep doing the same with cohorts of Roman citizens. Other partitions of the army (*ordines*, other groups of maniples, groups of cohorts plus maniples) lost importance, perhaps also because of the homogeneous nature of the single cohorts. As far as I know, indeed, there is no evidence in the sources of cohorts of *socii* ever having been decomposed into their three maniples and regrouped in some other way. Whether or not these changes, both administrative and tactical, are enough to postulate a “reform” in the late Roman republican army, remains to be discussed.

### *Conclusion. Reform in the Roman republican army?*

The concept of military reform has been challenged several times in this paper. Nevertheless, it was noted in the previous section that some kind of change was definitely going on in the late republic. While there is no evidence for any change in the array and fighting characteristics of the cohort, the growth of its importance is certainly notable. However, as Taylor noted, the idea of “military reform” is problematic.<sup>131</sup> It is quite improbable that one of the commanders of the last decades of the republic was able to devise, introduce, and enforce the idea that cohorts should have been the main unit to employ whenever detachments had to be picked out. A progressive development over time is surely more likely, and the changes brought about by the social and civil wars are surely more than enough to account for the mutations described above.

It should be stressed that, for the middle and late republic, there is next to no evidence, in the sources, for game-changing reforms. Important generals and commanders have been credited by scholars with various important reforms. In this paper, three such generals have been found, namely Scipio, Marius, and Caesar. It is certainly not my aim to deny their military genius. However, it is noteworthy that our sources never present them as reformers.<sup>132</sup> Caesar never styles himself as an innovator.<sup>133</sup> Scipio’s military career is documented by Polybius, who admired

<sup>131</sup> Taylor, cit., p. 78.

<sup>132</sup> Of course, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and this *argumentum e silentio* is not conclusive. In the face of the absence of direct evidence, however, I think that we should tread very carefully when trying to attribute proper military reforms to Roman commanders.

<sup>133</sup> Despite this, Caesar has sometimes been portrayed as a great innovator: e.g. E. Sander, «Die Reform des römischen Heeres durch Julius Cäsar», *Historische Zeitschrift*, 179

him; again, however, Polybius does not credit him with any innovation.<sup>134</sup> Even the often-mentioned “reform” of the training was an ad hoc programme similar to those put in place by other commanders. Polybius only praises it because it was very thorough.<sup>135</sup> As for Marius, he is credited with some changes; however, the sources again present these changes as transitory, ad hoc measures. Two examples illustrate this well. While the sources only tell us that Marius accepted *capite censi* for his *supplementum* for Numidia, scholars have often assumed either that he carried out a reform of the recruitment, or that he institutionalised tendencies already at work. Both of these interpretations are unwarranted: no source relates any law or decree that made this change stable.<sup>136</sup> While the sources tell us that Rutilius Rufus had his legionaries undergo a training programme by gladiator-instructors, some scholars have assumed that this was part of a major reform devised by Marius (!) to professionalise his soldiers.<sup>137</sup> The concept of a “military reform” seems to be a modern construction, at least in the context of the middle and late republic. I have contended, in this text, that the Romans did not *need* a tactical reform. The Roman republican army seems to have been a very flexible and adaptable device. In this paper, we found cohorts fighting in open and close order, arrayed on one, two, three, or four lines. As for maniples, they also had

---

(1955), pp. 225-54; P.J. Cuff, «Caesar the Soldier», *Greece and Rome*, 6 (1957), pp. 29-35 (p. 31). A much more sensible view is in G. Zecchini, *Cesare e il mos maiorum*, Stuttgart, 2001, pp. 144-58; Y. Le Bohec, *César chef de guerre*, Monaco, 2001, p. 101; and Rosenstein, *General*, cit., p. 98.

134 On Polybius' very positive depiction of Scipio, see G. Zecchini, «Scipione in Spagna: un approccio critico alla tradizione polibiano-liviana», in G. Urso (ed.), *Hispania terris omnibus felicior: premesse ed esiti di un processo di integrazione*, Pisa, 2002, pp. 87-103. For Scipio as a great innovator, see the mentioned contributions by Brizzi, and also H.H. Scullard, *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*, Ithaca NY, 1970, pp. 226-230.

135 Other, very rudimentary, programmes are known before Scipio (e.g. Liv. 10.25; 23.35). Most importantly, Scipio's decision was not a real reform, as it did not institutionalise a practice in time: after his campaign, both idle generals that did not train their soldiers (e.g. Sal. Jug. 44) and other training programmes (Liv. Per. 57; App. Hisp. 86; Val. Max. 2.7.2) are mentioned by the sources. On these issues, see P. Bannard, «Military Training», in W.M. Bloomer (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Education*, Malden, 2015, pp. 483-95 (pp. 487-92).

136 Again, Cadiou, *L'armée*, cit.; see already Aigner, cit.

137 H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, London, 1976, p. 58; Keppie, *The Making*, cit., p. 59; G.P. Baker, *Sulla the Fortunate*, New York, 2001, p. 120. Even Matthew, cit., pp. 86-7, the most strenuous modern supporter of Marius' reforms, frankly admits that no source attributes this decision to Marius.

been perfectly able to deploy in a looser or denser (at times, almost phalanx-like) formation,<sup>138</sup> and to build up a variety of tactical units. Bell's statement, "to the Romans, tactically the maniples implied dispersion, and the cohort concentration" is too simplistic and does not account for this adaptability.<sup>139</sup> The only difference between the middle and late republic, as argued here, seems to be that the Romans started to exploit the flexibility of their army especially by cohorts, and almost never by maniples – unless, of course, Caesar's *antesignani* really are the old *triarii*. In this case, even less of a change should be assumed. However this may be, there appears to be no ground for theorising a major tactical reform.

Similar points could be made if one switches to the concept of "administrative (military) reform". Again, there is no doubt, even if the reconstruction set forth in this paper is rejected, that an important change in the recruitment of Roman legionaries happened after the social war. However, on the one hand, things seem to have evolved to be not that different from before. Cities continued to send cohorts of soldiers, with the difference being that these soldiers were now Roman citizens (and were thus paid by the Roman treasury: this is perhaps the biggest change).<sup>140</sup> On the other hand, it is probable that the settlement of the issue of the recruitment of the new citizens was a matter of evolution over time (in the troubled period of the civil war) rather than of a neat reform by a single commander.

I think, to sum up, that the concept of "military reform" should not be employed in an uncritical way. The case study of the evolution of the cohort in the middle and late republic seems to show that no real reform was carried out. The Roman army was just evolving and adapting to changing circumstances, and it seems to have been able to evolve and adapt, without any major rupture, even to the changes brought about by the social and civil wars.

---

138 The classical example is Polyb. 2.33.4: Flaminius, against the Gauls, distributed to the *hastati* the thrusting spears of the *triarii*, to turn his front line into a sort of phalanx. This is not an isolated case, though: Polyb. 3.113 (on Cannae) underlines the tightness of the Romans' ranks. Polyb. 1.33.9. writes that Atilius Regulus deployed his legions, against Xanthippus, "many maniples deep".

139 Bell's phrase: Bell, cit., p. 409. *Contra* (and rightly so) Taylor, cit., pp. 79-80.

140 On the social war as an important turning point see Gauthier, *The Transformation*, cit.; on its importance in the context of the Roman war-finances, see S. Kendall, «Appian, Allied Ambassadors, and the Rejection of 91: Why the Romans Chose to Fight the *bellum sociale*», in S.T. Roselaar (ed.), *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, Leiden-Boston, 2012, pp. 105-21.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aigner, Heribert, «Gedanken zur sogenannten Heeresreform des Marius», in Franz Hampl and Ingomar. Weiler (eds.), *Kritische und vergleichende Studien zur alten Geschichte und Universalgeschichte*, Innsbruck, Institut für die Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, 1974, pp. 11-23.
- Astin, Alan E., *Cato the Censor*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Baker, George P., *Sulla the Fortunate*, New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 2001.
- Bannard, Preston, «Military Training», in W. Martin Bloomer (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Education*, Malden, John Wiley & Sons, 2015, pp. 483-95.
- Bell, Michael J.V., «Tactical Reform in the Roman Republican Army», *Historia*, 14 (1965), pp. 404-22.
- Boatwright, Mary T., Gargola, Daniel J. and Talbert, Richard J.A., *A Brief History of the Romans*, New York-Oxford, University Press, 2006.
- Breccia, Gastone, *I figli di Marte: l'arte della guerra nell'antica Roma*, Milano, Mondadori, 2012.
- Bringmann, Klaus, *A History of the Roman Republic*, Cambridge-Malden, Polity Press, 2007.
- Briscoe, John, *A Commentary on Livy: Books 34-37*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981.
- Brizzi, Giovanni, «I Manliana imperia e la riforma manipolare: l'esercito romano tra ferocia e disciplina», *Sileno*, 16 (1990), pp. 185-206.
- Brizzi, Giovanni, «Roma e la Spagna: considerazioni su un fronte difficile», in Valeria Gennaro Lerda (ed.), *Le stelle e le strisce: studi americani e militari in onore di Raimondo Luraghi*, Milano, Bompiani, 1998, pp. 23-30.
- Brizzi, Giovanni, «Gli Iberi nell'armata di Annibale: armamento e funzioni», in Antonio Sartori and Alfredo Valvo (eds.), *Hiberia-Italia, Italia-Hiberia*, Milano, Cisalpino, 2006, pp. 157-66.
- Brunt, Peter A., «The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 52 (1962), pp. 69-86.
- Brunt, Peter A., *Italian Manpower: 225 BC – AD 14*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Brusa, Gabriele, *Le coorti nell'esercito romano di età repubblicana*, Pisa, ETS, 2020.
- Brusa, Gabriele, «La battaglia di Emporiae, il *De re militari*, lo stratagemma: per una valutazione della fama militare di Catone il Censore», *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*, 10 (2021), pp. 177-216.
- Cadiou, François, «Les guerres en Hispania et l'émergence de la cohorte légionnaire dans l'armée romaine sous la république: une révision critique», *Gladius*, 21 (2001), pp. 167-82.
- Cadiou, François, *L'armée imaginaire: les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la république*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2018.
- Cagniard, Pierre, «The Late Republican Army (146 – 30 BC) », in Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A*

- Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 80-95.
- Cantel, Pierre-Joseph, *De Romana republica, sive de re militari et civili Romanorum*, Paris, apud viduam Simonis Benard, 1684.
- Catrou, François and Rouillé, Julien, *Histoire romaine depuis la fondation de Rome*, vol. 6, Paris, chez J. Rollin, J.-B. Delespine, J.-B. Coignard, 1726.
- Connolly, Peter, *Greece and Rome at war*, London, Macdonald Phoebus, 1981.
- Connolly, Peter, «The Roman Army in the Age of Polybius», in John Hackett (ed.), *Warfare in the Ancient World*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson Limited, 1989, pp. 149-168.
- Cuff, Peter J., «Caesar the Soldier», *Greece and Rome*, 6 (1957), pp. 29-35.
- Delbrück, Hans, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, vol. 1, Berlin, Stilke, 1900.
- De Ligt, Luuk, «Roman Manpower and Recruitment during the Middle Republic», in Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 114-31.
- Dillon, Matthew and Garland, Lynda, *The Ancient Romans: History and Society from the Early Republic to the Death of Augustus*, London-New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2021.
- Domaszewski, Alfred von, *Die Fahnen im römischen Heere*, Wien, Druck und Verlag von Carl Gerol's Sohn, 1885.
- Domaszewski, Alfred von, «Antesignani», *RE* 1.2 (1894), pp. 2355-6.
- Erdkamp, Paul, «The Transformation of the Roman Army in the Second Century BC», in Isaias Arrayás and Toni Ñaco del Hoyo (eds.), *War and Territory in the Roman World – Guerra y territorio en el mundo romano*, Oxford, BAR Publishing, 2006, pp. 41-51.
- Folard, Jean-Charles de, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre dans une dissertation sur Polybe*, Paris, chez Jean-François Josse et Claude Labottiere, 1724.
- Fraccaro, Plinio, «Catone il Censore in Tito Livio», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 1, Pavia, Biblioteca di Athenaeum, 1956, pp. 115-37.
- Fraccaro, Plinio, «Le fonti per il consolato di M. Porcio Catone», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 1, Pavia, Biblioteca di Athenaeum, 1956, pp. 177-226.
- Fraccaro, Plinio, «L'ordinamento a coorti», in Id., *Opuscula*, vol. 4, Pavia, Biblioteca di Athenaeum, 1975 (posthumous), pp. 137-60.
- Fröhlich, Franz, *Das Kriegswesen Cäsars*, vol. 1, Zürich, Schulthess, 1889.
- Fröhlich, Franz, *Das Kriegswesen Cäsars*, vol. 2, Zürich, Schulthess, 1890.
- Gabba, Emilio, *Esercito e società nella tarda repubblica romana*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1973.
- Garlan, Yvon, *La guerre dans l'antiquité*, Paris, F. Nathan, 1972.
- Gauthier, François, «The Changing Composition of the Roman Army in the Late Republic and the so-called Marian Reforms», *The Ancient History Bulletin*, 30 (2016), pp. 103-20.

- Gauthier, François «The Transformation of the Roman Army in the Last Decades of the Republic», in Jeremy Armstrong and Michael P. Fronda (eds.), *Romans at War: Soldiers, Citizens, and Society in the Roman Republic*, London-New York, Routledge, 2020, pp. 283-96.
- Gauthier, François, «Did *Velites* Disappear in the Late Roman Republic? », *Historia*, 70 (2021), pp. 69-82.
- Goldsworthy, Adrian K., *The Roman Army at War, 100 BC – AD 200*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Goldsworthy, Adrian K., *The Punic Wars*, London, Cassell & Co, 2000.
- Goldsworthy, Adrian K., *Caesar: the Life of a Colossus*, New Haven-London, Phoenix, 2006.
- Göler, August F. Von, *Caesars Gallischer Krieg und Theile seiner Bürgerkriegs*, vol. 2., Freiburg-Tübingen, Mohr, 1880.
- Guischartd, Guischartd, *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains*, vol. 1, La Haye, chez Pierre de Hondt, 1763.
- Gwinn, David M., *The Roman Republic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, University Press 2012.
- Harmand, Jacques, *L'armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère*, Paris, Picard, 1967.
- Hoyos, Dexter, «The Age of Overseas Expansion (264 – 146 BC) », in Paul Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Malden, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 63-79.
- Ilari, Virgilio, *Gli Italici nelle strutture militari romane*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1974.
- Jähns, Max, *Handbuch einer Geschichte des Kriegswesens von der Urzeit bis zur Renaissance, Technischer Theil: Bewaffnung, Kampfweise, Befestigung, Belagerung, Seewesen*, Leipzig, Verlag von Friedrich Wilhelm Grunow, 1880.
- Joly de Maïzeroi, Paul-Gédéon, *Traité de tactique pour servir de supplément au cours de tactique théorique, pratique et historique*, vol. 1, Paris, chez J. Merlin, 1767.
- Kendall, Seth, «Appian, Allied Ambassadors, and the Rejection of 91: Why the Romans Chose to Fight the *bellum sociale*», in Saskia T. Roselaar (ed.), *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2012, pp. 105-21.
- Kennett, Basil, *Romae antiquae notitia, or the antiquities of Rome, in two parts*, London, A. Swall and T. Child, 1696.
- Keppie, Lawrence, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire*, London, Batsford, 1984.
- Keppie, Lawrence, «The Roman Army of the Later Republic», in John Hackett (ed.), *Warfare in the Ancient World*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson Limited, 1989, pp. 169-91.
- Kertész, Imre, «The Roman Cohort Tactics: Problems of Development», *Oikumene*, 1 (1976), pp. 89-97.

- Kromayer, Johannes and Veith, Georg, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer*, München, C.H. Beck, 1928.
- Kubitschek, Wilhelm, «Legio», *RE* 12.1 (1924), pp. 1186-210.
- Lammert, Edmund and Lammert, Friedrich, «Schlachtordnung», *RE* 2.A.1 (1921), pp. 436-94.
- Lange, Ludwig, *Historia mutationum rei militaris Romanorum inde ab interitu rei publicae usque ad Constantinum Magnum*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1846.
- Lazenby, John F., *Hannibal's War: A Military History of the Second Punic War*, Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 1978.
- Le Bohec, Yann, *Histoire militaire des guerres puniques: 264-146 avant J.-C.*, Monaco, Éditions du Rocher, 1996.
- Le Bohec, Yann, *César chef de guerre*, Monaco, Éditions du Rocher, 2001.
- Lendon, Jon E., *Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005.
- Levi, Mario Attilio, «La battaglia del Muthul», *Atene e Roma*, 6 (1925), pp. 188-203.
- Liebenam, Wilhelm, «Exercitus», *RE* 6.2 (1909), pp. 1587-679.
- Lips, Joost, *De militia Romana libri quinque, commentarius ad Polybium*, Antwerp, ex officina Plantiniana, 1598.
- Lo-Looz, Robert de, *Récherches d'antiquités romaines, avec la défense du chevalier Follard, contre les allegations insérés dans les Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains*, Paris, chez Charles Antoine Jombert, 1770.
- Luce, Torrey J., *Livy: The Composition of his History*, Princeton, University Press, 1977.
- Madvig, Johann N., *Kleine philologische Schriften*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1875.
- Madvig, Johann N., *Die Verfassung und Verwaltung des römischen Staates*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1882.
- Mann, John C., «Roman Legionary Centurial Symbols», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 115 (1997), pp. 295-8.
- Marin y Peña, Manuel, *Instituciones militares romanas*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1956.
- Marquardt, Joachim, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. 2, Leipzig, Hirzel, 1876.
- Masquelez, Alfred É.A.E., «Cohors», in Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio (eds.), *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, vol. 1.2, Paris, Hachette, 1887, pp. 1287-9.
- Matthew, Christopher A., *On the Wings of Eagles: The Reforms of Gaius Marius and the Creation of Rome's first Professional Soldiers*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- Mommsen, Theodor, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 2, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1855.
- Mommsen, Theodor, «Zu Domaszewski's Abhandlung über die römischen Fahnen»,

- Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn*, 10 (1886), pp. 1-11.
- Nast, Johan J.H. and Rösch, Jakob F. von, *Römische Kriegsalterthümer aus ächten Quellen geschöpft: ein Beitrag zur Aufklärung der römischen Taktik*, Halle, bey Johan Jacob Gebauer, 1782.
- Nicolet, Claude, *Rome et la conquête du monde méditerranéen*, vol. 1, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1977.
- Niebuhr, Barthold G., *Vorträge über römische Alterthümer, an der Universität zu Bonn gehalten*, Berlin, Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1858.
- Ogilvie, Robert M., *A Commentary on Livy: Books 1-5*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Parker, Henry M.D., *The Roman Legions*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1928.
- Paul, George M., *A historical commentary on Sallust's Bellum Iugurthinum*, Liverpool, Francis Cairns, 1984.
- Panvinio, Onofrio, *Reipublicae Romanae commentariorum libri tres*, Venezia, ex officina Erasmiana apud Vincentium Valgrisium, 1558.
- Patrizi, Francesco, *Paralleli militari*, Roma, Luigi Zannetti, 1594.
- Praissac, [unknown first name], sieur du, *Les discours militaires dediez à sa Majesté*, Paris, chez la Vefue M. Guillemot et S. Thiboust, 1614.
- Rawson, Elizabeth, «The Literary Sources for the pre-Marian Roman Army», *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 39 (1971), pp. 13-31.
- Rice Holmes, Thomas, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911.
- Roldán Hervás, José M., *El ejército de la república romana*, Madrid, ArcoLibros, 1996.
- Rosenstein, Nathan, «General and Imperialist», in Miriam T. Griffin (ed.), *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, Malden, Blackwell, 2009, pp. 85-99.
- Rosenstein, Nathan, «Integration and Armies in the Middle Republic», in S.T. Roselaar (ed.), *Processes of Integration and Identity Formation in the Roman Republic*, Leiden-Boston, 2012, pp. 85-103.
- Rüstow, Wilhelm, *Heerwesen und Kriegführung C. Julius Cäsars*, Gotha, Verlag von Hugo Scheube, 1955.
- Sander, Erich, «Die Reform des römischen Heeres durch Julius Cäsar», *Historische Zeitschrift*, 179 (1955), pp. 225-54.
- Saumaise, Claude, *De re militari Romanorum liber*, Leiden, apud Johannem Elsevirium, 1657.
- Savile, Henry, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba, Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus, the Life of Agricola*, Oxford, by Joseph Barnes, 1591.
- Schele, Radboud H., *Hygini gromatici et Polybi Megalopolitani de castris Romanis quae extant, cum notis et animadversionibus, quibus accedunt dissertationes aliquot de re eadem militari populi Romani*, Amsterdam, apud Judocum Pluymmer Bibliopolam 1660.

- Scullard, Howard H., *Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician*, Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1970.
- Scullard, Howard H., *From the Gracchi to Nero*, London, Methuen & Co., 1976.
- Sierra Estornés, David, «La táctica del ejército romano centuriado a través de las fuentes literarias», *Aquila legionis*, 14 (2011), pp. 37-68.
- Sigonio, Carlo, *De antiquo iure civium Romanorum Italiae provinciarum, Romanae iurisprudentiae iudiciis, tum privatis, tum publicis, eorumque ratione, libri IX*, Paris, apud Iacobo du Puys, 1576.
- Speidel, Michael P., «Centurial Signs and the Battle Order of the Legions», *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 154 (2005), pp. 286-92.
- Steinwender, Thomas, «Zur Kohortentaktik», *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 70 (1915), pp. 416-40.
- Taylor, Michael J., «Tactical Reform in the Late Roman Republic: The View from Italy», *Historia*, 68 (2019), pp. 76-94.
- Toynbee, Arnold J., *Hannibal's Legacy: the Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life*, vol. 1, London, Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Vachette, A., «La bataille de Muthul», *Les études classiques*, 5 (1936), pp. 574-83.
- Valtrini, Giannantonio, *De re militari veterum Romanorum libri septem*, Cologne, in officina Birckmannica, 1597.
- Votsch, Wilhelm, *Caius Marius als Reformator des römischen Heerwesens*, Berlin, Verlag von Carl Habel, 1886.
- Walbank, Frank W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 2, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Wheeler, Everett L., «The Legion as Phalanx», *Chiron*, 9 (1979), pp. 303-18.
- Wolff, Catherine, «À propos des *conquistores*», *Latomus*, 68 (2009), pp. 1050-2.
- Wolff, Catherine, «Les *extraordinarii*», *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*, 9 (2020), pp. 167-79.
- Zecchini, Giuseppe, *Cesare e il mos maiorum*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001.
- Zecchini, Giuseppe, «Scipione in Spagna: un approccio critico alla tradizione polibiano-liviana», in Gianpaolo Urso (ed.), *Hispania terris omnibus felicior: premesse ed esiti di un processo di integrazione*, Pisa, ETS, 2002, pp. 87-103.

# Le nombre, l'identité et l'origine des légions du *Bellum Africum*

par BATISTE GÉRARDIN

**ABSTRACT.** A review of the literature on Caesar's campaigns reveals that specialists offer differing estimates of the number of Caesarian legions involved in the African War. Some count ten legions, while others propose twelve. The identity of these units is also debated, and their origins are rarely specified. These uncertainties did not exist prior to the mid-19th century. They first arose in 1847, following a series of emendations to the *Bellum Africum* made by the philologist Carl Nipperdey and then by subsequent editors of the text. A re-examination of the evidence indicates that none of the conjectures proposed so far are relevant. It is therefore necessary to restore the original readings of the manuscripts in the five traditionally emended passages: *BAfr* 1.5; 60.1-2; 62.1; 66.1 and 81.1.

**KEYWORDS.** *AFRICA*, *BELLUM AFRICUM*, CAIUS JULIUS CAESAR, CAESAR'S AFRICAN WAR, *HISPANIA ULTERIOR*, PHILOLOGY, ROMAN LEGIONS, TEXT TRANSMISSION.

**E**n dépit de son statut de source incontournable pour l'étude des campagnes militaires de Jules César, le *Bellum Africum* a suscité un faible nombre de publications universitaires lors des dernières décennies<sup>1</sup>. Ses deux éditions critiques de référence datent de la première moitié du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle et elles sont désormais considérées insatisfaisantes par certains spécialistes<sup>2</sup>. L'une est parue en 1927 sous la plume d'Alfred Klotz, l'autre a été publiée par Alphonse Bouvet en 1949 et révisée par Jean-Claude Richard en 1997. Toutes deux ont été établies à partir d'un *stemma* proposé en 1898, qui ne fait plus autorité. Des études philologiques ont depuis permis de mieux appréhender les relations entre les manuscrits transmettant le corpus césarien et trois autres *stemmata* ont été élaborés (fig. 1). Il serait donc judicieux d'effectuer une nouvelle

1 RICHARD 1997 (in BOUVET 1949), p. v-viii ; lv-lxv ; CIOFFI 2019 ; 2022, p. viii.

2 GAERTNER 2018, p. 276 ; CIOFFI 2019, p. 220 ; 2022, p. viii-ix.

collation des cinq manuscrits jugés les plus fiables (SMUTV<sup>3</sup>) et de procéder à un nouvel établissement du texte<sup>4</sup>. Cela permettrait de régler un travers qui concerne toutes les éditions du *Bellum Africum* depuis le milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, à savoir la correction injustifiée d'informations concernant les troupes de César. Tandis que J.-C. Richard n'avait pas jugé pertinent d'intervenir sur « l'identification, controversée on le sait, des légions mises en ligne<sup>5</sup> », il apparaît que ce problème pourrait être réglé en rétablissant des leçons tirées des manuscrits dans cinq passages habituellement remaniés. Pour comprendre ce qui a amené les éditeurs à corriger un texte fidèle à l'archétype, nous présenterons les leçons transmises et l'origine des doutes sur leur authenticité. Nous étudierons chacun des passages concernés, pour montrer que seules les leçons de la tradition permettent de tirer au clair la question des effectifs césariens.

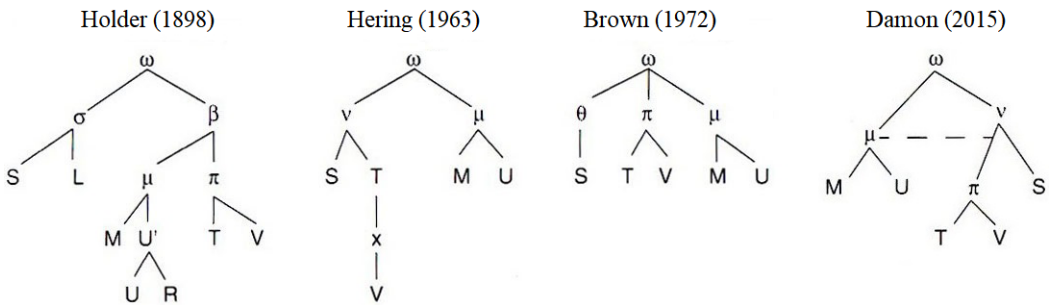


Fig. 1 : Les *stemmata* proposés pour établir le texte du *Bellum civile* et des *Tria Bella* (d'après DAMON 2015, p. 17 et 54).

Le *Bellum Africum* est l'unique source qui nous renseigne avec précision sur les légions mobilisées dans la campagne africaine de César. Leur nombre total n'est pas indiqué explicitement, mais le récit de l'anonyme tel qu'il a été transmis par les manuscrits comporte douze numéros légionnaires : II, V, VII, VIII, IX, X, XIII, XIV, XXVI, XXVIII, XXIX et XXX<sup>6</sup>. Il permet de retracer l'évolution des

3 S (Florence, BML Ashburnham 33) ; M (Florence, BML Plut. lat. 68.8) ; U (Vatican, BAV Vat. lat. 3324) ; T (Paris, BNF lat. 5764) ; V (Vienne, ÖN 95). Les trois autres utilisés par BOUVET sont des *descripti* de S (L, N) et U (R). Sur les manuscrits, voir HERING 1963 ; BROWN 1972 ; DAMON 2015, p. 77-95 ; CIOFFI 2019, p. 222-224.

4 CIOFFI 2019, p. 220-224 ; 2022, p. viii-ix.

5 RICHARD 1997 (in BOUVET 1949), p. vi.

6 *BAfr* 1, 5 ; 16, 2-3 ; 28, 2 ; 34, 4 ; 45, 2 ; 47, 6 ; 53, 1 ; 54, 1 ; 60, 1 et 4 ; 62, 1 ; 81, 1 ; 84, 1. Les leçons de SMUTV et de R ont été vérifiées à l'aide de numérisations de ces six *codices*.

effectifs à disposition du général. Le 9 octobre 47, celui-ci quitte la Sicile avec deux mille cavaliers et six légions, dont la V<sup>e</sup><sup>7</sup>. À son arrivée en Afrique, il dispose également de sept cohortes de vétérans<sup>8</sup>. Pendant toute la campagne, César est mis en difficulté par les insuffisances de sa flotte. Seule une partie de ses navires de transport peut acheminer des renforts de Sicile, car certains sont affectés au ravitaillement (*BAfr* 8 ; 34). Début novembre 47, un deuxième convoi lui amène les XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> légions, huit cents cavaliers gaulois, mille frondeurs et archers. Les bateaux sont aussitôt renvoyés en Sicile pour faire venir d'autres troupes (*BAfr* 34, 4 ; 37, 1) et ces aller-retours expliquent le renforcement très progressif des effectifs césariens. Les IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> légions arrivent dans un troisième convoi et les VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> dans un quatrième, à des dates difficiles à déterminer<sup>9</sup>. Fin janvier 46, un cinquième convoi conduit en Afrique quatre mille soldats appartenant aux légions déjà sur place, avec quatre cents cavaliers et mille frondeurs et archers (*BAfr* 77, 3). Lors de la bataille de Thapsus, César paraît ainsi disposer de douze unités. Ayant confié la garde du camp à deux d'entre elles, il en place dix autres face à l'armée de Scipion : cinq sur les ailes et cinq au centre (*BAfr* 80-81). Jusqu'au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, ces éléments concordants sont utilisés pour conclure à un total de douze légions<sup>10</sup>.

La complexité fait irruption en 1847, lorsque Carl Nipperdey publie la première édition savante du corpus césarien. Dans les *Quaestiones Caesarianae*, un important essai de critique textuelle introduisant son édition, le philologue affirme catégoriquement que des indications numériques sont altérées et doivent être corrigées dans certains passages du *Bellum Africum*. Selon lui, quatre unités citées dans les *codices* n'ont pas participé à la guerre d'Afrique : les II<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup> sont restées en Espagne et les VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> en Italie. Pour éliminer ce qu'il perçoit

7 *BAfr* 1, 5 ; 2, 1. Sauf indication contraire, les dates indiquées s'entendent avant J.-C. et sont celles du calendrier rectifié par Paul GROEBE.

8 *BAfr* 10, 1. Ces cohortes sont constituées de soldats qui n'ont pas pu accompagner César lors de sa campagne contre Pompée, car ils étaient malades en janvier 48. Elles ont été intégrées à la flotte pour mener des attaques en Illyrie (*BAlex* 44, 4), puis ont rejoint l'Afrique avec le premier convoi. Cela rend possible la confrontation entre Labienus et un vétéran de la X<sup>e</sup> à Ruspina (*BAfr* 16), à un moment où cette unité n'a pas encore traversé la Méditerranée : BOUVET 1949, p. 14, n. 24 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 553.

9 *BAfr* 53 ; 62, 1. Les indications chronologiques de l'anonyme sont rares et imprécises entre le 18 octobre 47 et le 22 janvier 46 : BOUVET 1949, p. xxiv-xxv ; 93.

10 GUICHARD 1774, p. 98-99 ; DRUMANN 1837 (in GROEBE 1906), p. 520.

comme des erreurs de copistes, Nipperdey émende quatre passages. Dans trois d'entre eux, il modifie sept numéros de légions et cela réduit à neuf les unités mentionnées dans son *Bellum Africum*. En deux endroits, il propose de rectifier des nombres de légions. À l'en croire, César n'en disposait que de dix : cinq de vétérans (V, IX, X, XIII, XIV) et cinq de recrues (XXV, XXVI, XXVIII, XXIX, plus une au numéro inconnu)<sup>11</sup>.

Le travail de Nipperdey marque une étape importante dans la publication des œuvres de César et de ses continuateurs, car il contribue à écarter la vulgate et met en évidence l'existence de deux classes de manuscrits : les *integri* ( $\alpha$ ) comportant uniquement le *Bellum Gallicum* et les *interpolati* ( $\beta$ ), sur lesquels figurent aussi le *Bellum ciuile* et les *Tria Bella*<sup>12</sup>. Les corrections du philologue sont jugées parfois excessives<sup>13</sup>, mais certaines de ses conjectures restent envisagées avec intérêt<sup>14</sup>. Du fait de son influence, la corruption des passages sur les légions du *Bellum Africum* fait aussitôt consensus<sup>15</sup>. Les éditeurs et les traducteurs adoptent des conjectures dans trois ou quatre des passages concernés<sup>16</sup>. Dans les cinq éditions publiées entre 1867 et 1927, des corrections réduisent à neuf les numéros légionnaires cités par l'anonyme<sup>17</sup>. Des historiens se prononcent encore pour un effectif total de douze unités<sup>18</sup>, mais l'hypothèse des dix légions s'impose largement<sup>19</sup>. Son hégémonie prend fin en 1949, avec la publication de l'édition d'Alphonse Bouvet. Cet éditeur adopte six conjectures sur les unités de César, mais il se

11 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 217-222.

12 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 37-48. Cf. HERING 1963, p. 3 ; BROWN 1972, p. 6-8 ; DAMON 2015, p. 4-5 ; GRILLO-KREBS 2018, p. 2-6.

13 STOFFEL 1887, I, p. 278 ; GRILLO-KREBS 2018, p. 3.

14 BOUVET 1949, p. liii ; BROWN 1972, p. 7 ; DAMON 2015, p. 4-5.

15 VEITH 1906, p. 547-548 ; 1912, p. 880-885 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 535-536 ; GSELL 1928, p. 50, n. 3 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 101-102 ; 105 ; CARTER 1997, p. 314-316 ; LORETO 2001, p. 398-399 ; 459 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 154, n. 286 ; 168, n. 358.

16 DÜBNER 1867 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949 ; WAY 1955 ; CARTER 1997 ; LORETO 2001 ; RAAFLAUB 2017 ; CIOFFI 2022. PONTET 1901, qui n'effectue qu'une correction, indique l'altération des trois autres passages et signale des conjectures.

17 DÜBNER 1867 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927.

18 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 139 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 712-719.

19 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 150-151 ; DOMASZEWSKI 1894, p. 173, n. 5 ; SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 82 ; VEITH 1906, p. 547-550 ; 1912, p. 880-888 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 523 ; 534-536 ; GSELL 1928, p. 50-51 ; PARKER 1928, p. 66-67 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 581.

montre plus critique que ses devanciers envers les corrections de Nipperdey. En *BAfr* 62, 1, Bouvet conserve une leçon des *codices* qui porte à onze les numéros légionnaires cités dans son texte<sup>20</sup>. Dans son sillage, des historiens reviennent au total de douze unités<sup>21</sup>. Les effectifs césariens continuent toutefois de faire l'objet d'incertitudes<sup>22</sup>.

Pour comprendre ce qui a amené Nipperdey à estimer altérées les indications sur les légions, il faut nous intéresser aux manuscrits employés par cet auteur. Dans son ouvrage, le philologue indique avoir utilisé six *codices* de la classe  $\beta$  : le Parisinus secundus (a), le Leidensis primus (b), le Scaligeranus (c), le Cuiacianus (d), le Hauniensis primus (e) et le Vindobonensis primus (f). Le premier et le dernier de cette liste, désormais désignés par les lettres T et V, font partie des plus fiables<sup>23</sup>. En tant que *descriptus* de U, le Hauniensis primus constitue lui aussi un témoin pertinent<sup>24</sup>. Cependant, les trois autres *codices* ont été identifiés comme des copies de T, inutiles à l'établissement du texte<sup>25</sup>.

Une telle présentation des faits pourrait amener à surestimer la documentation réunie par Nipperdey<sup>26</sup>. En réalité, son travail repose sur des collations effectuées par des tiers<sup>27</sup> et celles-ci sont parfois très incomplètes. Il ne connaît de V que les publications de Karl Schneider contenant le *Bellum Hispaniense* et les quatre premiers livres du *Bellum Gallicum*. Pour le Hauniensis primus, le philologue dispose seulement des transcriptions du *Bellum Gallicum* par Elberling et Whitte, ainsi que des observations critiques d'Elberling sur le *Bellum ciuile*<sup>28</sup>. Il possède enfin une transcription intégrale de T, dont Eduard Wölfflin déplorera plus tard le

20 BOUVET 1949, p. 59 (n. 99) et 101-102, suivi par WAY 1955, LORETO 2001 et CIOFFI 2022.

21 BOUVET 1949, p. xiv, n. 4 ; KEPPIE 1984, p. 110-111 ; MÜLLER 2001, p. 325-342 ; PORTE 2016, p. 61-62 ; 842 ; CADIOU 2018, p. 159, n. 182.

22 Les traductions de CARTER et RAAFLAUB ne comportent que neuf numéros légionnaires. CARTER 1997, p. 316 penche pour un total de neuf unités. LORETO 2001, p. 399 et 457-458 évalue leur nombre à onze.

23 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 37-48 ; 252. Cf. HERING 1963, p. 3 ; BROWN 1972, p. 7 ; DAMON 2015, p. 4.

24 HERING 1963, p. 3, n. 3 ; BROWN 1972, p. 7 ; 48 ; DAMON 2015, p. 4.

25 MEUSEL 1885, p. 176-179 ; 189 ; WÖLFFLIN 1893, p. 304 ; BROWN 1972, p. 7-8 ; 44-45.

26 BROWN 1972, p. 7 en fait le premier à utiliser V pour le *Bellum ciuile*, ce qui s'avère inexact. Si NIPPERDEY n'a pas mesuré le potentiel de U (DAMON 2015, p. 5, n. 10), c'est qu'il n'en disposait que de courts extraits tirés du Hauniensis primus.

27 DAMON 2015, p. 4, n. 8.

28 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 42-50.

	Nipperdey (1847)	Dübner (1867)	Wölfflin (1889)	Wölfflin (1896)	Pontet (1901)	Schneider (1905)	Klotz (1927)	Bouvet (1949)
Ashburnhamensis			A	S	D	S	S	S
Lovaniensis					E		L	L
Neapolitanus								N
Mediceus				W	L	W	W	M
Ursinianus		U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Riccardianus		F	F	F	F	F	R	R
Thuaneus	a	T	P	T	T	T	T	T
Vindobonensis		V	V	V	V	V	V	V

Fig. 2 : Les manuscrits employés pour établir le texte du *Bellum Africum*.

manque de fiabilité<sup>29</sup>. Cela explique que l'apparat critique de son *Bellum Africum* se limite aux variantes de T (a) et de ses trois copies (b, c et d), complétées par des leçons de l'édition de Frans van Oudendorp, publiée en 1737 (u). Nipperdey accorde toutefois un faible intérêt à cette dernière, qui lui semble refléter la vulgate<sup>30</sup>.

Sans surprise, son *Bellum Africum* est jugé décevant. Pour Rudolf Schneider, le philologue ressentait trop d'aversion envers l'anonyme pour pouvoir produire une bonne édition de son texte ; Wölfflin et Miodoński estiment de leur côté que leur prédécesseur n'a pas employé les meilleurs manuscrits<sup>31</sup>. De fait, l'édition de Nipperdey repose sur un seul témoin, quand J.F. Dübner peut exploiter des transcriptions complètes de quatre *codices* importants en 1867 et quand tous les éditeurs à partir de 1896 utilisent les cinq jugés les plus pertinents (fig. 2)<sup>32</sup>. Ce rapide état des lieux amène au constat que Nipperdey n'était pas en mesure d'exprimer un point de vue définitif sur l'altération de la tradition manuscrite.

29 WÖLFFLIN 1893, p. 304 estime à plus de mille les erreurs de transcription, constatées en collationnant lui-même le manuscrit original. Cf. DÜBNER 1867, I, p. xxv.

30 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 252.

31 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1884, p. xiv-xvi ; SCHNEIDER 1905, p. v.

32 DÜBNER 1867, I, p. viii ; xxv-xxvii ; WÖLFFLIN 1896, p. iii ; PONTET 1901, p. i-iv ; SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 158 ; KLOTZ 1927, p. vi-vii ; xiv ; BOUVET 1949, p. xlv-liv ; lxvii.

### 1. Le transfert des VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> légions

*Interim Varus classem, quam antea Uticae hiemis gratia subduxerat, cognito legionis VII et VIII ex Sicilia aduentu celeriter deducit ibique Gaetulis remigibus epibatisque complet insidiandique gratia ab Utica progressus Hadrumetum cum LV nauibus peruenit*<sup>33</sup>.

Ce passage est important, car il constitue le point de départ de toutes les corrections effectuées par Nipperdey. L'identité de la seconde légion fait l'objet de plusieurs variantes : VIII (S et U), *octaue* (M) et VIII (TV). Cette dernière leçon est forcément fautive, car les IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> légions ont traversé la Méditerranée ensemble<sup>34</sup>. Ne disposant que de T, le philologue conclut légitimement à une faute de copiste. Dans son appareil critique, il signale la leçon *legionis VII et VIII* qu'il connaît par l'intermédiaire d'Oudendorp, mais il n'en tient pas du tout compte dans les *Quaestiones Caesarianae*, où il se contente de rejeter la leçon fautive et d'en inférer la nécessité d'une conjecture.

S'appuyant sur un passage relatant la capture d'un centurion de la XIV<sup>e</sup> par P. Attius Varus, il propose de remplacer *legionis VII et VIII* par *legionis XIII et XIII*<sup>35</sup>. Cette conjecture l'amène à l'idée que *BAfr* 62 ne concerne pas un quatrième transport de troupes, mais rappelle l'arrivée du deuxième, déjà évoquée en *BAfr* 34. En modifiant les numéros des légions, Nipperdey fait ainsi disparaître un transport de troupes. Il en conclut que César ne reçoit pas six unités en renfort mais seulement quatre, ce qui induit un total de dix légions.

Cette correction élimine la VII<sup>e</sup> du *Bellum Africum* et réduit à onze le nombre de numéros légionnaires qui y figurent. Convaincu que le texte ne devrait pas en comporter plus de dix, Nipperdey effectue d'autres interventions pour évincer les numéros qui lui semblent excédentaires. Cela le conduit à remplacer la VIII<sup>e</sup> par la IX<sup>e</sup> en *BAfr* 60 et par la XIV<sup>e</sup> en *BAfr* 81, passage dans lequel il écarte aussi la II<sup>e</sup> au profit de la XIII<sup>e</sup>. Pour justifier ces corrections qui font disparaître les II<sup>e</sup>, VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> légions de notre source, il écrit simplement que les chiffres transmis sont altérés<sup>36</sup>.

33 *BAfr* 62, 1. Sauf mention contraire, nous reproduisons le texte du *Bellum Africum* établi par BOUVET et révisé par RICHARD. Pour les autres sources nous citons le texte des éditions publiées dans la CUF.

34 *BAfr* 53 : *legionis duae X et VIII, ex Sicilia nauibus onerariis profectae*.

35 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 220 ; 698. Cf. *BAfr* 44-46.

36 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 219-220 ; 696 ; 698 ; 708.

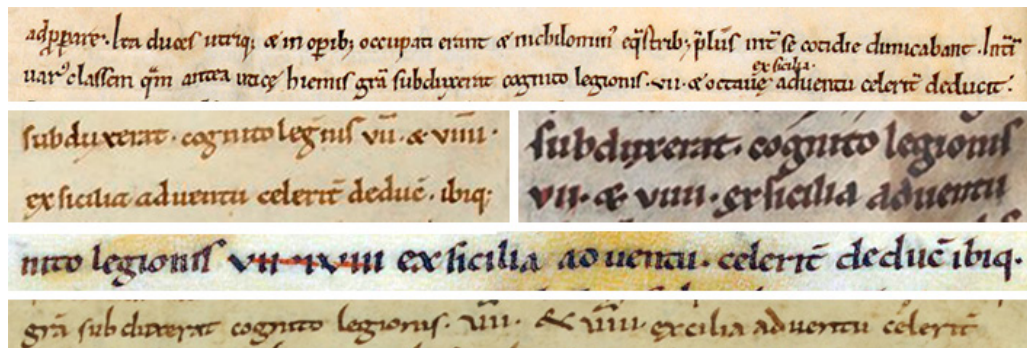


Fig. 3 : Les légions citées en *BAfr* 62, 1 dans les manuscrits M (f. 150v°), T (f. 146v°), V (f. 165r°), R (f. 170v°) et S (f. 146r°). Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (M, R et S), Bibliothèque nationale de France (T) et Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (V).

Vingt ans plus tard, Dübner dispose de deux manuscrits comportant la leçon fautive (TV) mais aussi de U et R, donnant la leçon plausible *VII et VIII*. Malgré cela, il se rallie à l'opinion de son prédécesseur dont il suit toutes les corrections. Comme la proposition de Nipperdey est peu compatible avec la chronologie des faits<sup>37</sup>, les éditeurs suivants optent pour une conjecture alternative : *legionis X et VIII*<sup>38</sup>. Le transport de troupes évoqué en *BAfr* 62 serait ainsi le troisième. Cette correction semble plus crédible, mais aucun argument n'est avancé pour justifier le rejet de la leçon transmise par SN et MUR. Deux historiens tentent de réhabiliter cette dernière<sup>39</sup>, sans parvenir à convaincre.

En toute logique, les éditeurs auraient dû démontrer l'irrecevabilité de cette leçon avant de proposer des conjectures. Comme aucun ne l'a fait, Georg Veith s'y est attelé. Pour lui, il est anormal que la VIII<sup>e</sup> apparaisse dans l'ordre de bataille d'Uzitta (*BAfr* 60) sans que son arrivée soit signalée au préalable. Cela lui paraît constituer une rupture dans le style de l'anonyme, qui annonce habituellement chaque renfort au fil de son récit<sup>40</sup>.

37 Selon l'anonyme, Varus avait tiré sa flotte au sec pour l'hiver et il l'a remise à la mer pour tenter d'intercepter les légions. Les XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> étant arrivées en Afrique début novembre 47, la conjecture de NIPPERDEY implique un hivernage très précoce (sur les périodes propices à la navigation, voir PORTE 2016, p. 416 sq.). De plus, le raid de Varus sur Leptis est survenu bien après, en décembre 47 ou début janvier 46.

38 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 (justifiée dans la note p. 110-111) ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; RAAFLAUB 2017.

39 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 296 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 715-716.

40 VEITH 1906, p. 548-549 ; 1912, p. 881-883 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 59 (n. 99) et 101-102.

Cette différence de traitement peut toutefois s'expliquer. Le débarquement des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> légions permet à César d'adopter une stratégie plus offensive (*BAfr* 34-37), celui des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> l'amène à prendre des sanctions à l'encontre de cadres de son armée (*BAfr* 53-54) et celui du dernier convoi lui permet de compléter ses unités avant l'affrontement décisif. Quand les VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> légions arrivent, César intègre aussitôt la seconde à son dispositif mais pas la première, qui semble le rejoindre plus tard.

Ce qui paraît intéresser l'anonyme n'est pas tant l'arrivée de ce renfort, que la façon dont César parvient à déjouer l'offensive ennemie qui en résulte. C'est en effet pour intercepter ces deux unités que P. Attius Varus a sorti sa flotte d'hivernage. Sa tentative ayant échoué, il lance un raid sur Leptis et César doit réagir rapidement pour y faire face (*BAfr* 62-63). Relater l'arrivée des VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> avant la confrontation d'Uzitta aurait entraîné une redite inutile.

Sensible à l'argument de Veith mais pas convaincu pour autant, Bouvet décide de conserver la leçon *legionis VII et VIII* et il est logiquement suivi par d'autres éditeurs<sup>41</sup>, car il paraît évident que le numéro de la VIII<sup>e</sup> a été corrompu dans la branche TV<sup>42</sup>.

## 2. L'ordre de bataille d'Uzitta

Ce passage a fait l'objet de corrections dans l'ensemble des éditions modernes. Nous reproduisons ici le texte de Klotz, en remplaçant ses conjectures sur les légions par les leçons des manuscrits.

*Caesaris autem acies hoc modo fuit conlocata : ut ab sinistro eius cornu ordiar et ad dextrum perueniam, habuit legionem VIII et VIII in sinistro cornu, XXX, XXVIII, XIII, XIV, XXVIII, XXVI in media acie. Ipsum autem dextrum cornu <...> <in> secunda autem acie fere in earum legionum partem cohortium conlocauerat, praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas. Tertiam autem aciem in sinistram suam cornu contulerat et usque ad aciei suae mediam legionem porrexerat et ita conlocauerat uti sinistram suam cornu <esset> triplex. Id eo consilio fecerat quod suum dextrum latus munitionibus adiuuabatur, sinistram autem equitatus hostium multitudinē uti resistere posset laborabat, eodemque suum omnem equitatum contulerat,*

41 BOUVET 1949, p. 59, n. 99 ; WAY 1955, p. 242 ; LORETO 2001, p. 240 ; 398 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 58-59 (avec une coquille dans le texte latin) ; 156-157, n. 294.

42 LORETO 2001, p. 398.

*et quod ei parum confidebat, praesidio his equitibus legionem V praemiserat leuemque armaturam inter equites interposuerat. Sagittarios uarie passimque locis certis maximeque in cornibus conlocauerat.*<sup>43</sup>

Nipperdey estime indispensable de corriger les numéros des trois premières légions. Pour les deux constituant l’aile gauche, il propose de restituer *habuit legionem X, VIII in sinistro cornu*. Au sujet de l’unité suivante, il affirme que le numéro *XXX* résulte d’une erreur de copiste et qu’il faut le rectifier en *XXV*<sup>44</sup>. Cependant, la tradition manuscrite est unanime (fig. 4) et aucun de ces numéros légionnaires ne soulève de difficulté. Les seules variantes concernent deux des légions du centre : la *XXVIII<sup>e</sup>* et la *XXIX<sup>e</sup>*. Aussi, la seule incertitude dans cette première phrase porte sur l’emplacement respectif de ces unités<sup>45</sup>.

	Aile gauche		Centre					
<b>M</b>	<b>IX</b>	<b>VIII</b>	<b>XXX</b>	<b>XXIX</b>	<b>XIII</b>	<b>XIV</b>	<b>XXVIII</b>	<b>XXVI</b>
<b>U</b>				<b>XXVIII</b>			<b>XXVII</b>	
<b>S T V</b>							<b>XXVIII</b>	
<b>R</b>							<b>XXIX</b>	
Nipperdey (1847)	X	IX	XXV	<b>XXVIII</b>	<b>XIII</b>	<b>XIV</b>	XXIX	<b>XXVI</b>
Wölfflin (1896)	IX	X	XXX	<b>XXIX</b>			XXVIII	
Schneider (1905)	IX	X	XXV	<b>XXVIII</b>			XXIX	

Fig. 4 : Les légions citées en *BAfr* 60, 1 selon les manuscrits et les éditeurs. Dans un souci de clarté, les numéros légionnaires sont simplifiés (IX au lieu de VIII) et les conjectures sont signalées par des cases grisées.

43 *BAfr* 60. Les unités de l’aile droite semblent avoir disparu dans une lacune, affectant tous les *codices*. Nous rétablissons les numéros légionnaires attestés par la tradition et la leçon *ferè in earum (codd.)* au lieu de la conjecture *ueteranarum*.

44 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 217-220 ; 696.

45 La leçon retenue par KLOTZ et BOUVET est celle de R. Dans M, les *XXVIII<sup>e</sup>* et *XXIX<sup>e</sup>* sont inversées. La leçon transmise par S et TV est fautive, car la *XXVIII<sup>e</sup>* y apparaît deux fois. Celle de U est suspecte, parce que la *XXVII<sup>e</sup>* se trouvait en Thessalie en 48 (CÉSAR, *BC* III, 34, 2) et aucune des légions impliquées dans la campagne contre Pompée — dont les *VIII<sup>e</sup>*, *IX<sup>e</sup>*, *X<sup>e</sup>* et sans doute les *VII<sup>e</sup>*, *XIII<sup>e</sup>* et *XIV<sup>e</sup>* — n’a pu faire partie du premier convoi pour l’Afrique. Alors que ses prédécesseurs indiquent à tort un *XXVIII* corrigé en *XXVIII* par une deuxième main, BOUVET a raison de lire *XXVII* sur U. Il omet toutefois de préciser que ce nombre, étrangement dépourvu de I long final, paraît résulter d’un grattage, ce qui pourrait expliquer l’absence du point censé séparer ce numéro légionnaire du suivant. Compte tenu du peu de place disponible, U devait initialement comporter le nombre *XXVIII*. Puisque R est considéré comme une copie de U (BROWN 1972, p. 48 ; 84), notre préférence va à la leçon de M.

### a. Les unités placées à l'aile gauche

Tandis que la tradition manuscrite place la IX<sup>e</sup> à l'extérieur et la VIII<sup>e</sup> à l'intérieur de l'aile gauche, Nipperdey décide de les inverser et de remplacer la VIII<sup>e</sup> par la X<sup>e</sup>. Tous les éditeurs du *Bellum Africum* le suivent<sup>46</sup>, sauf Schneider. Reprenant une idée de Stoffel, celui-ci conserve la IX<sup>e</sup> à l'endroit où la situent les *codices* et se contente de remplacer la VIII<sup>e</sup> par la X<sup>e</sup><sup>47</sup>.

Les conjectures de Nipperdey reposent sur sa conviction que la VIII<sup>e</sup> n'a pas participé à la campagne d'Afrique et sur son étonnement face à l'absence de la X<sup>e</sup> dans l'ordre de bataille d'Uzitta. Cela l'amène à placer la X<sup>e</sup> à côté de la IX<sup>e</sup>, à l'extrémité de l'aile gauche. Cette idée lui paraît confortée par *BAfr* 81, ce qui est étonnant : à Thapsus comme à Uzitta, les manuscrits situent les VIII<sup>e</sup> et IX<sup>e</sup> sur l'aile gauche, avec la première à l'intérieur et la seconde à l'extrémité de l'aile<sup>48</sup>. César a déjà eu recours à ce dispositif à Pharsale : il écrit qu'il a placé la X<sup>e</sup> à l'aile droite et la IX<sup>e</sup> à l'aile gauche, comme à son habitude, mais en associant cette fois la IX<sup>e</sup> à la VIII<sup>e</sup> pour compenser ses faibles effectifs<sup>49</sup>. La leçon *legionem VIII et VIII in sinistro cornu* est donc confortée par ce précédent et par le maintien de cette association à Thapsus, où la X<sup>e</sup> est encore à nouveau sur l'aile droite.

Le fait que la X<sup>e</sup> légion ne soit pas citée en *BAfr* 60, 1 est certes surprenant<sup>50</sup>, mais cela n'autorise pas à l'ajouter arbitrairement à l'aile gauche. Critiquant la conjecture de Nipperdey, Paul Groebe montre que cette unité était placée à l'aile droite à Pharsale, à Thapsus et à Munda<sup>51</sup> (fig. 7).

46 DÜBNER 1867 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; PONTET 1901 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949. Voir aussi WAY 1955 ; CARTER 1997 ; LORETO 2001 ; RAAFLAUB 2017 ; CIOFFI 2022.

47 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 295 ; SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 82 ; GSELL 1928, p. 102.

48 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 219. L'ordre de bataille d'Uzitta est décrit de gauche à droite, celui de Thapsus l'est de droite à gauche, en commençant par les ailes. Pour trouver les IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> associées sur l'aile gauche, il faut remonter en 57 : CÉSAR, *BG* II, 23.

49 CÉSAR, *BC* III, 89, 1 : *Caesar superius institutum seruans X legionem in dextro cornu, nonam in sinistro conlocauerat, tametsi erat Dyrrachinis proeliis uehementer adtenuata, et huic sic adiuxint octauam ut paene unam ex duabus efficeret, atque alteram alteri praesidio esse iusserat*. Cf. GROEBE 1906, p. 716-717.

50 BOUVET 1949, p. 101 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 581.

51 GROEBE 1906, p. 716-717 ; CÉSAR, *BC* III, 89, 1 (cité *supra*, n. 49) ; *BAfr* 81, 1 (cité *infra*) ; *BHisp* 30, 7 : *Hic decumani suum locum, cornum dextrum, tenebant* ; 31, 4.

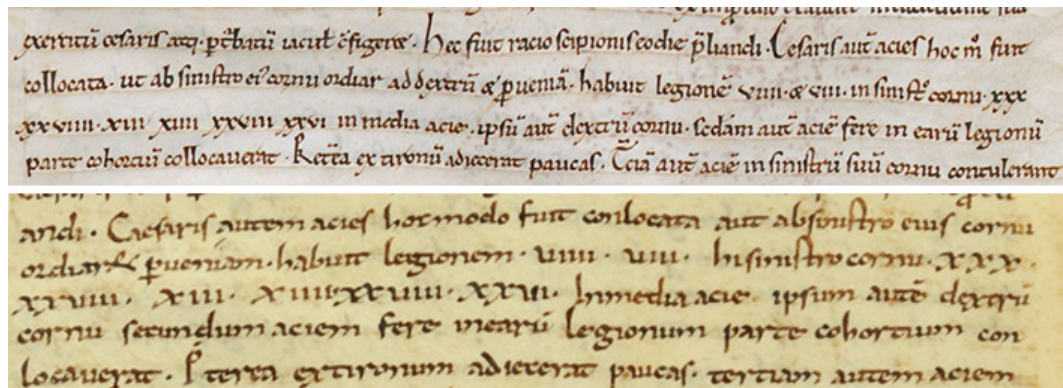


Fig. 5 : BAfr 60, 1-2 dans les *codices* M (f. 150<sup>o</sup>) et S (f. 145<sup>v</sup>o).

Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.

### b. La XXX<sup>e</sup> légion

Malgré l'unanimité des manuscrits, Nipperdey remplace le numéro de la XXX<sup>e</sup> par celui de la XXV<sup>e</sup> et tous les éditeurs suivent cette correction<sup>52</sup>, sauf Wölfflin. Le philologue suisse l'avait adoptée en 1889, mais il décide de rétablir la leçon des *codices* dans son édition de 1896, sans même juger utile de signaler la conjecture XXV dans son apparat critique<sup>53</sup>. Nipperdey justifie sa correction en affirmant que la XXX<sup>e</sup>, formée en 49, n'est plus composée de recrues lors de la guerre d'Afrique<sup>54</sup>. Comme il pense que César ne disposait que de cinq unités de vétérans portant les numéros V, IX, X, XIII et XIV, il exclut la possibilité que la XXX<sup>e</sup> ait été présente en Afrique.

Ce raisonnement est problématique. Pour commencer, il est inenvisageable que les soldats de la XXX<sup>e</sup>, simples recrues en 49, soient devenus des *ueteres milites* en trois ans, sans avoir participé à des batailles d'ampleur<sup>55</sup>. D'autre part, il est illogique d'invoquer le critère de l'ancienneté pour remplacer la XXX<sup>e</sup> par

52 DÜBNER 1867 ; PONTET 1901 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949 ; WAY 1955 ; CARTER 1997 ; LORETO 2001 ; RAAFLAUB 2017 ; CIOFFI 2022 (avec un développement p. 154, n. 286). *Contra* MÜLLER 2001, p. 326-327.

53 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 97 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896, p. xxxvi ; 82.

54 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 219-220.

55 DOMASZEWSKI 1894, p. 162, n. 4. La XXX<sup>e</sup> a participé à une brève campagne en Lusitanie, après laquelle elle continue d'être présentée comme inexpérimentée. Cf. *BAlex* 48, 2 ; 53, 5 ; 61, 1.

une autre unité formée au même moment<sup>56</sup>.

En dehors de Veith, qui s'est ensuite ravisé<sup>57</sup>, aucun historien ne valide la conjecture de Nipperdey. Une majorité considère que la XXX<sup>e</sup> était présente dans l'armée de César<sup>58</sup> et certains envisagent la participation conjointe des XXX<sup>e</sup> et XXV<sup>e</sup> à la guerre d'Afrique<sup>59</sup>, ce qui invalide l'argument du philologue. Plusieurs éditeurs adoptent sa correction tout en reconnaissant la faiblesse de son raisonnement<sup>60</sup>. Certains la justifient, en expliquant que la XXX<sup>e</sup> ne pouvait pas être en Afrique car elle se trouvait alors en Espagne<sup>61</sup>. Cette légion a certes été stationnée en Ulérieure, mais rien ne permet d'assurer qu'elle y est restée après 48<sup>62</sup>. L'adoption de cette correction par les éditeurs est peut-être liée à l'idée selon laquelle le numéro de cette unité de recrues n'a pas grande importance<sup>63</sup>. Nous verrons toutefois qu'il en va autrement.

### *c. La composition de l'aile droite*

Nipperdey a également proposé quelques corrections dans la phrase suivante, qui a fait l'objet de diverses interprétations. Le tableau ci-dessous présente les leçons de la tradition et le texte établi par quatre des principaux éditeurs.

Jugée suspecte, la leçon *ferē in earum* est corrigée en *ueteranarum* par la plupart des éditeurs, suivant une proposition d'Oudendorp<sup>64</sup>. Schneider écarte

---

56 PARKER 1928, p. 67, n. 1. Les légions portant les numéros XVI à XXX ont été formées dans la première moitié de l'année 49 : KEPPIE 1984, p. 104 et 200.

57 VEITH 1906, p. 404-405 ; 542 ; 547 ; 1912, p. 859 ; 870 ; 887. Après avoir estimé que la XXV<sup>e</sup> était présente en Afrique mais pas la XXX<sup>e</sup>, il considère la présence de la XXX<sup>e</sup> avérée et celle de la XXV<sup>e</sup> hypothétique.

58 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 132 ; 295 ; DOMASZEWSKI 1894, p. 162, n. 4 ; 173 ; 188 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 712-719 ; VEITH 1912 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 542 (malgré des doutes p. 523) ; GSELL 1928, p. 51 ; PARKER 1928, p. 67, n. 1 ; KEPPIE 1984, p. 110 ; 200-201 ; MÜLLER 2001, p. 79 ; 326-327 ; 333 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 91-92.

59 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 295 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 3 ; SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 4 ; 82 ; VEITH 1912, p. 859 ; 870 ; 887 ; PARKER 1928, p. 67 ; KEPPIE 1984, p. 110 ; 200-201.

60 KLOTZ 1927, p. 105 ; LORETO 2001, p. 399 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 154, n. 287.

61 KLOTZ 1927, p. 105 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 102. BOUVET se contredit lui-même dans son introduction (p. xv) et LORETO 2001, p. 399 et 437 commet la même erreur.

62 LORETO 2001, p. 399.

63 HOLMES 1923, p. 523 ; LORETO 2001, p. 399.

64 OUDENDORP 1737, p. 905, n. 2 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 154, n. 286.

<b>M U V</b>	ipsum autem dextrum cornu secundam autem aciem fere in earum legionum parte cohortium collocauerat praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas
<b>T</b>	fere ipsum autem dextrum cornum secundam autem aciem fere in earum legionum parte cohortium conlocauerat praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas
<b>S</b>	ipsum autem dextrum cornu secundum aciem fere in earum legionum parte cohortium conlocauerat praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas
Nipperdey (1847)	<i>In suo autem dextro cornu e secunda acie ueteranarum legionum partem cohortium collocauerat, praeterea ex tironum paucas adiecerat.</i>
Schneider (1905)	†ipsum autem† dextrum cornu. <In> secunda autem acie †fere in earum† legionum partem cohortium conlocauerat, praeterea †ex tironum† adiecerat paucas.
Klotz (1927)	Ipsum autem dextrum cornu <...> <in> secunda autem acie ueteranarum legionum partem cohortium conlocauerat, praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas.
Bouvet (1949)	Ipsa autem dextro cornu [secundam autem aciem] ueteranarum legionum partem cohortium collocauerat, praeterea ex tironum adiecerat paucas.

Fig. 6 : Les leçons des *codices* et le texte établi par les éditeurs en *BAfr* 60, 2.

cette conjecture car il doute de l'authenticité de la leçon *ex tironum*<sup>65</sup>. Selon Nipperdey, César aurait constitué son aile droite en prélevant douze cohortes sur l'aile gauche et sur quatre des légions formant le centre. Wölfflin et Miodoński accueillent favorablement cette hypothèse, mais Schneider la rejette parce qu'il la juge discutable<sup>66</sup>.

De son côté, Bouvet considère *secundam autem aciem* comme une glose et il envisage lui aussi une aile droite composée de cohortes de vétérans et de recrues<sup>67</sup>. Cependant, un tel dispositif est peu crédible : la XXVIII<sup>e</sup> (ou la XXIX<sup>e</sup>) et la XXVI<sup>e</sup> étant inexpérimentées, tout le côté droit aurait été rendu vulnérable avec une aile réduite à douze cohortes hétéroclites. Puisque César a l'habitude d'encadrer ses unités de recrues par d'autres qui ont fait leurs preuves, il serait plus logique qu'il ait confié l'aile droite à des légions aguerries.

Schneider estime comme Stoffel que cette aile pourrait avoir été formée par deux des unités du centre, mais cette idée n'est pas conforme au texte transmis. Il envisage une seconde hypothèse plus pertinente : la X<sup>e</sup> était évoquée en début de phrase, mais une altération l'a fait disparaître au profit de la leçon fautive

65 SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 83.

66 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 217-218 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 98. *Contra* SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 82.

67 BOUVET 1949, p. 102. CIOFFI 2022, p. 154, n. 286 le suit, mais avec perplexité.

*ipsum autem*<sup>68</sup>. Suivi par plusieurs éditeurs, Klotz suppose enfin qu'une lacune après *dextrum cornu* pourrait avoir effacé l'aile droite de la tradition<sup>69</sup>. Malgré cela, Schneider et Klotz placent la X<sup>e</sup> sur l'aile gauche, comme Nipperdey. Les éditeurs attribuant dix unités à César n'en ont plus qu'une à placer à l'aile droite. C'est également le cas de Bouvet, car il pense que les VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> ne sont pas encore arrivées<sup>70</sup>. Toutefois, la mention de la VIII<sup>e</sup> dans l'ensemble des *codices* en *BAfr* 60, 1 implique que César l'a déjà reçue en renfort : cela signifie que le général dispose d'au moins onze légions à Uzitta.

La solution qui paraît la plus satisfaisante consiste à postuler qu'une lacune a fait disparaître les numéros des II<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup><sup>71</sup> légions juste après *dextrum cornu*. Ces deux unités constituaient sans doute l'aile droite, comme à Thapsus (fig. 7). La suite du texte semble indiquer que César a employé une formation en *triplex acies*, en rajoutant des cohortes de recrues en deuxième ligne<sup>72</sup> et en concentrant toute la troisième ligne sur la partie gauche de son dispositif. Les cohortes faisant office de réserve semblent avoir été doublées sur la gauche, en leur rajoutant celles des unités placées du côté le moins exposé. Si cette interprétation est valide, la conjecture d'Oudendorp devient superflue.

### 3. *L'ordre de bataille de César à Thapsus*

[...] *ipse acie triplici conlocata, legione X secundaque dextro cornu, VIII et IX sinistro oppositis, quinque legiones <...> in quarta acie ad ipsa cornua quinque cohortibus contra bestias conlocatis, sagittariis, funditoribus in utrisque cornibus dispositis leuique armatura inter equites interiecta* [...] <sup>73</sup>.

Du fait des affirmations de Nipperdey, plusieurs numéros légionnaires sont

68 SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 82-83. STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 132 imagine une aile droite formée par les XXX<sup>e</sup> et XXIX<sup>e</sup> légions.

69 KLOTZ 1927, p. 105 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 101 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 581 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 154, n. 286.

70 BOUVET 1949, p. 101-102.

71 SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 82 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 715-717 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 101.

72 Ces cohortes de recrues sont possiblement constituées de transfuges de l'armée de Scipion : *BAfr* 35.

73 *BAfr* 81, 1. Le texte reproduit est celui de WÖLFFLIN 1896, dans lequel nous retirons les conjectures XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> pour rétablir les leçons des manuscrits, *secundaque* et VIII.

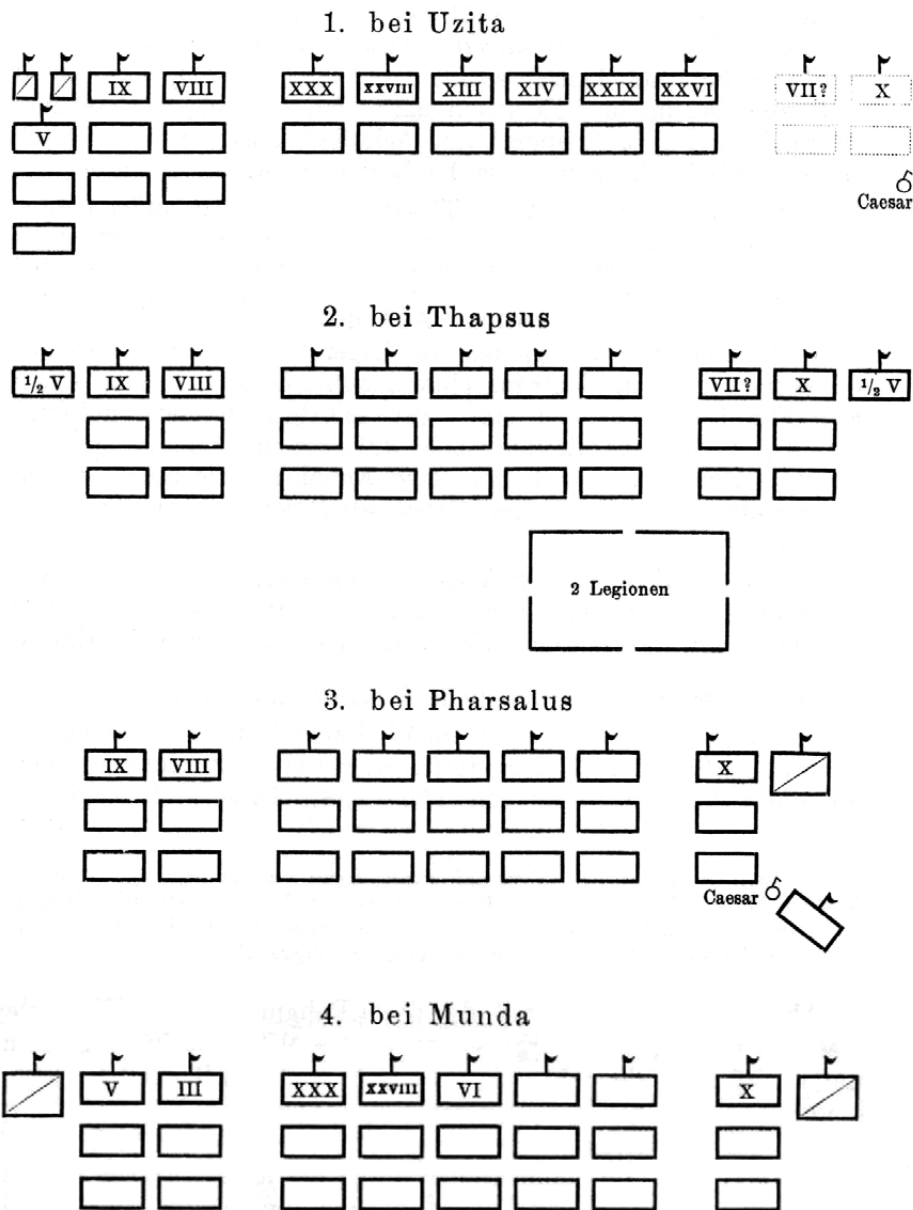


Fig. 7 : Les ordres de bataille césariens selon Paul GROEBE (1906, p. 713-714). Pour Uzitta, nous suggérons d'inverser les XXVIII<sup>e</sup> et XXIX<sup>e</sup> (leçon de M) et de postuler la présence de la II<sup>e</sup> plutôt que de la VII<sup>e</sup> à l'aile droite. Les cohortes formant la troisième ligne ont peut-être aussi renforcé certaines légions du centre (XXX, XXIX, XIII). Sur le schéma de Thapsus, il faut rétablir la II<sup>e</sup> (*codd.*) à la place de la VII<sup>e</sup> (Groebe).

	Aile gauche		Centre	Aile droite	
<b>Codd.</b>	<b>IX</b>	<b>VIII</b>	<b>quinque legiones</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>X</b>
Nipperdey (1847)	IX	XIV	?	XIII	X
Wölfflin (1896)			quinque legiones		
Schneider (1905)	XIV	XIII	?	IX	
Groebe (1906)	IX	VIII	quinque legiones	VII	
Bouvet (1949)			?		

Fig. 8 : Les légions citées en *B Afr* 81, 1 selon les *codices*, les éditeurs et GROEBE. Les cases grisées signalent les conjectures et l'incertitude qui en résulte.

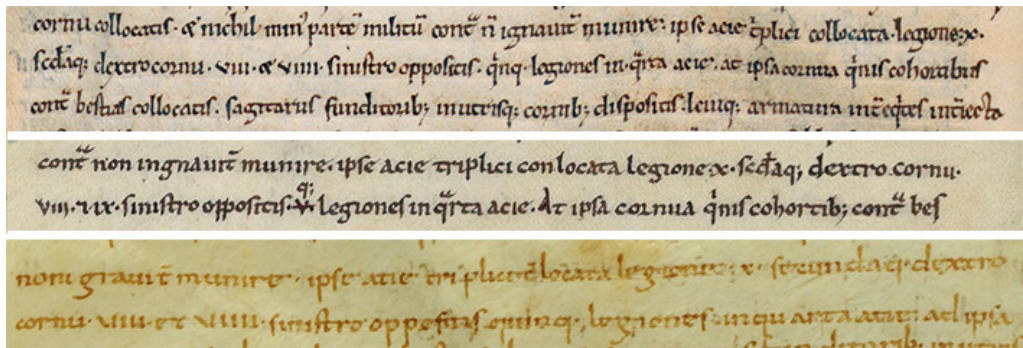


Fig. 9 : Détails des manuscrits M (f. 152v°), U (f. 104v°) et S (f. 150r°). Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (M et S) et Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (U).

jugés corrompus dans ce passage<sup>74</sup> et presque tous les éditeurs jugent nécessaire de remplacer le *quinque legiones* des manuscrits par une mention de la V<sup>e</sup> légion. Les principales propositions sont présentées dans le tableau ci-dessus (fig. 8).

### a. L'identité des légions placées aux ailes

Persuadé que la II<sup>e</sup> légion n'a pas participé à la guerre d'Afrique, Nipperdey estime que la leçon *secundaque* résulte d'une erreur de copiste. D'après lui, c'est la XIII<sup>e</sup> qui devait figurer au côté de la X<sup>e</sup> dans le texte de l'archétype. La leçon des manuscrits, devenue suspecte, est écartée par l'ensemble des éditeurs. Ceux-

74 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 220-221 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 531, n. 7 ; GSELL 1928, p. 130, n. 8 ; CARTER 1997, p. 232 ; 316, n. 81 ; LORETO 2001, p. 459 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 593 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 168-169, n. 358.

ci optent pour trois conjectures différentes : *XIIIque*, *VIIIque* ou *se[ptim]aque*. La dernière, qui semble la plus vraisemblable, est proposée par Groebe et suivie par Bouvet. Pour justifier la correction du texte, ces deux auteurs avancent l'idée que la II<sup>e</sup> légion ne pouvait pas être à Thapsus en 46, parce qu'elle se trouvait alors en Espagne<sup>75</sup>. Pourtant, cette affirmation ne peut être confirmée par aucune source : nous le verrons lorsque nous examinerons l'origine des troupes rassemblées en Sicile en 47. Les trois conjectures proposées sont arbitraires et obligent à postuler que le numéro de l'une des douze unités césariennes n'est jamais cité par l'auteur du *Bellum Africum*. Toutes trois ont été formulées sans avoir montré au préalable que la leçon des *codices* était irrecevable. Comme cette dernière ne semble finalement contredite par aucun élément historique ou philologique, rien ne justifie que l'on évince la II<sup>e</sup> légion du texte<sup>76</sup>.

Les unités de l'aile gauche font également l'objet de conjectures. Ayant éliminé la VIII<sup>e</sup> dans deux autres passages, Nipperdey ne peut pas conserver le VIII<sup>e</sup> des *codices* et il opte cette fois pour la XIV<sup>e</sup>. De son côté, Schneider décale la IX<sup>e</sup> sur l'aile droite et remplace les VIII<sup>e</sup> et IX<sup>e</sup> par les XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup><sup>77</sup>.

L'unité dont César a placé cinq cohortes sur chaque aile, en quatrième ligne, face aux éléphants, n'est pas nommée. Cependant la suite du *Bellum Africum* et un passage d'Appien d'Alexandrie permettent de déterminer qu'il s'agit de la V<sup>e</sup> légion<sup>78</sup>.

### b. Le nombre d'unités placées au centre

Pour les cinq légions du centre, le texte transmis comporte un problème de syntaxe<sup>79</sup>, que l'on a tenté de résoudre soit par une correction, soit en postulant une lacune entre *quinque legiones* et *in quarta acie*. D'après les *codices*, César a déployé douze unités : deux gardent le camp (*BAfr* 80, 4), cinq sont placées

75 GROEBE 1906, p. 718 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 531, n. 7 ; 542 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 105 ; LORETO 2001, p. 459. *Contra* MÜLLER 2001, p. 331-332.

76 MÜLLER 2001, p. 327-335. Cet auteur propose d'ailleurs de remplacer le numéro de la VII<sup>e</sup> par celui de la II<sup>e</sup> en *BAfr* 60, mais cela repose sur un postulat erroné attribuant à César une cinquième unité de recrues au numéro inconnu.

77 SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 111. L'auteur invoque un parallèle avec *BAfr* 60, 1, qui repose en fait sur l'une de ses conjectures.

78 *BAfr* 81, 1 ; 84, 1 ; APPIEN, *BC* II, 96.

79 VEITH 1912, p. 885, n. 2 ; MÜLLER 2001, p. 334, n. 1643.

aux ailes (les X<sup>e</sup>, II<sup>e</sup>, VIII<sup>e</sup>, IX<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup>) et cinq composent le centre. Ce nombre de légions ne convient pas à Nipperdey, qui propose de lire *quinta legione* au lieu de *quinque legiones*<sup>80</sup>. Dans le même ordre d'idée, Ludwig Vielhaber émet la conjecture *quintae legionis*, qui est adoptée par la plupart des éditeurs<sup>81</sup>. Ces deux corrections supposent que l'archétype n'indiquait pas le nombre d'unités constituant le centre, mais le numéro de la légion placée aux ailes face aux éléphants. Comme le texte remanié ne comporte aucune indication sur le centre, différentes estimations sont avancées sur l'effectif susceptible de s'y trouver<sup>82</sup>.

Approuvé par Paul Groebe, Wölfflin conserve la leçon *quinque legiones* et indique la présence d'une lacune dans la suite de la phrase<sup>83</sup>. Cette solution paraît judicieuse : après avoir détaillé la composition des deux ailes, il aurait été étonnant que l'anonyme omette de décrire le centre<sup>84</sup>.

Bien qu'ils attribuent douze légions à César, Alphonse Bouvet et Markus Müller estiment nécessaire de corriger le *quinque legiones* des manuscrits. Selon eux, il est impossible que toutes les légions aient été alignées face à l'ennemi, car César avait placé des garnisons dans différentes villes<sup>85</sup> et venait de charger trois cohortes de bloquer l'accès à Thapsus (*BAfr* 80, 2). La quantité de cohortes défendant Leptis, Ruspina, Acylla, Zeta et Thabena ne peut être déterminée avec certitude<sup>86</sup>. Tandis que Bouvet les évalue à vingt-cinq ou vingt-six, ouvrages défensifs compris, Veith pense que quinze suffisaient à assurer la protection des

80 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 221 ; 708 ; DÜBNER 1867 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889.

81 POLASCHEK 1892, p. 978 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949 ; WAY 1955 ; CARTER 1997 ; LORETO 2001 ; RAAFLAUB 2017 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 76 ; 168, n. 358. Cf. MÜLLER 2001, p. 327, n. 1618 ; 334.

82 Trois légions et demie selon MÜLLER 2001, p. 334, n. 1643 ; trois selon NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 221 ; deux selon POLASCHEK 1892, p. 978, VEITH 1906, p. 427 et CARTER 1997, p. 316, n. 81 ; une ou deux selon HOLMES 1923, p. 531, GSELL 1928, p. 130-131 et BOUVET 1949, p. 105 ; une selon VEITH 1912, p. 877.

83 WÖLFFLIN 1896, p. xl ; 95 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 534, n. 8.

84 POLASCHEK 1892, p. 979.

85 *BAfr* 9, 1 ; 29, 2 ; 43 ; 67, 1 ; 68, 4 ; 77, 2 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 105 ; MÜLLER 2001, p. 333, n. 1640 ; 334, n. 1643.

86 L'auteur du *Bellum Africum* n'indique pas toujours les nombres de cohortes (*BAfr* 67-68) et il peut avoir omis de signaler le redéploiement de certaines garnisons. Les chiffres transmis sont aussi parfois sujets à caution. Ainsi, les six cohortes placées à Leptis en *BAfr* 9 ne sont plus que trois (MUTV) ou quatre (S) en *BAfr* 29, 2. En *BAfr* 43, une lacune empêche de savoir combien défendent Acylla.

différentes villes<sup>87</sup>.

En réalité, la quantité de cohortes concernées n'a aucune incidence sur le nombre d'unités présentes à Thapsus. Lorsque César détache des cohortes pour garder un camp ou des bagages, il ne précise pas que les légions engagées au combat sont incomplètes, car cela va de soi<sup>88</sup>. L'anonyme fait référence aux dix cohortes de la V<sup>e</sup> mais il ne dit pas que les autres unités sont au complet. Ce sont les moins expérimentées, en particulier celles laissées à la garde du camp, qui ont dû fournir l'essentiel voire la totalité des garnisons : César ne pouvait pas se permettre d'affaiblir ses meilleures légions à la veille d'une bataille décisive. Le centre du dispositif césarien devait par conséquent comprendre cinq unités plus ou moins complètes : trois de vétérans (VII, XIII et XIV) et deux de recrues.

Après avoir examiné les passages dans lesquels les numéros légionnaires ont été corrigés à tort, nous allons nous pencher sur ceux où les conjectures ont porté sur des nombres d'unités.

#### 4. Le nombre des légions de vétérans

Peu de temps après la confrontation d'Uzitta, l'auteur anonyme nous apprend que César a employé huit légions expérimentées pour déjouer une embuscade de Labienus :

*Caesar interim, de insidiis Labieni ex perfugis certior factus, paucos dies ibi commoratus, dum hostes cotidiano instituto saepe idem faciendo in negligentiam adducerentur, subito mane imperat porta decumana legiones se VIII ueteranas cum parte equitatus sequi atque equitibus praemissis neque opinantes insidiatores subito <adortus> in conuallibus latentes leui armatura concidit circiter D, reliquos in fugam turpissimam coniecit<sup>89</sup>.*

Parce qu'il est persuadé que César ne dispose que de cinq légions de vétérans lors de cette campagne, Nipperdey affirme qu'une erreur de copiste a transformé le chiffre III en un VIII<sup>90</sup> et qu'il suffit de retirer le V pour rétablir le texte de l'archétype. Cependant, seul U transmet le nombre d'unités en chiffres romains : tous

87 VEITH 1912, p. 886 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 105. Comme le signale VEITH, les garnisons ont pu être réduites avant l'affrontement décisif. Cf. HOLMES 1923, p. 527 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 102.

88 VEITH 1912, p. 884-885.

89 *BAfr* 66, 1. Le texte reproduit est celui de BOUVET, dans lequel nous rétablissons le nombre d'unités transmis par les manuscrits (VIII au lieu de la conjecture III).

90 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 219.

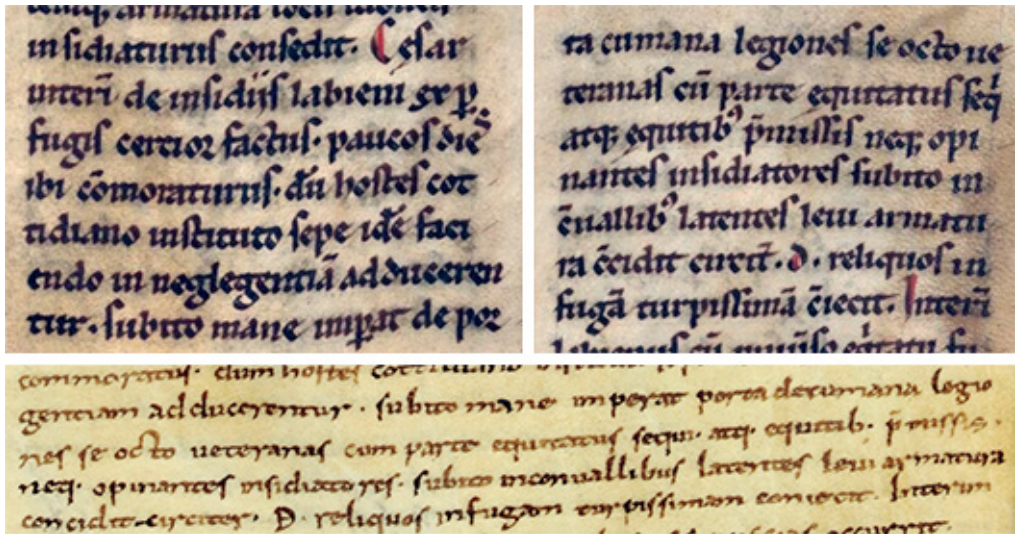


Fig. 10 : *BAfr* 66, 1 dans le *codex* V (f. 166<sup>r</sup>), avec un détail de S (f. 146<sup>v</sup>).  
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (V) et Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (S).

les autres témoins comportent *octo* en toutes lettres<sup>91</sup>. Tandis que le philologue se contente de signaler sa proposition dans son apparat critique<sup>92</sup>, les éditeurs suivants intègrent la conjecture *III* à leur texte<sup>93</sup>. Certains estiment avec Nipperdey que César n'avait pas plus de cinq légions de vétérans<sup>94</sup> et que l'emploi de huit unités aurait été disproportionné par rapport aux troupes engagées par l'ennemi<sup>95</sup>. Labienus n'a certes placé que deux légions en embuscade, mais il dispose aussi d'un important effectif de cavalerie et d'infanterie légère<sup>96</sup>.

Spéculer sur les troupes nécessaires à une telle opération ne suffit pas à invalider le texte transmis par les *codices*. Il semble plus judicieux de vérifier s'il est possible que César ait disposé de huit légions de vétérans à ce stade de la guerre d'Afrique. Les VII<sup>e</sup>, VIII<sup>e</sup>, IX<sup>e</sup>, X<sup>e</sup>, XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup>, qui font partie de son armée

91 BOUVET 1949, p. 62 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 159, n. 305.

92 NIPPERDEY 1847 ; DÜBNER 1867 ; PONTET 1901.

93 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; SCHNEIDER 1905 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949 ; WAY 1955 ; CARTER 1997 ; LORETO 2001 ; RAAFLAUB 2017 ; CIOFFI 2022.

94 STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 296 ; GSELL 1928, p. 106, n. 4 ; CARTER 1997, p. 315 ; RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 584.

95 NIPPERDEY 1847, p. 219 ; STOFFEL 1887, II, p. 296 ; WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 105.

96 *BAfr* 65, 3. Sur cette cavalerie, voir aussi *BAfr* 60,4 et 61, 2.

depuis la conquête des Gaules, entrent incontestablement dans cette catégorie<sup>97</sup>. C'est également le cas de la V<sup>e</sup>, que l'anonyme qualifie de *ueterana* (*BAfr* 1, 5), mais aussi de la II<sup>e</sup>, qui est décrite comme expérimentée par l'auteur du *Bellum Alexandrinum*<sup>98</sup>. Comme huit unités de vétérans étaient présentes en Afrique, il est impossible de rejeter *a priori* la validité du texte transmis.

### 5. Le nombre des légions de recrues

Pour compléter cette étude, il faut revenir aux deux premiers paragraphes du *Bellum Africum*, qui nous informent sur les forces disponibles lors des préparatifs siciliens de la campagne. L'anonyme écrit que César était prêt à embarquer avec une seule légion de recrues (*BAfr* 1, 1), puis qu'il a été rejoint par d'autres unités, dont la V<sup>e</sup> composée de vétérans :

*Interim in dies et naues longae adaugeri et onerariae complures eodem concurrere, et legiones tironum conuenire in his ueterana legio quinta, equitum ad II milia*<sup>99</sup>.

Bien que présentée comme *ueterana*, la V<sup>e</sup> semble incluse dans un groupe d'unités inexpérimentées. Pour résoudre cette difficulté, John Davies a proposé en 1727 de remplacer *in his* par *cum his*. Wölfflin et Miodoński jugent cette solution plausible mais ils préfèrent supprimer *tironum*, qui leur paraît provenir d'une glose<sup>100</sup>. Les éditeurs suivants adoptent la conjecture *legiones tironum conuenire IIII, ueterana legio quinta*, suggérée en 1891 par Schneider<sup>101</sup>.

Cette émendation prend appui sur le début de la phrase suivante : *Legionibus collectis VI* (*BAfr* 2, 1). Elle permet certes de distinguer la V<sup>e</sup> des unités de recrues, mais en indiquant le nombre de ces dernières, elle rajoute dans le texte une précision absente de la tradition. Par ailleurs, elle repose sur un présupposé inexact, selon lequel César avait cinq unités de recrues, dont une au numéro in-

97 GROEBE 1906, p. 702-709 ; KEPPIE 1984, p. 81-97.

98 *BALex* 57 ; 58, 1 : *ueteres legiones* ; 61, 1 : *ueteranas multisque proeliis expertas legiones*. Ces passages concernent la II<sup>e</sup>, la légion *uernacula* et six cohortes de la V<sup>e</sup>.

99 *BAfr* 1, 5. Nous reproduisons le texte de BOUVET en remplaçant la conjecture *IIII* par le *in his* des manuscrits.

100 WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889, p. 3.

101 SCHNEIDER 1891, p. 247 ; WÖLFFLIN 1896 ; PONTET 1901 ; KLOTZ 1927 ; BOUVET 1949 ; WAY 1955 ; LORETO 2001 ; CIOFFI 2022. Dans son édition, SCHNEIDER 1905 combine sa proposition et celle de DAVIES : « *legiones tironum conuenire IIII, cum his ueterana legio quinta* ».

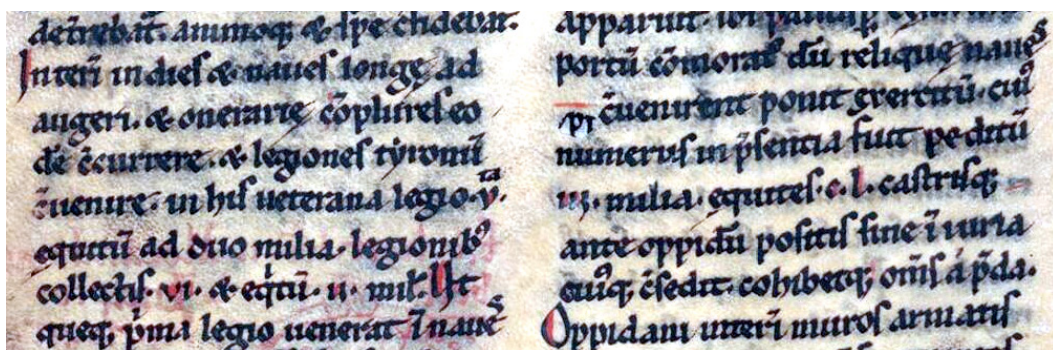


Fig. 11 : Détail du manuscrit V (f. 153v<sup>o</sup>). Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

connu. Dans les faits, il n'en avait que quatre : les XXVI<sup>e</sup>, XXVIII<sup>e</sup>, XXIX<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup>. S'il fallait véritablement remplacer *in his* par un chiffre, il conviendrait donc plutôt de lire *legiones tironum conuenire III*.

Selon le texte du *Bellum Africum* tel qu'il nous est parvenu, la sixième légion qui accompagne César en octobre 47 est nécessairement la II<sup>e</sup>. Le fait qu'elle ne soit pas davantage mise en avant en *BAfr* 1, 5 s'explique peut-être par une gêne de l'anonyme, liée à l'implication de cette unité dans les troubles qui ont secoué l'Espagne ultérieure l'année précédente (*BAlex* 53-64). Il est également possible que les faits d'armes de la *ueterana legio quinta*, particulièrement notables lors de la campagne d'Afrique, aient éclipsé ceux de la II<sup>e</sup>, dont le numéro n'est cité qu'une seule fois par l'anonyme, contre six pour la V<sup>e</sup>. Cette omission pourrait s'inscrire dans une stratégie narrative de l'anonyme, qui insiste énormément sur l'inexpérience des troupes césariennes dans sa description des opérations précédant l'arrivée des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> légions. Le fait de ponctuer son récit de multiples références aux *tirones* lui permet de louer le courage de César, prêt à embarquer avec une seule unité de recrues, de justifier ensuite son attitude défensive, que l'ennemi présente comme de la lâcheté, puis de le dédouaner des revers subis à Hadrumète et à Ruspina<sup>102</sup>. Ce procédé aurait perdu en efficacité si l'anonyme avait précisé d'emblée que César pouvait compter sur deux légions expérimentées et sept cohortes issues de ses meilleures unités. Pour finir, il ne semble pas impossible que le texte ait été affecté par une éventuelle lacune<sup>103</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> CADIOU 2018, p. 148-152 : *BAfr* 1, 1 et 5 ; 5 ; 10, 3 ; 16 ; 19, 2 ; 31, 8 et 9 ; 32, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Cela pourrait expliquer le fait que les sept cohortes de vétérans, totalement absentes du récit des préparatifs siciliens d'octobre 47, apparaissent subitement en *BAfr* 10.

### 6. *L'origine des troupes concentrées en Sicile*

Si aucune source n'indique explicitement la provenance des troupes rassemblées dans l'île, le *Bellum Alexandrinum* permet de savoir que trois des six légions constituant le premier convoi étaient stationnées en Espagne ultérieure l'année précédente : la II<sup>e</sup>, la V<sup>e</sup> et la XXX<sup>e</sup><sup>104</sup>. Q. Cassius Longinus, en charge de cette province, avait reçu de César l'ordre de lancer une offensive en Afrique au printemps 48. Il avait levé la V<sup>e</sup> légion et équipé trois mille cavaliers à cette fin<sup>105</sup>, mais une tentative d'assassinat puis la révolte d'une partie de ses troupes l'avaient contraint à annuler l'expédition. Deux unités, la *uernacula*<sup>106</sup> et la II<sup>e</sup>, s'étaient soulevées alors qu'il s'app préparait à les faire passer en Afrique, entraînant avec elles six cohortes de la V<sup>e</sup>. Longinus ne pouvait compter que sur ses légions de recrues, les XXI<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup>, ainsi que sur quatre cohortes de la V<sup>e</sup>. Les troubles ont pris fin grâce à Lépide, gouverneur de l'Espagne citérieure, intervenu avec trente-cinq cohortes légionnaires<sup>107</sup>. Confronté à l'échec de Curion en 49<sup>108</sup> puis à celui de Longinus en 48, César a finalement décidé de mener lui-même les opérations. Selon toute vraisemblance, il a ordonné à Lépide et à Trebonius, le remplaçant de Longinus, d'envoyer des troupes en Sicile pour préparer sa propre expédition. Le contingent transféré d'Espagne en Sicile comprenait la II<sup>e</sup>, la V<sup>e</sup>, la XXX<sup>e</sup>, des escadrons de cavalerie hispanique<sup>109</sup> et peut-être une ou deux des quatre unités stationnées en Espagne citérieure<sup>110</sup>.

Comme nous l'avons signalé en examinant l'ordre de bataille de Thapsus, la II<sup>e</sup> légion a été évincée de *BAfr* 81, 1 au motif qu'elle était restée en Espagne et

104 *BAlex* 50, 3 ; 52, 1 ; 53, 4-5 ; 54, 2-3 ; 55, 1 ; 57, 1-5.

105 *BAlex* 50, 3 : *Quintam legionem nouam conscribit. [...] Complentur equitum III milia maximisque ornantur inpensis.*

106 Sur cette légion recrutée parmi les citoyens romains établis en Espagne, voir CADIOU 2008, p. 612-627 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 43, n. 115.

107 *BAlex* 56-64. Cf. CADIOU 2008, p. 132.

108 CÉSAR, *BC* I, 30, 2 ; II, 23-44.

109 *BAfr* 1-2 ; 5 ; 39, 2 : *imperat turmae Hispanorum ut ad proximum collem propere accurrerent praesidiumque inde deturbarent locumque caperent.*

110 Avec une garnison de neuf légions en 48, la Péninsule ibérique était le principal réservoir de troupes pour la campagne d'Afrique. La XXVIII<sup>e</sup> était peut-être en Citérieure en 48 : comme la XXX<sup>e</sup>, elle a participé aux guerres d'Afrique et d'Espagne. CICÉRON, *Fam.* X, 32, 4 indique que ces deux unités étaient en Ulérieure en juin 43. Cf. DOMASZEWSKI 1894, p. 173 ; VEITH 1912, p. 859 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 92-95.

ne pouvait donc pas avoir participé à la campagne africaine de César en 47. Bien qu'elle ne soit étayée par aucune source, cette hypothèse a entraîné la correction d'un passage du *Bellum Hispaniense* décrivant les troupes de Cnaeus Pompée : les *codices* indiquent que parmi ses quatre unités les plus fiables, *duae fuerunt vernaculae, quae a Trebonio transfugerant* (*BHisp* 7, 4), ce qui implique que la garnison d'Ultérieure a été renforcée par une seconde légion formée sur place. Comme l'anonyme raconte la capture d'un *speculator de legione II Pompeiana* et n'évoque qu'une seule *uernacula* en d'autres endroits, Theodor Mommsen a proposé de lire *duae fuerunt uernacula e[st II] quae a Trebonio transfugerant*<sup>111</sup>.

Cette conjecture, plébiscitée par les éditeurs du *Bellum Hispaniense* comme par les historiens<sup>112</sup>, a renforcé l'idée selon laquelle la II<sup>e</sup> n'aurait jamais quitté l'Ultérieure. Cependant, si cette correction paraît séduisante au premier abord, elle s'avère improbable au regard du contexte et de l'attitude récente des unités concernées. Il semble unimaginable que César et ses légats, quelques mois après la révolte de 48, aient laissé la II<sup>e</sup> et la *uernacula* ensemble en Ultérieure, tandis qu'ils retireraient deux unités fiables de la province. Après un tel soulèvement, il aurait été logique que des mesures soient prises pour éviter tout risque de récidive, le minimum étant que les deux légions soient séparées et encadrées par des troupes de confiance. Le transfert de la II<sup>e</sup> vers la Sicile, qui est suggéré par *BAfr* 81, 1, paraît représenter une solution idéale, puisqu'il permet d'affranchir cette unité expérimentée de l'influence néfaste de la *uernacula*<sup>113</sup>.

Si l'on écarte la conjecture de Mommsen, cela signifie que Trebonius a formé une deuxième *legio uernacula* pour compenser le départ d'une bonne partie des troupes d'Ultérieure vers la Sicile. Lorsque l'auteur du *Bellum Hispaniense* fait ensuite référence à la *uernacula* au singulier, c'est peut-être parce qu'il est alors question de celle du *Bellum Alexandrinum*, bien mieux connue des lecteurs que l'autre récemment formée. Lors de la campagne de 45, Cnaeus Pompée dispose de treize unités, qui semblent numérotées de I à XIII<sup>114</sup>. Si l'anonyme qualifie sa II<sup>e</sup> légion de *Pompeiana*, c'est possiblement pour éviter une confusion avec la II<sup>e</sup>

111 MOMMSEN 1893, p. 610 : *BHisp* 10, 3 ; 12, 1 ; 13, 3 ; 20, 2 et 4-5.

112 Voir CADIOU 2008, p. 621-622 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 44, n. 116 ; 82-87 sur son succès et les quelques réserves dont elle a fait l'objet.

113 Cette dernière est présentée comme la plus virulente envers Longinus (*BAlex* 53, 4 et 5 ; 54, 3) puis comme la véritable meneuse de la révolte (*BAlex* 57, 1-3).

114 *BHisp* 7, 4 ; 13, 3 ; 18, 3 ; 30, 1 ; 34, 3 : GROEBE 1906, p. 720.

de César, déjà évoquée six fois dans le corpus césarien<sup>115</sup>. Cette dernière n'a sans doute pas été impliquée dans la guerre d'Espagne du fait de sa proximité avec l'une des *uernaculae* passées à l'ennemi.

Comme les numéros des II<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup> légions ont été retirés du texte du *Bellum Africum*, la composante espagnole des premières troupes menées en Afrique a fini par être perdue de vue. Il en restait deux indices, avec la cavalerie hispanique et surtout avec la V<sup>e</sup> légion, qui compte parmi ses officiers les frères Titius, deux jeunes tribuns militaires d'origine espagnole<sup>116</sup>. Cependant, de nombreux historiens ont contribué à faire disparaître davantage le lien avec la Péninsule ibérique, en affirmant que la V<sup>e</sup> du *Bellum Africum* ne correspondait pas à la V<sup>e</sup> levée par Longinus, mais à la légion *Alauda*<sup>117</sup>, une unité atypique formée à ses frais par César lors de la guerre des Gaules. Suétone raconte qu'elle était constituée de Transalpins, entraînés et équipés comme des légionnaires, qui ont reçu plus tard la citoyenneté romaine<sup>118</sup>. Selon une hypothèse formulée au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, cette récompense aurait débouché sur sa régularisation et elle serait devenue la V<sup>e</sup> légion de César peu avant la campagne d'Afrique. Cela suppose la réunion de plusieurs conditions, dont aucune ne paraît évidente<sup>119</sup>. Dans les faits, aucune source n'at-

115 *BAlex* 53, 4 et 5 ; 54, 3 ; 57, 1 et 3 ; *BAfr* 81, 1. Si la II<sup>e</sup> légion de César n'avait jamais quitté l'Ultime et avait fait défection à Trebonius, comme on l'a parfois supposé, l'anonyme aurait pu la présenter simplement comme la II<sup>e</sup> en *BHisp* 13, 3 — comme Mommsen dans sa conjecture en *BHisp* 7, 4 — car aucune ambiguïté n'était possible.

116 *BAfr* 28, 2 : [...] *forte incidit in nauem in qua erant duo Titi Hispani adulescentes, tribuni legionis V, quorum patrem Caesar in senatum legerat*. L'un des deux pourrait correspondre au L. Titius qui occupait le même grade dans la légion *uernacula* et qui a fait preuve de loyauté envers Longinus en 48 (*BAlex* 57). Cf. RICHARD 1997 (in BOUVET 1949), p. 141. Une autre hypothèse fait de L. Titius le père des deux tribuns de la V<sup>e</sup> légion. Cf. GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 65.

117 DOMASZEWSKI 1894, p. 173 ; GROEBE 1906, p. 718 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 236 ; 355, n. 3 ; GSELL 1928, p. 50-51 ; PARKER 1928, p. 57 ; 66-67 ; BOUVET 1949, p. 3, n. 3 ; KEPPIE 1984, p. 110-111 ; 140 ; RICHARD 1997 (in BOUVET 1949), p. 112.

118 SUÉTONE, *Caes.* 24, 2 : *Qua fiducia ad legiones, quas a re publica acceperat, alias priuato sumptu addidit, unam etiam ex Transalpinis conscriptam, uocabulo quoque Gallico — Alauda enim appellabatur —, quam disciplina cultuque Romano institutam et ornatam postea uniuersam civitate donauit*.

119 Rien ne permet d'affirmer que les Transalpins ont été faits citoyens pour régulariser leur unité. Ils peuvent avoir reçu cette récompense à leur démobilisation, après la conquête des Gaules ou au terme de la guerre civile. D'autre part, le cas de la légion *uernacula* montre que l'attribution d'un numéro n'était pas systématique.

teste de l'existence d'une V<sup>e</sup> *Alaudae* du vivant de César<sup>120</sup>. Cette théorie repose entièrement sur des inscriptions datant du Haut-Empire, dont les plus anciennes semblent avoir été gravées près d'un siècle après la guerre d'Afrique<sup>121</sup>.

Tandis que l'origine transalpine de la V<sup>e</sup> légion du *Bellum Africum* a longtemps été présentée comme un fait établi, cette idée a été remise en cause<sup>122</sup> et semble désormais envisagée avec davantage de prudence<sup>123</sup>.

Parce que la V<sup>e</sup> légion d'Espagne ultérieure a été formée en 48, certains historiens ont jugé impossible qu'elle corresponde à la *ueterana legio quinta* de la guerre d'Afrique<sup>124</sup>. Ce faisant, ils ont écarté un peu vite la possibilité que cette unité ait été mise sur pied en mobilisant d'anciens légionnaires présents dans la Péninsule ibérique<sup>125</sup>. Comme ni l'anonyme ni l'éditeur du corpus césarien n'ont jugé utile de distinguer la V<sup>e</sup> légion du *Bellum Africum* de la V<sup>e</sup> espagnole citée à six reprises dans l'ouvrage précédent<sup>126</sup>, il semble évident que nous avons en réalité affaire à une seule et même unité<sup>127</sup>.

120 Dans le corpus césarien (*BAlex* 50, 3 ; 52, 1 ; 53, 5 ; 54, 2 ; 57, 3 et 5 ; *BAfr* 1, 5 ; 28, 2 ; 47, 6 ; 60, 4 ; 84, 1 ; *BHisp* 23, 2 ; 30, 7), dans la correspondance de CICÉRON (*Fam.* X, 33, 4 ; 34, 1) comme sur les deniers légionnaires d'Antoine (RRC 544/18), la V<sup>e</sup> légion ne porte aucun surnom.

121 Les seules sources documentant l'existence d'une V<sup>e</sup> *Alaudae* sont des textes épigraphiques qui, lorsqu'ils peuvent être datés avec certitude (*AE* 1979, 412 ; *CIL* II, 4188 ; IX, 3380 ; XI, 5210 et 5211 ; *IMS* VI, 41), sont contemporains ou postérieurs au règne de l'empereur Claude. Cf. GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 227-229 ; 286-300 (avec références à la bibliographie antérieure). Du fait de son *cognomen*, C. Valerius Arsaces (*CIL* IX, 1460) est généralement considéré comme un ancien soldat d'Antoine, mais l'unique argument avancé pour dater cette épitaphe paraît discutable.

122 MÜLLER 2001, p. 335-341 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 51-108.

123 RAAFLAUB 2017, p. 754 ; CADIOU 2018, p. 160, n. 186 ; CIOFFI 2022, p. 95, n. 10.

124 GROEBE 1906, p. 718 ; HOLMES 1923, p. 355, n. 3 ; GSELL 1928, p. 51, n. 1. Sur les arguments utilisés pour écarter la V<sup>e</sup> espagnole, voir GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 73-89.

125 *BAlex* 57-58 et 61 (voir *supra*, n. 98). En 49, après la capitulation de L. Afranius et M. Petreius à Ilerda, César a démobilisé sur place tous les soldats qui avaient un domicile ou une propriété en Espagne. Cette mesure a concerné un tiers des effectifs pompéiens, soit environ huit mille hommes : CÉSAR, *BC* I, 85-87. Cf. VEITH 1906, p. 441 ; CADIOU 2008, p. 625-626 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 72.

126 *BAlex* 50, 3 ; 52, 1 ; 53, 5 ; 54, 2 ; 57, 3 et 5.

127 SCHNEIDER 1905, p. 3 ; VEITH 1906, p. 404-405 ; 444 ; LORETO 2001, p. 431 ; MÜLLER 2001, p. 335-342 ; GÉRARDIN 2009, p. 72-98.

### Conclusion

Lorsque le *Bellum Africum* fera l'objet d'une nouvelle édition, il faudra rétablir les leçons des *codices* dans les cinq passages portant sur les effectifs césariens. Les corrections effectuées à partir de 1847 sont injustifiées. Elles ont généré des incertitudes sur le nombre et l'identité des légions de César. Ce faisant, elles ont empêché de réaliser l'importance du transfert de troupes opéré entre la Péninsule ibérique et la Sicile au cours de l'année 47.

En prélevant trois à cinq légions en Espagne, César a pu avancer le début de sa campagne africaine de plusieurs semaines, mais il a fragilisé son implantation dans la péninsule, ce qui a facilité la tâche de ses adversaires. Il aurait été autrement plus compliqué pour Cnaeus Pompée d'y établir une tête de pont, s'il avait dû faire face aux neuf unités qui y étaient stationnées en 48. Pour compenser le passage de la garnison d'Ultérieure de cinq à deux unités, Trebonius a mobilisé une seconde légion *uernacula* en 47, mais cela s'est révélé inefficace : les *duae uernaculae* ont rallié le camp adverse dès l'arrivée de Cnaeus Pompée.

Tandis que Carl Gottlieb Guichard était en mesure d'établir la plupart de ces faits dès 1774<sup>128</sup>, les multiples corrections du *Bellum Africum* ont empêché de les appréhender correctement à partir du milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>129</sup>.

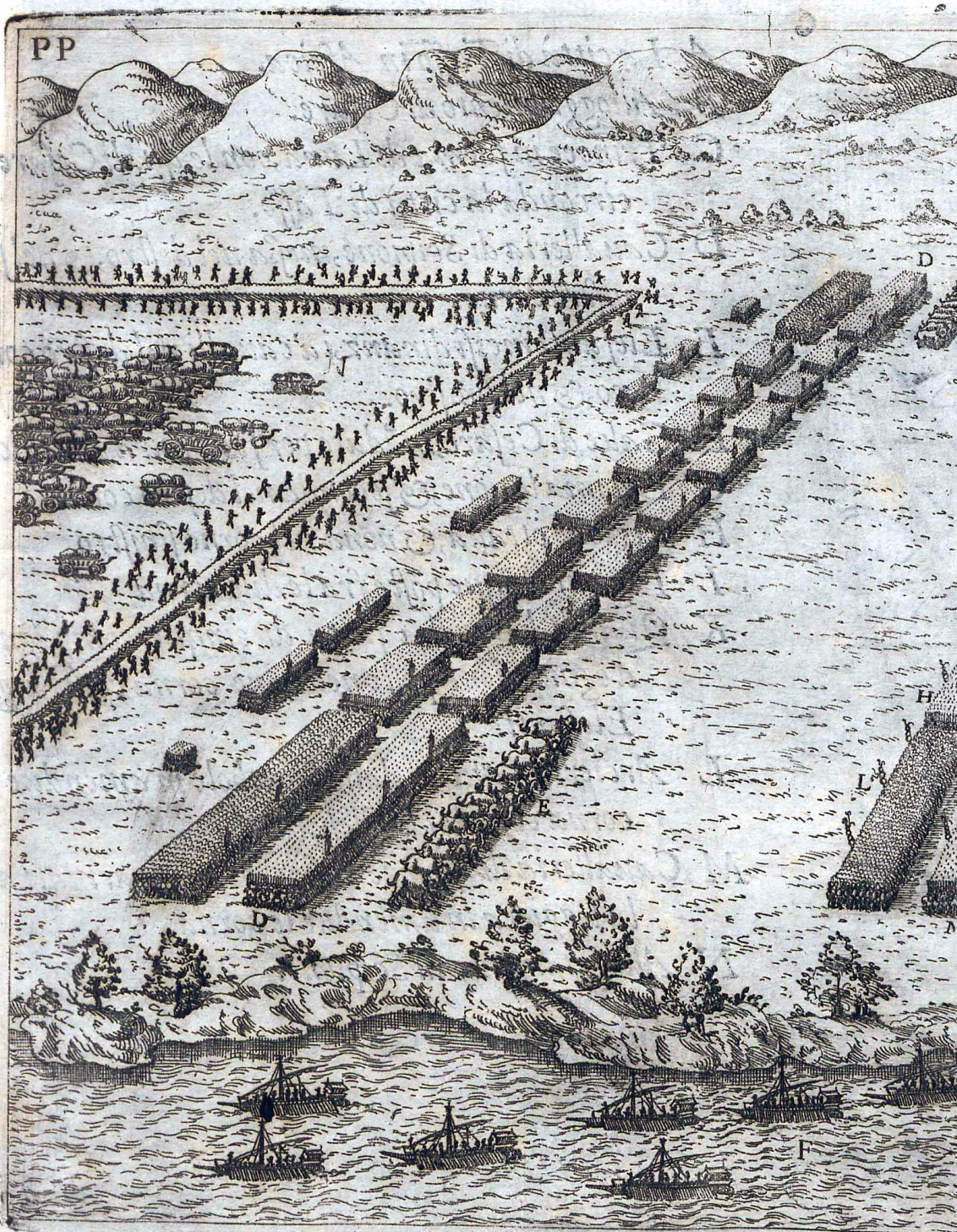
---

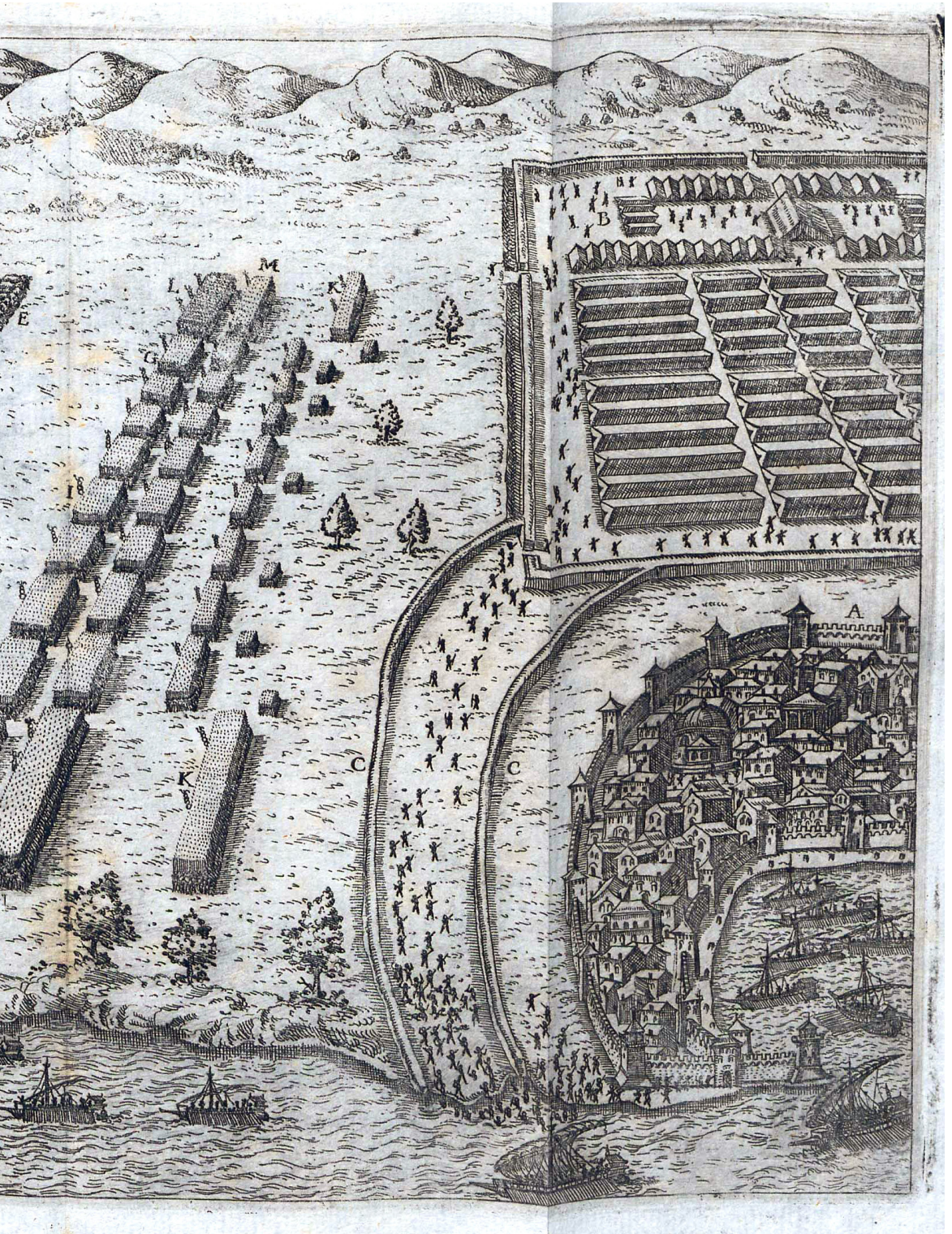
128 GUICHARD 1774, p. 98-99 et 106.

129 Dressant un tableau de la répartition des légions fin 47, VEITH 1906, p. 404 écrit que César a rassemblé en Sicile la V<sup>e</sup> légion d'Espagne et cinq unités de recrues. Pour lui, la Péninsule ibérique compte alors huit légions dont les II<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup>. Plus tard, il se ravise et estime que les XXVIII<sup>e</sup>, XXIX<sup>e</sup> et XXX<sup>e</sup> proviennent d'Espagne (1912, p. 359). GROEBE 1906, p. 718-719, pourtant favorable à la conservation de la plupart des leçons transmises, écarte la V<sup>e</sup> espagnole au profit d'une hypothétique V<sup>e</sup> *Alaudae* et suggère arbitrairement de remplacer la II<sup>e</sup> par la III<sup>e</sup> en *BAfr* 81, 1. Cette idée repose sur une anecdote de VALÈRE MAXIME (III, 2, 19), qui rapporte la façon dont César aurait empêché un *aquilifer* de la légion de Mars de prendre la fuite. Le lien entre cette anecdote et la campagne d'Afrique n'est toutefois pas assuré.



Fig. 12 et 13 (ici et dans les pages suivantes) La bataille de Thapsus selon Andrea Palladio, *I Commentari di C. Giulio Cesare, con le figure in rame de gli alloggiamenti, de' fatti d'arme, delle circonuallationi delle città, & di molte altre cose notabili descritte in essi*, In Venetia, appresso Pietro de Franceschi, Mdlxxv, carte entre les pages 380 et 381.





## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- BOUVET 1949 = Alphonse BOUVET, Jean-Claude RICHARD, *Pseudo-César. Guerre d'Afrique*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, CUF [seconde édition, 1997].
- BROWN 1972 = Virginia BROWN, *The Textual Transmission of Caesar's Civil War*, Leyde, Brill.
- CADIOU 2008 = François CADIOU, *Ibera in terra miles. Les armées romaines et la conquête de l'Hispanie sous la République (218-45 av. J.-C.)*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez.
- CADIOU 2018 = François CADIOU, *L'Armée imaginaire. Les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la République*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.
- CARTER 1997 = John CARTER, *Julius Caesar. The Civil War with the Anonymous Alexandrian, African and Spanish Wars*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- CIOFFI 2019 = Carmela CIOFFI, « Il *Bellum Africum*: tra vecchi pregiudizi e nuove prospettive », *Bollettino di studi latini*, 49, 1 (2019), p. 220-232.
- CIOFFI 2022 = Carmela CIOFFI, *Anonimo Cesariano. La guerra d'Africa (Bellum Africum)*, Florence, Le Monnier Università.
- DAMON 2015 = Cynthia DAMON, *Studies on the Text of Caesar's Bellum civile*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- DOMASZEWSKI 1894 = Alfred VON DOMASZEWSKI, « Die Heere der Bürgerkriege in den Jahren 49 bis 42 vor Christus », *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, 4 (1894), p. 157-188.
- DÜBNER 1867 = Johann Friedrich DÜBNER, *C. Julii Cæsaris commentarii de bellis Gallico et civili, aliorum de bellis Alexandrino, Africano et Hispaniensi*, deux tomes, Paris.
- GAERTNER 2018 = Jan Felix GAERTNER, « The *Corpus Caesarianum* », in Luca GRILLO, Christopher B. KREBS (dir.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 263-276.
- GÉRARDIN 2009 = Batiste GÉRARDIN, *La légion des Alouettes*, Besançon [mémoire de Master 2 inédit].
- GRILLO-KREBS 2018 = Luca GRILLO et Christopher B. KREBS, « Caesarian Questions: Then, Now, Hence », in Luca GRILLO, Christopher B. KREBS (dir.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 1-9.
- GROEBE 1906 = Wilhelm DRUMANN, Paul GROEBE, *Geschichte Roms in seinem Übergange von der republikanischen zur monarchischen Verfassung oder Pompeius, Caesar, Cicero und ihre Zeitgenossen, nach Geschlechtern und mit genealogischen Tabellen, III, Domitii-Julii*, Leipzig, 1837 [seconde édition, 1906].
- GSELL 1928 = Stéphane GSELL, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord, VIII, Jules César et l'Afrique. Fin des royaumes indigènes*, Paris.
- GUICHARD 1774 = Carl Gottlieb GUICHARD, *Mémoires critiques et historiques sur plusieurs points d'antiquités militaires*, III, Paris.
- HERING 1963 = Wolfgang HERING, *Die Recensio der Caesarhandschriften*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag.

- HOLMES 1923 = Thomas R. HOLMES, *The Roman Republic and the Founder of the Empire, III, (50-44 B.C.)*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- KEPPIE 1984 = Lawrence J.F. KEPPIE, *The Making of the Roman Army from Republic to Empire*, Londres, Batsford [Routledge, 1998].
- KLOTZ 1927 = Alfred KLOTZ, *C. Ivli Caesaris commentarii, III, Commentarii belli Alexandrini, belli Africi, belli Hispaniensis, accedvnt C. Ivli Caesaris et A. Hirti fragmenta*, Stuttgart-Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, BT [1993].
- LORETO 2001 = Luigi LORETO, *Pseudo-Cesare. La lunga guerra civile: Alessandria-Africa-Spagna*, Milan, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli.
- MEUSEL 1885 = Heinrich MEUSEL, « Caesar », *Jahresberichte des philologischen Vereins zu Berlin*, 11 (1885), p. 173-204.
- MOMMSEN 1893 = Theodor MOMMSEN, « Zur Geschichte der Caesarischen Zeit », *Hermes. Zeitschrift für classische Philologie*, 28 (1893), p. 599-618.
- MÜLLER 2001 = Markus MÜLLER, *Das Bellum Africum. Ein historisch-philologischer Kommentar der Kapitel I-47*, Trier [thèse inédite].
- NIPPERDEY 1847 = Carl NIPPERDEY, *C. Iulii Caesaris commentarii cum supplementis A. Hirtii et aliorum. Caesaris Hirtiique fragmenta*, Leipzig.
- OUDENDORP 1737 = Frans VAN OUDENDORP, *C. Iulii Caesaris de Bellis Gallico et civili Pompejano: nec non A. Hirtii, aliorumque de bellis Alexandrino, Africano et Hispaniensi commentarii, ad MSSorum fidem expressi*, Leyde.
- PARKER 1928 = Henry M.D. PARKER, *The Roman Legions*, Oxford, Clarendon [New York, Dorset Press, 1992].
- POLASCHEK 1892 = Anton POLASCHEK, « Vielhaberi in libros Pseudocaesarianos adnotationes criticae », *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien*, 43 (1892), p. 977-979.
- PONTET 1901 = René DU PONTET, *C. Ivli Caesaris Commentariorvm, pars posterior, Libri III de bello civili cvm libris incertorvm avctorvm de bello Alexandrino Africo Hispaniensi*, Oxford, Clarendon, OCT [1989].
- PORTE 2016 = François PORTE, *Le ravitaillement des armées romaines pendant les guerres civiles (49-30 avant J.-C.)*, Paris [thèse inédite].
- RAAFLAUB 2017 = Kurt A. RAAFLAUB, *The Landmark Julius Caesar. The Complete Works. Gallic War, Civil War, Alexandrian War, African War, Spanish War*, New York, Anchor Books.
- SCHNEIDER 1891 = Rudolf SCHNEIDER, « Caesar und seine Fortsetzer », *Jahresberichte des Philologischen Vereins zu Berlin*, 17 (1891), p. 235-269.
- SCHNEIDER 1905 = Rudolf SCHNEIDER, *Bellum Africanum*, Berlin, Weidmann [1962].
- STOFFEL 1887 = Eugène STOFFEL, *Histoire de Jules César. Guerre civile*, deux tomes, Paris.
- VEITH 1906 = Georg VEITH, *Geschichte der Feldzüge C. Julius Caesars*, Vienne.

- VEITH 1912 = Johannes KROMAYER, Georg VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder: Bausteine zu einer antiken Kriegsgeschichte, III, Italien und Afrika, ii, Afrika*, Berlin.
- WAY 1955 = A.G. WAY, *Caesar. Alexandrian, African and Spanish Wars*, Londres-Cambridge, William Heinemann Ltd, Harvard University Press, LCL.
- WÖLFFLIN-MIODOŃSKI 1889 = Eduard WÖLFFLIN et Adam S. MIODOŃSKI, *C. Asini Polionis de bello Africo commentarius*, Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, BT.
- WÖLFFLIN 1893 = Eduard WÖLFFLIN, « H. Mülken: In commentarium de bello Africano quaestiones criticae », *Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik*, 8 (1893), p. 304-305.
- WÖLFFLIN 1896 = Bernard KÜBLER, Eduard WÖLFFLIN, *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii cum A. Hirtii aliorumque supplementis, vol. III pars prior. Commentarius de bello Alexandrino. Commentarius de bello Africo*, Leipzig, B. G. Teubner, BT.

# Autour de la bataille de Thapsus

par OUIZA AIT AMARA<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** Caesar's victory at the Battle of Thapsus in 46 BC ended the African Civil War. This ultimate victory was only the culmination of a succession of events, which punctuated this conflict. The rivalry between Caesar and Pompey was evident from the year 49 at least. Caesar had already defeated the Pompeians in other theaters, but what mattered to him first and foremost was to make himself master of Africa, which he considered to be a veritable breadbasket for Rome. He charged Curion with leading the campaign to Africa and driving out the Pompeians gathered in this territory. At first, Caesar's plan did not go as planned, because the Juba's intervention prevented Curion from pushing his opponents back. Caesar then took matters into his own hands and, with the contribution of the Moorish kings, achieved his goal.

**KEYWORDS :** CAESAR, POMPEY, CURION, JUBA IER, SABURRA, BAGRADA, THAPSUS, UTICA.

**RESUMÉ.** La victoire de César à la bataille Thapsus, en 46 av. J.-C., mit fin à la Guerre Civile en Afrique. Cette victoire ultime ne fut que le point d'orgue d'une succession d'événements ayant émaillé ce conflit. La rivalité entre César et Pompée s'est manifestée dès l'an 49. César avait déjà vaincu les pompéiens sur d'autres théâtres, mais ce qui lui importait en premier lieu c'était de se rendre maître de l'Afrique qu'il considérait comme un véritable grenier à blé pour Rome. Il chargea Curion de mener la campagne d'Afrique et d'en chasser les pompéiens rassemblés dans ce territoire. Durant les premiers temps, le plan de César ne se déroula pas comme prévu. Les pompéiens remportèrent des victoires grâce à l'aide de Juba Ier. Curion ne put s'acquitter de sa mission ne parvenant pas à faire reculer ses adversaires. César prit alors l'affaire en main et, avec l'aide des rois maures, atteignit son objectif.

**MOTS-CLÉS :** CÉSAR, POMPÉE, CURION, JUBA IER, SABURRA, BAGRADA, THAPSUS, UTIQUE

1 Université d'Alger.

### Introduction

La bataille de Thapsus, qui eut lieu en 46 avant notre ère, fut l'ultime événement de la guerre civile de César, encore appelée « guerre civile romaine », au cours de laquelle césariens et pompéiens s'affrontèrent sans répit. En effet, cette guerre intestine et fratricide mit un terme au conflit durable existant entre les armées des deux chefs ennemis, César et le défunt Pompée, qui se combattirent sur de nombreux théâtres, surtout hors de l'Italie<sup>2</sup>.

Marquant une étape importante dans l'histoire romaine, la victoire de César à Thapsus eut pour conséquence d'affermir son pouvoir et d'entraîner, *de facto*, la disparition des derniers bastions républicains en Afrique.

Les éléments déclencheurs de la bataille de Thapsus trouvent leur origine dans les arcanes de la situation politique et militaire de l'époque.

Après l'assassinat en Egypte, en 48, de Pompée, ses partisans se regroupèrent en Afrique sous les commandements de Metellus Scipion et de Caton le Jeune qui cherchèrent, tous deux, à défier l'autorité de César, aidés en cela par Juba Ier, roi de Numidie<sup>3</sup>.

En 46, César, déjà victorieux à plusieurs reprises sur le sol européen et en Orient, prit la décision d'engager des légions en Afrique où stationnaient les forces pompéiennes républicaines. Il résolut de s'assurer du soutien d'alliés, notamment des deux rois maures Bocchus et Bogud.

Les deux camps accrurent alors leurs effectifs et pourvurent aux besoins d'une nouvelle, massive et inévitable confrontation dont Thapsus fut le décor.

Dans le propos qui va suivre, nous allons décrire cette longue épopée africaine, et ce, jusqu'à la bataille finale.

---

2 LORETO Luigi, *Il piano di guerra dei Pompeiani e di Cesare dopo Farsalo (giugno-ottobre 48 a.C.). Uno studio sulla grande strategia della guerra civile*, Hakkert, Amsterdam, 1994, du même auteur, *Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento storico-militare «Pseudo-Cesare, La lunga guerra civile. Alessandria – Africa – Spagna»*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, Milano 2001.

3 AIT AMARA Ouiza, « Thapsus, la bataille et le rôle de Juba Ier », Actes du 6<sup>e</sup> colloque international Byzacium, Byzacène, Muzaq : Occupation du sol, peuplement et modes de vie (Sousse, 13, 14 et 15 Juin 2019), 2021, pp. 29-53.

## *I Les sources*

La documentation à notre disposition permettant d'apprécier la situation politico-militaire antérieure, ainsi que l'enchaînement des événements aboutissant à la bataille de Thapsus, est manifestement peu abondante et son contenu délicat à interpréter.

Malgré ces « contraintes », deux historiens allemands, KROMAYER et VEITH, dans la présentation de leurs travaux, sont parvenus à donner une description détaillée et technique, suffisamment exhaustive et peu suspecte d'être entachée d'erreurs d'interprétation.

Pour ce faire, ils se sont plongés dans l'examen d'un recueil d'événements militaires intitulé « *Bellum Africum* », considéré par eux comme l'œuvre la plus gratifiante sur la manière de servir des combattants de l'époque, mais également la plus intéressante à étudier pour les chercheurs<sup>4</sup>. De l'avis des auteurs cités, c'est la seule source digne d'intérêt parmi d'autres descriptions des campagnes de César<sup>5</sup>.

Il est vrai que les rares éléments d'informations à notre disposition sont issus du *Bellum Africum*, œuvre unique d'un auteur anonyme, dont la teneur des écrits marque, à l'évidence, une « proximité » avec le camp des césariens<sup>6</sup>.

L'auteur de cet ouvrage serait un officier de l'armée d'Afrique de César, témoin des déplacements et des cantonnements des troupes en campagne.

Cet officier, césarien convaincu, ne tarit pas d'éloges à propos de César, affirmant que l'on ne saurait trouver chez lui « ni faute ni imprévoyance », arguant que les difficultés qu'il rencontrait et surmontait mettaient en relief son génie militaire<sup>7</sup>. César, lui-même, s'exprime à ce sujet dans ses propres commentaires sur la *Guerre Civile*.

D'autres auteurs, tout à fait identifiés, ceux-là, ont fourni quelques brefs échos sur cette guerre menée par César en Afrique. Il s'agit de Lucain, dans sa *Phar-*

4 KROMAYER Johannes und VEITH, Georg, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912, p. 826.

5 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cit », p. 427 et 826-827.

6 Pseudo-César, *Guerre d'Afrique*, III, 4-5, LVI, 3, XX-XXII, XXXIV, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1949.

7 Pseudo-César, III, 4-5, LVI, 3, XX-XXII, XXXIV.

*sale*, et de Dion Cassius<sup>8</sup>, dans son *Histoire*, qui s'inspire de sources hostiles à César, à la différence des deux précédents.

Appien<sup>9</sup>, à son tour, rédige un commentaire, dans sa narration de la guerre civile, qui tend à (dé)montrer que César ne dut son succès qu'à l'imprudence de ses adversaires<sup>10</sup>.

D'autres sources encore<sup>11</sup>, comme les écrits de Plutarque, affirmaient que César avait perdu le contrôle de ses troupes lors du déclenchement de la guerre parce qu'il était accablé par « sa maladie habituelle ». Une déclaration qui est généralement considérée comme une allusion aux troubles épileptiques dont il aurait souffert. Il était donc incapable de diriger le combat, alors que l'auteur pro-césarien du *Bellum Africum* évoque, lui, le vif enthousiasme de ses troupes, minimisant ainsi le manque d'anticipation de César quant au lieu et au moment de la bataille<sup>12</sup>.

Bien que considérées comme secondaires, ces sources qui ne peuvent prétendre à la comparaison avec la teneur des propos du « *Bellum Africum* », ne sont réellement pas à écarter de notre étude : elles contribuent à la bonne compréhension d'événements géopolitiques et de faits de guerre ayant pour terme la bataille de Thapsus<sup>13</sup>.

C'est sur cette documentation, certes éparse, que nous nous allons nous appuyer pour décrire les différentes étapes de la campagne d'Afrique et sa culmination finale qui mit un terme logique aux conflits antérieurs.

## 2 Le contexte historique

L'origine du conflit en Afrique remonte à la guerre de César contre Pompée. Maître de l'Italie dès 49, César avait déjà vaincu les pompéiens au nord de l'Espagne avant de les terrasser, plus tard, à l'est de l'Adriatique.

8 Dio Cass., *Histoire romaine*, 42, 1, 43, 8, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2002.

9 App., *BC*, II, 96, Paris, les Belles Lettres, 1993-2000.

10 CHARLES Michael B. and RHODAN Peter, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, XIV, Carl Deroux (Ed.), Editions Latomus, Bruxelles, 2008, p. 177-188.

11 Plut., *Vie parallèles*, Caes. LIII, 5-7, Paris, Gallimard, 2001.

12 CHARLES and RHODAN, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», « cité », p. 178-179.

13 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 827.

Entre ces deux conflits, sa priorité fut d'assurer le ravitaillement de la capitale, et l'Afrique, la Sicile et la Sardaigne possédaient justement les ressources en blé indispensables à satisfaire les besoins de Rome<sup>14</sup>.

La province d'Afrique voyait son importance doublement accrue : d'une part, par sa proximité avec l'Italie, et d'autre part, par sa démographie en pleine expansion, si l'on en juge par le nombre de petites cités attestées et par les allusions des sources aux différentes activités paysannes.

C'est pourquoi, dès l'année 50, le Sénat et Pompée, son fervent partisan, se sont efforcés d'y renforcer leurs positions. On sait maintenant que César réussit, par la suite, à les en chasser<sup>15</sup>.

Une première confrontation eut lieu dès le début de 49, alors que César avait installé son pouvoir en Italie et songeait à conquérir la Gaule et l'Espagne. Les pompéiens avaient déjà pris leurs précautions en Afrique en s'assurant l'alliance de Juba Ier, roi de Numidie.

La province d'Afrique avait été placée sous la responsabilité de deux de ses anciens propréteurs, P. Attius Varus et C. Considius Longus. Leur connaissance du pays leur facilitait la tâche. Ils levèrent deux légions, ce qui porta à trois leur nombre dans la province : une première était stationnée à Hadrumète, sous les ordres de Considius Longus, et les deux autres cantonnées à Utique et commandées par Attius Varus. Tous deux édifièrent des fortifications diverses dans les ports cités, puis dans d'autres encore, par crainte d'un débarquement soudain des césariens. Allant même, pour Attius Varus, dans le but renforcer sa position, jusqu'à conclure une alliance avec Juba Ier, qui s'engagea à lui fournir des troupes d'infanterie et de cavalerie<sup>16</sup>.

César, quant à lui, décida de s'assurer du contrôle des provinces frumentaires de Sicile et d'Afrique, et chargea Curion, C. Scribonius Curion, d'en assurer le contrôle et d'en occuper militairement le territoire. Curion, tribun de la plèbe en 50, avait fait part au Sénat, le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 49, de l'ultimatum de César. Le choix

14 César, *Guerre Civile*, II, 40, 1 ; XXV, 2, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1969-1972 ; App., *BC*, II, 96. GSELL Stéphane, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, VIII, Hachette, Paris, 1928, p. 43.

15 LASSERE Jean-Marie, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, Éditions du CNRS, Paris, 2015, p. 101.

16 LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 101.

de Curion pour une campagne en Afrique était symbolique : lors de son tribunat, il avait proposé l'annexion du royaume de Numidie et sa transformation en *ager publicus*, ce que Juba Ier n'oublia jamais, lui qui était plutôt favorable au Sénat et farouchement hostile aux césariens.

Nommé préteur, et à la tête de quatre légions, Curion conquiert aisément la Sicile au printemps 49. L'objectif restait l'Afrique, mais la campagne ne fut pas très bien préparée : le préteur sous-estima les capacités combattives de l'adversaire et ne prit avec lui que deux légions et cinq cents cavaliers gaulois et germains, tous placés sous le commandement de Cn. Domitius qui, par ailleurs, ne disposait pas d'un bon réseau de renseignement.

Curion put donc débarquer sans encombre au début de juin à l'extrémité de la pointe nord du Cap Bon. Au bout de deux jours, il atteignit l'embouchure du Bagrada, la Medjerda, puis les *Castra Cornelia*, le camp de Varus près d'Utique<sup>17</sup>. C'est à partir de ce moment que les confrontations commencèrent.

### 3 Les acteurs principaux et la mobilisation des forces

César fut le héros de la guerre civile. Les effectifs de son armée semblaient faibles par rapport à ceux des troupes républicaines. Les rangs de ses légions comptaient de nombreuses nouvelles recrues qui n'avaient pas encore combattu. Ces troupes arrivèrent progressivement, par convois, en provenance de Sicile et de Sardaigne. Il reçut, entre autres, six légions et 2000 cavaliers. En infériorité numérique, César chercha des renforts et des alliés.

L'un de ses principaux alliés fut le Campanien Publius Sittius de Nucérie<sup>18</sup>. Fils d'un citoyen de Nucérie loyal envers Rome lors de la Guerre Sociale de 91-88, Publius Sittius possédait un domaine en Campanie et s'était lancé dans le commerce du blé à grande échelle avec les rois de Maurétanie. Il avait pu entretenir des relations d'affaires avec les *Italici* de Cirta, surtout ceux qui faisaient commerce du grain. Il se familiarisa ainsi avec l'Afrique. En 57, Sittius était l'un des principaux fournisseurs en blé de Rome. Bien que ses effectifs « salariés » soient réduits, il sut fort bien les mener et alla même jusqu'à constituer une

17 LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 101-102.

18 App., *BC*, IV, LIV, 232, Paris, les Belles Lettres, 2015 ; Sall., *Cat.*, XVII, 1 ; XXI, 3 Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1999 ; App., IV, 54 ; Dio Cass., 43, 3, 1.

flotte<sup>19</sup>. Pendant la guerre civile, il mit cette flotte à la disposition de César dont l'usage courant était probablement commercial.

Sittius apporta donc son aide et son soutien à César au détriment des pompiens et de Juba Ier. Ce ralliement était susceptible de lui apporter des avantages financiers si César l'emportait<sup>20</sup>. Il pourrait même voir son honneur réhabilité après l'accusation de participation aux deux conjurations de Catalina, comme le rappelle S. Gsell. Devenu mercenaire par opportunité, Sittius se mit au service des rois maures, prenant parti pour le plus offrant<sup>21</sup>.

César dut se tourner également vers les Africains<sup>22</sup>. La présence de ces derniers était attendue<sup>23</sup>. En effet, après la victoire du Bagrada, remportée par Juba Ier, César décida d'organiser une nouvelle attaque contre ce roi. Il obtint le concours des deux rois maures, Bogud et Bocchus, connus comme hostiles à Juba Ier<sup>24</sup>. Leur participation était une nécessité absolue pour les troupes romaines, qui, partant d'Espagne, devaient traverser leurs États avant d'envahir la Numidie<sup>25</sup>.

Les deux souverains maures<sup>26</sup>, alliés de poids pour César, se déclarèrent en sa faveur<sup>27</sup>, et cela, dès l'année 49. En particulier, Bocchus, roi de Maurétanie orientale, qui avait l'opportunité de prendre Juba Ier à revers, l'empêchant ainsi d'employer ses forces contre César<sup>28</sup>. À cette fin, il lui fallait traverser les États de Massinissa, qui s'étendaient entre son propre territoire et celui de Juba Ier. Bocchus y était tout disposé, car Massinissa était l'allié de Juba Ier, un ennemi dont le royaume l'intéressait<sup>29</sup>.

19 App., IV, 54; Dio Cass., 43, 3, Pseudo-César, XCVI, 1. GSELL, *HAAN*, VIII, « cité », p. 55-56.

20 Dio Cass., 43, 3, 2. GSELL, *HAAN*, VIII, « cité », p. 56.

21 GSELL, *HAAN*, VIII, « cité », p. 55-56.

22 Plut., *César*, 52 ; *Cato*, 57, Paris, Gallimard, 2001 ; Dio Cass., 42, 57, 5 ; Suet., *Vie des douze Césars : César, Auguste*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1967.

23 COLTELLONI-TRANNOY Michèle, « Les liens de clientèle en Afrique du Nord », *BCTH*, XXIV, 1997, p. 59-82.

24 App., *B. C.*, IV, 54; Dio Cass., 43, 3. AIT AMARA Ouiza, *Numides et Maures au combat, Etats et armées en Afrique du Nord jusqu'à l'époque de Juba Ier*, Studi di Storia Antica e di Archeologia 13, Sandhi, Ortacesus, 2013, p. 231.

25 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 24-25 ; AIT AMARA, *Numides et Maures au combat*, « cité », p. 232.

26 Dio Cass., XLI, 42, 7.

27 César, *La Guerre d'Alexandrie*, LI, LXII, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1954.

28 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 53 ; LE BOHEC, *César chef de guerre*, « cité », p. 409.

29 LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1607.

Bocchus entretenait des relations avec Sittius. Il avait pris le parti des césariens, dans la guerre contre Juba Ier et les pompéiens, dans l'espoir d'annexer plus tard la Maurétanie occidentale.

Quant à la mobilisation de Bogud, qui régnait sur cette Maurétanie occidentale, elle, est attestée par les écrits du pseudo-César<sup>30</sup>.

Ces deux rois maures étaient intervenus dès 48, à la demande de César, et cette double participation lui avait permis de replacer l'Afrique sous son autorité alors qu'il était retenu en Orient.

L'auteur anonyme évoque également la présence de Gétules dans l'armée romaine :

«Pendant ce temps, Considius, avec huit cohortes d'auxiliaires numides et gétules, assiégeait Acylla, que C. Messius commandait avec trois cohortes »<sup>31</sup>.

Les Gétules, restés fidèles au souvenir prestigieux de Marius, se rallièrent à César<sup>32</sup>. Dion Cassius les mentionne et indique les récompenses obtenues :

«Pendant ce temps, les Gétules se rallièrent à lui, et aussi certains de leurs voisins, soit parce qu'ils étaient convaincus par les Gétules puisqu'ils avaient reçu de très grands honneurs, soit par reconnaissance envers Marius auquel César était apparenté»<sup>33</sup>.

Certains auteurs estiment que le nombre de Gétules ralliés à César approchait le millier<sup>34</sup>. Ils étaient, on peut l'imaginer, organisés en corps auxiliaires de cavalerie, d'infanterie<sup>35</sup> et en marins<sup>36</sup>.

Par ailleurs, pour les services que leur avait rendus César, les habitants d'Utique ne pouvaient que lui témoigner de la reconnaissance<sup>37</sup>. D'autres cités

30 Pseudo-César, *La Guerre d'Alexandrie*, LXII, 1, 3. CAMPS Gabriel, « Grande ou petite Numidie ? », dans *Vbique amici, Mélanges offerts à J.-M. Lassère*, Montpellier, CERCAM (2001), p. 78.

31 Pseudo-César, XLIII, 1.

32 Pseudo-César, XXXII, 3. COLTELLONI-TRANNOY, « Juba Ier I et Juba II », « cité », p. 3917 ; AIT AMARA, *Numides et Maures au combat*, « cité », p. 234.

33 Dio Cass., 43, 4, 2.

34 LASSÈRE Jean-Marie, « La cohorte des Gétules », *Mél. M. Le Glay*, Coll. *Latomus*, 226, 1994, p. 249.

35 HAMDOUNE Christine, *Les auxilia externa africains des armées romaines, IIIe siècle avant J.-C. - IVe apr. J.-C.*, Montpellier, 1999, p. 59.

36 AIT AMARA, *Numides et Maures au combat*, « cité », p. 61-68.

37 Pseudo-César, LXXXVII.

avaient pris part à la guerre d’Afrique, comme Leptis Magna qui s’était rapprochée de César dès le début de sa campagne d’Afrique<sup>38</sup>. En effet, les Africains menaient une politique d’alliance, plutôt opportuniste, avec l’un ou l’autre des belligérants, en fonction de leurs intérêts propres.

Cependant, les forces recensées en Afrique donnaient l’avantage aux républicains. Pompée avait envoyé en Afrique un premier légat propréteur, P. Attius Varus, puis un second, C. Considius Longus. Mais les événements qui suivirent montrèrent que l’autorité de l’un primait sur celle de l’autre. Varus disposait de deux légions et, dans le cadre d’une stratégie de défense, il envoya l’une à Utique et l’autre à Hadrumète<sup>39</sup>.

Face à l’armée de César, celle des républicains était commandée par Scipion. Après la défaite de Pompée à la bataille de Pharsale, certains cadres renoncèrent aux combats en même temps qu’à une carrière politique. En revanche, Metellus Scipion, beau-père de Pompée et, avec lui, commandant suprême de l’armée, passa en Afrique. D’autres se regroupèrent autour de Caton, appelé par la suite Caton d’Utique, l’arrière-petit fils de Caton le Censeur (234-149) qui avait prêché en faveur d’une troisième guerre punique.

Caton d’Utique, à la nouvelle de la mort de Pompée, rejoignit Scipion en Afrique. Dans le même temps, certains partisans de Pompée se regroupèrent autour d’Attius Varus<sup>40</sup>.

Varus mit la province Africa en état de siège, renforçant la légion « du temps de paix » par deux autres qui avaient été levées sur place et dont l’une fut établie à Hadrumète (Sousse), commandée par Considius et son ancien légat, Ligarius. Varus maintint deux légions à Utique<sup>41</sup>.

Dès 49, les républicains bénéficiaient déjà de nombreux atouts en Afrique : des positions sûres, du blé et des hommes. Varus officialisa son alliance avec Juba Ier qui s’engagea à lui fournir des troupes auxiliaires : cavaliers et fantassins numides<sup>42</sup>.

38 Pseudo-César, VII, 1. ROMANELLI Pietro, *Leptis Magna*, Rome, Società editrice d’arte illustrata, 1925, p. 14-15.

39 LE BOHEC, « L’expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1606.

40 César, *B.C.*, I, 31, 2.

41 César, *B.C.*, I, 31, 2.

42 GSELL, *HAAN*, VIII, « cité », p. 18.

La position pro-pompéienne de Juba Ier était motivée, d'abord, par les liens d'amitié que son père, Hiemsal II, avait tissé avec Pompée, ensuite, par sa haine envers Curion qui, en 50, avait, comme tribun de la plèbe, proposé une loi tendant à incorporer le royaume de Numidie à l'Etat romain<sup>43</sup> et, enfin, contre César qui l'avait offensé, en 64, en lui tirant la barbe devant un parterre de personnalités et qui, en 62, avait protégé le prince rebelle numide Masintha qui s'était enfui à Rome<sup>44</sup>. Juba Ier déclara donc la guerre à César en saisissant l'opportunité de la guerre civile, laissant ainsi s'exprimer tout son ressentiment contre César qui projetait d'annexer la Numidie.

L'engagement de Juba Ier aux côtés des pompéiens dans la guerre civile romaine jusqu'à la bataille de Thapsus<sup>45</sup> fut également, pour lui, l'opportunité de poursuivre une politique qu'il résumait ainsi : « le roi et le royaume numide, d'abord ».

Par ailleurs, il est difficile de déterminer si Juba Ier avait de réelles ambitions territoriales. Pour F. Bertrand, le roi avait peut-être à l'esprit le vœu de Massinissa d'annexer la partie de l'ancien territoire de Carthage, qui appartenait autrefois à ses ancêtres, devenue depuis l'*Africa*<sup>46</sup>.

Juba Ier exerçait son autorité dans la région située à proximité immédiate de la frontière romaine, et possédait Thaenae, située à l'entrée septentrionale de la petite Syrte. Vers le sud-est, son royaume jouxtait le territoire de Leptis, entre les deux Syrtés, et bordait, à l'ouest, la province du Byzacium, dont dépendait Thapsus<sup>47</sup>. Dion Cassius rapporte que Scipion proposa au roi numide la province d'Afrique entière pour le convaincre de s'engager au côté des pompéiens<sup>48</sup>.

On ne peut manquer de noter ici que Juba Ier possédait le potentiel qu'une

43 César, *BC*, II, 25; Dio Cass., XLI, 3.

44 César, *BC*, II, 25; Lvc., IV, 689-691; Dio Cass., XLI. LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1607.

45 Eutr., VI, 23, 1-3. LE BOHEC, *César chef de guerre*, « cité », p. 406.

46 BERTRANDY François, « l'aide militaire de Juba Ier aux pompéiens pendant la guerre civile en Afrique du Nord (50-46 avant J.-C. », in *Histoire et Archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord : actes du IVe Colloque international 2 : L'armée et les Affaires Militaires*, Paris, CTHS, (1987), p. 291; AIT AMARA, *Numides et Maures au combat*, « cité », p. 207.

47 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VII, « cité », p. 189-190; AIT AMARA, *Numides et Maures au combat*, « citée », p. 205.

48 Dio Cass., 43, 4, 6. CARCOPINO Jérôme, *Jules César*, Paris, 1968, p. 439-443.

guerre exigeait : des hommes aguerris et une logistique sûre<sup>49</sup>. Nous ignorons le nombre exact des effectifs mis en place pour lutter contre Curion en 49. Les sources, elles, évoquent une garde de deux mille cavaliers, espagnols et gaulois<sup>50</sup>, et des mercenaires. Le roi disposait également d'une infanterie et d'une cavalerie nombreuse et bien entraînée, et en plus de cent vingt éléphants<sup>51</sup>. Juba Ier pouvait compter sur l'aide de clients et d'alliés : Maures<sup>52</sup>, Gétules et Marmarides<sup>53</sup>. Les forces sur lesquelles il pouvait s'appuyer étaient considérables. Certaines d'entre elles étaient formées sur le modèle romain<sup>54</sup>. Dans ces conditions, il put même envoyer des renforts en nombre élevé aux pompéiens<sup>55</sup>.

Cette alliance qui plaça Juba Ier dans le camp des *optimates*, lui valut, en 49, d'être nommé « ami et allié de Rome » par le sénat pompéien et « ennemi public », par le sénat césarien<sup>56</sup>.

#### *4 Les évènements précédant la bataille et les stratégies mises en œuvre.*

##### *4. 1. La campagne de Curion*

César estimait que sa présence n'était pas nécessaire en Afrique parce qu'il jugeait peu menaçantes les forces pompéiennes déployées dans cette province. Néanmoins, il devait absolument prendre le contrôle (politique et économique) de cette région, grande exportatrice du blé dont Rome avait besoin, les expéditions de céréales vers l'Italie dépendant du « bon vouloir » de ses opposants. Et toute interruption de ces approvisionnements provoquerait, à coup sûr, un soulèvement contre lui<sup>57</sup>.

César chargea donc Curion, qu'il avait lui-même élevé au rang de propréteur,

49 Luc., IV, 671-673.

50 César, *BC*, II, 40 ; Pseudo-César, 48, 2. MOINIER, «une expédition en Afrique en 49 avant J.-C. : épisode de la guerre civile », « cité », p.35.

51 LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1607.

52 Flor., II, 13, 34.

53 Luc., IV, 673-683.

54 Pseudo-César, II, 4 ; XIX, 3-4.

55 César, *BC*, II, 25, 3. LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 102.

56 Dio Cass., 42.

57 LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1605.

et qui lui était tout dévoué, de mener à bien cet impérieux projet en Afrique<sup>58</sup>.

Agé de 35 ans, fils de consul, Curion était considéré comme intelligent et possédant des compétences dans le domaine politique<sup>59</sup>. Cependant, cette appréciation ne fait pas l'unanimité chez les historiens : certains modernes ne tiennent compte que sa dernière et funeste défaite face à l'armée de Juba Ier et négligent bien trop hâtivement ses victoires remportées, elles, dès début 49 sur les pompiens<sup>60</sup>. Et, dans le prolongement de leur cécité, ils émettent également des doutes sur ses aptitudes militaires<sup>61</sup>.

L'expédition de Curion a, néanmoins, retenu l'attention des spécialistes parce qu'elle fait partie intégrante de l'histoire de l'Afrique. Et ce général s'est, en quelque manière, distingué dans sa mission, même si celle-ci a mal tourné pour lui. Les détails de cette intervention sont réunis, pour l'essentiel, dans le second livre des « *Commentaires sur la Guerre civile* » de César<sup>62</sup>. Pour sa rédaction, celui-ci s'est inspiré, entre autres, de rapports remis en main propre, non pas par Curion qui avait été tué à la bataille du Bagrada, mais par son représentant qui s'exprime d'ailleurs sur cet événement tragique et dépeint Curion comme un homme arrogant, mais fidèle à César. Tite-Live évoque également ce dramatique épisode ainsi que Lucain qui va jusqu'à critiquer acerbement le personnage<sup>63</sup>.

Une autre source intéressante, qui n'est plus consultable parce que disparue également, est rapportée par Appien<sup>64</sup>. Il pourrait s'agir des écrits d'un des officiers de Curion : Asinius Pollion<sup>65</sup>. « Sa » narration, malgré une confusion de certains détails, offre un complément d'information utile<sup>66</sup>.

58 César, *Guerre Civile*, II, 40, 1 ; XXV, 2, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1969-1972 ; App., *BC*, II, 96. GSELL Stéphane, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, VIII, Paris, Hachette, 1928, p. 43.

59 LE BOHEC, César, « cité », p.355 ; LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », *Africa Romana*, XV, 2005, p. 1608.

60 LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1605 ; 1608.

61 MOINIER Auguste, « une expédition en Afrique en 49 avant J.-C. : épisode de la guerre civile », *RAfr.*, XLIV, 1900, p.20.

62 César, *BC*, II, 23-44.

63 Lvc., I-V.

64 App., *BC*, II, 96.

65 App., *BC*, II 44-46.

66 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 730.

En effet, d'après les sources, Curion tenta de vaincre les pompéiens regroupés en Afrique. Dès le début de l'année 49, le Sénat prit en main la gestion de la situation africaine. Les pompéiens levèrent deux nouvelles légions en Afrique, renforçant ainsi celles qui s'y trouvaient déjà. Une alliance fut conclue avec Juba Ier par l'intermédiaire de P. Attius Varus. Les troupes pompéiennes avaient pour base Utique<sup>67</sup>.

Curion quitta la Sicile avec deux des quatre légions qu'il avait reçues de César, et accompagné par 500 cavaliers<sup>68</sup> d'origine gauloise et germanique, comme l'indique le *Bellum Civile* :

« C. Curion s'embarquait en Sicile pour l'Afrique, et, ne transportait que deux légions sur les quatre qu'il avait reçues de César, et cinq cents cavaliers »<sup>69</sup>.

Il avait décidé de laisser deux légions en Sicile et pensait qu'il pourrait venir à bout de ses ennemis sans difficulté. Son armée, forte de 10000 hommes, avait embarqué sur des bâtiments de transport, eux-mêmes escortés par douze vaisseaux de guerre<sup>70</sup>. Ses effectifs étaient comparables à ceux de Varus, mais, si l'on tient compte des renforts de Juba Ier, il existait alors un réel déséquilibre<sup>71</sup>.

Curion décida, ensuite, de marcher sur Utique pour en finir avec les pompéiens. Il remporta quelques premiers succès<sup>72</sup>. Puis la confrontation tourna à son avantage jusqu'à aboutir à un désastre pour les pompéiens.

A la suite ce désastre, des courriers diligents par Juba Ier arrivèrent à Utique, où Varus s'était réfugié, annonçant la venue de renforts et invitant Utique à résister<sup>73</sup>. Juba Ier avait pu mettre un contingent en mouvement dès qu'il avait eu

67 César, *BC*, II, 40, 1; XXV, 2; App., *BC*, II, 96. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 43.

68 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 742.

69 César, *BC*, II, 23.

70 César, *BC*, II, 25, 2-3 et 5. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 730 ; LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1609.

71 César, *BC*, II, 25, 2-3 et 5. LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1609.

72 César, *BC*, II, 25, 2-3 et 5.

73 Utique était la capitale politique et économique de la province romaine d'Afrique. Elle se trouvait prise entre les césariens et les pompéiens (MOINIER, « Une expédition en Afrique », « cité », p. 10-11, 23). Il est difficile de trancher quant à l'attitude des habitants d'Utique. César considère qu'ils lui étaient favorables (César, *BC*, II, 36). Mais certains historiens rapportent que ce sont les habitants eux-mêmes qui ont empoison-

connaissance du débarquement des césariens<sup>74</sup>. Le roi, quelques jours auparavant, avait pu, ainsi, envoyer à Varus le renfort de six cents cavaliers numides et quatre cents fantassins<sup>75</sup>.

Les césariens furent informés que des troupes numides approchaient d'Utique<sup>76</sup>. Ils levèrent le siège et se retirèrent, attendant des renforts en provenance de Sicile<sup>77</sup>. Les détails de ces événements sont relatés dans le *Bellum Ciuile* :

« Les mêmes renseignements [l'arrivée de Juba Ier] étaient donnés à Curion, mais pendant quelque temps il ne pouvait y croire, tant était grande sa confiance en sa Fortune. Et déjà lettres et courriers commençaient à répandre en Afrique les succès de César en Espagne. Tout cela l'exaltait et lui faisait penser que le roi n'entreprendrait rien contre lui. Mais quand il sut de source certaine que ses troupes n'étaient éloignées d'Utique que de vingt-cinq milles, il abandonna les travaux et battit en retraite sur les *castra Cornelia*. Il commença à y faire accumuler du blé, élever des retranchements, transporter des bois de construction et envoya aussitôt des ordres en Sicile pour qu'on lui fit parvenir les deux légions et le reste de la cavalerie »<sup>78</sup>.

Trompé par le stratagème de Juba Ier, Curion crut que Saburra, le lieutenant du roi, était seul. Des transfuges lui affirmèrent que Juba Ier était retourné en Numidie, rappelé pour régler des conflits avec ses voisins<sup>79</sup>. C'est son lieutenant Saburra, à la tête de troupes peu nombreuses, qui vint secourir la ville d'Utique. Il campa sur la rive gauche du Bagrada<sup>80</sup>, à dix milles (environ 15 km) au sud d'Utique. Le *Bellum Civile* témoigne de ces faits :

---

né les puits des *castra Cornelia* où s'étaient installées les troupes de Curion (App., II, 7, 44). Curion mit à profit la situation élevée de ces *castra* pour reconnaître la position ennemie : la hauteur de ce poste d'observation permettait une excellente vue en direction d'Utique et de ses environs (KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 733-736, 743).

74 César, *B.C.*, II, 35, 6 ; 36,3 ; 37, 3, 4 ; LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1612 ; du même auteur, *César chef de guerre César stratège et tacticien*, Paris, Tallandier, 2001, p. 442-443.

75 César, *BC*, II, 25.

76 César, *B.C.*, II, 35, 6 ; 36,3 ; 37, 3, 4 ; LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1612 ; du même auteur, *César chef de guerre César stratège et tacticien*, « cité », p. 442-443.

77 Dio Cass., 42, 1. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 19

78 César, *BC*, II, 37.

79 César, *BC*, II, 38, 3-4 ; Lvcán., *La guerre civile*, IV, 732-733 et 741, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1997. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 746.

80 La bataille du *Bagrada* s'est déroulée en 49 avant J.-C.

« Quelques déserteurs de la ville lui [à Curion] apprennent que Juba Ier, rappelé par une guerre avec un peuple voisin et par les querelles des habitants de Leptis, était resté dans son royaume, et que c'était Saburra, son lieutenant, qu'il avait envoyé avec des forces peu considérables, qui approchait d'Utique»<sup>81</sup>.

Quant à Juba Ier, contrairement aux dires des transfuges, il avait suivi Saburra avec toute son armée et s'était arrêté à six milles (environ 9 km) en arrière, certainement sur la rive droite du fleuve<sup>82</sup>. César le rapporte dans le *Bellum Ciuile* :

« Mais le roi suivait avec toutes ses troupes et s'était établi à six mille pas en arrière de Saburra »<sup>83</sup>.

Au début de la nuit, Curion envoya ses cavaliers, au bord du Bagrada, qui se jetèrent sur le seul ennemi connu, Saburra à la tête de son armée. Ils surprirent les Numides dans leur sommeil et en mirent un grand nombre hors de combat. A la suite de cet épisode, Curion mit en mouvement toutes ses forces, sauf cinq cohortes destinées à la garde du camp. Il se porta à la rencontre des Numides avant qu'ils ne se remettent de la terreur de l'agression subie<sup>84</sup>.

Juba Ier, ayant appris l'attaque de Curion<sup>85</sup>, envoya à son lieutenant deux mille cavaliers espagnols et gaulois, qui formaient sa garde personnelle, et ceux de ses fantassins qu'il jugeait les meilleurs. César l'a bien dit dans son récit de la guerre civile<sup>86</sup>.

Juba Ier, lui-même, suivrait plus lentement avec le reste de son armée et soixante éléphants. Saburra se rapprochait ainsi du roi, et en même temps se plaçait dans des conditions favorables pour combattre les Romains en les attirant dans une vaste plaine<sup>87</sup>.

Juba Ier, comme nous le constatons, recourut à plusieurs stratagèmes. Son lieutenant, Saburra, devait faire croire qu'il était seul et que le roi était retenu

81 César, *BC*, II, 38.

82 Dio Cass., 41, 5. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 741 ; GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 19.

83 César, *BC*, II, 38.

84 César, *BC*, II, 38. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 746-747 ; COLTELLONI-TRANNOY Michèle, « Juba Ier I et Juba II », *Encyclopédie berbère*, XXV, 2003, p. 3922.

85 COLTELLONI-TRANNOY, « Juba Ier I et Juba II », « cité », p. 3923.

86 César, *BC*, II, 40.

87 César, *BC*, II, 40 ; Lvcan, IV, 74, 1-3.

aux frontières par une attaque d'autres ennemis<sup>88</sup>. Puis il recourut à un deuxième stratagème, dès le commencement de l'engagement, il donna à ses troupes un ordre de repli lent. Ce qui pourrait montrer que l'infanterie numide avait acquis une certaine maîtrise dans l'art de la guerre. Sur ordre de Juba Ier, les combattants repartirent vers l'avant, isolèrent l'avant-garde de l'armée romaine de Curion, puis contournèrent ses deux ailes<sup>89</sup>. La cavalerie numide prit à revers le dispositif ennemi, épuisant les combattants romains, les surprenant par la supériorité numérique des Numides et les conduisant au désastre. L'efficacité de cette armée est attestée dans le *Bellum Africum* :

«À côté de l'imposante cavalerie indigène, en partie mercenaire, fournie à Scipion par Juba Ier, et qui s'avéra redoutable dès les premiers engagements, la plupart des légions étaient formées surtout de sujets [autochtones]»<sup>90</sup>.

Cette façon de procéder n'était pas acceptée par les Romains quand ils étaient mis en œuvre par leurs ennemis. Mais lorsque ces mêmes procédés étaient à leur initiative, ils étaient considérés comme la preuve de leur intelligence militaire<sup>91</sup>.

Face à cette tactique déroutante des troupes numides, l'armée de Curion montrait des signes de faiblesse. Tout étant perdu pour ses soldats, les uns prirent la fuite, les autres se firent massacrer<sup>92</sup>. Curion, leur chef, n'échappa pas au désastre<sup>93</sup>, il fut tué et sa tête rapportée à Juba Ier<sup>94</sup>.

Bien sûr, pour préserver sa vie, Curion aurait pu rejoindre certains de ses soldats qui avaient pris la fuite. Mais s'il réagissait ainsi, il ne pourrait supporter les critiques et les conséquences de son retour sans l'armée qui lui a été confiée avant son départ de Sicile. Il n'opta pas pour la fuite, resta

88 César, *BC*, II, 39 ; Eutr., *Abrégé d'histoire romaine*, VI, 23, 1-3, trad. Hellegouarc'h, J., Paris, 1999 ; Lvc., IV, 720, 744-745 ; App., II, 7, 43 ; Dio Cass., XLI, 41. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 747 ; LE BOHEC, *César chef de guerre*, « cité », p. 358 ; LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1613.

89 César, *B.C.*, II, 41-42 ; Tac, *Ann.* II, 52 ; III, 21, trad. P. WUILLEUMIER, Paris, 1958.

90 César, *BC*, II, 39-42 ; Pseudo-César, VI, 1 ; VIII, 5 ; XX, 4 ; XLIII, 1.

91 César, *BC*, II, 40-42 ; App., II, 7, 45. LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1613.

92 César, *B.C.*, II, 41-42 ; Tac, *Ann.* II, 52 ; III, 21.

93 César, *BC*, II, 42 ; Dio Cass., 42, 3-4. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 20-23.

94 Dio Cass., 42, 3-4. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 20-23. LASSÈRE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p.102.

sur le champ de bataille et mourut en brave au combat<sup>95</sup>.

Juba Ier fit son entrée dans Utique, suivi de nombreux sénateurs et s'y montra en maître. Ensuite, il donna des directives sur ce qu'il entendait qu'il y fût fait. Il ordonna l'extraction des soldats de Curion qui s'étaient rendus à Varus, l'exécution d'une partie de ceux-ci, la mise en esclavage des graciés en Numidie<sup>96</sup> ; puis il rentra dans son royaume avec son armée<sup>97</sup>.

Cette bataille fut le plus grand triomphe d'une armée africaine sur une armée romaine, celle de Curion, en l'occurrence<sup>98</sup>. Les pertes, du côté romain furent très lourdes<sup>99</sup>. L'initiative de Juba Ier montre qu'il possédait une culture militaire et que son armée était organisée et moderne pour son époque<sup>100</sup>.

César tenta de redresser la situation et de chercher l'appui des Maures qu'il dressa contre les Numides. C'est l'implication des peuples autochtones qui manquait à Curion pour la victoire.

#### 4.2. Autres affrontements avant la bataille de Thapsus

Trois ans plus tard, en 46, César, en personne, prit le commandement des opérations. Sa campagne de quatre mois, depuis son accostage près d'Hadrumète et jusqu'à la bataille de Thapsus, avait été menée dans des espaces incroyablement étroits qui n'excédaient pas 60 kilomètres<sup>101</sup>.

Les sources mentionnent des lieux de bataille (Fig. 1 et 2) ou de transit des belligérants<sup>102</sup>, dont certains, parmi les plus importants, apparaissent réguliè-

95 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 748.

96 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 749.

97 César, *B.C.*, II, 44, 2-3; Dio Cass., 42, 7. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 24; COLTELLO-NI-TRANNOY, « Juba Ier et Juba II », « cité », p. 3922; LASSÈRE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 102.

98 App., *BC*, II, 7, 46. LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1613-1614.

99 Dio Cass., 41; César, *B.C.*, II, 41, 5, 7, 8; 42, 3-4; 44, 1, 6. LE BOHEC, *César chef de guerre*, « cité », p. 358 ; le même, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1613.

100 LE BOHEC, « L'expédition de Curion en Afrique », « cité », p. 1613-1615.

101 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 762.

102 Pseudo-César, XXVIII ; LXII ; LXVII ; LXXIX ; LXXX ; LXXXII ; LXXXV ; LXXXVI.

ment. Il s'agit de Hadrumète (Sousse)<sup>103</sup>, Ruspina<sup>104</sup>, Leptiminus<sup>105</sup>, Uzitta<sup>106</sup>, Aggar<sup>107</sup> et Thysdrus (El-Jem)<sup>108</sup>. Ruspina joua un rôle important comme base de César pendant ces opérations, comme le montre l'étude des restes archéologiques<sup>109</sup>.

La plupart de ces cités représentaient d'anciennes colonies maritimes phéniciennes. Certaines d'entre elles étaient fortifiées et entourées de remparts<sup>110</sup>. Elles dépendaient de la sphère d'influence punique, mais nous ignorons la nature des relations qui les unissaient à Carthage. Pourtant, il est avéré que cette dernière imposait sa culture<sup>111</sup>.

Durant la troisième guerre punique, quelques-unes avaient soutenu Rome<sup>112</sup>. Cet engagement aux côtés des Romains s'explique vraisemblablement par une relation d'amitié qui les liait à Rome avant même la création de la province en Afrique.

Plus tard, elles ont été récompensées de l'aide qu'elles avaient apportée aux Romains. En effet, ces villes se virent octroyer le statut juridique privilégié d'*oppida libera*. Ce qui n'avait pas empêché certaines d'entre elles, comme Thapsus, même un siècle après la destruction de Carthage, de se rallier aux républicains

103 Pseudo-César, III ; XXI ; XXIV ; LXII-LXIII ; LXXXIX.

104 Pseudo-César, VI ; VII ; IX, X-XX.

105 Pseudo-César, VI ; VII ; X ; XXIX ; LXI ; LXII.

106 Pseudo-César, XLI ; LI ; LIII ; LVIII ; LIX ; LXXXIX.

107 Pseudo-César, LXVII ; LXXVII.

108 Pseudo-César, XXXVI ; LXXVI.

109 KALLALA Nabil, *RUSPINA-Monastir romaine et tardo-antique*, Tunis, 2024, p. 25-92.

110 Pseudo-César, LXXIX, 1 ; LXXXV, 1. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, p.136-137 ; FANTAR Mohamed Hassine, *Carthage, approche d'une civilisation*, t. 2, Tunis.1998, note 222, p. 139.

111 ANZIANI Dominique, « Nécropoles puniques du Sahel tunisien », *MEFR*, 32, 1912, p. 301-3 ; YOUNES Ameer, « Recherches sur la ville portuaire de Thapsus et son territoire en Byzacène dans l'antiquité », *Cahier du CERES, Histoire*, t. 1, n° 10, 1999, p. 201-2.

112 TROUSSET Pol, « Hadrumète », *Encyclopédie Berbère*, XXII, 2000, p. 3307-3319 ; BENABOU Marcel, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, Paris, 1976, p. 412 ; KALLALA Nabil, « Le *Bellum Africum* et son apport pour la connaissance des villes et villages du Sahel tunisien antique », *Africa*, XXI, 2007, p. 61 ; ANZIANI, « Nécropoles puniques du Sahel tunisien », « cité », p. 301-3 ; LASSERE Jean-Marie, *Ubique populus, peuplement et mouvements de population dans l'Afrique romaine de la chute de Carthage à la fin de la dynastie des Sévères (146 a.C-235 p.C.)*, 53, Paris.1977, p. 48 ; TROUSSET, « Hadrumète », « cité », p. 3307-3319 ; DESANGES Jehan, DUVAL Noël, LEPELLEY Claude et SAINT-AMANS Sophie, *Cartes des routes et des cités de l'est de l'Afrique à la fin de l'Antiquité*, Brepols, Belgium, 2010, p. 238 ; KALLALA, *RUSPINA-Monastir romaine et tardo-antique*, « cité », p. 25-92.

contre César<sup>113</sup>.

En décembre 47, César débarqua avec son armée à Hadrumète<sup>114</sup>. Ses forces étaient composées de six légions (dont cinq formées de vétérans), de peu de cavaliers (2 000 seulement) et de 2 à 3 000 archers, soit 35 000 hommes, au total. Encore, pouvait-il compter sur l'appui des Maures<sup>115</sup>.

C'est non loin de là qu'était installée l'une des légions pompéiennes, placée sous le commandement de Considius Longus. Ce dernier ne s'opposa ni au débarquement de César, ni au cantonnement de son armée au sud de la ville, près du rivage<sup>116</sup>.

César se prépara à une campagne d'hiver. Son arrivée à Hadrumète n'a pas relevé de son choix mais tenait compte de l'impossibilité d'accoster aux abords d'Utique, l'accès par mer lui étant interdit parce que bien défendu par ses adversaires. Ce qui a fait que l'ennemi ignora le lieu de son débarquement<sup>117</sup>.

Il est bien de rappeler ici que César, au début, était quelque peu hésitant. Sa flotte prit la mer le 25 décembre 47, avec pour objectif secret Hadrumète ; mais la tempête, qui sévit ce jour-là, dispersa une bonne partie des navires et, seuls 3000 fantassins et 150 cavaliers purent débarquer. Ce qui était un effectif insuffisant pour prendre une place solidement tenue par C. Considius<sup>118</sup>.

113 PEYRAS Jean, « Remarque sur les centuriations et les cadastres de l'Afrique proconsulaire », *De la terre au ciel, Paysage et cadastres antiques*, I, Besançon 29-31 mars 1993, Besançon, Université de Franche-Comté, 1994, p. 223-246 ; LASSERE, *Vbique populus, peuplement et mouvements de population dans l'Afrique romaine de la chute de Carthage à la fin de la dynastie des Sévères (146 a.C-235 p.C.)*, « cité », p. 48 ; PASA Béatrice, *Recherches sur l'Africa Vetus, de la destruction de Carthage aux interventions césaro-augustéennes*, *Archéologie et Préhistoire*, thèse d'histoire et civilisations antiques de l'université Toulouse le Mirail (dactylographie), 2011, p. 141 ; BENABOU, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, « cité », p. 412 ; TROUSSET, « Hadrumète », « cité », p. 3307-3319 ; KALLALA, « Le *Bellum Africum* et son apport pour la connaissance des villes et villages du Sahel tunisien antique », « cité », p. 61 ; DESANGES, DUVAL, LEPELLEY et SAINT-AMANS, *Cartes des routes et des cités de l'est de l'Africa à la fin de l'Antiquité*, « cité », p. 238 ; ANZIANI, « Nécropoles puniques du Sahel tunisien », « cité », p. 301-3 ; GSELL Stéphane, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, VIII, Paris, 1928, p. 126.

114 Dio Cass., XLII, 58.

115 Pseudo-César, II, 1. LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 103.

116 Dio Cass., XLII, 58.

117 Dio Cass., XLII, 58.

118 Pseudo-César, III, 1. LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 104.

Toutes les tentatives de négociations entreprises avec son ennemi avant l'entrée en guerre, ayant échoué<sup>119</sup>, il donna alors l'ordre à ses combattants de poursuivre leur progression en évitant Hadrumète<sup>120</sup>.

Les Numides entrèrent en guerre, occupèrent son camp dès qu'il l'eut abandonné et attaquèrent son arrière-garde. César n'avait d'autre choix que de marcher vers le Sud-est, car il ne pouvait ni s'écarter de la mer et de ses vaisseaux, ni se diriger vers le Nord, par peur d'être pris en tenaille par l'adversaire entre Hadrumète et Utique.

Plusieurs villes proposèrent du blé à César, notamment Leptis<sup>121</sup>, ville libre et prête à se soumettre à ses ordres<sup>122</sup>. Il installa son camp à proximité de cette cité et à distance utile de ses forces navales. Malgré cette « prudence » ses troupes étaient continuellement harcelées, à l'exemple de matelots, débarquant pour s'approvisionner en eau douce, attaqués par des cavaliers maures refusant de se battre en plaine.

Ces tactiques guerrières africaines avaient le don d'irriter les troupes de César, qui, au bout du troisième jour, levèrent le camp et se déplacèrent plus au sud, à Ruspina<sup>123</sup>.

Ces manœuvres des forces pompéiens se succédaient tout au fil des jours. César décida, à un moment, de dresser son camp et d'établir son quartier général, de manière durable, le long du rivage, près de Ruspina.

D'après les indications du *Bellum Africum*, son armée était composée d'une infanterie qui comptait alors 8 000 hommes : six cohortes basées à Leptiminus, une légion (dix cohortes) à Ruspina, sept cohortes au port de Ruspina. Des navires apportèrent également des renforts<sup>124</sup>. Ce nombre important de combattants exigeait un ravitaillement sérieux. C'est pour cette raison que César déploya beaucoup d'énergie à la recherche d'approvisionnements<sup>125</sup>. A Ruspina, il se vit

119 Pseudo-César, IV. LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 104.

120 Pseudo-César, IX. 1 ; X-XI.

121 Pseudo-César, IX. 1 ; X-XI.

122 LASSERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 104.

123 *Tout César, discours, traités, correspondance et commentaires*, édition bilingue établie et présentée par ALEXANDRO GARCEA, Editions ROBERT LAFFONT, Paris, 2020, p. 862-863 ; KALLALA, *RUSPINA-Monastir romaine et tardo-antique*, « cité », p. 25-92.

124 Pseudo-César, IX. 1 ; X-XI ; Suet., *César*, LIX ; Dio Cass., XLII, 58.

125 Pseudo-César, XXXIV.

remettre d'abondantes provisions de blé par les habitants<sup>126</sup>.

Cinq jours après son arrivée en Afrique (le 4 janvier), César entreprit une expédition avec le soutien de trente cohortes. Il se trouvait à trois milles (4,5 km) de Ruspina, quand des cavaliers lui annoncèrent l'approche d'ennemis. Il livra bataille à Ruspina.

Labienus, son adversaire, avait constitué un front étendu et plaça des forces de cavalerie aux deux ailes dans le but d'encercler les césariens et de leur faire subir le même sort qu'à l'armée de Curion.

César disposa son armée sur une seule ligne, précédée d'archers et flanquée aux ailes de cavaliers, pour éviter l'encercllement. Et là, une fois encore, les troupes césariennes durent affronter d'autres manœuvres pratiquées par les africains. Au moment où César pensait que le combat se déroulerait entre fantassins, la cavalerie pompéienne se déploya. Les collines furent occupées pour priver les césariens d'un refuge éventuel et le reste de la cavalerie se lança contre celle de César<sup>127</sup>.

Le désordre régnait dans son armée. D'après le *Bellum Africum*, l'armée ennemie aurait été repoussée par César<sup>128</sup>. César fit même des prisonniers et fut rejoint par des transfuges, notamment des Gétules. Après sa défaite, il regagna ensuite son camp. Ce fut bien une défaite, en dépit de ce qu'ont prétendu certaines sources<sup>129</sup>. Il avait pu éviter un désastre, mais n'avait pas vaincu. Pendant que César renforçait son camp de Ruspina<sup>130</sup>, une série d'opérations confuses se déroulèrent<sup>131</sup>.

Au même moment, Juba Ier quitta ses États, accompagné par une cavalerie et une infanterie nombreuses, pour se rendre au secours de ses alliés. Profitant de la situation, P. Sittius et le roi Bocchus, apprenant le départ de Juba Ier, réunirent leurs forces, envahirent la Numidie et s'emparèrent d'un *castellum* du

126 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 764 ; *Tout César, discours, traités, correspondance et commentaires*, « cité », p. 863.

127 Pseudo-César, XII-XIII ; XVII.

128 Pseudo-César, XVIII-XXI.

129 Strabon, *Géographie*, XVII, 3, 12, trad. Aujac, G., Lasserre, F., *et alii*, Paris, 1969. LAS-SERE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 104.

130 Pseudo-César, XX, 1. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 777 ; KALLALA, *RUSPINA-Monastir romaine et tardo-antique*, « cité », p. 25-92.

131 Pseudo-César, XXXIX-XLIII.

roi<sup>132</sup>. C'était là que le Numide avait stocké ses réserves de blé et son matériel de guerre. A ces nouvelles, Juba Ier, qui était sur le point de rejoindre Scipion et les autres chefs, réfléchit et conclut qu'il valait mieux aller au secours de son propre royaume que de s'exposer à le perdre en voulant secourir les autres. Il se retira une seconde fois en compagnie des troupes destinées à Scipion en lui laissant seulement trente éléphants<sup>133</sup>.

Au moment des combats de Ruspina, plusieurs villes envoyèrent des députés pour assurer César de leur soutien et le prièrent de veiller à leur fournir des garnisons et de la logistique<sup>134</sup>. Ces démarches renforcèrent la position de César qui décida, dans la nuit du 25 au 26 janvier 46, de déplacer le théâtre des opérations de Ruspina, à 15 km au sud-ouest, vers Uzitta, où les forces pompéiennes étaient déjà installées<sup>135</sup>. Scipion décida alors de secourir Uzitta où il entreposait, en quantité importante, des armes et des vivres<sup>136</sup>.

Les événements à Uzitta furent marqués par l'entrée en lice de Juba Ier<sup>137</sup>. Nous savons que le roi, sur le point de rejoindre Scipion, avait été contraint de rentrer de toute urgence dans ses États pour contrecarrer l'attaque de Bocchus et de Sittius. Avant d'aller les affronter, Juba Ier confia à Saburra, son lieutenant, le commandement des forces maintenues sur place<sup>138</sup>.

A son retour de Numidie, le roi était accompagné de trois groupes : huit cents cavaliers réguliers bien armés, d'autres cavaliers et fantassins, nombreux eux aussi, mais équipés plus légèrement, et trente éléphants avec leur personnel. Il établit son camp à l'écart, à quelque distance de celui de Scipion, marquant ainsi son indépendance<sup>139</sup>.

Le lendemain de son arrivée à Uzitta, Juba Ier et Scipion se préparèrent au combat et disposèrent les troupes et les éléphants en ordre de bataille. Ils les

132 L'emplacement de ce *castellum* reste inconnu.

133 Pseudo-César, XXV, 2 ; XXXVI. *Tout César, discours, traités, correspondance et commentaires*, « cité », p. 870-871.

134 *Tout César, discours, traités, correspondance et commentaires*, « cité », p. 875.

135 Pseudo-César, XXXVII-LXVI ; XLI. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 795.

136 Pseudo-César, LVIII ; LXXXIX.

137 Pseudo-César, XLVIII.

138 Dio Cass., 41, 5 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 19.

139 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 94.

alignèrent à peu de distance du camp de César. Ils placèrent, au premier rang les légions de Scipion et les combattants de Juba Ier. Plus en arrière, et en réserve, ils disposèrent des fantassins numides, et, sur les flancs, les éléphants, à intervalle régulier. Et encore derrière ces pachydermes, l'infanterie légère. À droite était postée l'ensemble de la cavalerie régulière<sup>140</sup>.

L'objectif était triple : impressionner l'adversaire par le déploiement ostensible de leurs forces, habituer les hommes à la vue de leurs ennemis et empêcher ces derniers de s'emparer de la ville d'Uzitta. Les deux chefs n'étaient pas favorables à la pensée de prendre le risque d'une véritable bataille. Ils choisirent de s'engager plutôt dans des escarmouches, moins coûteuses en hommes, en s'assurant l'appui de cavaliers et de fantassins suffisamment mobiles<sup>141</sup>. Ce harcèlement discontinu eut pour effet de provoquer des pertes sévères à César<sup>142</sup>. Une fois encore, les manœuvres d'Uzitta n'ont pas débouché sur une bataille décisive.

Face aux pertes et au harcèlement de l'ennemi, César éprouvait les plus grandes difficultés à assurer le ravitaillement en blé de ses légions. Il ordonna qu'on se mette à la recherche d'un lieu où les ressources pourraient être plus abondantes. Et, pour répondre à ses vœux, c'est la cité d'Aggar, à 26 miles (40 km), au Sud de Ruspina<sup>143</sup>, qui fut retenue. Avant de quitter Uzitta, il renforça les garnisons de Ruspina, dont les habitants s'étaient ralliés à lui, de Leptiminus, vers le sud, ainsi que d'Acholla, plus méridionale encore.

Quelques temps après, il leva le camp, et se dirigea vers Aggar. En fin de nuit, il atteignit le rivage et ne s'en éloigna pas, prêt à réceptionner les convois en provenance de Sicile. Dans l'après-midi, il arriva à destination et établit son bivouac dans la plaine.

Le *Bellum africanum*<sup>144</sup> indique que des Gétules avaient tenté de s'emparer de la ville que ses habitants, ayant choisi le parti de César, avaient défendue avec énergie. Il y serait, à tout coup, le bienvenu. Il n'était donc pas parti sans assurance car il s'était ménagé des complicités dans la place.

140 Pseudo-César, LIX, 1-5. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 101.

141 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 94-100; LASSÈRE, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, « cité », p. 104.

142 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 103.

143 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 776; GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 108-122.

144 Pseudo-César, LXVII-LXXVIII.

D'Uzitta à Aggar, il parcourut 34 km et pillà, sur son chemin, toutes les ressources disponibles. Il a été écrit plus haut que c'était l'insuffisance du ravitaillement en blé qui avait poussé César à quitter ses positions, mais c'était également le refus des pompéiens de s'engager dans une bataille<sup>145</sup>.

Il faut noter là que César, dans tous ses déplacements, était poursuivi par Juba Ier et Scipion ainsi que par Labienus.

Les événements d'Aggar se déroulèrent du 14 mars au 4 avril 46<sup>146</sup>. Les habitants d'Aggar apportèrent leur concours à César qui put remporter ainsi quelques succès. Les éléphants de Juba Ier continuaient à inspirer les plus grandes craintes aux troupes romaines. Ce qui n'était pas le cas envers la cavalerie et l'infanterie légère numide, auxquelles elles s'étaient déjà confrontées à maintes reprises. Pourtant, lorsque les troupes de César entrèrent en lutte contre les cavaliers numides, elles perdirent beaucoup de chevaux, blessés ou tués à distance par les javelots numides. Ces guerriers numides épuisaient les légionnaires par leur facilité à se déplacer et leurs charges répétées souvent accompagnées de pièges et d'embuscades<sup>147</sup>. Cependant, aucun des adversaires ne l'emporta réellement et César renonça à l'espoir de terminer la guerre dans la plaine d'Aggar où les pompéiens refusaient de faire descendre leurs combattants<sup>148</sup>.

Et, sans autre solution pour satisfaire aux besoins du ravitaillement, les deux belligérants n'eurent d'autre choix, pour tenter de se procurer des vivres, que de se diriger vers Zeta, distante d'environ 27 km.

César mit sur pied une expédition vers la ville. Il déplaça son camp vers le sud-ouest, sur les hauteurs bordant la plaine d'Aggar, non loin de la route menant à Thapsus. Le 17 mars 46, il s'empara sans mal de Zeta qui lui était toute acquise<sup>149</sup>. Lorsqu'il approcha des camps républicains, Labiénus et Afranius, en embuscade derrière des collines voisines, avec la cavalerie et l'infanterie légère, l'attaquèrent. César les repoussa.

Les républicains et les Numides firent une autre tentative. Et ces manœuvres ne cessèrent de se renouveler. Dès que César et ses légionnaires se mettaient en

---

145 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 811; GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 115.

146 Pseudo-César, LXVII-LXXVIII.

147 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 107-113; 121-2.

148 Pseudo-César, LXXIX, 1.

149 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 811.

marche, leurs adversaires les suivaient. Quand ils leur faisaient face, ils les évitaient et se contentaient de les cribler de traits.

César tira deux enseignements : d'une part, il devenait urgent d'entraîner ses soldats à la tactique numide caractérisée par des harcèlements rapides et répétés des cavaliers, d'autre part, il devait familiariser ses hommes et ses chevaux à la présence d'éléphants, afin qu'ils ne les craignent plus. Il regagna son camp. L'unique résultat de cette expédition avait été la prise de Zeta<sup>150</sup>.

César prit le contrôle de Sarsura, située entre Thysdrus et Hadrumète. Il distribua à son armée le blé qu'il y trouva. L'armée passa la nuit dans la ville puis la quitta au matin. Ce même jour, le 24 mars, il arriva devant Thysdrus (aujourd'hui El Jem ou El Djem), après une marche de 17 km.

Alors, Scipion dut sortir de son camp, situé à proximité, car l'auteur du *Bellum Africum* écrit plus loin que Scipion le regagna. Il savait que cette ville était mieux défendue que Sarsura<sup>151</sup> et se prépara à intervenir.

L'auteur du *Bellum Africum* explique que César étudia le terrain et que c'est le manque d'eau qui le décida de ne pas tenter l'attaque<sup>152</sup>.

Finalement, César envoya à Thabena (Thaenae ?)<sup>153</sup> une armée composée de trois cohortes, d'archers et de machines de guerre pour défendre la ville et ses habitants. D'après Strabon, César se rendit maître de la ville sans combattre<sup>154</sup>. Les engagements restaient très limités, autour des villes citées.

Les armes ne parvenaient pas à départager les deux adversaires : Juba Ier avait pris la ville de Vaga, au nord d'Aggar, César celle de Zeta, dans le voisinage de Vaga, puis Sarsura, plus à l'ouest, ainsi que Thabena qui venait de basculer dans son camp. La bataille décisive ne pouvait se dérouler en ces lieux<sup>155</sup>. Aucun adversaire ne prenait réellement le pas sur l'autre. Dion Cassius confirme que c'est bien ce constat qui a justifié le départ de César pour Thapsus<sup>156</sup> :

« C'est pourquoi quand César s'aperçut qu'en raison de la nature du

150 Pseudo-César, LXVIII, 1-4 ; LXXIV, 1.

151 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 811.

152 Pseudo-César, LXXVI, 1-2.

153 ville située à l'extrémité des côtés maritimes et de la domination de Juba Ier.

154 Pseudo-César, LXXVII, 1-4; Strabo., XVII, 3, 12.

155 Pseudo-César, LXXIX, 1. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 821-622.

156 Dio Cass., 43, 7, 1.

terrain il ne pouvait les forcer à engager une bataille, il partit pour Thapsos [Thapsus], pour pouvoir soit les attaquer, s'ils venaient en aide à la ville, soit du moins s'emparer de l'endroit, s'ils les laissaient à leur destin »<sup>157</sup>.

Dans le *Bellum Civile*, l'auteur rend responsables les adversaires de César, par l'utilisation forcenée de javelots, d'avoir imposé une guerre « à distance » tout en évitant le combat rapproché susceptible d'être décisif. En effet, cette pratique martiale finissait par épuiser les troupes césariennes. Le même auteur note que les combattants ennemis étaient agiles, insaisissables et ne s'enfuyaient que pour revenir à la charge<sup>158</sup>. Cette forme de combat, à laquelle s'ajoutaient pièges et embuscades, était inhabituelle pour les soldats de César. Accuser les pompéiens d'utiliser des moyens peu courants, voire inappropriés, n'était qu'un leurre pour démontrer la supériorité des Romains.

### 5 La bataille de Thapsus

Les deux premières attaques lancées contre Zeta et Sarsura-Thysdrus ne furent que des succès mineurs et ne permirent pas d'atteindre l'objectif principal qui demeurait l'élimination des pompéiens.

César décida alors de lancer une nouvelle offensive, et cette fois, contre Thapsus (Fig. 3), avec, pour résultat escompté, une victoire qui, dans son esprit, devait mettre un point final au conflit en Afrique, marquant ainsi l'étape ultime de son expédition en terre africaine et scellant, de fait, l'avenir de la région.

C'est dans le livre rédigé par un auteur jusqu'à aujourd'hui inconnu, et auquel on a attribué le nom de « *Pseudo-César* », que le récit de la bataille de Thapsus est le plus détaillé. L'auteur, on le devine, n'a sans doute pas été présent dans les diverses phases de l'affrontement. Les explications qu'il nous livre sont parfois tronquées et rendent délicate la compréhension du bon déroulement de cet épisode guerrier en Afrique. Néanmoins, on le devine, l'auteur a certainement dû faire partie des soldats lancés à la poursuite des fuyards.

Cette source, comme évoqué plus haut, peut être complétée, le cas échéant et de manière plus précise, par les écrits de Dion Cassius et Plutarque, deux auteurs dont les récits sont plutôt fiables, tout comme ceux d'Appien<sup>159</sup> et de Strabon

157 Dio Cass., XLIII, 7, 1.

158 Pseudo-César, LXXI, 3-4 ; LXXII, 1.

159 App., II, 97.

également<sup>160</sup>.

Les préparatifs de la bataille de Thapsus débutèrent le 4 avril à minuit lorsque César leva le camp et se dirigea vers la cité. Il franchit les 16 milles (environ 24 km) séparant Aggar de Thapsus, plus au sud<sup>161</sup>.

L'arrivée de César, le 6 avril, à Thapsus sema dans la cité une grande agitation que les soldats romains attribuèrent à de la peur.

« [César] établit son camp sous les murs de Thapsus... Le jour même, commença l'investissement de la ville et l'occupation de plusieurs points stratégiques, pour empêcher les ennemis de pénétrer jusqu'à lui et d'occuper aucun poste en deçà... [Scipion] se hâta de suivre César par les hauteurs et s'établit en deux camps à huit milles de Thapsus »<sup>162</sup>.

Les troupes républicaines, sous le commandement unique de Scipion, suivaient César à distance<sup>163</sup>, progressant elles aussi en direction de Thapsus<sup>164</sup>. L'armée des pompéiens était constituée de trois groupes : le premier, sous la responsabilité de Juba Ier, le deuxième sous celle d'Afranius, et le troisième avait Scipion, en personne, à sa tête<sup>165</sup>.

Scipion s'était donné pour mission de porter secours aux Thapsitains, mais il en fut empêché par les travaux avancés de César bloquant, en son point le plus étroit, le passage de terre entre la sebkha et la mer. Scipion, seul, rebroussa chemin laissant sur place les deux autres groupes qui se tenaient prêts au combat. Il contourna le lac, s'avança en direction de Thapsus par cette seconde voie. Scipion avait donc choisi l'option d'attaquer César sur deux fronts, lui interdisant de fait tout échappatoire puisque installé au cœur de l'isthme. Lorsque Scipion se présenta non loin de la position de César, il commença la mise en place d'un camp retranché.

Mais César veillait, ses soldats piaffaient d'impatience et voulaient en découdre immédiatement, certains qu'ils étaient de remporter la victoire. Le Pseudo-César révèle les hésitations de César à donner rapidement le signal du dé-

160 Strabo., XVII, 3,12.

161 Pseudo-César, LXXIX, 2.

162 Pseudo-César, LXXIX-LXXX.

163 Pseudo-César, LXXIX, 3; XLIII, 7. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 827, GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 126.

164 DENIAUX Élisabeth, « César et la mer au temps de la guerre d'Afrique », *Africa Romana*, XIV, 1, 2002, p. 159.

165 GSELL L, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 127-140.

clenchement des hostilités, alors que ses soldats étaient prêts et le pressaient d'engager le combat<sup>166</sup>.

César tenta de calmer leur impatience à combattre, arguant que se précipiter ainsi n'était pas, à ses yeux, la meilleure façon d'agir. Il n'eut pas à donner le signal de l'engagement :

« Tout à coup, à l'aile droite, un trompette, cédant aux soldats et sans en avoir reçu l'ordre de César, se mit à sonner la charge. Aussitôt dans toutes les cohortes, on marcha à l'ennemi, malgré les centurions qui faisaient face et résistaient, essayant d'empêcher de force les soldats d'engager le combat sans l'ordre du général, mais en vain »<sup>167</sup>.

Les troupes de César attaquèrent donc soudainement les hommes de Scipion et, utilisant à distance des frondes et des arcs, semèrent une grande confusion dans les rangs républicains<sup>168</sup>.

Les premiers à s'enfuir furent les cavaliers maures qui entraînent les éléphants dans leur déroute<sup>169</sup>. Le Pseudo-César précise que les éléphants, effrayés par le tumulte des combats ou atteints, pour certains d'entre eux, par les pierres et les billes de plomb lancées par les frondeurs, firent demi-tour, piétinèrent les fantassins placés en deuxième ligne offensive au moment de l'attaque et s'échappèrent par les portes inachevées du cantonnement. Les légions césariennes prirent d'assaut le camp qui n'était ni terminé, ni défendable. Les quelques républicains qui tentaient encore de résister furent tués<sup>170</sup>.

Après avoir démantelé les troupes républicaines à Thapsus, César se lança à la poursuite des fuyards et saisit l'opportunité qui se présentait à lui pour s'emparer des camps d'Afranius et de Juba Ier qu'il livra au pillage de ses hommes<sup>171</sup>.

De la part de César, ce fut une contre-manœuvre vraiment ingénieuse, tant dans sa rapidité, sa simplicité et son efficacité, et qui déboucha sur une totale réussite<sup>172</sup>.

---

166 Pseudo-César, LXXXII.

167 Pseudo-César, LXXXII.

168 Dio Cass., 43, 8, 2.

169 Flor., *Œuvres*, II, 13, 67, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1967.

170 Pseudo-César, LXXXIII, 3-5 ; Dio Cass., 43, 8, 2 ; Plut., *César*, 53.

171 Dio Cass., 43, 8.

172 Pseudo-César, LXXX-LXXXIII. KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 827.

Ainsi, en quelques heures, les légions de César s'étaient emparé des trois camps, et avaient ôté la vie à 50 000 de leurs ennemis, selon Plutarque<sup>173</sup>. Le nombre des victimes indiqué dans le *Bellum Africum*, 40 000, semble plus vraisemblable. Les césariens, quant à eux, n'auraient décompté que ... 50 morts<sup>174</sup>. Cependant, les chiffres avancés par le Pseudo-César, pro-césarien, sont à relativiser.

Silius Italicus tente d'expliquer la raison de la défaite des pompéiens face à l'armée de César et décrit le rôle des éléphants dont le nombre atteignait soixante-quatre<sup>175</sup> :

« Le carnage commença d'abord dans les rangs Juba Ier, dont les éléphants, non habitués à la guerre, tout juste sortis de leurs forêts et épouvantés par le bruit soudain des trompettes, se retournèrent contre les leurs »<sup>176</sup>.

Les éléphants étaient utilisés au début d'un engagement pour provoquer la rupture des lignes ennemies. Mais ils formaient — si l'on peut employer cette image — une arme « à double tranchant » car, blessés, ils pouvaient se retourner contre les combattants de leur propre camp. Ce type de réaction explique en partie la défaite de Thapsus<sup>177</sup> : les animaux, effarouchés par les flèches et les projectiles des frondes, se retournèrent vers les rangs de l'armée numide et, dans leur fuite, écrasèrent tout sur leur passage<sup>178</sup>.

Cette dernière explication, issue du récit du Pseudo-César, est toutefois remise en question par certains Modernes<sup>179</sup> qui émettent une première réflexion en faisant

173 Plut., *César*, 53. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 135.

174 Pseudo-César, LXXXVI, 1. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 135.

175 Pseudo-César, LXXXVI, 1. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 43.

176 Silius It., *La Guerre Punique*, I, II, trad. MINICONI, P., et DEVALLET, G., Paris, 1979 ; Flor., II, 13, 67.

177 Pseudo-César, LXXXIII, 2-4 ; Flor., II, 13, 67. CAMPS Gabriel, « Aux origines de la Berbérie, Massinissa ou les débuts de l'histoire », *Libyca*, VIII, (1960), p. 263 ; LE BOHEC Yann, « L'armée de la Numidie au temps de Juba Ier », in *Carthage et les autochtones de son empire du temps de Zama*. Colloque international organisé à Siliana et Tunis du 10 au 13 mars 2004 par l'Institut National du Patrimoine et l'Association de Sauvegarde du site de Zama. Hommage à M. H. Fantar, édit. A. Ferjaoui, Tunis, 2010, p. 445-456.

178 Flor., IV, 2 ; Dio Cass., 43, 8. MULLER Ludwig, *Numismatique de l'ancienne Afrique : les monnaies de la Numidie et de la Maurétanie*, Copenhague, Bianco-Luno, 1860-1862, 1, p. 45.

179 CHARLES and RHODAN, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», « cité », p.180-185.

remarquer que le *Bellum Africum* ne précise pas le nombre exact de pachydermes engagés à Thapsus et ayant, de fait, contribué à la défaite des pompéiens<sup>180</sup>. Une seconde remarque est également relevée : le Pseudo-César n'évoque ces animaux qu'après la bataille et uniquement, lorsque César exigea qu'ils défilent devant Thapsus montrant de la sorte son intention de soumettre ses habitants.

César, d'après l'œuvre du Pseudo-César, aurait pris à l'ennemi soixante-quatre éléphants, harnachés, armés et équipés de tours<sup>181</sup>. Quoi qu'il en soit, dans le contexte spécifique de Thapsus, les éléphants avaient été capturés récemment et, à l'évidence, n'étaient pas encore accoutumés aux fureurs de la guerre<sup>182</sup>.

Certains historiens sont quasi persuadés que ces informations, invérifiables par ailleurs, seraient des ajouts au texte original. En effet, les deux camps semblent avoir eu conscience des dangers de déployer offensivement de telles bêtes, jusque-là sauvages. Et les pompéiens les auraient utilisées plus comme une arme psychologique que prenant part aux combats. À Thapsus, les éléphants constituaient, on l'imagine donc, plus une arme de dissuasion et qu'offensive<sup>183</sup>.

Les soixante-quatre éléphants dont l'existence est évoquée dans le *Bellum Africum* avaient, sans doute, été déployés dans le but premier de protéger les travaux décidés par les commandants<sup>184</sup>. Les éléphants n'étaient donc pas actifs sur le champ de bataille pour s'opposer, a priori, aux troupes romaines dans le sens « offensif » du terme.

Les historiens s'opposent également quant à l'existence ou pas de tourelles fixées sur leur dos : ils notent l'absence de preuves crédibles d'un tel équipement. De plus, ces éléphants de forêt étaient de petite taille et n'étaient pas adaptés à parcourir de longues distances avec, sur leur dos, des tourelles chargées de combattants.

Il se peut également que la référence aux tourelles dans le *Bellum Africum* ait

---

180 Pseudo-César, LXXXVI, 1. CHARLES and RHODAN, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», « cité », p. 178-179.

181 Pseudo-César, LXXXVI, 1.

182 Silius It., *La Guerre Punique*, I, II, trad. MINICONI, P., et DEVALLET, G., Paris, 1979 ; Flor., II, 13, 67.

183 CHARLES and RHODAN, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», « cité », p.180-185.

184 CHARLES and RHODAN, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», « cité », p.186-187.

eu pour intérêt d'agrémenter le texte. En effet, l'auteur, familiarisé peut-être avec les récits de guerre du monde hellénistique où l'éléphant tenait une place particulière, a introduit, volontairement ou pas, cet élément narratif. Le *Pseudo-César*, pro-césarien, tente peut-être là, par son écriture orientée, de dramatiser les événements et de leur donner une aura teintée d'héroïsme.

A ce moment de notre propos, il est opportun de citer deux historiens germanophones du début du siècle dernier, J. Kromayer, et G. Veith. Ils sont les coauteurs d'un livre qui traite « des champs de bataille antiques en Italie et en Afrique »<sup>185</sup>. La bataille de Thapsus, y est analysée, et ce, à travers la compilation de plusieurs sources antiques : le *Bellum Africum*, bien sûr, mais également de textes anciens traitant de cet épisode, rédigés notamment par Dion Cassius, Plutarque et Appien.

A travers l'étude comparative de ces différentes œuvres, ils ont notés des disparités, voire des contradictions entre les différentes narrations. Il faut comprendre là qu'ils ont « confronté » le *Bellum Africum* aux récits des autres auteurs cités. Le propos de Cassius est plutôt limpide et digne d'intérêt, par opposition au récit des deux autres, moins précis, par exemple, sur la question des camps de retraite des républicains au moment de Thapsus<sup>186</sup>.

Sur un plan plus général, ils constatent que le *Bellum Africum* retrace pratiquement tous les événements principaux de la bataille de Thapsus, mais que certaines données complémentaires, bien qu'appartenant à l'Histoire, n'apparaissent pas.

L'explication qu'ils avancent repose sur l'observation suivante : l'auteur, le Pseudo-César, très certainement officier subalterne à la tête d'un détachement, a porté par écrit tout simplement les événements dont il avait été le témoin et/ou l'acteur direct.

A contrario, sur le plan de la tactique d'ensemble, sur les affectations des officiers de haut rang et sur les événements s'étant déroulés hors de son champ d'action, le Pseudo-César reste assez vague. Il omet de signaler qu'une partie de l'armée ennemie est restée sur la partie sud de l'isthme, ainsi que l'avancée de César contre ce groupe. Il mentionne bien, d'autre part, l'arrivée des troupes césariennes dans la *Regia castra*.

---

185 KROMAYER Johannes und VEITH, Georg, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912.

186 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 827.

Par ailleurs, le Pseudo-César, censé être présent, s'est montré peu disert sur le thème de la poursuite des républicains en fuite. A la lecture de ses écrits, il aurait dû le constater et prendre conscience des lacunes dans la description de cet événement<sup>187</sup>.

Scipion, dont l'armée arriva d'abord unie à l'une des entrées de l'isthme, élabore le plan d'encercler César en bloquant les deux issues de l'isthme. Après avoir échoué à atteindre la position de César par une marche de flanc, il fait un détour avec une partie de l'armée autour de la sebkha afin d'empêcher tout échappatoire, tandis que Juba et Afranius, ce dernier avec une partie des troupes romaines restées derrière le camp. César, profitant de la séparation de l'ennemi, laisse deux légions derrière lui en action contre Juba et le corps d'Afranius et attaque le corps de Scipion<sup>188</sup>.

### 6 *Au lendemain de Thapsus*

La victoire de Thapsus, mit un terme à la guerre civile en Afrique. Sur le plan militaire, elle fut incontestable et eut un formidable retentissement dans tout le monde romain. Sur le plan géopolitique, César se rendit maître de l'Afrique. Les généraux adverses s'étant enfuis, il avait pu éliminer les chefs ennemis : mort de Juba 1er, de Petreius<sup>189</sup>, de Caton<sup>190</sup>, de Saburra, général de Juba 1er, tué par Sittius<sup>191</sup>. Sans omettre Scipion qui, s'échappant par la mer et voyant que son navire était abordé, se transperça le corps de son épée pour ne pas tomber vivant aux mains du vainqueur<sup>192</sup>. Arabion, à cette époque-là, « se replia » en Hispanie auprès des fils de Pompée. Plus tard, il revint en Afrique sitôt l'assassinat de César perpétré et fit périr Sittius par vengeance et par ruse<sup>193</sup>.

Après sa victoire, César gagna Utique où il prit les dispositions nécessaires pour réorganiser l'administration de l'Afrique<sup>194</sup>. D'abord, tous ceux qui avaient

187 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 830.

188 KROMAYER und VEITH, *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, « cité », p. 831-832.

189 Pseudo-César, XCIV.

190 Pseudo-César, LXXXVII.- LXXXVIII.

191 Pseudo-César, XCV, 1; App., *BC*, IV, LIV, 232.

192 Flor., II.

193 App., *BC*, IV, LIV, 234.

194 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p.156.

soutenu les pompéiens se virent imposer des amendes en espèces ou en nature<sup>195</sup>. Il fit mettre aux enchères les biens de Juba Ier et ceux des citoyens romains qui avaient choisi le parti des républicains<sup>196</sup>.

Cependant, une des conséquences marquantes de la campagne d'Afrique a été la chute du royaume numide et la création d'une nouvelle province, l'« *Africa Nova* ». Des colons romains s'installèrent en divers points de la région de Cirta<sup>197</sup>. César laissa à Salluste le soin d'organiser la province et lui donna le titre de proconsul avec un *imperium* qui lui accordait les pleins pouvoirs<sup>198</sup>.

A l'ouest de l'*Africa nova*, Sittius reçut, en récompense de l'aide efficace apportée à César, la meilleure partie du territoire de Massinissa (le père d'Arabion), allié de Juba Ier<sup>199</sup>, une vaste principauté située autour de Constantine (Cirta)<sup>200</sup>. Cette terre était implantée sur un large territoire qui s'étendait le long du littoral méditerranéen, de l'embouchure de l'Ampsaga jusqu'en un lieu situé entre Rusi-cade et Hippone. À l'intérieur des terres, les limites de son domaine jouxtaient le pays des Gétules, à environ 100 km de la mer<sup>201</sup>. Sittius distribua ces territoires à ses soldats<sup>202</sup>.

Quant au royaume de Maurétanie, le roi maure Bocchus II retira également des bénéfices de son alliance avec César. Il partagea avec Sittius, les restes de l'ancien royaume numide de Massinissa, dont les États s'étendaient de *Cirta* à la Maurétanie<sup>203</sup>.

195 Pseudo-César, XC, XCVII, XCVIII. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.* VIII, « cité », p. 155-181.

196 Pseudo-César, XLIII, 13, 2 ; cf. XLIII, 17, 4 ; Dio Cass., 43, 13 et 17. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 166.

197 GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 156 ; BERTRANDY François, *L'Etat de Publius Sittius et la « Numidie cirtéenne » (Ier siècle avant J.-C.-Ier siècle après J.-C.)*, thèse de Doctorat, l'Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne (thèse dactylographiée), 1989, p. 455-456 ; du même auteur, « Remarques sur l'origine romaine du monnayage en bronze et en argent de Juba Ier, roi de Numidie », *BCTH*, n.s., 12-14 (1976-1978), (1980), pp. 9-22.

198 ERNOUT Alfred, « préface », in Salluste, *La conjuration de Catilina. La guerre de Jugurtha. Fragments des Histoires*, texte établi et traduit par A. Ernout, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1941, p. 12.

199 App., *BC*, IV, LIV, 232-233.

200 Plin. *nat.*, V, 22, trad. J. Desanges, Paris, 1980. GSELL, *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 158.

201 GSELL *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 158.

202 App., *BC*, IV, LIV, 233.

203 GSELL *H.A.A.N.*, VIII, « cité », p. 156.

L'annexion de la Numidie octroya au peuple romain un vaste domaine. Ainsi, se sont constitués, en Afrique, des *latifundia* au profit de sénateurs et de chevaliers. De même, de simples citoyens s'y sont installés comme l'a montré J.-M. Lassère dans sa thèse.

### *Conclusion*

La bataille de Thapsus n'a été que le dernier acte d'évènements guerriers. L'importance accordée à cette bataille vient du fait qu'elle marque une victoire décisive de César et l'aboutissement d'un processus de prise du pouvoir politique et militaire sur une vaste province à fort potentiel économique. Ces événements sont relatés dans une œuvre dont l'auteur, témoin partial, était favorable à César.

A contrario, la bataille du Bagrada, est relatée de manière brève et superficielle parce qu'elle est marquée par l'échec des césariens et le succès des pompéiens et du roi Juba Ier.

Dans les deux cas, et tout au long des opérations militaires qu'a connues l'Afrique, depuis le début de la campagne du Curion jusqu'à Thapsus, l'apport des combattants africains fut décisif.

Les troupes numides et maures ont prouvé leur efficacité et leur savoir-faire guerrier. Leur implication, telle qu'elle est décrite dans le *Bellum Africum*, expliquerait, selon leur adhésion à tel ou tel camp, l'échec de l'un ou la victoire de l'autre.

Leur ralliement à l'un ou à l'autre des belligérants était subordonné prioritairement à leur intérêt propre.

Ils ont ainsi pris conscience que leur région, par sa richesse, était devenue un enjeu des sphères politiques romaines.

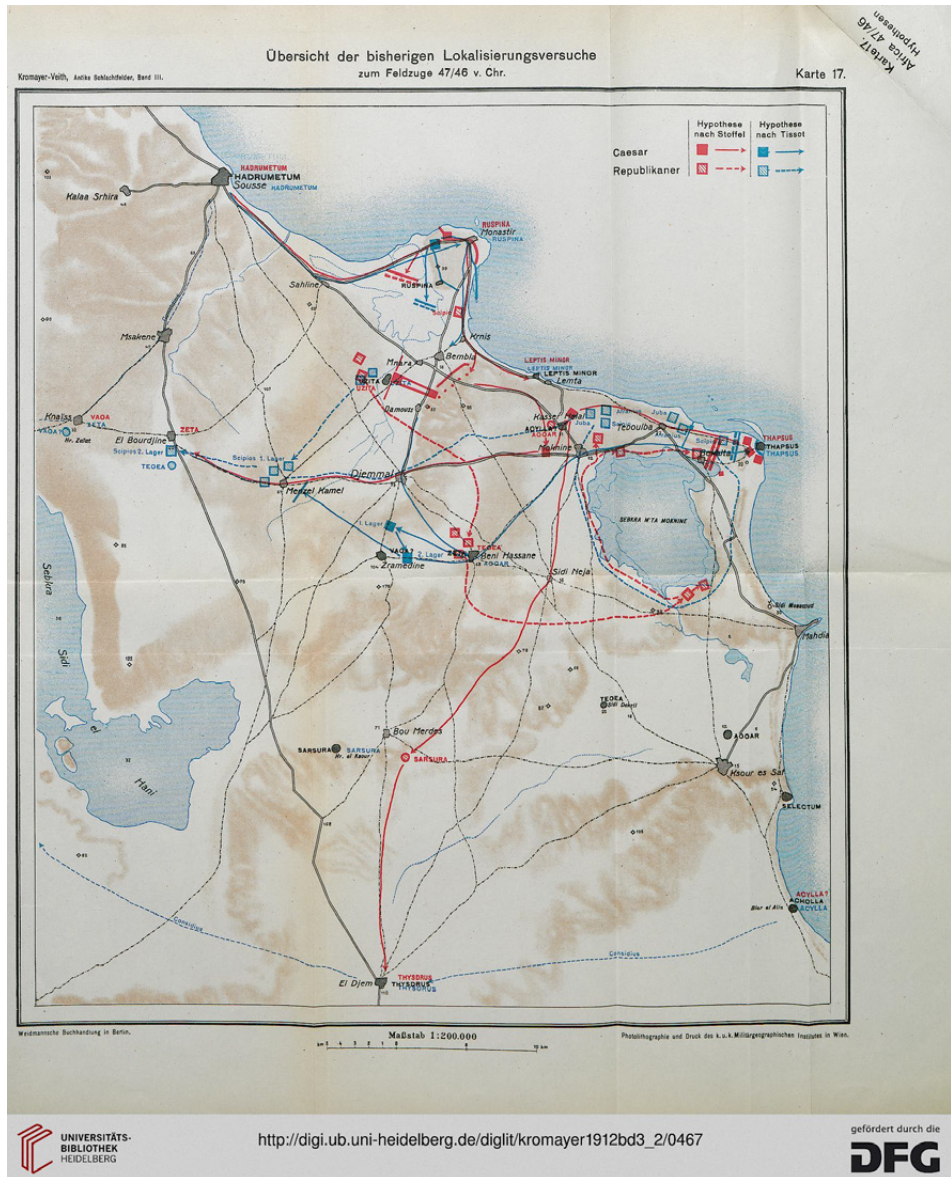


Fig. 1 Aperçu des tentatives de localisation précédentes de la campagne de 47/46 (Kromayer, Johannes; Veith, Georg, *Antike Schlachtfelder: Bausteine zu einer antiken Kriegsgeschichte* (Band 3: *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Abt. 2): Afrika, Berlin, 1912, Karte 17. 0467). uni-heidelberg.de

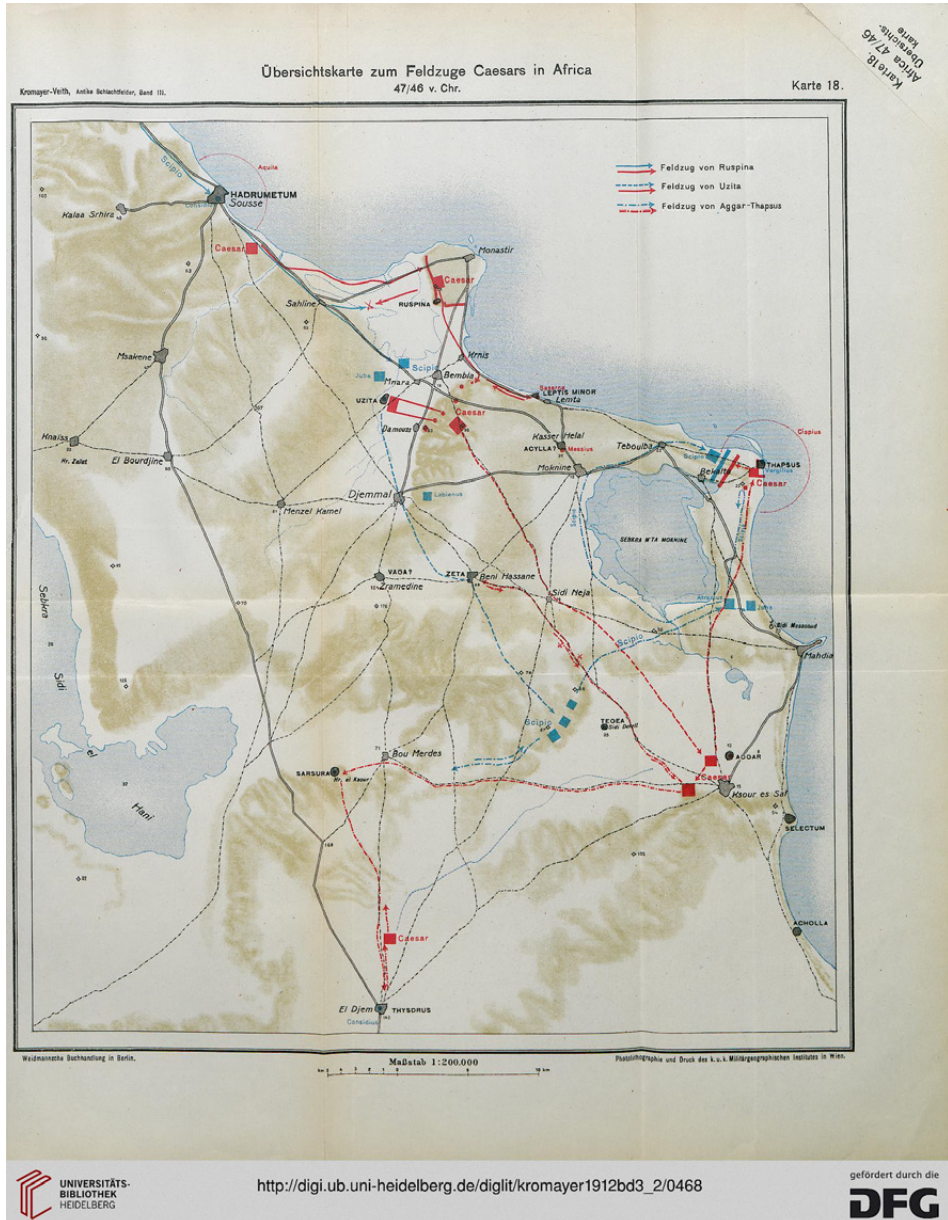


Fig. 2 Carte générale de la campagne de César en Afrique d'après Georg Veith (Kromayer, Johannes; Veith, Georg, *Antike Schlachtfelder: Bausteine zu einer antiken Kriegsgeschichte* (Band 3: *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Abt. 2): Afrika, Berlin, 1912, Karte 18. 0467). uni-heidelberg.de

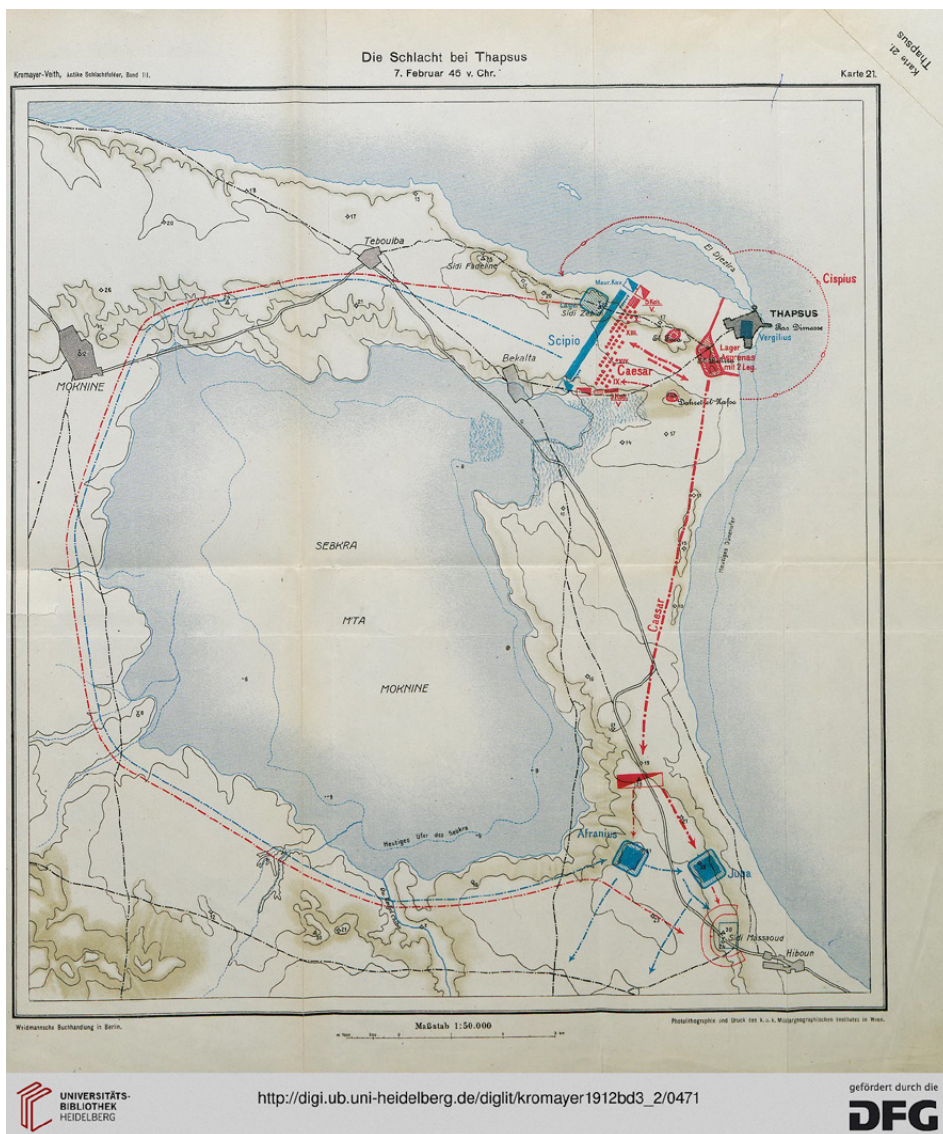


Fig. 3 La bataille de Tapsus d'après Georg Veith (Kromayer, Johannes; Veith, Georg, *Antike Schlachtfelder: Bausteine zu einer antiken Kriegsgeschichte* (Band 3: *Antike Schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Abt. 2): Afrika, Berlin, 1912, Karte 21. 0467). uni-heidelberg.de

## SOURCES ET BIBLIOGRAPHIE

## SOURCES

- Appien, *Guerres civiles* 2 vol., Paris, les Belles Lettres, 1993-2000.
- César, *Guerre Civile*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1969-1972.
- Dion Cassius, *Histoire romaine*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2002.
- Eutrope, *Abrégé d'histoire romaine*, VI, 23, 1-3, trad. Hellegouarc'h, J., Paris, 1999.
- Florus, *Œuvres*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1967.
- Lucain, *La guerre civile*, I-V, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1997.
- Pline L'Ancien, *Histoire Naturelle*, V, trad. J. Desanges, Paris, 1980.
- Plutarque, *Vie parallèles (César et Caton)*, Paris, Gallimard, 2001.
- Pseudo-César, *Guerre d'Afrique*, Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1949.
- Pseudo-César, *La Guerre d'Alexandrie*, LXII, 1, 3, trad. J. Andrieu, Paris, 1954.
- Salluste, *Conjuration de Catilina*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1999.
- Silius Italicus, *La Guerre Punique*, I-IV, trad. Miniconi, P., et Devallet, G., Paris, 1979.
- Strabon, *Géographie*, trad. Aujac, G., Lasserre, F., et alii, Paris, 1969.
- Suétone, *Vie des douze Césars : César, Auguste*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1967.
- Tacite, *Annales*, trad. P. Willeumier, Paris, 1958 et suiv. 4 vol.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- AIT AMARA Ouïza, *Numides et Maures au combat, Etats et armées en Afrique du Nord jusqu'à l'époque de Juba Ier*, Studi di Storia Antica e di Archeologia 13, Sandhi, Ortacesus, 2013.
- AIT AMARA Ouïza, « Thapsus, la bataille et le rôle de Juba Ier », Actes du 6<sup>e</sup> colloque international Byzacium, Byzacène, Muzaq: Occupation du sol, peuplement et modes de vie (Sousse, 13, 14 et 15 Juin 2019), 2021, pp. 29-53.
- ANZIANI Dominique, « Nécropoles puniques du Sahel tunisien », *MEFR*, 32, 1912, pp. 245-303.
- BENABOU Marcel, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, Paris, 1976.
- BERTRANDY François, « Remarques sur l'origine romaine du monnayage en bronze et en argent de Juba Ier, roi de Numidie », *BCTH*, n.s., 12-14 (1976-1978), (1980), pp. 9-22.
- BERTRANDY François, *L'Etat de Publius Sittius et la « Numidie cirtéenne » (Ier siècle avant J.-C.-Ier siècle après J.-C.)*, thèse de Doctorat, l'Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne (thèse dactylographiée), 1989.
- BERTRANDY François, « L'aide militaire de Juba Ier aux pompéiens pendant la guerre civile en Afrique du Nord (50-46 avant J.-C.) », in *Histoire et Archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord : actes du IV<sup>e</sup> Colloque international 2 : L'armée et les Affaires Militaires*, Paris, CTHS, (1987), pp. 289-297.

- CAMPS Gabriel, « Grande ou petite Numidie ? », dans *Vbique amici*, Mélanges offerts à J.-M., Lassère, Montpellier (CERCAM (2001), pp. 67-83.
- CAMPS Gabriel, « Aux origines de la Berbérie, Massinissa ou les débuts de l'histoire », *Libyca*, VIII, (1960), 320 p.
- CARCOPINO Jérôme, *Jules César*, Paris, 1968.
- CHARLES Michael B. and RHODAN Peter, «Reconsidering Thapsus: Caesar and the Elephants of Scipio and Juba Ier», *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, XIV, Carl Deroux (Ed.), Editions Latomus, Bruxelles, 2008, pp. 177-188.
- COLTELLONI-TRANNOY Michèle, « Juba Ier et Juba Ier II », *Encyclopédie berbère*, XXV, (2003), pp. 3914-3938.
- COLTELLONI-TRANNOY Michèle, « Les liens de clientèle en Afrique du Nord », *BCTH.*, XXIV, (2003), pp. 59-82.
- DENIAUX Élizabeth, « L'importation d'animaux d'Afrique à l'époque républicaine et les relations de clientèle », *Africa Romana*, XIII, 2, (2000), p. 1299-1307.
- DENIAUX Élizabeth, « César et la mer au temps de la guerre d'Afrique », *Africa Romana*, XIV, 1 (2002), pp. 151-160.
- Desanges Jehan, Duval Noel, Lepelly Claude et Saint-Amans Sophie, *Cartes des routes et des cités de l'est de l'Afrique à la fin de l'Antiquité*, Brepols, Belgium, 2010.
- ERNOU Alfred, « préface », in *Salluste, La conjuration de Catilina. La guerre de Jugurtha. Fragments des Histoires*, texte établi et traduite par A. Ernout, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1941.
- FANTAR Mhamed Hassine, *Carthage, approche d'une civilisation*, t. 2, Tunis.1998.
- GSELL Stéphane, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, VIII, Paris, Hachette, 1928.
- HAMDOUNE Christine, *Les auxilia externa africains des armées romaines, IIIe siècle avant J.-C.- IVe apr. J.-C.*, Montpellier, 1999.
- KALLALA Nabil, « Le *Bellum Africum* et son apport pour la connaissance des villes et villages du Sahel tunisien antique », *Africa*, XXI, 2007, pp. 59-76.
- KALLALA Nabil, *RVSPINA-Monastir romaine et tardo-antique*, Tunis, 2024, pp. 25-92.
- KROMAYER Johannes und VEITH, Georg, *Antike schlachtfelder in Italien und Afrika*, Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912.
- LASSERRE Jean-Marie, *Ubique populus, peuplement et mouvements de population dans l'Afrique romaine de la chute de Carthage à la fin de la dynastie des Sévères (146 a.C-235 p. C.)*, 53, Paris.1977.
- LASSERRE Jean-Marie, « La cohorte des Gétules », *Latomus*, 226 (1994), pp. 244-253.
- LASSERE, Jean Marie, *Africa, quasi Roma (256 av. J.-C. — 711 ap. J.-C.)*, 2015, pp. 101-102.
- LE BOHEC Yann, « L'armée de la Numidie au temps de Juba Ier », in *Carthage et les autochtones de son empire du temps de Zama*. Colloque international organisé à Siliana et Tunis du 10 au 13 mars 2004 par l'Institut National du Patrimoine et l'Association

de Sauvegarde du site de Zama. Hommage à M. H. Fantar, édit. A. Ferjaoui, Tunis, 2010, pp. 445-456.

LE BOHEC Yann, «L'expédition de Curion en Afrique : étude d'histoire militaire», *Africa Romana*, XV, 3 (2005), pp. 1603-1615.

LE BOHEC Yann, *César chef de guerre. César stratège et tacticien*, Paris, Tallandier, 2001.

LORETO Luigi, *Il piano di guerra dei Pompeiani e di Cesare dopo Farsalo (giugno-ottobre 48 a.C.). Uno studio sulla grande strategia della guerra civile*, Hakkert, Amsterdam, 1994.

LORETO Luigi, *Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento storico-militare «Pseudo-Cesare, La lunga guerra civile. Alessandria – Africa – Spagna»*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, Milano 2001.

MOINIER Auguste, «une expédition en Afrique en 49 avant J.-C. : épisode de la guerre civile », *R Afr.*, XLIV, n°236, 1900, pp. 5-43.

MÜLLER Ludwig, *Numismatique de l'ancienne Afrique : les monnaies de la Numidie et de la Maurétanie*, Copenhague, Bianco-Luno, 1860-1862, 3 vol.

PASA Beatrice, *Recherches sur l'Africa Vetus, de la destruction de Carthage aux interventions césaro-augustéennes, Archéologie et Préhistoire*, thèse d'histoire et civilisations antiques de l'université Toulouse le Mirail (dactylographie), 2011.

PEYRAS Jean, « Remarque sur les centuriations et les cadastres de l'Afrique proconsulaire », *De la terre au ciel, Paysage et cadastres antiques*, I, Besançon 29-31 mars 1993, Besançon, Université de Franche-Comté, 1994, pp. 223-246.

ROMANELLI Pietro, *Leptis Magna*, Rome, Società editrice d'arte illustrata, 1925.

TROUSSET Pol, « Hadrumète », *Encyclopédie Berbère*, XXII, 2000, pp. 3307-3319.

YOUNES Ameer, « Recherches sur la ville portuaire de Thapsus et son territoire en Byzacène dans l'antiquité », *Cahier du CERES, Histoire*, t. 1, n°10, 1999, pp. 201-202.

# Tecnologia militare e ordinamenti tattici in età imperiale: le *ballistae*, i *ballistarii* delle legioni e le legioni di *Ballistarii*

di MAURIZIO COLOMBO

ABSTRACT. Several books and many papers have already dealt with the torsion artillery of the Roman Empire and the related issues of the Imperial Army, but this article leads the reader on to a very different pathway. It will dig deep into three main issues, namely the *ballistae*, the *carroballistae* and the *ballistarii*, by taking a multidisciplinary approach to the historical development of the imperial artillery and of the Roman artillerymen (“gunners” would sound too much anachronistic). This point of view strongly disagrees with the now widely accepted depiction of the Later Roman *ballistae* and *Ballistarii* as “Roman crossbows” and “legions of crossbowmen”; the evidence here will prove that both interpretations are fully wrong. The disappearing of the *Ballistarii* from the open field warfare as well as their strictly specialized role in the Later Roman army was a straight byproduct of the III Century military crisis.

KEYWORDS: *ballistae*, *ballistarii*, *carroballistae*, Colonna Traiana, Colonna Aureliana, Harzhorn, Ammiano Marcellino, *ripenses*, *comitatenses*.

## 1. *Le ballistae e i ballistarii dell’Alto Impero.*

**P**er trattare le *ballistae* e i *ballistarii*, è opportuno iniziare ricapitolando le nozioni fondamentali sull’artiglieria a torsione dell’esercito romano<sup>1</sup>. La storia della *ballista* si divide in due parti, che corrispondono a

\* Ringrazio il dottore Francesco Fiorucci per le osservazioni e i suggerimenti, che mi hanno aiutato a migliorare la versione originaria dell’articolo; come è ovvio, le opinioni eterodosse e gli eventuali errori della redazione finale sono responsabilità esclusivamente mia.

1 Eric W. MARSDEN, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Historical Development*, Oxford 1969, Clarendon Press (soprattutto pp. 174–198 sull’età imperiale) e ID., *Greek and Roman Artillery. Technical Treatises*, Oxford 1971, Clarendon Press; Alan WILKINS, *Roman Imperial Artillery. Outranging the Enemies of the Empire*, Oxford 2024<sup>3</sup>, Archaeopress. Cfr. inoltre Dietwulf BAATZ, *Bauten und Katapulte des römischen Heeres* (Mavors XI), Stuttgart 1994, Steiner, pp. 113–145 e 275–283. Un’utile sintesi delle dottrine correnti in Duncan B. CAMPBELL, «Ancient Catapults: Some Hypotheses Reexamined», *Hesperia* 80 (2011), pp.

due fasi consecutive dell'evoluzione tecnologica in ambito militare e a due tipi di macchina bellica sotto il medesimo nome. Dal III secolo a.C. al I secolo la *catapulta* e lo *scorpio* assolvero le funzioni di ὄξυβελεῖς ('lanciatori di dardi acuminati'), la *ballista* svolse il ruolo di λιθοβόλος o πετροβόλος ('lanciatore di pietre').

Il greco letterario adoperava καταπέλται in senso assoluto per entrambi i generi dell'artiglieria a torsione oppure impiegava soprattutto le espressioni specifiche ὄξυβελεῖς καταπέλται e πετροβόλοι/λιθοβόλοι καταπέλται, gli aggettivi sostantivati ὄξυβελεῖς e πετροβόλοι/λιθοβόλοι, varie locuzioni con gli aggettivi ὄξυβελής e πετροβόλος/λιθοβόλος (ad esempio, ὄξυβελῆ ὄργανα e πετροβόλα/λιθοβόλα ὄργανα, ὄξυβελεῖς τε καὶ λιθοβόλοι μηχαναί); ma la distinzione più semplice era tra καταπέλται e πετροβόλοι/λιθοβόλοι, come riscontriamo già in Pol. I, 53, 11 τοὺς τε καταπέλτας καὶ τοὺς πετροβόλους.

La seconda soluzione, ὄξυβελεῖς καταπέλται e πετροβόλοι o λιθοβόλοι καταπέλται, riveste particolare interesse da un punto di vista linguistico, poiché essa manifesta la volontà di individuare chiaramente entrambi i tipi dei καταπέλται. La necessità di distinguere le due funzioni specifiche degli ὄργανα nacque in età ellenistica insieme con la stessa artiglieria a torsione, ma poi le due relative espressioni divennero comuni variazioni a fini stilistici nell'ambito del lessico letterario<sup>2</sup>.

La *catapulta* e lo *scorpio* erano ora due versioni, ora due sinonimi della stessa arma<sup>3</sup>. L'uso frequente del nome specifico *scorpiones* come sinonimo del nome generale *catapultae* segue il modello della lingua greca, in cui il termine tecnico

677–700, soprattutto pp. 685–692.

- 2 Ad esempio, Diod. Sic. XIV, 50, 4 τοῖς ὄξυβελέσι καταπέλταις; XVII, 45, 2 τοὺς πετροβόλους καταπέλτας; XVIII, 51, 1 καταπέλτας ὄξυβελεῖς τε καὶ πετροβόλους. Due accezioni diverse a distanza di poche righe in App. Pun. 80 καταπέλτας [...] καταπέλτας ὄξυβελεῖς τε καὶ λιθοβόλους, dove la prima occorrenza dei καταπέλται significa entrambi i generi dell'artiglieria a torsione.
- 3 Lo *scorpio* è un pezzo specifico di artiglieria in B. Afr. 29, 3 e 31, 7 come in Caes. Gall. VII, 25, 2–4; ma *scorpiones* è sinonimo di *catapultae* in B. Afr. 56, 1. Le due accezioni raggiungono una frequenza quasi pari nei libri vitruviani *de architectura*, dove *scorpio* è sinonimo di *catapulta* in cinque passi (Vitr. I, praef. 2 e 1, 8; X, 1, 3. 3, 9. 10, 1), ma designa un *tormentum* distinto in quattro brani (Vitr. I, 5, 4; X, 13, 6. 15, 4. 16, 1). Cfr. anche Sen. nat. quaest. II, 16 nam ballistae quoque scorpionesque tela cum sono expellunt.



fig. 1 *Ballistae* murali: particolare da Conrad Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule*, tav. XLVII scena LXVI

σκορπίοι designava l'insieme degli ὄξυβελεῖς<sup>4</sup>. Flavio Giuseppe spesso usa καταπέλται e ὄξυβελεῖς come sinonimi interscambiabili<sup>5</sup>, talvolta distingue tra καταπέλται = *catapultae* e ὄξυβελεῖς = *scorpiones*<sup>6</sup>.

4 Her. *bell. Iud.* 3, che riconduce il nome alla somiglianza dello σκορπίος con la figura dello scorpione.

5 Ios. *bell. Iud.* II, 553; III, 167. 185. 219. 240; IV, 583; V, 269. 359. 484; VII, 309.

6 Ios. *bell. Iud.* III, 80 e 243; V, 14 e 263; VI, 121.

La traduzione inglese di ὄξυβελεῖς secondo Henry St. John Thackeray (il curatore e traduttore dell'edizione Loeb), "quick-firers", risulta fortemente discutibile (un perdonabile eccesso di attualizzazione lessicale), ma è congrua al testo greco, quando Flavio Giuseppe menziona contemporaneamente o i tre generi dei *tormenta* romani o i καταπέλται e gli ὄξυβελεῖς; quando egli nomina insieme ὄξυβελεῖς e λιθοβόλοι, "quick-firers" è una traduzione palesemente erronea, poiché in questo caso ὄξυβελεῖς abbraccia l'insieme dei καταπέλται. Talvolta ὄξυβελεῖς di Flavio Giuseppe era semplicemente sinonimo letterario del termine tecnico σκορπίοι; esso dunque dovrebbe essere tradotto come tale. Ad esempio, ὄξυβελεῖς/*scorpiones* potrebbe essere tradotto con "stingers" (rende meglio il senso del letterale "scorpions"), "bolt-shooters" o "light arrow-shooters", καταπέλται/*catapultae* con "catapults", "dart-throwers" o "heavy arrow-shooters".

Reperiamo una rarissima eccezione all'uso lessicale del latino classico soltanto in Caes. *ciu.* II, 9, 4 *ne aut tela tormentis immissa tabulationem perfringerent aut saxa ex catapultis latericium discuterent*, dove la *catapulta* è un λιθοβόλος e un grecismo semantico; infatti *catapultae* qui ha il medesimo valore di καταπέλται in senso assoluto e il tipo dei proiettili assolve la funzione di precisare chiaramente la natura dei pezzi, come accade negli autori greci. Le *catapultae*, gli *scorpiones* e le *ballistae* talvolta significavano per metonimia non le *machinae* stesse, ma le rispettive armi da lancio, cioè le *sagittae* degli *scorpiones*, gli *iacula* e le *sagittae* delle *catapultae*, i *saxa* e i *lapides* delle *ballistae*.

Quattro dettagli differenziavano visivamente *catapultae* e *scorpiones* dalle *ballistae* e avevano implicazioni sostanziali: le dimensioni del pezzo, l'asse di lancio, la struttura del telaio e le braccia. Le *ballistae* erano molto più grandi e pesanti delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones*; ciò poneva limiti pratici al loro uso. L'asse di lancio aveva ampia libertà di movimento verticale negli ὄξυβελεῖς, nei λιθοβόλοι era appoggiata a terra tramite un secondo piedistallo; gli ὄξυβελεῖς potevano scagliare i dardi secondo una traiettoria lineare o curva, ma il tiro dei λιθοβόλοι era prevalentemente curvo, fatta eccezione per le distanze relativamente brevi, che permettevano ai λιθοβόλοι di lanciare le pietre con una traiettoria quasi lineare. Le *catapultae* e gli *scorpiones* racchiudevano le due molle (le due matasse di tendini animali o di corde) e il telaio ligneo in un solo blocco dentro un frontale metallico a scudo; le molle e il telaio delle *ballistae* avevano una struttura aperta. Il diverso telaio dei *tormenta* da un lato comportava maggiore precisione

della mira per le *ballistae*, dall'altro facilitava moltissimo l'allestimento, lo smontaggio, il trasporto e la conservazione delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones* rispetto alle *ballistae*.

La differenza principale risiedeva nelle braccia, che secondo la forma determinavano la classificazione bipartita delle μηχαναί in ὄργανα εὐθύτονα o παλίντονα. Per ragioni di spazio (questo articolo già chiede molto alla pazienza del lettore) qui ometteremo di trattare la rovente controversia tra la dottrina vulgata (“outswinging arms”) e la teoria alternativa (“inswinging arms”)<sup>7</sup>. Le *catapultae* e gli *scorpiones* erano ὄργανα εὐθύτονα e potevano scagliare soltanto dardi, le *ballistae* ὄργανα παλίντονα e lanciavano unicamente pietre oppure pietre e dardi<sup>8</sup>. Il tipo παλίντονος delle braccia produceva maggiore potenza e conferiva una superiore letalità al proiettile di pietra. Le *ballistae* avevano una portata sostanzialmente pari alle *catapultae*, mentre le *catapultae* possedevano una gittata molto più lunga degli *scorpiones*; i punti forti delle *ballistae* erano la precisione e la potenza dei *rotundi lapides*.

Una legione altoimperiale possedeva *catapultae* e *ballistae*; le *catapultae* erano molto più numerose delle *ballistae*, gli *scorpiones* costituivano una parte delle *catapultae* e le *ballistae* comprendevano varie classi di peso. Gli stessi generi di artiglieria a torsione erano adoperati dalle *cohortes praetoriae*<sup>9</sup>. L'uso dei *tormenta* da parte degli *auxiliares* è un argomento molto controverso<sup>10</sup>. Gli assedi delle città da una parte o dall'altra delle mura, così come la difesa dei *castra* e delle fortezze, costituivano l'ambiente precipuo dell'artiglieria romana, ma alcune testimonianze tramandano anche la sua partecipazione alle operazioni campali, soprattutto negli anni 102–235, cioè dalla prima guerra di Traiano con i Daci (più precisamente dalla seconda campagna della prima guerra) alla grande spedizione di Massimino il Trace contro i Germani fino al corso inferiore del fiume Albis.

Tito Livio suddivide le artiglierie dei Cartaginesi catturate da Scipione a Nuova Cartagine in tre categorie, di cui ciascuna a sua volta comprende due sottogruppi:

7 Chi cercasse comunque una chiara e completa esposizione della teoria alternativa può consultare Aitor IRIARTE, «The inswinging theory», *Gladius* 23 (2003), pp. 111–139.

8 Erone, oltre a illustrare l'origine del termine tecnico σκορπίοι, enuncia così la differenza pratica tra ὄργανα εὐθύτονα e παλίντονα: v. n. 4.

9 Tac. *ann.* XII, 56, 2. Cfr. inoltre CIL VI, 2725 = 37189.

10 Duncan B. CAMPBELL, «Auxiliary Artillery Revisited», *BJ* 186 (1986), pp. 117–132.

*catapultae maximae formae* (120) e *minores* (281), *ballistae maiores* (ventitré) e *minores* (cinquantadue), *scorpiones maiores* e *minores* (una sessantina)<sup>11</sup>. L'attendibilità delle cifre precise è piuttosto discutibile, ma le proporzioni sembrano genuine: le *catapultae minores* formavano il grosso dell'artiglieria cartaginese e rappresentavano molto più del doppio rispetto alle *catapultae maximae formae*, le sole *catapultae maximae formae* erano molto più numerose dell'insieme delle *ballistae*, le *ballistae minores* erano più del doppio delle *ballistae maiores*, l'insieme degli *scorpiones* era circa la metà delle *catapultae maximae formae* e poco più di un quinto rispetto alle *catapultae minores*.

Nel contesto storico del *sociale bellum* un frammento di Sisenna, facendo riferimento ai *tormenta* dei Romani o degli Italici ribelli, menziona soltanto *catapultae* e *ballistae* (secondo la proporzione 4 : 1), attesta l'esistenza dei dardi chiamati *scorpii* e li associa molto significativamente con le *minores sagittae*; l'insieme del frammento implica che gli *scorpii* e le *minores sagittae* fossero i dardi delle *catapultae*<sup>12</sup>. Ciò trova piena conferma nel frammento successivo, dove egli attribuisce esplicitamente il lancio degli *scorpii* alle *catapultae*<sup>13</sup>.

Ancora nel 69, il terribile anno dei quattro imperatori, le *ballistae* risultano precipuamente connesse con i *saxa*. Nella seconda battaglia di Bedriacum le legioni vitelliane collocarono e riunirono i propri *tormenta* sull'*agger* della *uia Postumia*, per sfruttare la posizione sopraelevata e il campo libero di tiro; una *ballista* pesante della *XV Primigenia* (la locuzione perifrastica *magnitudine eximia* [...] *ballista* indica la sua appartenenza alle *ballistae maiores*) martellò *ingentibus saxis* l'esercito di Marco Antonio Primo<sup>14</sup>. I *saxa* scagliati dalle *ballistae* della *V Alaudae* e della *XV Primigenia* demolirono completamente le rozze *machinae* dei Germani durante il primo assedio di *Castra Vetera*<sup>15</sup>.

11 Liv. XXVI, 47, 5–6 e 49, 3. Cfr. inoltre Liv. XXIV, 34, 9 (gli *scorpiones modici* dei Siracusani assediati da Marcello); XXVI, 6, 4 (le *ballistae* e gli *scorpiones* dei Capuani); XXIX, 7, 6 (uno *scorpio* romano sfiora Annibale a Locri).

12 Sisenna *hist. frg.* 40 Peter *Praeterea catapultas sedecim, quattuor ballistas, uiginti plaustra scorpiis ac minoribus sagittis onusta*.

13 Sisenna *hist. frg.* 41 Peter *Longius scorpios catapulta concitos*. Il vocabolo *scorpii* è elencato tra i nomi dei *tela* da Gell. X, 25, 2.

14 Tac. *hist.* III, 23, 1–2.

15 Tac. *hist.* IV, 23, 3.

Le *catapultae* lanciavano *sagittae* e *iacula*<sup>16</sup>. Apriamo una brevissima parentesi sulle *sagittae*. L'asta delle normali frecce era fatta di due materiali, *harundo* nella parte inferiore e legno in quella superiore, per ridurre il peso, migliorare la struttura aerodinamica e aumentare la portata; proprio questa peculiarità indusse i poeti e i prosatori latini a utilizzare *harundines* come sinonimo poetico di *sagittae*. I ritrovamenti archeologici a Qasr Ibrim, lungo il Reno e nella Germania transrenana hanno mostrato che le *sagittae* delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones* ora erano fabbricate interamente con il solo legno, ora erano fatte di due legni diversi, più precisamente un legno morbido per la parte inferiore e uno duro per quella superiore. Perciò le *sagittae* delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones* oscillavano tra le ordinarie frecce e gli *iacula* sotto l'aspetto della composizione materiale.

La particolare conformazione del telaio chiuso, dove le *sagittae* e gli *iacula* passavano attraverso un apposito foro dello scudo frontale, imponeva il rigoroso rispetto delle corrispondenze tra lunghezza dei dardi e dimensioni dei pezzi. L'asse di lancio doveva essere lunga almeno quanto la *sagitta* o lo *iaculum*; la punta del dardo poteva eventualmente spuntare dalla piastra metallica, ma doveva essere inserita sempre nel foro, per prevenire il pericolo mortale di rimbalzi verso gli artiglieri romani. I βέλη consueti dei καταπέλται andavano da un πήχυς (46,2 cm) a tre πήχεις (138,6 cm). I καταπέλται τρισπίθαμοι (69,3 cm) erano i pezzi più popolari; un πολυβόλος καταπάλης lungo poco più di un πήχυς e poco meno di tre σπιθαμαί (più precisamente πενθημισπίθαμος = 2½ σπιθαμαί = 57,75 cm) era uno σκορπίδιον, cioè uno *scorpius minor*, e il suo βέλος misurava 1 πήχυς 1 δάκτυλος (48,125 cm)<sup>17</sup>.

La lunghezza media delle frecce antiche andava da 75 cm a 85 cm; perciò le *minores sagittae* di Sisenna sono i βέλη di lunghezza fino a tre σπιθαμαί (69,3 cm). Gli *scorpiones minores* lanciavano tutti i βέλη inferiori a tre σπιθαμαί e gli *scorpiones maiores* erano appunto gli ὄργανα di tre σπιθαμαί. Le *catapultae* in

16 Le sole *sagittae* in Vitruvius, X, 10. 1. 10, 3. 11, 2. Non. p. 552, r. 1 *CATAPVLTA, iaculum celer uel sagitta*.

17 Philo. *bel.* 13 (τρειςπίθαμον), 14 (δίπηχυς = 92,4 cm), 20 (τρειςπίθαμον, δίπηχυς, πενθημισπίθαμον), 24 (δίπηχυς), 29 (δίπηχυς), 30 (τρειςπίθαμον), 43 (τρειςπίθαμον), 51 (πηχυαίον, τρισπίθαμον, 1 πήχυς 1 δάκτυλος). Her. *bel.* 32 (τρίπηχυς). Athen. Mech. p. 8, 7 Wescher τρισπίθαμος [...] καταπάλης. Pol. V, 88, 7 καταπέλτας τριπήχεις. Athen. Mech. p. 8, 8–9 Wescher attesta incidentalmente che un τετράπηχυς καταπάλης (184,8 cm) era già παλίντονος. Il funzionamento assolutamente peculiare del πολυβόλος καταπάλης imponeva che il βέλος, a differenza degli altri σκορπίδια, fosse più corto del pezzo.

senso stretto potevano misurare 2 πήχεις, 2½ πήχεις (πεντασπίθαμοι) o 3 πήχεις; se applichiamo la classificazione dei *tormenta* cartaginesi secondo Tito Livio, i pezzi di 3 πήχεις e di 2½ πήχεις erano le *catapultae maximae formae*, quelli di 2 πήχεις le *catapultae minores*.

Tre πήχεις costituivano il limite massimo degli ὄργανα εὐθύτονα. Le *ballistae*, che erano ὄργανα παλίντονα e potevano scagliare sole pietre o pietre e dardi, possedevano la potenza necessaria a varcare questa soglia, ma soltanto quelle capaci di lanciare pietre pari o superiori a 10 mine = 13⅓ libbre avrebbero potuto scagliare *pila* leggeri o pesanti e *hastae/lanceae* da urto; qui possiamo anticipare che a Masada la maggioranza dei proiettili di pietra romani era inferiore alla soglia delle 5 mine = 6⅔ libbre. I due dettagli tecnici devono essere le nostre guide nell'esegesi delle fonti letterarie a questo riguardo.

Conosciamo quattro misure degli *iacula* romani. Anzitutto abbiamo un esplicito collegamento degli *iacula* con gli ὄργανα εὐθύτονα: *Trifax telum longitudinis trium cubitorum, quod catapultam mittitur*<sup>18</sup>. Tre *cubita* romani erano 133,2 cm; questa lunghezza coincide per leggero difetto con i βέλη massimi dei καταπέλται. Gli *iacula* dei *uelites* romani a Capua erano lunghi circa quattro *pedes*, cioè 118,4 cm; essi portavano il medesimo ferro delle *hastae uelitares* e furono definiti significativamente proprio *hastae*<sup>19</sup>. Ai tempi di Polibio il βέλος usuale dei *uelites* aveva un ferro lungo una σπιθαμή e un'asta lunga circa due πήχεις, che formavano un'arma inastata da lancio lunga almeno 115,5 cm<sup>20</sup>. Infine il *uerutum* tardoromano, che era composto da un'asta di 3½ *pedes* e da un ferro di 5 *unciae*, possedeva una lunghezza complessiva di 115,9 cm<sup>21</sup>. Un brano di Tito Livio, *In quarta classe [...] arma mutata, nihil praeter hastam et uerutum datum*, suffraga il ben fondato sospetto che gli *iacula* e il βέλος dei *uelites* repubblicani fossero semplicemente il *uerutum* o un suo antenato<sup>22</sup>.

Dobbiamo precisare che *hasta* e *lancea* erano perfetti sinonimi in latino; *hasta* era il termine letterario e *lancea* aveva origine gallica, ma entrambi i vocaboli

18 Paul. Fest. p. 367, r. 7 Müller = p. 504, rr. 14–15 Lindsay.

19 Liv. XXVI, 4, 4 (*iacula* con lo stesso ferro delle *hastae uelitares*) e Frontin. *strat.* IV, 7, 29 (*hastae*). Cfr. anche le *uelitares hastae* di Liv. XXXVIII, 20, 1 e Plin. *nat.* VII, 201.

20 Pol. VI, 22, 4.

21 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7.

22 Liv. I, 43, 6.

denominavano in maniera generale tre diversi generi di armi affini, cioè un'asta da urto, un'arma inastata da lancio o una lancia da urto e da getto. Ciò vale anche per i corrispondenti termini della lingua greca, cioè δόρυ e λόγχι. Durante l'assedio di Iotapata i καταπέλται di Vespasiano scagliarono λόγχι<sup>23</sup>. Gli *alares equites*, i *cohortales equites*, gli *auxiliares pedites* e i *classici milites* erano equipaggiati con una *hasta/lancea* da urto e un numero variabile di *hastae/lanceae* da getto; gli ordinari *iacula* degli *equites* furono chiamati ἄκοντες da Flavio Giuseppe (si noti bene la sua precisazione “non meno grandi dei δόρατα”) e appunto λόγχι da Arriano<sup>24</sup>.

La testimonianza di Tacito suffraga questa ricostruzione. Nel 16 Germanico Cesare schierò i *tormenta* delle otto legioni renane in campo aperto durante la battaglia del *uallum Angriuarianum*, affinché essi aiutassero *funditores* e *libritores* a fare strage dei Germani scagliando *hastae*<sup>25</sup>. Nel 62 Corbulone, dopo avere approntato le navi fluviali di maggiori dimensioni come piattaforme di tiro per le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* di tre legioni siriane, con una pioggia micidiale di *saxa* e di *hastae* obbligò i Parthi ad abbandonare la riva sinistra dell'Eufrate; poi egli costruì un ponte navale sul fiume e occupò le colline lungo la sponda opposta<sup>26</sup>. Nel 69 i *tormenta* di Castra Vetera distrussero con *hastae* incendiarie le *crates* e le *uineae* degli assediati germanici<sup>27</sup>. La logica conclusione è che i *tormenta* del *uallum Angriuarianum* e di Castra Vetera erano appunto le *catapultae*. La stessa identificazione vale per i *tormenta*, che lanciarono *hastae* e *faces* durante l'assalto a Celenderis (roccaforte dell'ammutinato Gneo Calpurnio Pisone in Cilicia) e l'espugnazione di Volandum (prima campagna di Corbulone in Armenia); in entrambi i casi le implicite *catapultae* furono azionate dai legionari siriani<sup>28</sup>.

23 Ios. *bell. Iud.* III, 167.

24 Maurizio COLOMBO, «La lancea, i lanciarri, il pilum e l'acies di Arriano: un contributo alla storia dell'esercito romano», *Historia* 60 (2011), pp. 158–165 e ID., «Lancea pugnatoria e minores subarmales: contributo all'esegesi linguistica di Tab. Luguall. 16 (AE 1998, 839)», *Arctos* 49 (2015), pp. 9–23.

25 Tac. *ann.* II, 20, 2 (il trasporto navale dei *tormenta* è riportato in 6, 2).

26 Tac. *ann.* XV, 9, 1 (le tre legioni sono elencate in 6, 3). Caes. *Gall.* IV, 25, 1–2 costituisce il precedente più significativo: Cesare dalle *naues longae* aveva impiegato *fundae*, *sagittae* e *tormenta* contro i Britanni nel 55 a.C., per liberare il lido e permettere lo sbarco delle due legioni al suo seguito.

27 Tac. *hist.* IV, 23, 4.

28 Tac. *ann.* II, 81, 2 e XIII, 39, 3. Già nella battaglia navale di Nauloco una parte delle μηχαναί imbarcate aveva scagliato πυρφόρα: App. *ciu.* V, 119.

Tacito denomina *hastae* i dardi romani di dimensioni piuttosto superiori alle comuni *sagittae*, ma molto più corti delle *hastae/lanceae* da urto: gli *iacula* romani erano lunghi appunto tra poco meno di quattro *pedes* e tre *cubita*. Il vocabolo *iacula* era descrittivo e quasi tecnico, *hastae* aveva una risonanza classica e conferiva un tono epico; le speciali *hastae* dei *uelites* a Capua, l'usuale sinonimia *hasta/lancea* e l'ampio significato di entrambi i vocaboli giustificano pienamente la licenza lessicale di Tacito a fini stilistici.

Il commediografo Plauto è il solo autore della letteratura latina a usare la locuzione *pilum catapultarium*, che sembra tramandare il nome colloquiale di un *telum* omologo al *pilum*, ma molto più corto<sup>29</sup>. Forse gli armieri delle legioni repubblicane e imperiali, quando i ferri dei *pila* già recuperati più volte dai campi di battaglia diventavano troppo corti, li adattavano ad aste di lunghezza proporzionata e rifornivano le *catapultae* con un ulteriore *telum*. Se i ferri pari o inferiori a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *pedes* fossero stati riciclati con aste pari o superiori a 3 *pedes*, i *tela* così prodotti avrebbero raggiunto la lunghezza massima di 3 *cubita*<sup>30</sup>.

Come abbiamo osservato, Sisenna associa gli *scorpii* con le *minores sagittae*, che erano i dardi degli *scorpiones* fino alla lunghezza di tre  $\sigma\pi\theta\alpha\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}$ , e attribuisce esplicitamente gli *scorpii* alle *catapultae*, che dovevano avere dimensioni rigorosamente commisurate alla lunghezza dei dardi. Perciò gli *scorpiones* romani erano le *catapultae* appositamente adibite al lancio delle *minores sagittae* e degli elusivi *scorpii*. I dardi propri degli *scorpiones* erano *parua subtiliaque spicula* secondo Vegezio<sup>31</sup>. La *catapulta* altoimperiale di Xanten-Wardt, uno *scorpio* εὐθύτονος (più precisamente il modello più leggero di *scorpio minor*), poteva scagliare frecce lunghe appena 40,5 cm = 1  $\sigma\pi\theta\alpha\mu\acute{\iota}$  9 δάκτυλοι o  $1\frac{3}{4}$   $\sigma\pi\theta\alpha\mu\alpha\acute{\iota}$  = 1 *pes* 6 *digiti* o  $1\frac{3}{8}$  *pedes*; il diametro dell'asta era 10–12 mm<sup>32</sup>. L'espressione apparentemente vaga *parua subtiliaque spicula* di Vegezio in realtà ritrae fedelmente il tipico aspetto dello *scorpius* nel I secolo.

29 Plaut. *Curc.* 689–690 *Quia ego ex te hodie faciam pilum catapultarium | atque ita te neruo torquebo itidem ut catapultae solent.*

30 Adolf SCHULTEN, Art. «pilum», *RE* XX 2 (1950), cc. 1361–1362 fig. 7 e 1365–1366; Michael C. BISHOP & Jonathan C. N. COULSTON, *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, Oxford 2006<sup>2</sup>, Oxbow Books, pp. 73–76 e fig. 37, p. 129 e fig. 74.

31 Veg. IV, 22, 6 *ideo sic nuncupati, quod paruis subtilibusque spiculis inferant mortem.* Ero-ne tramanda una diversa origine del nome: v. n. 4.

32 WILKINS (n. 1), pp. 43–51 e 59–63.



fig. 2 *Ballista* fissa: particolare da Conrad Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule*, tav. XLVII scena LXVI

Per avere un quadro completo della situazione, ora è opportuno illustrare quali *saxa* fossero lanciati dalle *ballistae*. Vitruvio, testimone oculare e professionale delle *ballistae* usuali nel periodo cesariano e in età augustea, afferma di avere adattato le *Graecorum pensiones* alle unità romane di misura ponderale; egli registra quattordici pesi dalle 2 alle 360 libbre romane per i proiettili di pietra scagliati dalle *ballistae* = λιθοβόλοι<sup>33</sup>. Flavio Giuseppe implica che tra il 67 e il 70 i proiettili di 1 talento = 80 libbre fossero il peso massimo dell'artiglieria legionaria<sup>34</sup>. Perciò i proiettili ordinari delle *ballistae* romane formavano otto

<sup>33</sup> Vitr. X, 11, 2–3.

<sup>34</sup> Ios. *bell. Iud.* III, 166–167 e V, 269–270. Cfr. anche Sisenna *hist. frg.* 92 *Peter Ballistas quattuor talentarias*.

classi di peso e andavano dalle 2 alle 80 libbre romane: 2, 4, 6 (una lacuna ha risparmiato la dimensione del *foramen* e ingoiato il peso del proiettile, che altri integrano con 8), 10, 20, 40, 60, 80<sup>35</sup>. Le dimensioni delle *ballistae* erano strettamente correlate con il peso massimo dei proiettili, anche se proiettili di pietra più leggeri, poggiando su un adattatore mobile, potevano essere lanciati da *ballistae* costruite per pesi maggiori. Le *ballistae* romane sembrano essere state ripartite tra cinque classi di peso:  $\leq 10$  libbre,  $\leq 20$  libbre,  $\leq 40$  libbre,  $\leq 60$  libbre,  $\leq 80$  libbre.

Filone di Bisanzio ci offre l'opportunità di un confronto puntuale con i pesi dei proiettili fino a 1 talento in età ellenistica: 10 mine (13 $\frac{1}{3}$  libbre), 15 mine (20 libbre), 20 mine (26 $\frac{2}{3}$  libbre), 30 mine (40 libbre), 50 mine (66 $\frac{2}{3}$  libbre), 1 talento (80 libbre)<sup>36</sup>. I ritrovamenti archeologici in cinque siti del Mediterraneo (Pergamo, Rodi, Salamina di Cipro, Cartagine, Tel Dor) non soltanto hanno offerto abbondanti riscontri alla preferenza genuina degli eserciti ellenistici per i proiettili pari o superiori a 10 mine, ma inoltre hanno aggiunto i proiettili di 8, 5 e 3 mine (rispettivamente 10 $\frac{2}{3}$ , 6 $\frac{2}{3}$  e 4 libbre) alla nostra conoscenza dell'artiglieria ellenistica. Ora i proiettili di pietra recentemente scoperti ad Abuqir hanno rivelato la familiarità dei  $\lambda\theta\omicron\beta\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\iota$  ellenistici con i proiettili leggeri di 1, 2 e 3 mine (1 $\frac{1}{3}$ , 2 $\frac{2}{3}$  e 4 libbre)<sup>37</sup>.

Un dettaglio molto interessante emerge dalla comparazione tra i proiettili di pietra rinvenuti negli arsenali di Cartagine e l'artiglieria punica di Nuova Cartagine secondo Tito Livio: i Cartaginesi effettivamente preferivano i pesi tra le 5 e le 17 mine (4400 proiettili su 5600 rinvenuti, 78%), cioè le *ballistae minores* di Tito

35 Vit. X, 11, 3. Le categorie di peso superiori alle 80 libbre erano sei: 120 (1 $\frac{1}{2}$  talenti), 160 (2 talenti), 180 (2 $\frac{1}{3}$  talenti), 200 (2 $\frac{1}{2}$  talenti), 240 (3 talenti) e 360 libbre (4 $\frac{1}{2}$  talenti).

36 Philo. bel. 6: soltanto due classi di peso superano 1 talento, più precisamente 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  (200 libbre) e 3 talenti (240 libbre). MARSDEN (n. 1), p. 158 nella scia di Drachmann emenda i pesi delle due classi rispettivamente in 2 (160 libbre) e 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  talenti.

37 Per un quadro completo dei proiettili ellenistici cfr. Israel SHATZMAN, «Stone-Balls from Tel Dor and the Artillery of the Hellenistic World», *SCI* 14 (1995), pp. 52–72. I proiettili da 5 mine sono stati rinvenuti a Rodi e a Tel Dor; gli scavi della seconda località hanno restituito anche alcuni proiettili da 3 mine e parecchi da 8 mine (ibid., pp. 57 e 61). I proiettili di 1, 2 e 3 mine: Alberto Maria POLLASTRINI, «Studio preliminare sui proiettili di ballista da Nelson Island – Abuqir - Egitto», in Guido GUARDUCCI & Stefano VALENTINI (Edd.), *Il futuro nell'archeologia: il contributo dei giovani ricercatori. Atti del IV Convegno Nazionale dei Giovani Archeologi, Tuscania (VT), 12–15 Maggio 2011*, Roma 2012, Scienze e Lettere, pp. 89–96.

Livio, che dunque tramanda una testimonianza pienamente attendibile circa le genuine proporzioni tra le classi di peso cartaginesi. Purtroppo, qualora non si scopra un arsenale di dardi cartaginesi per le *catapultae*, è impossibile stabilire se anche le proporzioni tra *catapultae maximae formae*, *catapultae minores* e *scorpiones* di Nuova Cartagine siano ugualmente autentiche.

Tre classi di Vitruvio superiori alle 10 mine (20, 40 e 80 libbre) equivalgono a tre pesi di Filone (15 mine, 30 mine, 1 talento), ma quattro classi (2, 4, 6 e 10 libbre) sono inferiori alla soglia delle 10 mine e tre (2, 4 e 6 libbre) addirittura al peso minimo di 5 mine. Ciò trova puntuale e contemporaneo riscontro nella città-fortezza nubiana di Primis/Premnis, l'odierna Qasr Ibrim, che fu occupata da un distaccamento misto delle tre legioni egiziache (*III Cyrenaica*, *XXII Deiotariana* e una ignota, forse la *XII Fulminata*) appena per quattro anni proprio al principio del principato augusteo (24 a.C.–20 a.C.)<sup>38</sup>. La schiacciante maggioranza dei proiettili va da 6 a 15 libbre (da 4½ a 11¼ mine), ma la grande maggioranza (circa due terzi) si concentra tra 10 e 6 libbre (tra 7½ e 4½ mine)<sup>39</sup>. I proiettili di pietra e le punte di dardi rinvenuti a Qasr Ibrim provano splendidamente l'ipotesi di Marsden, che datava l'istituzione permanente e regolare dell'artiglieria legionaria al tempo di Cesare Augusto; ora sappiamo che entro il secondo quinquennio del principato augusteo ogni legione possedeva *catapultae*, *scorpiones* e *ballistae*.

La schiacciante maggioranza dei proiettili romani a Masada nel 73–74 raggiunge un peso pari o inferiore a 9 libbre (6¾ mine), ma i gruppi più consistenti pesano appena 2, 3 e 5 libbre, che rappresentano poco più della metà del totale; i proiettili di 3 libbre sono i più numerosi, quelli di 2 e di 5 libbre occupano il secondo gradino del podio. Se includiamo nel conto i proiettili di 4 e di 6 libbre, quasi cinque ottavi del totale appartenevano alle classi di peso da 2 a 6 libbre ed erano inferiori a 5 mine<sup>40</sup>. Masada fu assediata e presa dalla *X Fretensis*, cui Flavio Giuseppe, narrando l'assedio di Gerusalemme, attribuisce encomiasticamente *ballistae* più grandi rispetto alle altre legioni di Tito e capaci

38 Maurizio COLOMBO, «Arabia Eudaemon ed Aethiopia: le altre facce della vittoria augustea», *NAM* 18 (2024), pp. 191–197 e 200–206.

39 WILKINS (n. 1), pp. 136–144. Cfr. anche Alan WILKINS, Hans BARNARD, Pamela J. ROSE, «Roman Artillery Balls from Qasr Ibrim, Egypt», *Sudan & Nubia* 10 (2006), pp. 66–80.

40 Andrew E. HOLLEY, «The Ballista Balls from Masada», in Joseph AVIRAM, Gideon FOERSTER, Ehud NETZER (Eds.), *Masada IV. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965. Final Reports*, Jerusalem 1994, Israel Exploration Society, pp. 349–365, soprattutto pp. 355–359.

di lanciare proiettili da 1 talento; ma a Masada questa legione adoperò pochissimi proiettili (6%) sopra la soglia delle 20 libbre.

Le postazioni sopraelevate di tiro a Premnis permettevano di scagliare proiettili più pesanti contro gli eventuali assalitori; le condizioni estreme di Masada obbligarono la *X Fretensis* a utilizzare in misura massiva proiettili di peso molto minore rispetto all'assedio di Gerusalemme. I proiettili di pietra più leggeri erano palesemente destinati al tiro di precisione e all'uccisione mirata dei nemici; la tradizionale inclinazione dell'esercito romano verso i pezzi più leggeri delle *ballistae minores* e i pesi pari o inferiori a 7½ mine (Premnis) ovvero inferiori a 5 mine (Masada) era chiaramente connessa con la maggiore letalità del meccanismo *παλίντονος* contro gruppi di nemici e singoli bersagli.

Precorrendo l'esposizione metodica e l'analisi puntuale delle fonti, possiamo anticipare il quadro generale degli sviluppi successivi. Tra l'assedio di Masada e la prima guerra di Traiano contro i Daci tre innovazioni tecnologiche trasformarono radicalmente l'artiglieria romana a torsione: le braccia degli *ὄξυβελεῖς* romani passarono dal modello *εὐθύτονος* al tipo *παλίντονος*, il loro telaio diventò interamente fatto di ferro e il suo disegno mutuò la struttura aperta dei *λιθοβόλοι*<sup>41</sup>. Inoltre le due molle furono ricoperte con due cilindri metallici, per rendere il funzionamento dei *tormenta* immune dalle interferenze meteorologiche. Le tre novità, che garantivano potenza molto maggiore e precisione molto superiore a parità di peso con gli *scorpiones* *εὐθύτονοι*, concorsero a determinare la fulminea ascesa degli *scorpiones* *παλίντονοι*, poiché essi erano i pezzi più leggeri tra le *catapultae* e i più adatti a trarre il massimo risultato dal triplice progresso della tecnologia militare; per il genere *παλίντονος* delle braccia e la struttura aperta del telaio gli *scorpiones* furono rinominati definitivamente *ballistae*.

Le nuove *ballistae* = *ὄξυβελεῖς*, che erano molto più versatili, leggere e mobili delle *ballistae* classiche, grazie alla maggiore precisione rimpiazzarono sistematicamente le classi di peso più basse tra i *λιθοβόλοι* romani; a parità di potenza e di gittata le *sagittae* ora erano molto più letali rispetto ai proiettili minori di pietra. La versatilità delle nuove *ballistae* risultava evidente anche nella rivoluzionaria libertà di lanciare dardi di varie dimensioni dal medesimo

---

41 La *χειροβαλλίστρα* di Erone riassume questa svolta della tecnologia militare: Alan WILKINS, «Reconstructing the cheiroballistra», *JRMES* 6 (1995), pp. 5–59 e ID., «Scorpio and cheiroballistra», *JRMES* 11 (2000), pp. 77–101.

pezzo; ora la lunghezza delle *sagittae*, invece di determinare le dimensioni dello ὄργανον, dipendeva dalla sua potenza. La struttura stessa delle *sagittae* sperimentò un'evoluzione funzionale all'aumento della potenza e della precisione; un'asta integralmente fatta di legno duro diventò la norma e le tradizionali piume furono rimpiazzate con alette di legno.

Le *ballistae* derivate dagli *scorpiones* presero il posto delle *catapultae* negli assedi e in campo aperto; ma la rivoluzione tecnologica investì e trasformò anche le *catapultae*, che divennero le *maiores ballistae* dell'artiglieria murale. Giova precisare le esatte equivalenze tra vecchi e nuovi ὄξυβελεῖς: gli *scorpiones minores* divennero le *manuballistae* (*ballistae* leggere), gli *scorpiones maiores* originarono le generiche *ballistae* e le *carroballistae* (*ballistae* medie), le *catapultae* generarono le *maiores ballistae* (*ballistae* pesanti). Le *maiores ballistae* conservarono l'uso peculiare degli *iacula*, che includevano tanto i dardi incendiari contro le macchine ossidionali quanto i dardi comuni contro gli assediati<sup>42</sup>.

La portata massima di un arco romano era 600 *pedes* = 177,6 m<sup>43</sup>; le nuove *ballistae* ora riunivano una gittata perlomeno pari a due tiri di arco (come le *catapultae maximae formae*), una potenza devastante e una precisione micidiale<sup>44</sup>. Ciò trova riscontro indiretto nella gittata propria delle *ballistae* classiche, che potevano scagliare anche i proiettili di pietra più pesanti a una distanza di due stadi = 370 m<sup>45</sup>. Nel 359 ad Amida cinque *leuiores ballistae* furono capaci di annichilire *ocius* un distaccamento scelto di 70 arcieri persiani della Guardia Regia, soldati implicitamente equipaggiati con le migliori armature dell'esercito persiano, trafiggendo *nonnumquam* due Persiani con un solo colpo<sup>46</sup>. Nel 363 a Maiozamalcha i singoli βέλη dei μηχανήματα romani trapassarono due, tre o più difensori persiani<sup>47</sup>. Un episodio molto meno spettacolare, ma altrettanto significativo sul piano tecnico ebbe luogo nel 537 a Roma. Un colpo di *ballista* uccise un Ostrogoto e lo inchiodò a un albero; il βέλος, dopo avere trapassato la

42 V. nn. 121–123. Per il legame abituale tra le *catapultae* e i dardi incendiari v. nn. 27–28.

43 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 23, 7.

44 Procop. *Goth.* I, 21, 17.

45 Ios. *bell. Iud.* V, 270.

46 Amm. XIX, 5, 4–7.

47 Zos. III, 21, 2.

corazza e il corpo, si conficcò nel tronco per più di metà della sua lunghezza<sup>48</sup>.

Le sole punte e i dardi interi o parzialmente conservati delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones maiores* concordano sostanzialmente con i ferri e le aste delle *ballistae* romane rinvenuti a Dura Europos (256), dove i dardi usuali avevano la punta molto più grande, l'asta molto più corta e il diametro delle aste alquanto maggiore (la misura massima verso la punta è 18 mm, la coda raggiunge i 33 mm) rispetto alle normali frecce dei *sagittarii*<sup>49</sup>. I ferri di Dura Europos coincidono sistematicamente con le punte di *ballista* scoperte allo Harzhorn (235)<sup>50</sup>. Ammiano attribuisce esplicitamente uno *spiculum maius* alle *sagittae* proprie delle *ballistae*<sup>51</sup>. Procopio nota tre caratteristiche distintive: le βαλλίστραι murali di Belisario (537) scagliavano un βέλος lungo la metà delle frecce ordinarie, ma largo il quadruplo e munito di una grande punta<sup>52</sup>. Si osservi bene questo dettaglio: se Procopio prende la coda del βέλος come termine di confronto ed esagera moderatamente le proporzioni della sua larghezza rispetto alle normali frecce, le *ballistae* dell'Alto Impero e le βαλλίστραι di Belisario lanciavano lo stesso genere di *sagittae*.

I rilievi della Colonna Traiana offrono un solido terminus ante quem non soltanto per la nuova *ballista* (uno *scorpio παλίντονος* con un telaio aperto e interamente fatto di ferro), ma anche per la *carroballista*, che era il semplice e pragmatico adattamento di una nuova *ballista* ai combattimenti campali. Contiamo esattamente sette nuove *ballistae*, di cui sei sono romane e una dacica<sup>53</sup>. La *carroballista*, di cui la Colonna Traiana raffigura tre esemplari, montava una

48 Procop. *Goth.* I, 23, 9–12.

49 WILKINS (n. 1), pp. 59–63. FRANCIS E. BROWN, «Arms and Armor», in Michail I. ROSTOVITZEFF, Alfred R. BELLINGER, Clark HOPKINS, Charles B. WELLES (Eds.), *The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University, and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Preliminary Report of Sixth Season of Work, October 1932–March 1933*, New Haven 1936, Yale University Press, pp. 455–456 e tav. XXIV, 2–3. SIMON JAMES, *Excavations at Dura Europos 1928–1937. Final Report VII. The Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment*, Oxford 2010, Oxbow Books, pp. 209–216 e nrr. 742–842 con figg. 127–138.

50 V. n. 104.

51 Amm. XXIII, 4, 2.

52 Procop. *Goth.* I, 21, 15–16.

53 Salvatore SETTIS, Adriano LA REGINA, Giovanni AGOSTI, Vincenzo FARINELLA, *La Colonna Traiana* (Saggi 716), Torino 1988, Einaudi, pp. 317–318 tavv. 59–60 scena XL, 360–362 tavv. 102–104 e 364–365 tavv. 106–107 scena LXVI.

nuova *ballista* su un carro trainato da due muli<sup>54</sup>; il nome *carroballista* è tramandato esclusivamente da Vegezio, ma suona genuino o almeno ben escogitato<sup>55</sup>.

La raffigurazione isolata della nuova *ballista* nelle mani dei Daci, qualora non sia una convenzione artistica e non rimpiazzi una *catapulta* o uno *scorpio* (una semplificazione iconografica), ha un'importanza eccezionale per la storia della tecnologia militare nel mondo greco-romano; questo dettaglio autorizza l'ipotesi che la rivoluzione tecnologica degli ὄξυβελεῖς sia avvenuta dopo l'assedio di Masada, ma prima delle guerre daciche sotto Domiziano (85–89). Nel corso delle operazioni belliche i Daci catturarono i μηχανήματα romani; inoltre Decebalo ottenne l'invio di μηχανοποιοί romani tra le altre concessioni del *foedus* stipulato con l'imperatore<sup>56</sup>. L'inizio delle ostilità tra l'impero romano e il risorto regno dei Daci nello 85 segnerebbe il certo terminus ante quem. Se invece la nuova *ballista* dei Daci fosse una convenzione artistica e i μηχανήματα romani di Decebalo fossero stati *catapultae* e *scorpiones*, otterremmo un terminus post quem ugualmente sicuro (il *foedus* di Domiziano con i Daci nello 89) per l'adozione della nuova *ballista* da parte delle legioni.

Se le nuove *ballistae* fossero nate prima dello 85, la creazione delle *carroballistae* già sotto Domiziano o al più tardi entro il primo triennio di Traiano avrebbe mirato a compensare e superare la perdita gravissima dei μηχανήματα più avanzati conferendo inaudita mobilità ai pezzi romani. Se invece l'invenzione della nuova *ballista* fosse avvenuta soltanto dopo lo 89, proprio la perdita delle *catapultae* e degli *scorpiones* avrebbe indotto Domiziano o Traiano a ripristinare la superiorità tecnologica dell'esercito romano; la *carroballista* può essere stata sviluppata subito a titolo preventivo o essere stata ideata a distanza di alcuni anni durante i preparativi lunghi e massicci del *bellum Dacicum*. La datazione esatta della nuova *ballista* e della *carroballista* deve restare sospesa; la paternità di entrambi i *tormenta* potrebbe risalire già a Domiziano, ma ci sono buone probabilità che gli ingegneri militari di Traiano possano rivendicare perlomeno l'invenzione della *carroballista*.

---

54 V. n. 85.

55 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 2 e 4; III, 14, 13 e 24, 14.

56 Cass. Dio LXVIII, 9, 3 (Traiano recupera i μηχανήματα catturati ai Romani sotto Domiziano) e 5 (le condizioni di pace impongono a Decebalo di restituire i μηχανήματα e i μηχανοποιοί).

Lo stesso modello di braccia, la simile struttura del telaio e le analoghe prestazioni portarono le due famiglie dell'artiglieria romana, le nuove *ballistae* e le *ballistae* classiche, a condividere il nome di *ballistae* per alcuni decenni<sup>57</sup>. I glossari greco-latini traducono *ballista* cinque volte con *καταπέλτης*, appena due volte con *λιθοβόλος*<sup>58</sup>; le glosse esplicative di *ballista* chiamano coerentemente i suoi proiettili cinque volte *sagittae*<sup>59</sup>, tre volte *hastae*<sup>60</sup>. La scelta di Tacito, che chiamò gli *iacula* delle *catapultae* sempre *hastae*, trova un parallelo molto interessante, poiché le *maiores ballistae* ereditarono appunto gli *iacula* delle *catapultae*.

Gli artiglieri legionari dell'Alto Impero furono denominati *ballistarii* entro il regno di Marco Aurelio; infatti Taruttieno Paterno elenca i *ballistarii* tra le quarantaquattro *condiciones* degli *immunes* di una legione<sup>61</sup>. Il testo tradito in realtà legge *ballistrarii*, traslitterazione inversa e tarda del latinismo greco *βαλλιστάρριοι*, ma sembra molto probabile che la *consuetudo* ortografica dell'età giustiniana abbia indebitamente influenzato l'originario *ballistarii*; Taruttieno Paterno, già *procurator Augusti ab epistulis Latinis* prima della promozione a *praefectus praetorio*, non avrebbe mai accolto un simile ibrido nel latino letterario della dinastia antonina. I *ballistarii* erano gli specialisti addetti all'uso delle *ballistae*; altre due categorie di *immunes* curavano la produzione e la riparazione dei *tormenta*, più precisamente gli *artifices* e l'*architectus*, che era il supervisore tecnico degli *artifices*<sup>62</sup>.

Due particolari poco appariscenti meritano il massimo rilievo. Benché quarantaquattro *condiciones* garantissero i privilegi di *immunis*, i soli *ballistarii*

57 In questo senso già MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), p. 189.

58 CGL II, 342, 53. 492, 41. 517, 44; III, 208, 58 e 353, 15 (qui *καταπέλται* è emendazione della corruzione *καταβειαί*). *Lyd. mag.* I, 46 glossa *βαλλιστάρριοι* giustamente con *καταπελιτισταί*, ma poi confonde il *καταπέλτης* con lo *ὄναγρος*. Le due occorrenze di *λιθοβόλος*: CGL III, 299, 6 e 528, 40.

59 CGL IV, 24, 13. 210, 42. 487, 21; V, 49, 22 e 170, 22.

60 CGL IV, 313, 9 e 590, 20; V, 270, 21.

61 *Dig. L.*, 6, 7 (6). Il *nomen* è tradito sotto due forme: due epigrafi ufficiali e una iscrizione privata usano *Taruttienus* (IAM II 94 = IAM Suppl. 94; CIL VI, 41273–41274), ma troviamo *Tarrutenius* nelle fonti letterarie (Cass. Dio LXII, 5, 1 e *Hist. Aug. Comm.* 4, 1).

62 Gli *artifices* compaiono anche in Liv. XXIX, 35, 8. La stele di un *architectus armamentarii imperatoris* esibisce appunto la rappresentazione frontale di una *catapulta*: CIL VI, 2725 = 37189.



fig. 3 *Ballista* fissa dei Daci: particolare da Conrad Cichorius,  
*Die Reliefs der Traianssäule*, tav. XLVIII scena LXVI

erano *immunes* in virtù di un servizio armato; inoltre essi soli avevano mansioni di combattimento distinte e specializzate nell'ambito della fanteria legionaria. Un legionario, quando partecipava attivamente a un'operazione bellica, o assolveva i compiti generali della *gravis armatura* o svolgeva gli specifici doveri di *ballistarius*.

Dopo gli *immunes* di Taruttieno Paterno, per incontrare la seconda e ultima occorrenza dei comuni *ballistarii* nel latino letterario, dobbiamo attendere Vegezio, che classifica sorprendentemente i *ballistarii* tra la *leuis armatura* della

*legio antiqua* (gli altri membri sono *ferentarii*, *sagittarii* e *funditores*), ma li considera giustamente specialisti del combattimento a distanza<sup>63</sup>. Entrambe le occorrenze comunque figurano ai margini della letteratura latina in senso stretto, poiché la prima compare in un trattato di diritto militare e la seconda in un manuale di dottrina militare.

Un dubbio sostanziale concerne l'esatta origine del nome *ballistarii*; la sua derivazione dalle *ballistae* è la sola certezza, ma ammette tre soluzioni. I *ballistarii*, benché operassero soprattutto le *catapultae* e gli *scorpiones*, già durante la dinastia giulio-claudia presero il nome dalle *ballistae* = λιθοβόλοι, che furono i *tormenta* più potenti delle legioni sicuramente fino ai primi anni di Vespasiano. L'uso indiscriminato del termine tecnico *ballista* per entrambi i generi dell'artiglieria romana tra le guerre daciche di Traiano e il regno di Marco Aurelio può avere determinato la nascita del vocabolo colloquiale *ballistarii* con la generica accezione di 'artiglieri'. Altrimenti *ballistarii* rispecchia semplicemente il predominio numerico e tattico delle nuove *ballistae* tra i *tormenta*. Taruttieno Paterno ci fornisce il solido terminus ante quem per la seconda e la terza circostanza.

In un momento imprecisabile del II secolo un nuovo modello di λιθοβόλος a un solo braccio verticale entrò in servizio e affiancò le *ballistae* classiche a due braccia orizzontali; la tecnologia dei λιθοβόλοι μονάγκωνες, che alcuni chiamavano significativamente σφενδόνας, non era una novità assoluta<sup>64</sup>, ma fu sicuramente adottata dall'artiglieria legionaria soltanto in questo periodo. La nuova arma venne chiamata *scorpio*, ma entro la prima metà del IV secolo fu rinominata *onager*<sup>65</sup>. Lo *scorpio* era già in servizio tra i *tormenta* legionari negli ultimi anni di Settimio Severo, quando esso è esplicitamente menzionato per la prima volta<sup>66</sup>. L'economia semantica del *sermo castrensis* in materia di termini tecnici deve essere debitamente evidenziata: come *ballista* era passato dai λιθοβόλοι agli ὄξυβελεῖς, così *scorpio* passò dagli ὄξυβελεῖς ai λιθοβόλοι.

La *ballista* di Hatra, una *ballista* classica a due braccia orizzontali, rappresenta

63 Veg. r. mil. II, 2, 10 In altri due passi i *ballistarii* ricevono il nome specifico di *manuballistarii*: Veg. r. mil. III, 14, 13 e IV, 21, 1. Gli *arcuballistarii* di Veg. r. mil. IV, 21, 1 erano un genere distinto di specialisti addetti a usare le *arcuballistae* (v. n. 96).

64 Apollod. Mech. pol. p. 188, 6 Wescher.

65 V. nn. 135–136.

66 Tert. scorp. 1, 1–2.

il terminus post quem per la sostituzione generale e uniforme delle *ballistae* classiche con gli *scorpiones/onagri*. Un fatto deve essere abbondantemente evidenziato: prima che lo *scorpio/onager* venisse introdotto tra i *tormenta* romani, anche le *ballistae* classiche avevano sperimentato un vistoso progresso sul piano tecnologico. Il telaio ligneo delle molle era stato allargato, irrobustito e rinforzato con placche di metallo riadattando il modello generale delle nuove *ballistae*; ciò aveva prodotto un analogo aumento della potenza rispetto alle *ballistae* giulio-claudie e flavie<sup>67</sup>. Se l'enorme incremento della potenza (2,25 volte secondo Alan Wilkins) avesse ridotto in misura proporzionale le dimensioni del pezzo, l'ultima versione della *ballista* classica sarebbe risultata molto più maneggevole dei λιθοβόλοι ellenistici e delle *ballistae* vitruviane. Ciò spiegherebbe ottimamente la resistenza così lunga delle *ballistae* classiche alla concorrenza degli *scorpiones/onagri*. La caduta di Hatra nel 240 stabilisce il terminus ante quem molto largo per la versione potenziata delle *ballistae* classiche e rinvia la definitiva prevalenza degli *scorpiones/onagri* alla seconda metà del III secolo.

La *stuppea uel ferrea funda* dello *scorpio* e la successiva metamorfosi del nome tecnico in *onager* suggeriscono che il nuovo λιθοβόλος potesse lanciare tanto singoli proiettili di grande peso quanto un equivalente grappolo di proiettili più leggeri, come gli asini selvatici della regione siriana potevano scagliare con i calci un solo sasso o un gruppo di pietre: ad esempio, uno *scorpio/onager* da 80 libbre poteva lanciare un solo *lapis* di 80 libbre, otto *saxa* ciascuno di 10 libbre o 20 *lapides* ognuno di 4 libbre.

Il tiro di precisione continuò a usare singoli proiettili di grande peso contro le macchine ossidionali o le fortificazioni murali, ma talvolta i proiettili più pesanti furono impiegati contro masse particolarmente dense di nemici<sup>68</sup>; i grappoli di proiettili più leggeri alimentavano il tiro di saturazione contro assalitori o

---

67 I resti archeologici: Dietwulf BAATZ, «Recent finds of ancient artillery», *Britannia* 9 (1978), pp. 3–9. L'evoluzione tecnologica: WILKINS (n. 1), pp. 183–195. Si osservi bene che Cass. Dio LXXV, 11, 2–3 attribuisce il lancio contemporaneo di due βέλη non alle μηχαναί, ma agli arcieri degli Hatreni: “dal momento che essi scagliavano una coppia di dardi nello stesso lancio e alimentavano il tiro con molte mani simultaneamente e molte frecce”.

68 Amm. XXXI, 15, 12 *Scorpio, genus tormenti, quem onagram sermo uulgaris appellat, e regione contra hostium aciem densam locatus lapidem contorsit ingentem, qui, licet humo frustra illis est, uisus tamen ita eos metu exanimauit, ut stupore spectaculi noui cedentes e medio abire temptarent.*

difensori<sup>69</sup>. Il medesimo *tormentum* poteva scagliare proiettili di vario peso e assolvere entrambe le funzioni. Se questa congettura cogliesse il bersaglio, lo *scorpio/onager*, nonostante la forte semplificazione del meccanismo, avrebbe segnato in realtà un enorme progresso rispetto alle *ballistae* classiche, che avevano dimensioni accuratamente proporzionate al peso massimo dei proiettili (ma c'era tolleranza verso il basso) e potevano lanciare un solo *saxum* a colpo.

Dobbiamo collegare necessariamente l'adozione dello *scorpio* con le condizioni proprie del *bellum Parthicum*, che dopo la conquista della Dacia costituiva la sola occasione di usare i λιθοβόλοι romani nell'assedio di città fortificate; quindi lo *scorpio* fu inaugurato sicuramente nel corso del II secolo, ma abbiamo tre datazioni possibili e ugualmente plausibili, cioè Traiano, Lucio Vero o Settimio Severo. Il *miles immunis scor(pio)* della *II Parthica*, deceduto durante la spedizione orientale di Severo Alessandro contro il rinato regno dei Persiani, fornisce il terminus post quem per *onager*<sup>70</sup>. Le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* costituirono l'artiglieria dell'esercito tardoromano fino alla prima metà del VI secolo<sup>71</sup>.

Dopo avere illustrato le macchine belliche e gli uomini, possiamo definire bene numeri, ordinamento e composizione dell'artiglieria legionaria in età altoimperiale. Descrivendo la struttura e il funzionamento di una *legio antiqua*, Vegezio attribuisce una *carroballista* = ὄξυβελής a ogni *centuria*, un *contubernium* di undici uomini a ciascuna *carroballista* e cinquantacinque *carroballistae* a una legione; dieci *onagri* = λιθοβόλοι, uno per ogni *cohors*, completavano i *tormenta* legionari<sup>72</sup>.

La *legio antiqua* è una creazione libresca dello stesso Vegezio e i suoi dettagli molto spesso sono proposte personali sotto le mentite spoglie di nozioni erudite ed antiquarie<sup>73</sup>: ad esempio, il *contubernium* di undici uomini, la *centuria* di 110

69 Amm. XIX, 2, 7 *diffRACTIS CAPITIBUS MULTOS HOSTIUM SCORPIONUM IACTU MOLES SAXEAE COLLISERUNT*: la traiettoria del tiro dall'alto delle mura verso la pianura e la parte colpita escludono l'azione di un solo *lapis* (rimbalzi o frammenti) ai danni di più bersagli e implicano il lancio simultaneo di più *saxa*.

70 AE 1993, 1584. L'abbreviazione potrebbe essere sciolta anche con *scor(pionarius)*: cfr. AE 2012, 1030 *Iustinus scorpionari(us?)*, dove però *scorpio* potrebbe designare l'antico e omonimo ὄξυβελής.

71 Ancora nel 537 l'artiglieria di Belisario sulle mura di Roma comprendeva appunto βαλλίστραι e ὄναγροι: Procop. *Goth.* I, 21, 14–19.

72 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 2 e 4.

73 In tale senso già Jonathan ROTH, «The Size and Organization of the Roman Imperial Le-

uomini, le *cohortes II–X* strutturate su cinque *centuriae* con cinque *centuriones* e forti di 555 uomini, la *cohors I* organizzata su dieci *centuriae* sotto il comando di cinque *centuriones* e forte di 1105 uomini<sup>74</sup>. Purtroppo anche il totale delle *carroballistae* e la forza di un *contubernium* addetto a una *carroballista* ricadono in questo insieme.

Flavio Giuseppe attribuisce 160 pezzi di artiglieria alle tre legioni di Vespasiano durante l'assedio di Iotapata nel 67<sup>75</sup>. Le tre legioni erano la *V Macedonica* e la *X Fretensis* già in *Syria*, più la *XV Apollinaris* da Alessandria. La sola *X Fretensis* apparteneva all'esercito provinciale della *Syria*<sup>76</sup>. La lunga permanenza della *V Macedonica* e della *XV Apollinaris* in Oriente era iniziata rispettivamente nel 62 e nel 63 durante il *bellum Parthicum* di Nerone; la *V Macedonica* proveniva dalla *Moesia*, la *XV Apollinaris* dalla *Pannonia*<sup>77</sup>. La notizia di Flavio Giuseppe, che fa riferimento alle legioni di tre eserciti diversi (due europei e uno orientale), ci aiuta a filtrare le informazioni di Vegezio circa l'artiglieria legionaria.

Prendiamo il numero genuino di sessanta *centuriae* a legione (cinquantaquattro normali nelle *cohortes II–X*, sei doppie nella *cohors I*) e calcoliamo il numero complessivo dei *tormenta* contando una *catapulta* o una *ballista* per *centuria*. A titolo di esempio, possiamo ipotizzare tre ripartizioni totalmente diverse tra le sessanta *centuriae*, una simmetrica e l'altra proporzionale: venti *ballistae*, venti *catapultae* e venti *scorpiones*, ovvero dodici *ballistae* (comprese le *ballistae maiores*) e quarantotto *catapultae* (inclusi gli *scorpiones minores*)<sup>78</sup>. Sessanta

---

gion», *Historia* 43 (1994), pp. 348–350; Dietwulf BAATZ, «Vegetius' Legion and the Archaeological Facts», in Richard J. BREWER (Ed.), *Roman Fortresses and their Legions. Papers in Honour of George C. Boon*, London–Cardiff 2000, Society of Antiquaries of London–National Museum and Galleries of Wales, pp. 156–157; Philip RANCE, «Battle», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES, Michael WHITBY (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, II, Cambridge 2007, Cambridge University Press, p. 345.

74 Maurizio COLOMBO, «La forza numerica e la composizione degli eserciti campali durante l'Alto Impero: legioni e auxilia da Cesare Augusto a Traiano», *Historia* 58 (2009), pp. 96–98 e 115–117; ID., «La disfatta di Boudicca e la battaglia del mons Graupius: la composizione delle forze romane, il ruolo tattico delle cohortes equitatae e la forza numerica delle cohortes miliariae», *Latomus* 75 (2016), pp. 427–431.

75 Ios. *bell. Iud.* III, 166.

76 L'attestazione più antica della *X Fretensis* nell'esercito provinciale della *Syria* risale al 19: Tac. *ann.* II, 57, 2.

77 Tac. *ann.* XV, 6, 3 e 25, 3.

78 Secondo la proporzione 1 : 4 tra *ballistae* e *catapultae* in un frammento di Sisenna: v. n. 12.

*tormenta* a legione danno un totale di 180 *tormenta* per tre legioni<sup>79</sup>. La cifra più bassa di 160 *tormenta* ammette tre spiegazioni ugualmente verosimili.

Forse in quell'occasione le tre legioni avevano i ranghi completi, ma i pezzi funzionanti o montati dell'artiglieria legionaria erano esattamente 160 su 180. Altrimenti la cifra tonda di 160 può essere il veniale arrotondamento per difetto di 162, poiché in quella circostanza ogni legione schierò nove *cohortes* su dieci e 54 *tormenta*. Se invece l'assedio di Iotapata vide l'insieme di una legione con 60 *tormenta* affiancare il grosso delle altre due (otto *cohortes* su dieci) ciascuna con 48 *tormenta*, 160 diventa il veniale arrotondamento per eccesso di 156.

Vespasiano, prima di invadere la Galilea e di investire Iotapata, aveva dislocato a Sepphoris 6000 uomini della sua armata, più precisamente 1000 cavalieri e 5000 fanti<sup>80</sup>. Le tre legioni possono avere complessivamente contribuito con 1500 o 2000 uomini alla guarnigione di 5000 fanti; ambedue le opzioni sono congrue alle abitudini dell'esercito altoimperiale nella seconda metà del I secolo. Proprio l'armata campale di Tito nel 70 sperimentò contemporaneamente entrambe le situazioni. Ognuna delle quattro legioni (*VMacedonica*, *XFretensis*, *XII Fulminata* e *XV Apollinaris*) cedette una *uexillatio* di 500 uomini (una *cohors quingenaria* intera o un *contubernium* a *centuria* più i sottufficiali e i *centuriones*) a Muciano per il corpo di spedizione in Italia; le due legioni egiziache (*III Cyrenaica* e *XXII Deiotariana*), per bilanciare il salasso, inviarono ciascuna una *uexillatio* di 1000 uomini (due *cohortes quingenariae* intere o due *contubernia* a *centuria* più i sottufficiali e i *centuriones*) a Tito in *Iudaea*<sup>81</sup>.

I dati nudi e crudi dello stesso Vegezio, cioè 55 *carroballistae* e 10 *onagri* a legione, significano 195 *tormenta* per tre legioni; la normalizzazione di Vegezio secondo la legione reale di sessanta *centuriae*, cioè 60 nuove *ballistae* = ὄξυβελεῖς e 10 *ballistae* classiche = λιθοβόλοι a legione, dà un totale di 210 *tormenta* per tre legioni. Un fatto è certo: un totale teorico di 180 *tormenta* risulta compatibile con il totale effettivo di 160, mentre i totali teorici di 195 o di 210 (soprattutto il secondo) sono giustificabili più difficilmente in rapporto con i 160 pezzi presenti a Iotapata.

Vegezio descrive la proporzione dei *tormenta* legionari (una *carroballista*

79 MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), p. 180.

80 *Ios. bell. Iud.* III, 59.

81 *Ios. bell. Iud.* V, 43–44.

a *centuria* e una *ballista* classica a *cohors*) sicuramente posteriore al *bellum Iudaicum* e vigente al più tardi dal 101; a partire dal regno di Traiano ogni legione ebbe complessivamente sessanta *carroballistae* e dieci *ballistae* classiche = λιθοβόλοι, che poi furono rimpiazzate da altrettanti *scorpiones/onagri*<sup>82</sup>. Come abbiamo detto, già il regno di Traiano sarebbe il contesto adatto all'introduzione del nuovo λιθοβόλος, che potrebbe essere stato adottato al più presto nelle guerre daciche e al più tardi nelle campagne orientali. Ma occorre aggiungere che il *bellum Dacicum* o il *bellum Parthicum* di Traiano rappresenterebbe il contesto adeguato soprattutto alla *ballista* classica di Hatra; la rivoluzione tecnologica delle nuove *ballistae* potrebbe avere influenzato subito l'analoga evoluzione delle *ballistae* classiche. La *ballista* classica di Hatra e lo *scorpio/onager* potrebbero essere stati due sviluppi paralleli e simultanei o due stadi consecutivi e separati dell'artiglieria romana in età altoimperiale.

Gli uomini necessari all'uso di una *ballista* classica erano perlomeno nove; infatti lo *scorpio/onager* impegnava un intero *contubernium* di otto uomini e un *magister*<sup>83</sup>. Un genuino *contubernium* di otto uomini risulta congruo anche a una *carroballista*, se dividiamo le mansioni operative tra due squadre di quattro uomini, entrambe viaggianti su carri; una era direttamente addetta al pezzo, l'altra (forse i *discentes ballistarii* o *discentes ballistariorum*) trasportava e gestiva i *tela* e il resto dell'equipaggiamento bellico (compresi i pezzi di ricambio e i materiali necessari alla manutenzione), assisteva i commilitoni nell'uso del pezzo e forniva i serventi degli *scorpiones/onagri*<sup>84</sup>. I rilievi della Colonna Traiana, gli accenni delle fonti tardoimperiali al funzionamento delle *ballistae* e i due muli o cavalli adibiti al traino di una *carroballista* corroborano l'ipotesi che una *carroballista* richiedesse l'opera diretta di quattro *ballistarii*, cioè un guidatore, due serventi e un *magister*, esattamente mezzo *contubernium*<sup>85</sup>.

Una epigrafe funeraria della *Transpadana* (CIL V, 6632) registra il grado di

82 MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), p. 179 attribuisce cinquanta *carroballistae* e dieci *onagri* a legione; in ogni *cohors* legionaria cinque *centuriae* avevano una *carroballista*, la sesta un *onager*.

83 Amm. XXIII, 4, 6.

84 MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), p. 192.

85 SETTIS, LA REGINA, AGOSTI, FARINELLA (n. 53), pp. 317–318 tavv. 59–60 scena XL e 360–361 tavv. 102–103 scena LXVI. Anon. *De reb. bell.* 7, 2 e 6; 18, 2 e 4. Amm. XXIII, 4, 2. Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 2 e III, 24, 14.

*magister ballistari(us)* o *ballistari(orum)* tra i ranghi della *XX Valeria Victrix* al più presto sotto Antonino Pio (il defunto porta il gentilizio imperiale *Aelius*). Il testo tradito *BALLISTA|RIPRDVPLIOI* (rr. 5–6) molto probabilmente cela parte del grado, il rango dello *stipendium* e la sottounità della legione, cioè *magister ballistari(orum) pr(inceps) dupl(icarius) co(hortis) I* (la *O* inscritta nella *C* spiega *OI*).

Questa lettura di CIL V, 6632 suggerisce che i semplici *magistri*, sottufficiali di rango *sesquiplicarius* (come i *tesserarii*), fossero i ‘capipezzo’ delle singole *carroballistae* (otto uomini) e i *magistri principes*, sottufficiali di rango *duplicarius* (come *optiones* e *signiferi*), comandassero le ‘batterie’ delle singole *cohortes* insieme con la propria *carroballista* (48 uomini). Forse è un caso, ma conosciamo appunto il grado di *opt(io) b(allistariorum)* nella *cohors V uigilum* (CIL VI, 1057–1058 = 31234). Il totale dei *ballistarii* in una legione dell’Alto Impero contava 490 uomini, che includevano 180 *ballistarii* addetti direttamente alle *carroballistae*, 240 *ballistarii* incaricati dell’assistenza manuale, logistica e tecnica, 48 *magistri ballistariorum*, 12 *magistri ballistariorum principes* e 10 *magistri* degli *scorpiones/onagri*.

La *carroballista* poteva fornire tiro di appoggio e di copertura dalla massima distanza tanto in un assedio quanto in campo aperto, mentre una *ballista* classica era soprattutto un *tormentum* ossidionale e difensivo. In campo aperto la posizione di tiro poteva seguire l’evoluzione del combattimento, ma le *carroballistae* dovevano occupare temporaneamente una postazione fissa, per aprire il tiro sul nemico; l’artiglieria mobile della legione altoimperiale operava esattamente come l’artiglieria mobile degli eserciti moderni e contemporanei a partire dal XVII secolo. Sembra molto probabile che le *carroballistae* fossero adoperate come tali non soltanto per la difesa dei *castra* temporanei, ma anche negli assedi. È ugualmente plausibile che i pezzi venissero separati dai carri e utilizzati come ordinarie *ballistae* per la difesa permanente dei *castra* legionari e delle fortezze.

Quattro vantaggi e due limiti caratterizzavano la *carroballista*. Le singole *carroballistae* avevano un legame organico con le singole *centuriae* e il coordinamento tattico dell’artiglieria a torsione con la fanteria legionaria era bene articolato su tre livelli: *cohors*, *uexillatio*, legione. La portata doppia rispetto agli arcieri consentiva di bersagliare il nemico per un tempo doppio. La maggiore precisione e la grande potenza aumentavano cospicuamente le probabilità di un



fig. 4 Due *carroballistae* in campo aperto: particolare da Conrad Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule*, tav. XXXI scena XL

colpo letale. Gli effetti devastanti delle *sagittae* demoralizzavano o terrorizzavano i nemici prossimi ai feriti e agli uccisi. Allo stesso tempo il numero dei pezzi era scarso (una sola *carroballista* per *centuria* legionaria) e la cadenza di tiro molto più bassa rispetto ai *sagittarii* (uno *scorpio* dei legionari cesariani sembra essere stato capace di scagliare due dardi al minuto con tiro mirato<sup>86</sup>).

Le *carroballistae* non perseguivano l'impossibile obiettivo di rendere le legioni autonome dal supporto dei *sagittarii*, ma assolvevano appunto la funzione tattica di integrare l'opera dei *sagittarii* anche in campo aperto colpendo il nemico da una distanza molto maggiore con superiore precisione e letalità più alta; la cooperazione tattica tra *tormenta* e specialisti delle armi da lancio (arcieri, *funditores* e ἀκοντισταί) era ordinaria amministrazione negli assedi<sup>87</sup>.

86 Caes. *Gall.* VII, 25, 2–4. Ho calcolato approssimativamente la cadenza di tiro secondo la durata massima delle azioni narrate: ogni Gallo, prima di essere colpito a morte, doveva scavalcare o rimuovere il commilitone appena ucciso, prendere il suo posto nella catena di rifornimento manuale e cominciare a tirare le *glebae* di materiale incendiario contro le fortificazioni romane (circa trenta secondi).

87 Ad esempio, Vespasiano a Iotapata e Tito a Gerusalemme, quando le legioni romane anco-

Ma già nella battaglia del *uallum Angriuarianum* le *catapultae* delle otto legioni renane, benché fossero statiche e meno potenti delle future *carroballistae*, avevano irrobustito il tiro micidiale dei *funditores* e dei *libritores* contro i Germani<sup>88</sup>. Le *glandes* dei *libritores* e dei *funditores* avevano accompagnato anche le *faces* e le *hastae* delle *catapultae* durante l'assalto di Corbulone alla città armena di Volandum<sup>89</sup>. Il neologismo erudito *libritores* di Tacito, che lo ricavò dall'uso secondario del verbo *libro* per i proiettili delle *fundae* ricalcando il modello *funditor* < *fundo*, sostituisce il termine tecnico *fundibulatores* e individua una parte dei *funditores* ancora più specializzata. La differenza risiedeva nel tipo di arma; i *libritores* invece della *funda* roteavano il *fustibalus*<sup>90</sup>, che scagliava i medesimi proiettili dei *funditores*, cioè *rotundi lapides* e appunto *glandes*, ma aveva una gittata più lunga della normale *funda*<sup>91</sup>.

I rilievi della Colonna Traiana distribuiscono le tre raffigurazioni delle *carroballistae* tra la battaglia decisiva di Tropaeum Traiani in *Moesia inferior* (due *carroballistae*) e la vittoriosa difesa di una fortezza romana contro un attacco dei Daci durante la seconda campagna oltre il Danubio (una *carroballista*, più tre comuni *ballistae*, una operativa dietro le *concaedes* e due inattive sulle mura); entrambi gli episodi cadono esattamente nel 102. Agli occhi degli stessi Romani la versatilità tattica contraddistingueva la *carroballista* fino dal suo esordio, anche se la funzione offensiva in campo aperto risultava prevalente. I *funditores*, che possono essere *auxiliares* o *symmacharii* europei, compaiono in primo piano subito dopo la *ballista* fissa. Sullo sfondo i *pedites sagittarii* delle *auxiliares cohortes* o dei *symmacharii Palmyreni* concorrono alla difesa dei *castra* e in quella circostanza fanno la prima apparizione tra le truppe di Traiano<sup>92</sup>.

Verso il 135 le forze legionarie di Arriano, cioè il grosso della *XV Apollinaris*

---

ra utilizzavano i tradizionali *tormenta* della dinastia giulio-claudia, cioè *catapultae*, *scorpiones* e *ballistae*: Ios. *bell. Iud.* III, 169, 211, 219, 256 e 285; V, 263 e 296.

88 V. n. 25.

89 Tac. *ann.* XIII, 39, 3.

90 Veg. *r. mil.* I, 16, 2; II, 15, 7; III, 3, 11, 14, 13–14, 24, 12; IV, 8, 4, 22, 1, 22, 7, 29, 2, 44, 5.

91 I *funditores* armati di *fustibalus* toccavano con i *lapides* la portata massima dei *sagittarii*, cioè 600 piedi: v. n. 43.

92 SETTIS, LA REGINA, AGOSTI, FARINELLA (n. 53), pp. 362–363 tavv. 104–105 scena LXVI. Gli arcieri orientali compaiono in altri tre episodi delle due guerre con i Daci: *ibid.*, pp. 372–374 tavv. 114–116 scena LXX, 458 tavv. 200–201 scena CVIII, 472–473 tavv. 214–215 scena CXV.

e una *uexillatio* della *XII Fulminata*, portarono con sé i *καταπέλται*<sup>93</sup>; le *μηχαναί*, che comprendevano implicitamente i *λιθοβόλοι*, furono schierate alle due ali dietro l'intera *φάλαγξ* su due alture, per bersagliare dalla massima distanza di tiro con *βέλη* e *λίθοι* la carica degli Alani<sup>94</sup>. Le *μηχαναί* sul fianco destro presero posto dietro gli arcieri, sul fianco sinistro dietro gli *ἀκοντισταί*<sup>95</sup>.

Ciò corregge l'adattamento personale ed erroneo di Vegezio, che pone sia le *manuballistae* e le *arcuballistae* delle singole legioni sia le *carroballistae* dell'intero *exercitus* nella quinta linea dell'*acies* davanti ai fantomatici *triarii*, che avrebbero formato la sesta e ultima linea<sup>96</sup>. La menzione stessa dei *triarii*, una reliquia erudita dell'età repubblicana come altri ingredienti della *legio antiqua*, dovrebbe accendere il sospetto di una rielaborazione arbitraria. Ma egli conosceva sicuramente la tradizione genuina dell'Alto Impero, poiché altri due passi riportano la giusta posizione delle *carroballistae*: Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 3 *in campo post aciem grauis armaturae ponuntur* e III, 24, 14 *Carroballistas [...] post aciem conuenit ordinari*.

Le *arcuballistae* erano pezzi di artiglieria a tensione più antichi, più semplici e meno potenti dell'artiglieria a torsione; oltre a Vegezio<sup>97</sup>, soltanto Heges. II, 15, 8 le nomina e ne attribuisce anacronisticamente l'uso all'armata campale di Cestio Gallo nel 66. Ma in quegli anni le legioni siriane, come le altre legioni degli eserciti provinciali e le *cohortes praetoriae*, solevano utilizzare *scorpiones*, *catapultae* e *ballistae*. Le fonti latine e greche dopo gli *scorpiones*, le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* nominano talvolta in maniera vaghissima “gli altri pezzi di artiglieria”; il latino *tormenta* forse abbraccia impropriamente alcuni pezzi di artiglieria a tensione o piuttosto include giustamente altri generi allora secondari di artiglieria a torsione (ad esempio, i *λιθοβόλοι μονάγκωνες*). Nella seconda parte ritorneremo brevemente alle *arcuballistae* del Tardo Impero.

Vegezio assegna gli *onagri* esclusivamente alla difesa dei *castra*, alle operazioni ossidionali e al *nauale certamen*<sup>98</sup>. Questi ambiti risultano conformi alla

93 Arr. *ect.* 5–6 e 15.

94 Arr. *ect.* 19 e 25.

95 Arr. *ect.* 12 e 14.

96 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7 e III, 14, 13.

97 V. anche nn. 126 e 129.

98 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 4; III, 3, 11; IV, 8, 3. 22, 4. 22, 6. 29, 3. 44, 5.

consuetudine predominante sotto la tarda Repubblica e l'Alto Impero. *Ballistae* classiche o *scorpiones/onagri*, gli impliciti λιθοβόλοι di Arriano concordano con la testimonianza esplicita di Tacito ed entrambi gli autori attestano l'eccezione alla regola. Ma soltanto un terreno dotato di una morfologia molto particolare, come l'*agger* della *uia Postumia* nella seconda battaglia di Bedriacum o le due alture di Arriano contro gli Alani, consentiva di usare tutti i *tormenta* in una battaglia campale; inoltre il disastro incombeva sulla soglia, se qualcosa andava storto.

L'esercito di Vitellio aveva pagato un prezzo alquanto salato per la scelta di impiegare i *tormenta* in campo aperto, dal momento che le dimensioni e il peso rendevano tutte le *ballistae* estremamente ingombranti e difficilmente trasportabili; le *catapultae* e gli *scorpiones* occupavano molto meno spazio e avevano un peso molto inferiore, ma allora dovevano essere spostati a forza di braccia. Quando l'armata vespasiana di Marco Antonio Primo aveva sfondato l'*acies* nemica, i *uehicula* e appunto i *tormenta*, collocati sulla *uia Postumia*, avevano impedito alle truppe vitelliane di ricomporre lo schieramento<sup>99</sup>. La seconda battaglia di Bedriacum, nonostante la differente tecnologia e la diversa composizione dell'artiglieria a torsione, conferma la testimonianza di Arriano circa la posizione dei *tormenta* nell'ultima fila della *acies* romana.

La partecipazione delle *carroballistae* a un combattimento campale era condizionata dalla morfologia del terreno; le *carroballistae* e le ordinarie *ballistae* della Colonna Traiana testimoniano in questo senso, come Tacito e Arriano. La battaglia di Tropaeum Traiani raffigura entrambe le *carroballistae* schierate in ultima fila e intente a lanciare *sagittae* da una postazione di tiro sopraelevata (un rilievo naturale). La difesa della fortezza romana pone in pianura la *ballista* attiva dietro le *concaedes* e la terza *carroballista*; entrambe coprono i legionari con *galea* e *lorica* impegnati a rafforzare le *concaedes*, ma la *carroballista* protegge anche i legionari con la sola *lorica* occupati nella parallela costruzione delle *munitiones*. Le due *ballistae* inattive sono collocate dietro la sommità delle mura già edificate e la *ballista* dacica occupa una postazione ugualmente elevata

<sup>99</sup> Tac. *hist.* III, 25, 1. SHATZMAN (n. 37), p. 55 calcola una lunghezza di 3,55 m e una larghezza di 2,13 m per una *ballista* di 3 mine = 4 libbre. Una *ballista* di 5 mine = 6 $\frac{2}{3}$  libbre già raggiungeva una lunghezza di 4,21 m e una larghezza di 2,52 m; la *ballista* di 10 mine = 13 $\frac{1}{3}$  libbre, il pezzo più leggero tra i pesi abituali degli eserciti ellenistici, era lunga 5,30 m e larga 3,18 m.

dietro una palizzata di legno su un rilievo boscoso (l'accampamento fortificato dei Daci).

Le *carroballistae* collocate in pianura, esattamente come i *sagittarii* e gli altri specialisti della *leuis armatura*, potevano scagliare i propri dardi secondo una traiettoria lineare, se la linea di tiro era libera; anche le *ballistae* imbarcate sulle navi ovviamente dovevano rispettare questa condizione, quando il bersaglio erano altre navi, un litorale marino o la riva opposta di un fiume. Altrimenti le *carroballistae*, per scavalcare in piena sicurezza tutte le file della *acies* romana, dovevano imprimere una traiettoria curva alle *sagittae*. La terza opzione per le *carroballistae* poste in pianura era il lancio dei dardi con una traiettoria diagonale, cioè lineare e indirizzata verso un bersaglio sopraelevato (ad esempio, le pendici o la sommità di un'altura o di un colle), come gli ὄξυβελεῖς facevano in tutti gli assedi fino dalla propria introduzione; già le *catapultae* di Germanico Cesare avevano adottato appunto il terzo tipo di traiettoria nella battaglia del *uallum Angriuarianum*, dove i Germani schierati su un ampio muro di terra avevano offerto un bersaglio perfetto all'artiglieria legionaria.

Le *carroballistae* e le semplici *ballistae*, quando occupavano una postazione di tiro sopraelevata o miravano a un bersaglio sopraelevato, avevano la linea di tiro totalmente libera, scagliavano le loro *sagittae* sempre secondo una traiettoria lineare (la sola variazione concerneva ovviamente l'angolo di tiro) e potevano martellare liberamente come la *acies* nemica in una battaglia campale, così i difensori o gli assalitori nemici in un assedio. La sopraelevazione, che ospitava le *carroballistae* e le ordinarie *ballistae*, poteva avere origine naturale (un colle, un'altura, un rilievo o una ondulazione del terreno) o artificiale (un *agger* stradale, un *agger* ossidionale, un *uallum*, le *munitiones* dei *castra*, una torre ossidionale, le mura di una città o di una fortezza, una torre murale).

La morfologia del terreno nella regione di Tropaeum Traiani e in Dacia era perfettamente adatta all'uso delle *carroballistae* nelle battaglie e nei combattimenti campali; forse è lecito dire che gli ingegneri militari di Traiano o di Domiziano, ideando la *carroballista*, tennero bene a mente soprattutto i terreni ondulati, collinosi o montuosi della *Moesia superior*, della *Moesia inferior* e della Dacia. Ma una morfologia molto simile caratterizzava anche la *Caledonia*, buona parte della Germania transrenana fino all'Elba, le regioni transdanubiane davanti a *Raetia*, *Noricum* e *Pannonia superior*, l'intera Armenia e la Mesopotamia settentrionale.

La grande superiorità dell'impero romano sul piano strategico e in campo tecnologico autorizzava a credere che l'esercito imperiale avrebbe potuto scegliere sempre e ovunque i terreni più adatti all'uso campale delle *carroballistae*. Ancora durante il regno di Marco Aurelio la facoltà romana di gestire quasi sempre e quasi ovunque la preparazione e lo svolgimento dei combattimenti e delle battaglie campali caratterizzava le guerre difensive e offensive su grande scala; né all'epoca più fortunata di Traiano né allora qualcuno privo di poteri oracolari avrebbe potuto immaginare i profondi e duraturi sconvolgimenti della situazione strategica dal 238 al 260.

In ambito ossidionale e difensivo le funzioni delle *carroballistae* erano piuttosto versatili. Ad esempio, le *carroballistae* potevano aprire subito il tiro di interdizione contro i difensori di una città, concentrare celermente il tiro di saturazione a fini offensivi o difensivi, supportare rapidamente con il tiro di copertura l'assalto diretto a una fortezza o a un accampamento, rinforzare velocemente in più punti i *tormenta* fissi dei *castra* temporanei.

L'altra destinazione dei *tormenta* in campo aperto possedeva analogha rilevanza sul piano strategico: la protezione armata dei legionari adibiti alla costruzione di un ponte attraverso un fiume e la preliminare eliminazione dei nemici dalla riva opposta. Nel 15 Germanico Cesare aveva respinto i Chatti dalla riva opposta del fiume Adrana e coperto la costruzione di un ponte fluviale facendo ricorso a *tormenta* e *sagittae*<sup>100</sup>. Le *sagittae* sono una sineddoche e indicano ovviamente i *sagittarii*; i generici *tormenta* sono le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* delle quattro legioni germaniche (*II Augusta*, *XIII Gemina*, *XIV Gemina* e *XVI Gallica*) sotto il diretto comando di Germanico Cesare in quella circostanza. Nel 62 Corbulone aveva adoperato appunto le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* di tre legioni siriane (*III Gallica*, *VI Ferrata* e *X Fretensis*) contro gli *equites sagittarii* dei Parthi, per costruire un ponte navale sull'Eufrate e occupare le colline della riva sinistra<sup>101</sup>.

Nel corso del II secolo i τοξόται e i καταπέλται (le nuove *ballistae*), imbarcati su navi fluviali, erano soliti proteggere i legionari impegnati a costruire un ponte attraverso il Reno, il Danubio e l'Eufrate; ciò accadeva sia nelle esercitazioni sia in guerra. Avidio Cassio ordinò di lanciare βέλη e καταπέλται dalle navi fluviali contro gli arcieri dei Parthi, per coprire i legionari addetti alla costruzione di un

<sup>100</sup> Tac. *ann.* I, 56, 3.

<sup>101</sup> Per le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* di Corbulone v. n. 26.

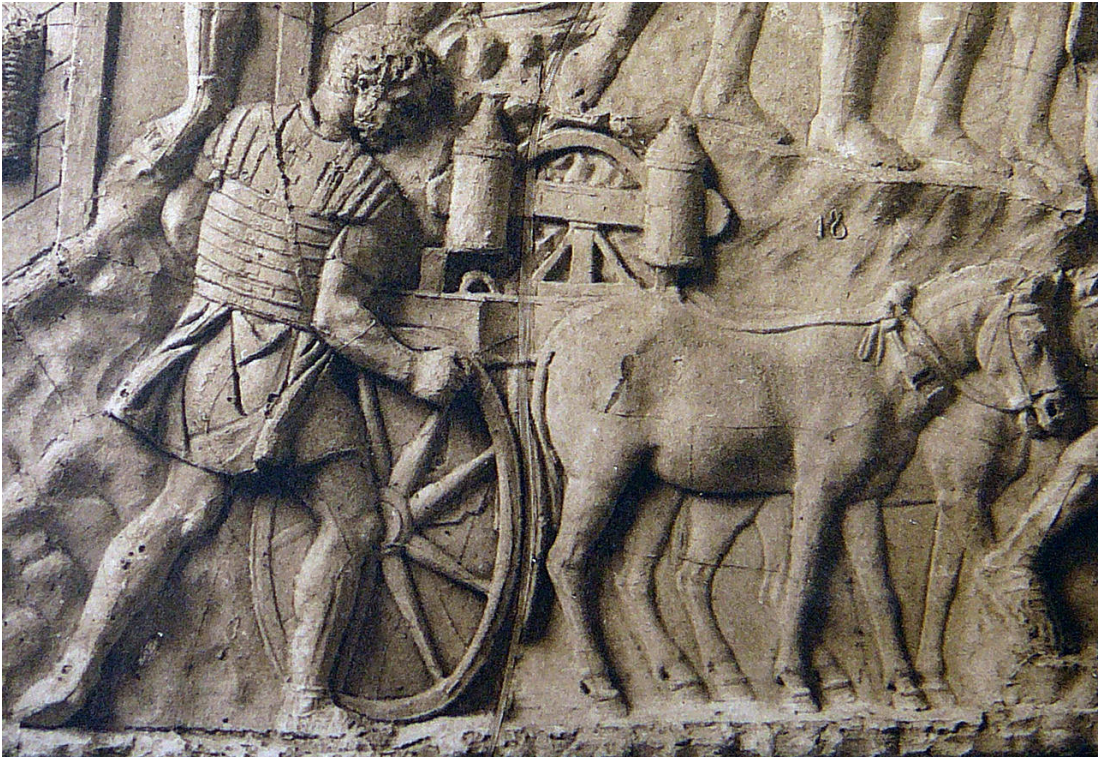


fig. 5 *Carroballista* in funzione difensiva: particolare da Conrad Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule*, tav. XLVI scena LXVI

ponte navale sull'Eufrate durante il *bellum Parthicum* di Lucio Vero; l'azione combinata degli arcieri e dell'artiglieria mise i Parthi in fuga<sup>102</sup>. Il progresso tecnologico dei *tormenta* si rileva facilmente dal confronto con le analoghe tattiche di Germanico Cesare e di Corbulone, che avevano dovuto impiegare congiuntamente *catapultae* e *ballistae* per il medesimo scopo; infatti i soli *καταπέλται* sostituirono degnamente entrambi i generi dei *tormenta* giulio-claudi.

Come abbiamo già detto, la Colonna Traiana mostra tre *carroballistae* ritratte in piena azione. I rilievi della Colonna Aureliana esibiscono una singola *carroballista* durante l'attraversamento di un ponte fluviale in territorio germanico

<sup>102</sup> Cass. Dio. LXXI, 3, 1<sup>1</sup>. Si noti la simmetria espressiva rispetto ai *tormenta* e alle *sagittae* di Tacito (v. n. 100).

e danno una raffigurazione molto schematica del pezzo<sup>103</sup>. Le *carroballistae* avevano costituito una innovazione tecnologica, tattica e iconografica ai tempi di Traiano, ma dopo sette decenni di onorevole e costante servizio ormai facevano parte del panorama militare. Quei rilievi narrano una campagna posteriore meno di un decennio ai *καταπέλται* di Avidio Cassio sull'Eufrate. La prossimità cronologica dei due eventi chiarisce il valore pregnante e simbolico della singola *carroballista* nei rilievi della Colonna Aureliana: l'armata campale dello stesso Marco Aurelio, quando attraversò il medio Danubio a Carnuntum e invase il territorio dei Quadi, aveva come sempre con sé le *carroballistae* delle legioni e delle *uexillationes* legionarie.

Le fonti esplicitamente citate di Vegezio (per così dire, la bibliografia tecnica dell'*Epitoma rei militaris*) includono le *constitutiones* di Traiano e di Adriano, così come l'opera di Taruttieno Paterno sullo *ius militare* (Veg. *r. mil.* I, 8, 10–11), cui Lyd. *mag.* I, 9 attribuisce anche Τακτικά in due o più libri. L'arco temporale coincide con le tre *carroballistae* della Colonna Traiana, i *καταπέλται* di Arriano contro gli Alani e la singola *carroballista* della Colonna Aureliana. Perciò le *carroballistae* di Vegezio *interdum* schierate sui campi di battaglia provengono effettivamente da una fonte tecnica del II secolo, ma egli mescola il dettaglio genuino delle *carroballistae* con la sua versione dell'*acies* generale, che in realtà, come l'*acies* legionaria, costituisce una rielaborazione libresca e personale di informazioni autentiche e disparate.

Infine i resti archeologici del combattimento presso lo Harzhorn dimostrano da un lato la realtà storica e l'uso campale della *carroballista* ancora nel 235, dall'altro la presenza costante delle *carroballistae* al seguito delle *uexillationes* legionarie nel *comitatus* di Severo Alessandro e di Massimino<sup>104</sup>. La *leuis armatura*, cioè gli specialisti delle armi da lancio, ebbe sempre un peso determinante ai danni dei Germani; Erodiano, narrando la campagna transrenana di Massimino (lo scenario

103 Eugen PETERSEN, «Beschreibung der Bildwerke», in Eugen PETERSEN, Alfred VON DOMASZEWSKI, Guglielmo CALDERINI (Hrsgg.), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*, München 1896, F. Bruckmann, p. 58 e tav. 22 scena XVI A.

104 Frank BERGER, Felix BITTMANN, Michael GESCHWINDE, Petra LÖNNE, Michael MEYER, Günther MOOSBAUER, «Die römisch-germanische Auseinandersetzung am Harzhorn, Lkr. Northeim, Niedersachsen», *Germania* 88 (2010), pp. 313–402, soprattutto pp. 334–343. Cfr. inoltre Günther MOOSBAUER, *Die vergessene Römerschlacht: Der sensationelle Fund am Harzhorn*, München 2018, C. H. Beck, soprattutto pp. 73–102.

strategico del combattimento presso lo Harzhorn), sottolinea l'efficienza esiziale degli ἀκοντισταί e dei τοξόται contro i guerrieri germanici, ma non fa il minimo cenno alle *carroballistae*<sup>105</sup>.

I ritrovamenti dello Harzhorn presentano un caso esemplare di armi combinate, benché le interpretazioni siano divise circa la natura offensiva o difensiva della tattica romana in questa circostanza. Alcuni ritengono che i Germani abbiano teso un agguato all'*agmen* romano sfruttando la posizione dominante della collina; altri credono che un'*acies* romana abbia assaltato lo schieramento difensivo dei Germani sulla collina. In entrambi gli scenari l'artiglieria mobile delle legioni martellò i Germani dalla massima distanza, i comuni *sagittarii* degli *auxilia* o gli arcieri scelti dei *numeri* orientali fecero lo stesso dalla lunga distanza, la fanteria legionaria sostenne lo scontro frontale e il combattimento corpo a corpo con i guerrieri germanici, gli *equites* degli *auxilia* con una manovra avvolgente spezzarono la resistenza nemica e aprirono la via alla colonna romana. Lo scenario difensivo ha una rilevante implicazione: le *carroballistae* erano molto utili anche alla difesa dell'*agmen*, poiché la loro capacità di aprire subito il tiro dalla massima distanza guadagnava il tempo necessario a schierare gli arcieri in posizione di copertura e a formare ordinatamente l'*acies* della fanteria legionaria.

Nonostante il silenzio assoluto di Erodiano, le punte di *ballista* scoperte allo Harzhorn (131) sono circa il triplo dei ferri delle *sagittae* (43). La ragione è palmare: i Germani schierati sui fianchi dello Harzhorn rientravano esattamente nella terza opzione di tiro per le *carroballistae* schierate in pianura, cioè la traiettoria diagonale verso un bersaglio sopraelevato. È utile citare ancora una volta la battaglia del *uallum Angriuarianum*: dobbiamo notare e sottolineare l'analogia generale della tattica romana con i *tormenta* in campo aperto, ma la suddivisione del peso tattico tra *carroballistae* e *sagittarii* di Massimino risulta esattamente inversa rispetto a *funditores* e *catapultae* di Germanico Cesare. Il combattimento dello Harzhorn dimostra concretamente che valeva sempre la pena di cercare o di sfruttare un campo di battaglia adatto alle *carroballistae*.

Dal momento che in ogni legione c'erano sei *carroballistae* e una *ballista* classica ovvero uno *scorpio/onager* per *cohors*, ciascuna *uexillatio* del *comitatus*, purché fosse una *uexillatio milliaria*, aveva con sé i *tormenta* di due *cohortes*, cioè dodici *carroballistae* e due *ballistae* classiche ovvero due *scorpiones/onagri*;

105 Hdn. VII, 2, 1–2: gli ἀκοντισταί erano Mauri, i τοξόται Osroeni e Armeni.

è legittimo congetturare che ogni *cohors praetoria* o distacco pretoriano del *comitatus* avesse a sua disposizione sei *carroballistae* e una *ballista* classica ovvero uno *scorpio/onager*. Giova precisare che le *cohortes praetoriae* ancora militavano nei *comitatus* tetrarchici<sup>106</sup>.

Più di un secolo intercorre tra la campagna transrenana di Massimino il Trace e gli eventi narrati da Ammiano Marcellino; il naufragio quasi totale delle fonti storiografiche sulla fase finale dell'Alto Impero e sul lungo regno di Diocleziano coinvolge anche le *ballistae*. Le rarissime eccezioni riportano concordi l'uso esclusivamente ossidionale o murale delle *ballistae*. Durante l'assedio gotico di Tessalonica o di un'altra città nella *prouincia Macedonia* i difensori romani scagliarono ὑπὸ μηχανῆς una parte dei πυρφόρα βέλη, con cui essi incendiarono i μηχανήματα dei Goti. Il *ballistarius* più abile al servizio del *latro* isaurico Lidio era uno specialista esperto anche nella costruzione delle *ballistae*; egli prima contribuì validamente alla difesa di Cremna contro le truppe romane, poi disertò e con il βέλος di una μηχανή romana ferì a morte il capo ribelle<sup>107</sup>.

Il *comitatus* riformato di Gallieno e i *comitatus* tetrarchici assediaron e presero una città in numerose occasioni. Le capacità ossidionali del *comitatus* provano implicitamente che fino alla prima Tetrarchia le *uexillationes* legionarie e le *cohortes praetoriae* o i distacamenti pretoriani del *comitatus* continuarono a portare sempre con sé le *carroballistae* e gli *scorpiones/onagri*. Gallieno fu gravemente ferito nell'assedio di una città gallica, rifugio dell'usurpatore Postumo, e fu assassinato durante l'assedio di Mediolanum, piazzaforte dell'usurpatore Aureolo<sup>108</sup>. Aureliano catturò Ancyra, Tyana e Palmyra<sup>109</sup>. Probo sembra avere affidato il già citato assedio di Cremna a unità legionarie del suo *comitatus*; la

106 Michael P. SPEIDEL, «The Later Roman Field Army and the Guard of the High Empire», *Latomus* 46 (1987), pp. 375–379; Maurizio COLOMBO, «Constantinus rerum nouator: dal comitatus diocleziano ai palatini di Valentiniano I», *Klio* 90 (2008), pp. 146–147; ID., *Auxilia e Legiones. La fanteria romana nel IV secolo* (Fucina di Marte 5), Roma 2022, Società Italiana di Storia Militare, pp. 73, 102, 106 e 111–116. Per le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* delle *cohortes praetoriae* nel I secolo v. n. 9

107 Euseb. frg. 2, 4–7 = FHG V, p. 21 Müller. Zos. I, 70.

108 Aur. Vict. 33, 19; Zon. XII, 24–25.

109 Hist. Aug. Aurel. 22, 5–6; 28, 1–2; 31, 1–3. Zos. I, 50, 2. 54, 2–56, 2. 60, 1–61, 1. Cfr. anche Hist. Aug. Aurel. 26, 4 *nulla pars muri est, quae non binis et ternis ballistis occupata sit; ignes etiam tormentis iaciuntur* (falsa lettera di Aureliano su pericoli e fatiche nell'assedio di Palmyra).

ribellione di Coptus nella *Thebais* e la sua alleanza con i Blemmyes portò alla disfatta dei barbari e alla riconquista della città, ma egli può avere assegnato la spedizione ai *duces* e alle truppe del *comitatus* ovvero al *praefectus Aegypti* e alla guarnigione egiziaca<sup>110</sup>. Galerio *Caesar* rase al suolo Busiris, capitale amministrativa del nono νομός del Basso Egitto, e l'irriducibile Coptus<sup>111</sup>; Diocleziano espugnò Alessandria dopo un assedio di otto mesi<sup>112</sup>.

L'episodio più significativo avvenne nel 283 per opera di un imperatore effimero, ma molto efficiente in ambito militare; Caro infatti conquistò Seleucia e Ctesifonte, ma poi morì repentinamente vittima di una malattia o di un fulmine, mentre proseguiva l'avanzata attraverso le terre persiane oltre il basso Tigri<sup>113</sup>. L'ultimo poeta dell'Alto Impero, Nemesiano, menziona espressamente le *arces* espugnate dei Persiani elogiando i successi bellici dei nuovi imperatori Carino e Numeriano, l'uno condottiero del *comitatus* occidentale e vincitore dei barbari settentrionali, l'altro successore di Caro anche al comando del *comitatus* orientale<sup>114</sup>.

## 2. *Le ballistae, i ballistarii e i Ballistarii del Tardo Impero.*

Dobbiamo evidenziare subito un fatto: per quanto riguarda l'Alto Impero, una fonte iconografica di natura ufficiale (la Colonna Traiana), due fonti letterarie di carattere storiografico (Arriano e Cassio Dione) e una fonte archeologica (i resti rinvenuti allo Harzhorn) provano l'uso abituale ed efficace delle *ballistae* in campo aperto dal 102 al 235; tre fonti (la Colonna Traiana, Arriano e gli scavi dello Harzhorn) suffragano concordi la regolare partecipazione delle *carroballistae* alle battaglie campali. Nessuna fonte fa lo stesso per il Tardo Impero; anzi gli indizi negativi circa l'impiego campale delle *carroballistae* prevalgono ampiamente. Le *carroballistae* dell'esercito tardoromano diventarono semplicemente *ballistae*

110 Hist. Aug. *Prob.* 16, 4–5 e 17, 1–3; Zos. I, 69, 1–71, 1.

111 Hier. *chron.* p. 226 a Helm. I soprannomi trionfali *Aegyptiacus maximus* e *Thebaicus maximus*, che Galerio *Augustus* assunse soltanto nel 311 (Eus. *hist. eccl.* VIII, 17, 3), celebrarono le due spedizioni di Galerio *Caesar* contro i ribelli dell'*Aegyptus* e della *Thebais* nel 293–294: ChLA III 205 = P. Grenf. II 110 e P. Oxy I 43 R. Cfr. anche *Paneg.* 8, 5, 2 Mynors.

112 Eutr. IX, 22, 1 e 23; Hier. *chron.* p. 226 e Helm.

113 Eutr. IX, 18, 1; Fest. 24, 2; Hier. *chron.* pp. 224–225 g Helm; Zon. XII, 30.

114 Nemes. *cyn.* 63–75.

trasportate su carri; in campo aperto i *Ballistarii* le azionavano sulle piattaforme stesse dei carri soltanto per la difesa dell'*agmen* verso la metà del IV secolo o per la protezione del τοῦλδος verso la fine del VI secolo<sup>115</sup>.

Come abbiamo detto, durante l'Alto Impero le *carroballistae* erano armi ugualmente adatte alle tattiche ossidionali, difensive e campali. Quando l'impiego delle *carroballistae* negli scontri campali cadde in disuso, la potenza di tiro romana dalla lunga distanza subì una sensibile riduzione sotto l'aspetto qualitativo. La rinuncia all'altra destinazione delle *carroballistae* e delle comuni *ballistae* in campo aperto (il passaggio armato dei fiumi), benché sia comunemente trascurata dalla letteratura scientifica, ebbe effetti ugualmente gravi sull'efficienza bellica dell'esercito tardoimperiale.

Verso la metà del IV secolo il nome generale di *ballista* abbracciava tre modelli dell'arma diversi per funzioni e diffusione, cioè una piccola minoranza di *carroballistae*, una massa ingente di *ballistae*, una corposa minoranza di *maiores ballistae*. La *carroballista*, di cui l'anonimo autore dell'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis* propose una versione potenziata<sup>116</sup>, era un pezzo medio e mobile di artiglieria a torsione. La *ballista* era un pezzo leggero o medio e fisso; la versione leggera portava sporadicamente il nome specifico di *manuballista*<sup>117</sup>. Le *ballistae* medie e soprattutto le *manuballistae* potevano essere trasportate agevolmente a forza di braccia sulle brevi distanze<sup>118</sup>. Le βαλλίστραι potevano essere imbarcate sulle navi fluviali al fine di proteggere il trasporto delle provviste contro eventuali attacchi delle imbarcazioni nemiche<sup>119</sup>, così come per coprire la costruzione della parte finale di un *pons naualis*<sup>120</sup>. Infine le *maiores ballistae* erano le eredi murali delle *catapultae*. Purtroppo le fonti letterarie preferiscono quasi sempre denominare indistintamente i tre modelli *ballistae* o βαλλίστραι.

Le generiche *ballistae* dell'artiglieria murale e ossidionale comprendevano

115 V. nn. 186–187.

116 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 7.

117 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 16, 5; Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7 e IV, 22, 6.

118 Amm. XIX, 5, 6–7: cinque *leuiores ballistae* sono facilmente spostate da una postazione di tiro all'altra di Amida. Amm. XX, 11, 23: i Persiani incendiano un *agger* durante l'assedio romano di Bezabde, ma i soldati di Costanzo II riescono a mettere in salvo le *ballistae* intatte.

119 Mauric. *strateg.* XII B 21, rr. 12–15.

120 Mauric. *strateg.* XII B 21, rr. 41–44.

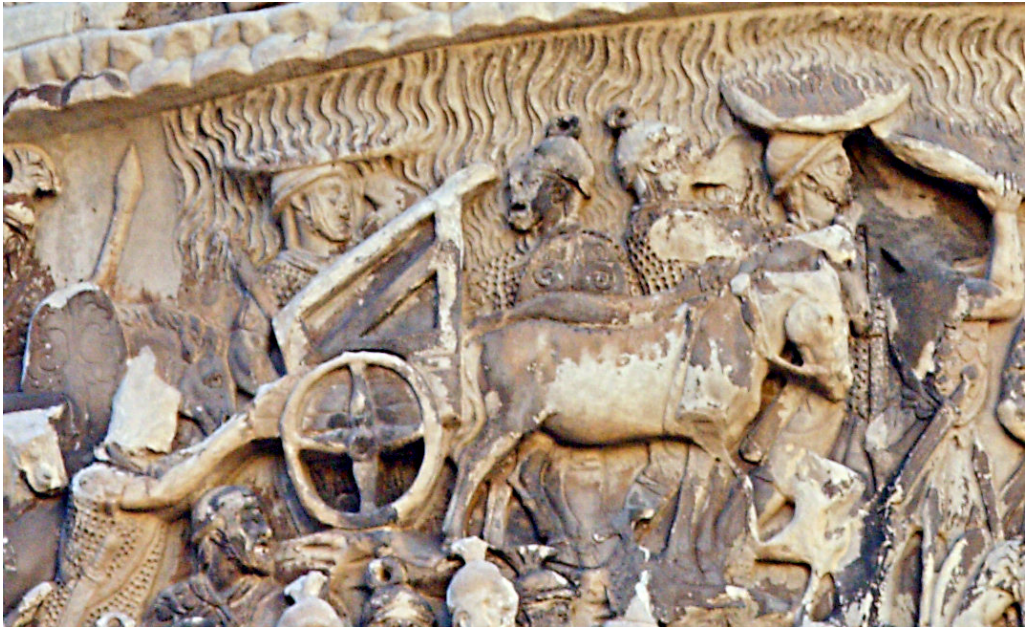


fig. 6 *Carroballista*, particolare dalla Colonna di Marco Aurelio,  
foto MatthiasKabel,2008. GNU Free documentation license. Wikimedia Commons

tre classi: leggere (le *manuballistae*), medie (le *carroballistae* e la grande maggioranza delle *ballistae* murali) e pesanti (le *maiores ballistae*); anche in questo caso l'etichetta generale di *ballista* valeva indiscriminatamente per i tre tipi. Le *leuiiores ballistae* di Ammiano sono o le *ballistae* medie rispetto alle *maiores ballistae* o una elegante perifrasi del termine tecnico *manuballistae*. La *ballista fulminalis*, che muniva esclusivamente la *muralis defensio*, era implicitamente una *maior ballista*, come ricaviamo dall'insieme dei dettagli. Vegezio assegna due tipi di dardi incendiari, cioè i *malleoli* e le *falaricae*, espressamente alle *maiores ballistae*<sup>121</sup>. Giuliano, narrando la difesa romana di Nisibis durante il terzo assedio dei Persiani, nomina specificamente i πυροφόροι delle *ballistae* e i λίθοι degli *onagri* nel secondo panegirico a Costanzo<sup>122</sup>. Le arcaizzanti *tragulae*, che compaiono in due passi ammiane, sembrano dare un nome erudito agli *iacula* delle *maiores ballistae*<sup>123</sup>. La *tragula* propriamente detta era stata un'arma

121 Amm. XIX, 5, 6. Anon. *De reb. bell.* 18, 1. Veg. *r. mil.* IV, 18, 2.

122 Iul. *or.* 3 (2), 62 D–63 A.

123 Amm. XIX, 1, 5 e 2, 7. Cfr. inoltre Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7 *erant tragularii, qui ad manuballi-*

inastata da lancio dei Galli e dei Celtiberi; la sua lunghezza doveva essere più o meno pari alle dimensioni degli *iacula romani*<sup>124</sup>.

L'anonimo autore dell'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis*, Ammiano e Vegezio menzionano unicamente le *sagittae*, quando essi danno un nome specifico ai dardi usuali delle generiche *ballistae*; il solo Ammiano nota esplicitamente che le *sagittae*, tranne lo *spiculum maius*, erano integralmente fatte di legno. Procopio conferma l'informazione tecnica di Ammiano precisando che lo speciale βέλος delle βαλλίστραι aveva anche le alette fatte di legno<sup>125</sup>. Le punte dello Harzhorn, i dardi di Dura Europos e le testimonianze di due fonti letterarie ammoniscono gli esegeti odierni a valutare bene anche le parole apparentemente banali come *sagittae*.

Vegezio identifica esplicitamente lo *scorpio* originario, la versione più leggera della *catapulta*, appunto con la contemporanea *manuballista*<sup>126</sup>; *scorpiones* è sinonimo implicito di *manuballistae* in un passo successivo<sup>127</sup>. In entrambi i brani le generiche *ballistae* (i pezzi medi e pesanti) sono giustamente distinte dagli specifici *scorpiones/manuballistae* (i pezzi leggeri). La *acies* generale di Vegezio affianca molto significativamente le *carroballistae* (il modello medio e mobile) e le *manuballistae* (la versione leggera e fissa, ma facilmente trasportabile): *In quinta acie ponebantur interdum carroballistae, manuballistarii, fundibulatores, funditores*<sup>128</sup>. Nei due paragrafi seguenti Vegezio spiega chi fossero i *fundibulatores*, descrive la loro arma (il *fustibalus*) e illustra brevemente chi fossero i *funditores*<sup>129</sup>.

---

*stas uel arcuballistas dirigebant sagittas.*

124 Caes. *Gall.* I, 26, 3; V, 35, 6. 48, 5, 48, 7; *ciu.* I, 57, 2. *B. Hisp.* 32, 3. Cfr. anche Liv. XX-IV, 42, 2; Val. Max. VII, 6, 5; Flor. *epit.* II, 13, 85.

125 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 7, 2 e 6; 18, 1 e 4. Amm. XIX, 7, 4; XXIII, 4, 2; XXIV, 4, 16 (cfr. anche XIX, 2, 7 e 5, 6; XX, 7, 10). Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7 e 25, 4; III, 3, 11 e 24, 14; IV, 21, 1 e 44, 7. Procop. *Goth.* I, 21, 16. L'espressione *sagittae ballistarum* di Veg. *r. mil.* III, 24, 14 può essere una coniazione personale o l'isolata attestazione di una espressione tecnica.

126 Veg. *r. mil.* IV, 22, 1 e 6 *ballistae, onagri, scorpiones, arcuballistae, fustibali, sagittarii, fundae* [...] *Scorpiones dicebant quas nunc manuballistas uocant; ideo sic nuncupati, quod paruis subtilibusque spiculis inferant mortem.*

127 Veg. *r. mil.* IV, 44, 5 *sagittis, missibilibus, fundis, fustibalis, plumbatis, onagris, ballistis, scorpionibus.*

128 Veg. *r. mil.* III, 14, 13.

129 Veg. *r. mil.* III, 14, 14-15: ma cfr. IV, 22, 7 *Fustibalos, arcuballistas et fundas describere superfluum puto, quae praesens usus agnoscit.*

I *manuballistarii* hanno soltanto valore di uariatio lessicale e morfologica a scopo stilistico; Vegezio infatti elenca un genere di armi (sostantivo della I declinazione), un tipo di soldati con suffisso di attività *-ari-* (II declinazione, aggettivo sostantivato della I classe) e due categorie di soldati con suffisso di agente *-tor-* (sostantivo della III declinazione). Le *carroballistae* e le implicite *manuballistae* sono simmetricamente abbinate come i *fundibulatores* e i *funditores*. I *fustibali* dei *fundibulatores* erano armi analoghe alle *fundae* dei *funditores*, ma dotate di una gittata maggiore; le *carroballistae* erano pezzi di artiglieria omologhi alle *manuballistae*, ma più potenti. La *acies* legionaria di Vegezio offre la prova definitiva a questo riguardo; là infatti le *manuballistae* e le *arcuballistae* occupano la medesima posizione delle *carroballistae* e dei *manuballistarii*, ma il primo posto e il ruolo implicito di arma dominante spettano appunto alle *manuballistae*<sup>130</sup>.

Le occorrenze delle *ballistae* e degli *onagri* raggiungono una frequenza altissima nell'*Epitoma rei militaris* di Vegezio<sup>131</sup>. Apriamo una brevissima e necessaria parentesi. La corretta contestualizzazione dell'*Epitoma* sul piano storico impone una radicale revisione rispetto alla dottrina comune: Vegezio scrisse il suo manuale verso il 425 nell'impero romano d'Oriente e i suoi riferimenti all'età contemporanea riguardano sempre l'esercito orientale di Teodosio II. L'imperiale destinatario dell'opera deve essere identificato non con Valentiniano III o Teodosio I, ma appunto con Teodosio II<sup>132</sup>.

La fonte più generosa di notizie dettagliate sull'uso concreto dei *tormenta* tardoimperiali è Ammiano Marcellino, che terminò la composizione e l'edizione delle *Res gestae* circa sette lustri prima di Vegezio. Le *ballistae* di Ammiano collezionano sedici occorrenze esplicite<sup>133</sup>, ma in molti brani ricevono il nome

<sup>130</sup> Veg. *r. mil.* II, 15, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Veg. *r. mil.* II, 10, 5 e 25, 4; III, 3, 11 e 14, 14; IV, 8, 4, 9, 1–2, 10, 3, 18, 2, 18, 5, 22, 1–2, 22, 4, 22, 8, 29, 3, 44, 5, 44, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Cfr. ora Maurizio COLOMBO, «La datazione dell'*Epitoma rei militaris* e la genesi dell'esercito tardoromano. La politica militare di Teodosio I, Veg. *r. mil.* 1.20.2-5 e Teodosio II», *AncSoc* 42 (2012), pp. 255–292 e ID., «Nuove prove per la datazione di Vegezio sotto Teodosio II e la sua collocazione nell'impero romano d'Oriente», *Klio* 101 (2019), pp. 256–275, cui rinvio per la bibliografia su questi aspetti di Vegezio.

<sup>133</sup> Amm. XIX, 1, 7 e 5, 6; XX, 7, 2, 7, 10, 11, 20, 11, 22; XXIII, 4, 1 e 3; XXIV, 2, 13 e 4, 16. Le quattro *ballistae* dei Persiani ad Amida (Amm. XIX, 2, 8, 5, 1, 7, 2, 7, 5–7) provenivano da una precedente *direptio* di Singara (Amm. XIX, 2, 8).

generico di *tormenta* o sono evocate indirettamente attraverso i loro dardi<sup>134</sup>. Lo storiografo registra debitamente in tre passi la natura colloquiale e contemporanea della parola *onager*<sup>135</sup>, ma preferisce il vocabolo ugualmente colorito e più antico *scorpio* (nove occorrenze)<sup>136</sup>. In un passo troviamo *catapulta* = λιθοβόλος come in Cesare<sup>137</sup>, in un altro la coppia classica *catapultae atque ballistae*, dove *catapultae* è ancora sinonimo di *onagri*<sup>138</sup>; nel primo brano riscontriamo la personale e brillante rielaborazione di una doppia allusione letteraria<sup>139</sup>, il secondo è un prestito linguistico a fini ornamentali da Tito Livio, che giustappone spesso le *catapultae* alle *ballistae*<sup>140</sup>. Come avremo occasione di constatare, Ammiano è il solo autore a menzionare esplicitamente una *legio comitatensis* di *Ballistarii* in un contesto bellico<sup>141</sup>.

Nell'ordinamento costantiniano l'esercito imperiale era ripartito in tre classi: *comitatenses*, *ripenses*, *alae* e *cohortes*. I *comitatenses* comprendevano *uexillationes equitum* (i reggimenti denominati *Comites* avevano sempre la precedenza), *legiones* e *auxilia*; entro la tarda primavera 365 Valentiniano I da un lato aggiunse i *palatini* (anche essi includevano *uexillationes equitum*, *legiones* e *auxilia*) e gli *pseudocomitatenses* (sola fanteria, cioè *legiones* e *auxilia*, ma le due categorie sono raramente distinte), dall'altro promosse in blocco gli *auxilia* \**comitatensia* a *palatina* e antepose coerentemente gli *auxilia* alle *legiones* nella gerarchia interna dei *ripenses*. I soli *palatini* conservarono la gerarchia originaria dei *numeri comitatenses*. I *cunei equitum*, le *uexillationes equitum*, le *legiones* e gli *auxilia* costituivano i *ripenses*, cioè le unità dei *limites* adatte e pronte al

134 Amm. XVIII, 8, 13; XIX, 6, 6. 6, 10. 7, 4; XX, 6, 2. 11, 21. 11, 23; XXI, 12, 7 e 10; XXII, 15, 16; XXIV, 4, 12; XXXI, 15, 6.

135 Amm. XXIII, 4, 4 e 7; XXXI, 15, 12.

136 Amm. XIX, 2, 7 e 7, 6–7; XX, 7, 10; XXIII, 4, 4 e 7; XXIV, 4, 16 e 28; XXXI, 15, 12.

137 Amm. XV, 12, 1 *Nec enim eorum quemquam adhibita uxore rixantem, multo fortiore et glauca, peregrinorum ferre poterit globus, tum maxime cum illa inflata ceruice suffrendens ponderansque niueas ulnas et uastas admixtis calcibus emittere coeperit pugnos ut catapultas tortilibus neruis excussas.*

138 Amm. XXIV, 2, 13 *Cum enim idem prohibitores catapultis nostrorum urgerentur atque ballistis.*

139 Plaut. *Capt.* 796 *Nam meus est ballista pugnus, cubitus catapultast mihi*; Lucan. VI, 198–199 *Hunc aut tortilibus uibrata phalarica neruis / obruat aut uasti muralia pondera saxi.*

140 Liv. XXI, 11, 7 e 10; XXIV, 40, 15; XXVI, 21, 7 e 47, 5; XXXI, 46, 10; XXXII, 10, 11; XXXIX, 5, 16. Cfr. anche Tac. *ann.* XII, 56, 2 e XV, 9, 1.

141 Amm. XVI, 2, 6.

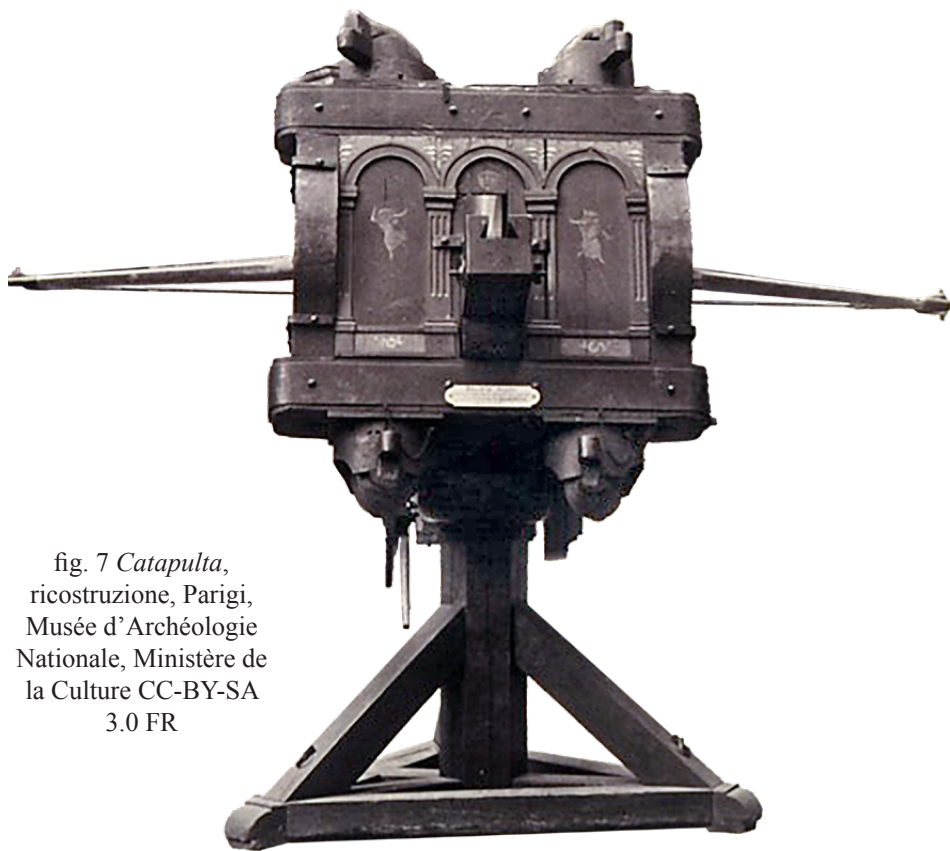


fig. 7 *Catapulta*,  
ricostruzione, Parigi,  
Musée d'Archéologie  
Nationale, Ministère de  
la Culture CC-BY-SA  
3.0 FR

combattimento; essi erano ben distinti per condizioni di servizio e privilegi di congedo dalle *alae* e dalle *cohortes*, che erano la fascia inferiore delle guarnigioni provinciali e la classe più bassa dell'intero esercito<sup>142</sup>.

L'espressione *militia limitanea* è usata da Giuliano nel 363<sup>143</sup>. Festo menziona anacronisticamente i *limitanei Daciae* verso il 370 in riferimento al *bellum Persicum* di Galerio *Caesar*<sup>144</sup>, ma il nome ufficiale di *limitanei* o *limitanei milites* per tutti i reparti dei *limites* è attestato soltanto dagli anni Ottanta del

142 Costantino: *C. Theod.* VII, 20, 4 (325). Valentiniano I: *C. Theod.* VIII, 1, 10 (365). I *palatini* e gli *pseudocomitatenses*: Dietrich HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (ES VII 1), I, Düsseldorf 1969, Rheinland-Verlag, pp. 396–424; COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 139–140; ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 146–150 e 152–155.

143 *C. Theod.* XII, 1, 56.

144 Fest. 25, 2.

IV secolo<sup>145</sup>. L'espressione *ripensis militia* abbraccia le truppe scelte dei *limites* ancora nel 372, mentre nel 375 la chiara perifrasi *Li uero, qui in ripa per cuneos auxiliaque fuerint constituti* distingue *cunei* e *auxilia* da *uexillationes equitum* e *legiones* proprio nell'ambito dei *ripenses*<sup>146</sup>. La variante *ripariensis* compare come aggettivo nel 365 e come sostantivo già nel 400; la *Notitia dignitatum* utilizza la locuzione specifica *legiones riparienses* per le quattro legioni della *Moesia II* e della *Scythia* più o meno verso il 400<sup>147</sup>. Nonostante la consuetudine oggi corrente, qui chiameremo le unità scelte dei *limites* sempre *ripenses* secondo l'uso originario.

I *ballistarii* dell'esercito costantiniano e valentiniano erano unicamente *legionarii milites*, che prestavano servizio soprattutto nei distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses* e nelle *legiones pseudocomitatenses*, ma potevano costituire integralmente *legiones pseudocomitatenses* o *legiones comitatenses*. La condizione ambigua degli *pseudocomitatenses*, che erano reparti scelti di truppe addette al presidio statico<sup>148</sup>, rende lecito ipotizzare che i distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses*, quando erano promossi a *legiones pseudocomitatenses*, conservassero *ballistarii* e *tormenta*. Come abbiamo detto, i ritrovamenti archeologici dello Harzhorn provano che le *uexillationes* legionarie del *comitatus* portavano con sé le proprie *carroballistae*.

Le *legiones comitatenses* e *pseudocomitatenses* annoveravano 120 *contubernia* di otto uomini, cioè 960 *gregarii milites* su dodici *centuriae*, circa 1000 uomini con sottufficiali e *centuriones*; le sole eccezioni per eccesso erano le speciali legioni dei *comitatenses* costantiniani, i *Lanciararii* e i *Mattiararii*, che riproducevano il medesimo modello dei *Lanciararii* tetrarchici, cioè venti *centuriae*, 200 *contubernia*, 1600 *gregarii pedites*. Le legioni leggere di soli *Ballistarii*

145 *C. Theod.* XI, 1, 21 (385) e VIII, 4, 17 (389): entrambe le leggi sono di Teodosio I.

146 *C. Theod.* VII, 22, 8 (Valentiniano I) e 13, 7, 3. La seconda legge fu emanata da Valente alcuni mesi prima della dipartita di Valentiniano I, per adeguare i privilegi fiscali dei *ripenses milites* alla nuova gerarchia della fanteria tardoromana, in cui gli *auxilia* erano sempre superiori alle *legiones*, fatta eccezione per l'insieme ristretto dei *numeri palatini*.

147 *C. Theod.* VII, 4, 14 (*ripariensis milites*, Valente) e 1, 18 (Onorio = Stilicone). *Not. dign. Or.* 39, 28 e 40, 29. Cfr. inoltre le espressioni amministrative *Gallia ripar<i>ensis* (*Not. dign. Occ.* 42, 13), *Noricus ripariensis* (*Lat. Veron.* 6, 7) e *Pannonia II ripariensis* (*Not. dign. Occ.* 32, 21).

148 Soltanto *comitatenses* e *palatini* formavano le armate campali: COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 152–155.

erano conformi alle altre *legiones comitatenses* e *pseudocomitatenses*; esse infatti contavano almeno 120 *carroballistae* e altrettanti *contubernia* di otto uomini, cioè 960 uomini, che diventavano 980 con i venti *magistri* di altrettanti *scorpiones/onagri*<sup>149</sup>. 480 *ballistarii* erano direttamente addetti alle *carroballistae*; altrettanti *ballistarii* curavano la gestione e il trasporto dell'equipaggiamento bellico, fornivano manovalanza generica e assistenza tecnica nell'uso dei pezzi, infine davano i serventi necessari agli *scorpiones/onagri*.

La cifra di 960 uomini include i *magistri ballistariorum*, i 'capipezzo' delle singole *carroballistae*, e i *magistri ballistariorum principes*, incaricati di comandare le singole 'batterie' delle *carroballistae*. Se anche l'ordinamento tattico dei *Ballistarii* era articolato su dodici *centuriae*, le dieci *carroballistae* di una singola *centuria* potevano formare due 'batterie' comandate da due *magistri ballistariorum principes*. Sommati gli altri sottufficiali e i *centuriones*, la forza teorica era poco più di 1000 uomini, esattamente la forza normale di una *legio comitatensis*.

Venti *scorpiones/onagri* richiedevano 160 serventi, per assistere i venti *magistri*; perciò 320 *ballistarii* erano liberi di aiutare i commilitoni addetti alle *carroballistae* e agli *onagri*, oppure potevano operare altri *tormenta* appositamente tratti dall'*armamentarium* imperiale o da un arsenale provinciale. Le tre *legiones comitatenses* e le tre *legiones pseudocomitatenses* con il nome reggimentale di *Ballistarii*<sup>150</sup>, più una *legio pseudocomitatensis* distrutta nell'*Illyricum* prima della *Notitia dignitatum*, fusero ognuna i *ballistarii* e i *tormenta* di più legioni provinciali.

La presenza uniforme dei *ballistarii* nei distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses* trae numerosi riscontri soprattutto dagli assedi di Amida e di Bezabde, dove i difensori romani usarono costantemente e in misura massiccia *ballistae* e *scorpiones/onagri* contro le macchine ossidionali, le artiglierie e gli arcieri dei

149 MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), p. 196 assegna soltanto cinquanta *carroballistae* e dieci *onagri* a ogni legione leggera di *Ballistarii*. Ricavo la forza teorica di 1000 uomini per un ἄριθμός di Βαλιστάριοι da Const. Porph. *adm. imp.* 53 (pp. 251–252 Bekker = pp. 266–267 Moravcsik). La forza numerica delle *legiones comitatenses*, dei *Lanciarii* e dei *Mattarii*: COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 120–124, 150–152 e 155–160.

150 *Not. dign. Or.* 7, 43 *Balistarii sen.* e 57 *Balistarii Theodosiaci*; 8, 46–47 *Balistarii Daphnenses* e *Balistarii iun.*; 9, 47 *Balistarii Theodosiani iun.*; *Occ.* 7, 97 *Balistarii*. La tradizione manoscritta della *Notitia dignitatum* usa sempre una sola *l* anche nella locuzione amministrativa *fabrica balistaria* (*Occ.* 9, 33 e 38).

Persiani<sup>151</sup>. Amida era protetta dalla *V Parthica*; la *II Flauia*, la *II Armeniaca* e la *II Parthica* presidiavano Bezabde<sup>152</sup>. I *tormenta bellica* sono menzionati anche tra i preparativi romani per l'assedio persiano di Singara, dove *I Flauia* e *I Parthica* formavano la guarnigione<sup>153</sup>. Almeno quattro distaccamenti (*I Parthica*, *II Armeniaca*, *II Parthica* e *V Parthica*) appartenevano sicuramente ai *ripenses*. Le attività belliche dei *ripenses* mesopotamici suffragano la presenza di *ballistarii* con *ballistae* e *onagri* in tutte le città, le città-fortezze e i *castra*, dove troviamo distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses*.

Anche le superstiti teste di ponte oltre il Danubio, quando erano presidiate da unità legionarie dei *ripenses*, ospitavano i normali *ballistarii* delle legioni provinciali: Dierna e Sucidaua davanti alla *Dacia ripensis*, Onagrinum davanti alla *Pannonia II*, un anonimo *castellum contra Tautantum* e Transaquincum davanti alla *Valeria*<sup>154</sup>. Due ritrovamenti archeologici avvalorano questa ipotesi; uno offre puntuale riscontro al distaccamento della *XIII Gemina* dislocata a Dierna (l'odierna Orșova)<sup>155</sup>. Ciò vale anche per le teste di ponte perdute oltre il Reno e il Danubio.

L'origine materiale dei *Ballistarii* è semplice. Le *uexillationes* legionarie dei *comitatus* tetrarchici ancora includevano i relativi *ballistarii*; Costantino creò tanto i *Ballistarii sen.* quanto i *Ballistarii iun.* con le *uexillationes* legionarie del suo *comitatus*, che fino al 25 Luglio 306 aveva servito suo padre Costanzo I prima per tredici anni come *Caesar*, poi per poco più di un anno come *Augustus*. Le due *legiones comitatenses* contavano complessivamente 240 *carroballistae* e quaranta *scorpiones/onagri*, cioè i *tormenta* e i *ballistarii* di venti legioni leggere; il *comitatus* originario di Costantino, come gli altri *comitatus* di tipo tetrarchico, annoverava appunto una ventina di *uexillationes* legionarie, che comprendevano due *cohortes praetoriae* intere o due distaccamenti della medesima consistenza

151 Amm. XIX, 1, 7. 2, 7. 5, 6. 7, 6–7; XX, 7, 2 e 10. Cfr. anche Amm. XVIII, 7, 6. 8, 13. 9, 1; XIX, 2, 8. 5, 2. 6, 6. 6, 10. 7, 4.

152 Amm. XVIII, 9, 3; XX, 7, 1.

153 Amm. XX, 6, 2 e 8: cfr. i *lapides* e i *tela* del § 4, dove l'avverbio spaziale *eminus* sottintende il lancio per mezzo dei rispettivi *tormenta*.

154 *Not. dign. Or.* 42, 37 e 39; *Occ.* 32, 48; 33, 55 e 65.

155 Nicolae GUDEA & Dietwulf BAATZ, «Teile spätrömischer Ballisten aus Gornea und Orșova», *SJ* 31 (1974), pp. 50–72; BAATZ (n. 67), pp. 9–17. La giusta identificazione dei resti rinvenuti: WILKINS (n. 1), pp. 69–81.



fig. 8 Replica in scala di una *manuballista* fotografata nel 2005 durante un reenactment della Legio XV Apollinaris a Pram, Austria. Foto MatthiasKabel, 2005, GNU Free documentation license, Wikimedia Commons.

tratti dall'insieme delle *cohortes praetoriae*, più o meno la stessa forza di due *uexillationes milliariae*<sup>156</sup>.

La nascita degli appellativi supplementari *seniores* e *iuniores*, che poi furono estesi agli altri *comitatenses* e ai *ripenses* (i *cunei equitum*, le *uexillationes equitum*, le *legiones* e gli *auxilia* degli eserciti provinciali), coincide con l'istituzione di due *comitatus* da parte di Costantino<sup>157</sup>. Entrambi i *comitatus*, uno al seguito

<sup>156</sup> COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 113–117, 126–129 e 133–134.

<sup>157</sup> La bipartizione dei *numeri* tardo-romani in *seniores* e *iuniores* è una questione molto controversa. HOFFMANN (n. 142), pp. 122–130 e 387–396 propone Valentiniano I nel 364. Ro-

dello stesso Costantino e l'altro sotto il comando di Crispo *Caesar* in Gallia, concentrarono tutta l'artiglieria legionaria in una sola unità separando i *ballistarii* dai generici *pedites*; i *Ballistarii sen. e iun.* radunarono omogeneamente i soli specialisti delle *carroballistae* e degli *onagri*, le altre *legiones comitatenses* dei due *comitatus* diventarono una forza omogenea di soli *pedites*. Infine dieci *legiones comitatenses*, che erano state *uexillationes* legionarie del disciolto *comitatus* di Licinio, diedero i *ballistarii* e i *tormenta* necessari alla formazione dei *Ballistarii Daphnenses* verso il 328/329<sup>158</sup>.

La creazione dei *Ballistarii Daphnenses* in coppia con i *Constantini Daphnenses* celebrò sonoramente l'importanza strategica di Daphne, la testa di ponte occupata e fortificata dallo stesso Costantino oltre il basso Danubio davanti alla *Moesia II*<sup>159</sup>. Diocleziano, dopo avere riportato la terza vittoria sui Sarmati<sup>160</sup>, aveva fondato Onagrinum e Contraquincum in *Sarmatia* nel 294<sup>161</sup>; entrambe

---

ger S. O. TOMLIN, «Seniores-Iuniores in the Late-Roman Field Army», *AJPh* 93 (1972), pp. 253–278, soprattutto pp. 264–266, per vie diverse giunse alla medesima conclusione. Thomas DREW-BEAR, «A Fourth-Century Latin Soldier's Epitaph at Nakolea», *HSPh* 81 (1977), pp. 267–273: Costanzo II e Costante dopo la morte di Costantino II nel 340. Ralf SCHARF, «Seniores-Iuniores und die Heeresteilung des Jahres 364», *ZPE* 89 (1991), pp. 265–272: Costanzo II dopo la battaglia di Mursa nel 351. Costantino stesso già nel 318: COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 127–128, 152–153 e 155–156; ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 136–137, 145–146 e 158.

158 A titolo di esempio possiamo citare dodici unità legionarie, più precisamente *Fortenses*, *Scythae*, *Primani*, *Vndecimani*, *V Macedonica* (già nel *comitatus* di Galerio), *Martenses sen.*, *II Flauia Constantia Thebaeorum*, *Solenses sen.*, *I Maximiana Thebaeorum*, *III Diocletiana Thebaeorum*, *Tertiodecimani* (già nel *comitatus* di Galerio), *Thebaei*: *Not. dign. Or.* 5, 45; 6, 44–46; 7, 39–40 e 45; 8, 34 e 36–38; *Occ.* 5, 154 = 7, 29.

159 Procop. *aedif.* IV, 7, 7.

160 *Paneg.* 8, 5, 1 e 10, 4 Mynors. Addirittura nove zecche (soprattutto Treueri, Roma e Siscia, ma anche Ticinum, Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antiochia e Alessandria) celebrarono la vittoria più grande e più importante di Diocleziano sui Sarmati imprimendo sul rovescio degli *argentei* la legenda *VICTORIA SARMATICA* e la variante *VICTORIAE SARMATICAE*: RIC VI, p. 175 nrr. 100–101 (294), pp. 175–176 nrr. 104 a–108 (295/297); p. 281 nrr. 12 a–13 b (294), p. 282 nrr. 16 a–17 b (295); p. 352 nrr. 14 a–26 (294), p. 353 nrr. 31 a–b (294), pp. 353–354 nrr. 36 a–39 (295/297); pp. 459–460 nrr. 34 a–42 (294/295), p. 461 nr. 58 (295); p. 529 nrr. 2–3 (294), p. 530 nrr. 6–7 (295) e 10 a–b (296); p. 555 nrr. 19 a–b (295), p. 556 nrr. 22 a–b (295) e 25 a–b (295/296); p. 579 nrr. 5 a–b (294/295); p. 616 nrr. 32–33 b (294/295); p. 661 nr. 8 (295). Cfr. anche Timothy D. BARNES, *The New Empire of Diocletianus and Constantine*, Cambridge, Mass.–London 1982, Harvard University Press, pp. 52–53.

161 *Cons. Const.* ad a. 294, 1 = *Chron. Min.* I, p. 230 Mommsen.

le teste di ponte oltre il medio Danubio erano ancora presidiate dai *ripenses* ai tempi della *Notitia dignitatum*<sup>162</sup>. Daphne era la fortezza sita più a valle tra le teste di ponte romane oltre il Danubio. Negli stessi anni Costantino occupò e fortificò anche la testa di ponte a Sucidaua, che egli tramite un ponte in muratura collegò con Palatiolum nei pressi di Oescus<sup>163</sup>; le liste della *Notitia dignitatum* ancora accreditano la fortezza transdanubiana di Sucidaua all'impero romano d'Oriente<sup>164</sup>.

Nel IV secolo Sucidaua, sede di un distaccamento della *V Macedonica*, garantiva l'accesso delle truppe romane alle terre tribali dei Taifali, che vivevano davanti alla *Dacia ripensis*<sup>165</sup>. Daphne era la porta romana della *Gothia* danubiana; nel 367 Valente invase le terre occidentali dei Tervingi costruendo liberamente un ponte navale a Transmarisca proprio in corrispondenza di Daphne<sup>166</sup>. Questo dettaglio suggerisce che allora Daphne continuasse a ospitare una guarnigione romana; è molto probabile che i *Constantini Daphnenses* e i *Ballistarii Daphnenses* abbiano presidiato il *munimentum* al più tardi fino al *bellum Persicum* o al *bellum Magnenticum*, che obbligarono Costanzo II a riorganizzare e ridistribuire i suoi *comitatenses* per due volte in meno di tre lustri.

La preminenza di Daphne rispetto alle altre teste di ponte risulta eccezionale sotto due aspetti qualitativi. In primo luogo i *comitatenses* dello stesso Costantino e della dinastia costantiniana sembrano avere presidiato soltanto Daphne tra tutte le teste di ponte transrenane e transdanubiane; la concentrazione e l'eponimia di due *legiones comitatenses* era un ulteriore segno di rilevanza strategica e propagandistica. Soltanto il toponimo transrenano *Diuitia*, la fondamentale testa di ponte davanti a Colonia Agrippina, ha generato un numero maggiore di nomi tra le *legiones comitatenses*, ma esso diede occasione di rinominare una sola unità per volta<sup>167</sup>. Poi una forza di *ripenses* esattamente uguale all'originaria

162 *Not. dign. Occ.* 32, 41 e 48; 33, 48.

163 *Aur. Vict.* 41, 18; *Chron. Pasch.* I, p. 527 Dindorf. Cfr. anche Procop. *aedif.* IV, 6, 34.

164 *Not. dign. Or.* 42, 39.

165 *Eutr.* VIII, 2, 2. *Amm.* XVII, 13, 19–20; XXXI, 3, 7 e 9, 3. *Epit. de Caes.* 47, 3.

166 *Amm.* XXVII, 5, 2. A questo proposito cfr. Maurizio COLOMBO, «Note esegetiche a quattro passi di Ammiano Marcellino», *WS* 134 (2021), pp. 174–176.

167 Al più tardi dal 312 (CIL VI, 3637 e XI, 4787; AE 1982, 258), prima che Costantino istituisse ufficialmente i *comitatenses*, la *II Italica Diuitensium*, poi rinominata *Diuitenses sen.*, si era stabilmente unita al *comitatus* gallico e aveva abbandonato definitivamente Diuitia, dove già nel 315 troviamo un distaccamento della *XXII Primigenia* (CIL XIII, 8502). Pro-

guarnigione di Daphne (1000 legionari e 1000 artiglieri dei *comitatenses*) difendeva *castellum Onagrinum* davanti a Bononia: gli *auxilia Augustensia* (1000 *auxiliares*) affiancavano un distaccamento misto della *V Iouia* e della *VI Herculia* (1000 legionari)<sup>168</sup>. Il numero dei *tormenta* faceva la seconda differenza: ad Onagrinum dodici *ballistae* e due *onagri* propri del distaccamento legionario più le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* fissi della fortezza, ma 120 *carroballistae* e venti *onagri* propri dei soli *Ballistarii* a Daphne<sup>169</sup>. La potenza di tiro concentrata su mura e torri di Daphne era sufficiente a intimidire preventivamente qualsiasi assalitore.

Sembra molto probabile che la creazione costantiniana dei *Ballistarii sen.* e *iun.* abbia comportato la perdita generale dell'artiglieria legionaria per tutti i distaccamenti delle legioni provinciali (*uexillationes* legionarie dei *comitatus* tetrarchici e distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses*) successivamente promossi a *legiones comitatenses*. Quando una *uexillatio* legionaria di un *comitatus* tetrarchico o un distaccamento legionario dei *ripenses* veniva promosso a *legio comitatensis*, i suoi *ballistarii* erano retrocessi o restavano tra i *ripenses* e soltanto i *pedites* generici andavano a formare il *numerus comitatensis* di fanteria legionaria. Già sotto il regno di Costantino le *uexillationes* legionarie dei *comitatus* tetrarchici e i distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses* complessivamente generarono più di sessanta *legiones comitatenses*<sup>170</sup>.

Le quattro *legiones pseudocomitatenses* di *Ballistarii*, tre sopravvissute e una annientata prima della *Notitia dignitatum*, rappresentano appunto i *ballistarii* e i *tormenta* di altre quaranta legioni leggere, che durante il regno dello stesso Costantino o al più tardi sotto la sua dinastia furono promosse da *uexillationes* legionarie dei *comitatus* tetrarchici e da distaccamenti legionari dei *ripenses* a *legiones comitatenses*. I conti tornano: *Ballistarii sen.*, *Ballistarii iun.* e *Ballistarii Daphnenses*, più le quattro *legiones pseudocomitatenses*, corrispondono ai *ballistarii* e ai *tormenta* di settanta *legiones comitatenses*.

---

prio questo distaccamento della *XXII Primigenia* potrebbe avere generato i *Diuitenses iun.* (Amm. XXVI, 6, 12), mentre i *Diuitenses Gallicani* (*Not. dign. Or.* 8, 43) sono sicuramente più tardi e possono essere stati formati con il distaccamento di un'altra legione o con un altro distaccamento della *XXII Primigenia*: COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 89–90.

168 *Not. dign. Occ.* 32, 41 e 48.

169 Ma cfr. Peter BRENNAN, «Combined Legionary Detachments as Artillery Units in Late-Roman Danubian Bridgehead Dispositions», *Chiron* 10 (1980), pp. 553–568.

170 COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), p. 155 e ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), p. 167.

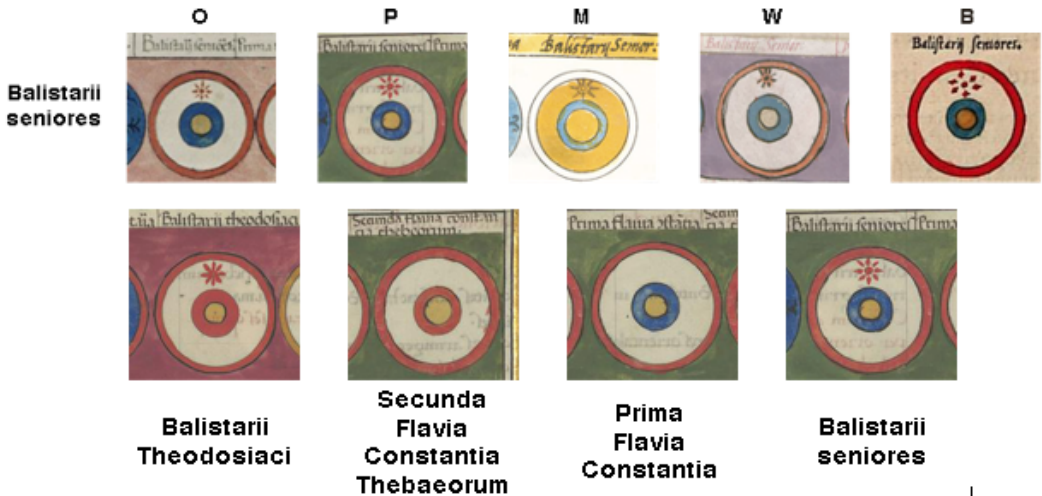


fig. 9 Lo scudo dei *Ballistarii seniores* e dei *Ballistarii Theodosiaci* secondo i manoscritti della *Notitia dignitatum*. Si noti il dettaglio distintivo della “stella macedone” con 6/8 punte rispetto a due scudi analoghi. Immagini dal sito <http://lukeuedasarson.com> (2014-2015).

La presenza più tarda tra gli *pseudocomitatenses* implica che le quattro unità in origine fossero state distaccamenti autonomi dei *ripenses*; come vedremo subito, la *Notitia dignitatum* documenta esplicitamente questa condizione per un reparto. La creazione dei quattro reggimenti tra i *ripenses*, a differenza delle tre *legiones comitatenses*, non espresse una scelta strategica, ma risolse empiricamente una conseguenza imprevista delle riforme costantiniane in campo militare.

Tre numeri su quattro furono promossi a *legiones pseudocomitatenses* tra il 364 e il 391. L’istituzione stessa degli *pseudocomitatenses* fornisce il terminus post quem; i nomi dinastici, l’annessione coatta dell’*Illyricum* orientale all’impero romano d’Oriente e il ritorno di Teodosio I a Costantinopoli dall’Italia stabiliscono il terminus ante quem<sup>171</sup>. Troviamo i *Ballistarii Theodosiaci* nella *dioecesis Orientis*; essi o furono promossi a *legio pseudocomitatensis* dalle file dei *ripenses* orientali durante il regno di Teodosio I o già erano una *legio pseudocomitatensis* e allora ricevettero semplicemente un nuovo nome<sup>172</sup>. Possiamo congetturare con pari verosimiglianza l’una o l’altra origine per i

<sup>171</sup> Per il terminus ante quem v. n. 142.

<sup>172</sup> P. Ness. III 15, r. 3 documenta che i *Ballistarii Theodosiaci* erano dislocati nella *dioecesis Orientis* ancora nel 511.

*Ballistarii Theodosiani iun.* nell'*Illyricum* orientale; come abbiamo accennato, la sopravvivenza degli *iuniores* presuppone la distruzione degli omonimi *seniores*. Infine gli *pseudocomitatenses* gallici annoveravano i *Ballistarii*, che durante la reggenza di Stilicone ancora erano un distaccamento autonomo dei *ripenses* renani, i *milites Ballistarii* dislocati a Bodobrica sotto il comando del *dux Moguntiacensis*<sup>173</sup>; poi essi furono promossi dal *patricius* Costanzo a *legio pseudocomitatensis* e messi a disposizione del *magister equitum per Gallias*<sup>174</sup>.

Nel 356 i *comitatenses* gallici avevano annoverato certamente una legione leggera di *Ballistarii*, poiché troviamo una *uexillatio equitum cataphractorum* e appunto i *Ballistarii* agli ordini diretti di Giuliano *Caesar* nella prima spedizione contro i Germani, quando egli aveva mosso le insegne da Augustodunum, per raggiungere il quartier generale dei *comitatenses* gallici a Remi<sup>175</sup>. Come abbiamo anticipato, soltanto in questo episodio una *legio comitatensis* di *Ballistarii* risulta avere preso parte sicura a fatti bellici. La frequenza dei *seniores* tra i *comitatenses* regionali della *Gallia* e nell'*exercitus praesentalis* dell'Occidente consiglia di identificare i *Ballistarii* di Giuliano con i *Ballistarii sen.*, benché la *Notitia dignitatum* li ponga tra i *comitatenses* regionali del *magister militum per Orientem*<sup>176</sup>.

È altamente implausibile che i *Ballistarii* gallici di Giuliano possano essere stati i *milites Ballistarii* di Bodobrica, allora appartenenti ai *ripenses* renani. La partecipazione del *dux Osrhoenae* Secundinus e della *I Armeniaca* alla spedizione di Giuliano contro i Persiani non possono essere citati in favore dei *milites Ballistarii*, poiché le circostanze furono estremamente diverse<sup>177</sup>. Nel 363 la campagna militare nella *Assyria* (Mesopotamia persiana) impose di mobilitare tutte le forze disponibili; i *ripenses* della *Mesopotamia* e quelli della *Osrhoena* comprendevano i legionari veterani del *bellum Persicum* e più esperti di tecniche ossidionali, ma i *ripenses* mesopotamici e una parte dei *comitatenses*, posta sotto il comando dei *comites* Procopio e Sebastiano, dovevano impedire

173 *Not. dign. Occ.* 41, 23: la fortezza sorvegliava un guado primario del medio Reno e controllava la strada romana lungo la riva sinistra del fiume da Confluentes a Treueri attraverso Bingium.

174 *Not. dign. Occ.* 7, 97.

175 *Amm.* XVI, 2, 1–8.

176 *Not. dign. Or.* 7, 43. I *seniores* occidentali: COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 176–178.

177 *Mal.* p. 332 Dindorf; *Amm.* XXIV, 1, 2.

eventuali contrattacchi dei Persiani contro il territorio romano. I *ripenses* della *Mesopotamia* e della *Osrhoena* temporaneamente aggregati ai *comitatenses* comunque formarono una piccola minoranza rispetto all'insieme delle truppe radunate e i *ripenses* della *Osrhoena* andarono a costituire una minoranza altrettanto piccola nell'armata campale di Giuliano<sup>178</sup>.

Per colpevole inerzia (*torpente praesentium militum manu*) le truppe dislocate ad Augustodunum avevano permesso agli Alamanni di occupare le sue mura, ma il tempestivo intervento dei *ueterani* residenti nella città aveva respinto l'incursione germanica. La narrazione ammiana consiglia di tenere il reggimento equestre di *cataphractarii* e i *Ballistarii sen.* ben distinti dalla sonnacchiosa e imbellè guarnigione di Augustodunum<sup>179</sup>; Lugdunum e Cabillonum erano dislocazioni molto più verosimili delle due unità<sup>180</sup>.

Il commento critico di Ammiano su *cataphractarii* e *Ballistarii sen.* merita di essere chiarito: *adhibitis catafractariis solis et Ballistariis, parum ad tuendum rectorem idoneis*. Il risultato sembra smentire lo storiografo; la cavalleria corazzata e gli artiglieri legionari, appena 500 cavalieri e 1000 fanti, più i 360 *scholares* di Costanzo II distaccati al servizio di Giuliano<sup>181</sup>, erano stati sufficienti a forzare il passaggio attraverso la stessa regione, che il *magister peditum praesentalis* Silvano aveva faticato a percorrere con 8000 *auxiliares*<sup>182</sup>. I *cataphractarii* lungo la strada da Autessiodurum a Tricasses avevano travolto in più occasioni le bande sparse degli Alamanni<sup>183</sup>.

178 COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 143–145.

179 Contra MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), pp. 196–197, che identifica i *Ballistarii* al seguito di Giuliano con gli omonimi *pseudocomitatenses* delle Gallie, congettura arbitrariamente la dislocazione dei *Ballistarii* ad Augustodunum sulla sola base della locale *fabrica lorica-ria, ballistaria et clibanaria* (*Not. dign. Occ.* 9, 33) e distingue erroneamente gli *pseudocomitatenses* gallici dagli omonimi *ripenses* del medio Reno.

180 Giuliano aveva trascorso l'inverno 355–356 a Vienna, capitale provinciale della *Viennensis* (*Not. Gall.* 11, 2–3 Seeck), e di là aveva raggiunto Augustodunum nell'estate 356: *Amm.* XVI, 1, 1 e 2, 1–2. Lugdunum e Cabillonum sorgevano appunto lungo la strada romana tra Vienna e Augustodunum: *Itin. Anton. Aug.* 358, 5–360, 2 Wesseling. Gli *equites Catafractarii sen.* erano dislocati a Lugdunum nella seconda metà del IV secolo: *CIL XIII*, 1848. Cabillonum (*castrum Cabillonense* in *Not. Gall.* 1, 6 Seeck) fu sede dei *Diuitenses sen.* e dei *Tungricani sen.* nel Gennaio 365: *Amm.* XXVII, 1, 2.

181 *Iul. epist. ad Athen.* 277 D; *Zos.* III, 3, 2.

182 *Amm.* XVI, 2, 4.

183 *Amm.* XVI, 2, 6.

La piccola colonna di Giuliano *Caesar* aveva potuto sfruttare il vantaggio determinante della mobilità rispetto a Silvano, che aveva guidato l'insieme o il grosso degli *auxilia* gallici, un *agmen* lungo e massiccio di soli *pedites*<sup>184</sup>; infatti i *cataphractarii* e gli *scholares* erano *equites*, ma gli artiglieri legionari dei *Ballistarii sen.* potevano viaggiare altrettanto spediti sulle loro *carroballistae* trainate da due muli o cavalli, mentre gli assistenti andavano ugualmente celeri sul carro dell'equipaggiamento bellico<sup>185</sup>. Ammiano narra che in quella circostanza Giuliano, quando temeva la superiorità numerica dei nemici, *barbaros in se cateruatim ruentis [...] confertis lateribus obseruabat*; la frase ammiana è bene illustrata da altri due autori. L'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis* consiglia di disporre le *machinae siue tormenta* a mo' di muro intorno all'*agmen* negli *angustiora loca*<sup>186</sup>; il manuale molto più tardo di Maurizio in due passi diversi raccomanda di collocare le ἄμαξαι con le βαλλίστραι lungo entrambi i fianchi del τοῦλδος<sup>187</sup>.

Il verbo *obseruo* evidenzia la figura di Giuliano a discapito dei suoi uomini, ma esprime adeguatamente la sorveglianza attiva dei *Ballistarii sen.* nei momenti di sosta forzata. Le *carroballistae*, schierate come un muro mobile su entrambi i fianchi del piccolo *agmen*, avevano tenuto sotto tiro le bande vaganti degli Alamanni, quando essi erano più numerosi dei Romani e si avvicinavano troppo all'esigua schiera di Giuliano (*in se cateruatim ruentis* è una perdonabile esagerazione); nelle occasioni favorevoli le cariche travolgenti dei *cataphractarii* avevano aperto la strada. La combinazione dei due reggimenti in realtà si era rivelata fortuitamente congrua all'obiettivo di percorrere rapidamente l'intero tragitto da Augustodunum a Remi e al compito di aprire la via con le armi attraverso il territorio infestato dagli Alamanni; infatti la colonna romana non aveva dovuto affrontare scontri frontali e pesanti con i guerrieri germanici.

Il commento critico di Ammiano risulta giustamente fondato; egli volle dipingere con tinte drammatiche ed enfatizzare al massimo grado i pericoli reali di Giuliano nel primo incontro con la guerra e i Germani transrenani, ma è certo che né i *cataphractarii* né i *Ballistarii sen.* avrebbero potuto proteggere la vita del giovane *Caesar*, qualora il piccolo *agmen* fosse caduto in un agguato o

184 COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 44–45 e 168–169.

185 Veg. *r. mil.* II, 25, 2 e III, 24, 14. Cfr. anche Anon. *De reb. bell.* 7, 2.

186 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 19, 8–9.

187 Mauric. *strateg.* XII B 6, rr. 8–10 e 18, rr. 9–11.

avesse incontrato una banda particolarmente numerosa e risoluta. In ambedue le circostanze i soli 360 *scholares* sarebbero stati adatti a sostenere un combattimento corpo a corpo con gli Alamanni.

Costantino stesso, il creatore dei *Ballistarii*, aveva riconosciuto tacitamente l'estrema vulnerabilità delle *carroballistae* nel combattimento ravvicinato, poiché egli aveva abbinato ogni *legio comitatensis* dei *Ballistarii* con una *legio comitatensis* di normali *pedites*: *Constantini sen.* e *Ballistarii sen.*, \**Constantini iun.* (distrutti prima della *Notitia dignitatum*) e *Ballistarii iun.*, *Constantini Daphnenses* e *Ballistarii Daphnenses*<sup>188</sup>. In origine ogni *legio comitatensis* di *Constantini* era stata, per così dire, lo scudo tattico dei suoi *Ballistarii*.

I *cataphractarii* ricompaiono tra i *numeri comitatenses* di Giuliano *Caesar* ad Argenteratum nel 357<sup>189</sup>; la loro prestazione fu molto deludente, ma la morte del comandante nella prima fase del combattimento giustifica pienamente il panico e la fuga<sup>190</sup>. L'assenza dei *Ballistarii sen.* brilla in quella battaglia e nella successiva spedizione oltre il Reno. Giuliano, dopo avere sbaragliato gli Alamanni ad Argenteratum, varcò il Reno superiore nei pressi di Mogontiacum; al termine del breve contrattacco (l'avanzata oltre il Reno si limitò a dieci miglia romane) egli occupò e fece riparare un *munimentum in Alamannorum solo conditum*, che dovette essere fortificato appunto con *tormenta muralia* e robusti preparativi nei dieci mesi di tregua concessi ai tre re degli Alamanni viventi in quella regione<sup>191</sup>. Se le truppe al seguito di Giuliano nelle terre alamanniche avessero incluso i *Ballistarii sen.*, il *munimentum* allora rioccupato avrebbe ricevuto subito non soltanto una guarnigione temporanea, ma anche una dotazione temporanea di *tormenta muralia*.

Germanico Cesare aveva utilizzato le *catapultae* e le *ballistae* con gli arcieri, per allontanare i nemici dalla riva opposta del fiume Adrana e gettare indisturbato un ponte fluviale; l'Eufrate aveva visto Corbulone impiegare le sole *catapultae* e *ballistae*, Avidio Cassio le nuove *ballistae* e gli arcieri<sup>192</sup>. Nel 323 Costantino aveva simulato la costruzione di un ponte sul fiume Hebrus, per distrarre le truppe

188 COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 167 n. 861, 178, 183, 185 n. 948.

189 Amm. XVI, 12, 7.

190 Amm. XVI, 12, 38 e 63 (si noti la contraddizione palese tra i due brani).

191 Amm. XVII, 1, 11–13.

192 V. nn. 26, 100 e 102.

di Licinio; poi egli aveva aperto la (prima) battaglia di Adrianopoli guidando la carica della sua cavalleria attraverso un guado, mentre 5000 *πεζοὶ τοξόται* coprivano il suo attacco<sup>193</sup>. La costruzione di *pontes nauales* su fiumi sotto la copertura dei *tormenta* è assente nelle narrazioni storiografiche delle guerre civili da Cesare a Cassio Dione. Il timore di uno sterile e dispendioso duello ad armi pari tra le *ballistae* dei due eserciti può avere instradato Costantino verso una soluzione alternativa, ma il dubbio rimane forte: forse già nel 323 l'imperatore e i suoi generali non sapevano più costruire un *pons naualis* sotto la protezione delle *ballistae* disposte sulla propria riva o imbarcate sulle navi fluviali.

Nel 354 i guerrieri degli Alamanni Brisigavi impedirono ostinatamente la costruzione di un *pons naualis* sull'alto Reno all'*exercitus praesentalis* di Costanzo II, ma la tempestiva stipula di un *foedus* con i re Gundomado e Vadomario liberò opportunamente l'imperatore dalla necessità di forzare il passaggio con le armi<sup>194</sup>. L'*exercitus praesentalis* di Costanzo II allora comprendeva certamente sei unità di arcieri (circa 3000 uomini), più precisamente due *uexillationes equitum comitatenses* e quattro *auxilia \*comitatensia*<sup>195</sup>.

Poi nel 359 Giuliano, quando le forze congiunte degli Alamanni viventi a meridione del basso Moenus gli sbarrarono ripetutamente l'attraversamento del Reno superiore presso Mogontiacum, attuò una manovra diversiva e lanciò una incursione notturna di *auxiliares*, per liberare il passaggio del fiume e costruire un *pons naualis*<sup>196</sup>. In questa circostanza Giuliano e i suoi generali omisero di impiegare non soltanto i *Ballistarii sen.*, ma anche i *sagittarii*, benché i *comitatenses* gallici allora annoverassero perlomeno tre unità di *sagittarii*, più precisamente una *uexillatio equitum* e due *auxilia* (circa 1500 uomini); gli *equites sagittarii* avevano partecipato alla battaglia di Argentoratum<sup>197</sup>. Nella seconda metà del IV secolo i *sagittarii* romani furono spesso protagonisti, comprimari o comparse delle vicende belliche<sup>198</sup>. Possiamo facilmente congetturare perché

193 Zos. II, 22, 3–6.

194 Amm. XIV, 10, 1 e 6–10.

195 *Not. dign. Or.* 5, 30 e 54–55; 6, 31 e 54–55. Le *uexillationes equitum comitatenses* di arcieri nell'*exercitus praesentalis* forse erano tre, se i *Comites sagittarii sen.* (CIL V, 8758) esistevano ancora nel 354.

196 Amm. XVIII, 2, 7–14.

197 Amm. XVI, 12, 7. *Not. dign. Occ.* 5, 170 e 174.

198 Amm. XVIII, 9, 4; XIX, 5, 1; XX, 7, 1; XXI, 11, 2; XXIX, 5, 20. 5, 22. 5, 24. 5, 31. 6,

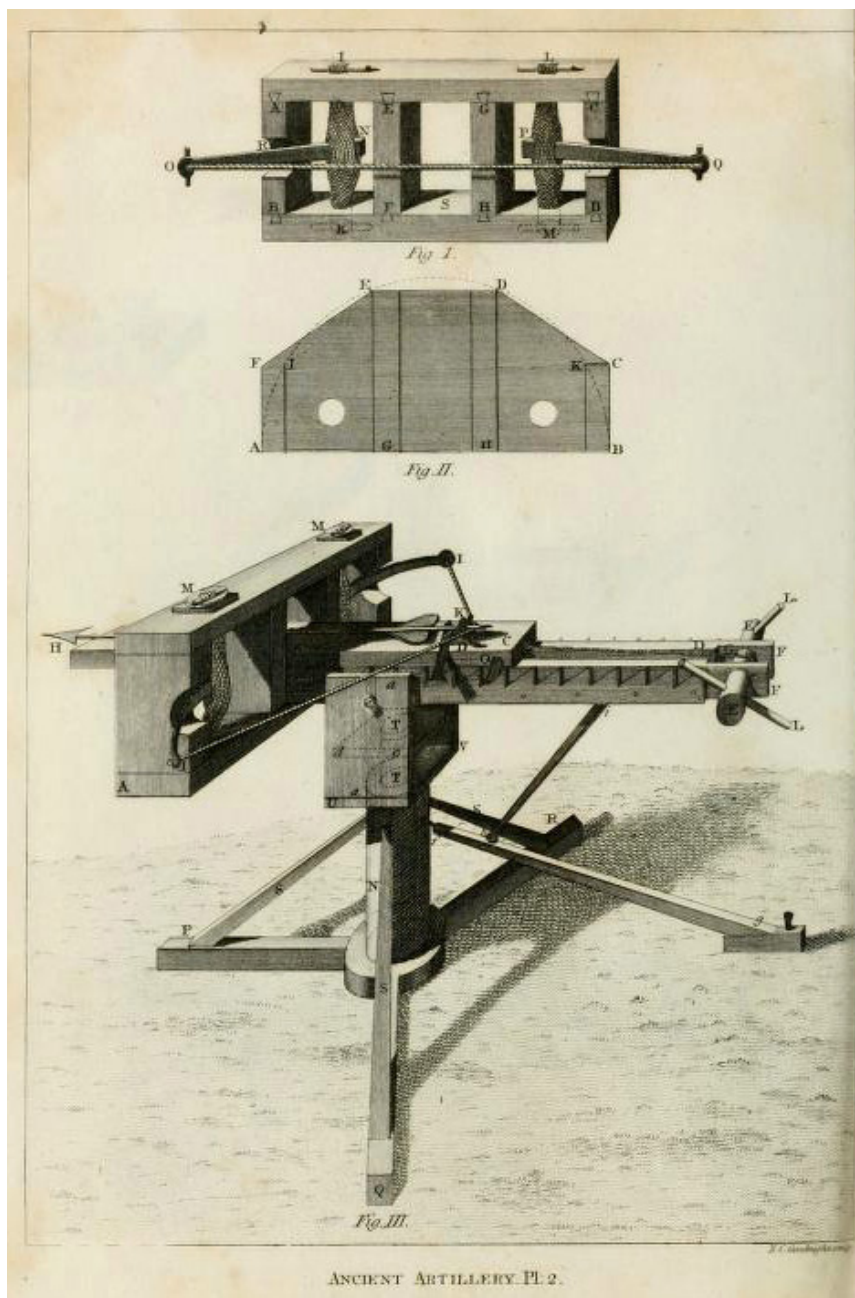


fig. 10, 11 e 12 Francis Grose's *Military Antiquities* respecting a history of the English army, from the conquest to the present time, London, Egerton, 801, Vol. 1. Chapter XII. Ancient Artillery Pl. 2, 3, 4, between pp. 366-367.

Costanzo II e Giuliano *Caesar* abbiano rinunciato a utilizzare le *ballistae* e soprattutto i *sagittarii* contro gli Alamanni schierati sulla riva destra del Reno.

L'anonimo autore dell'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis* contempla la costruzione di un ponte fluviale sotto la copertura di *manuballistae* disposte su ambedue le rive, ma tralascia di considerare la presenza armata e la resistenza attiva degli *hostes* sulla riva opposta. Dopo più di due secoli Maurizio prescrive ordinariamente l'uso delle βαλλίστραι imbarcate sui δρόμωνες fluviali, per proteggere con il tiro di copertura la costruzione della parte finale di un *pons naualis*<sup>199</sup>. Le βαλλίστραι, dotate di una portata perlomeno uguale a due tiri di arco, dovevano stare a un tiro di freccia dalla riva nemica, affinché i nemici fossero costretti a rispettare una pari distanza dalla propria sponda e non potessero interferire con i lavori del ponte neppure da lontano. Soltanto dopo la costruzione del ponte navale le βαλλίστραι collocate sulla riva nemica del fiume permettevano di edificare ἀνεμποδίστως una testa di ponte fortificata<sup>200</sup>. La differenza rispetto all'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis* è abissale.

Se l'arte bellica di forzare il passaggio di un fiume per la costruzione di un *pons naualis* sopravvisse fino all'ultimo ventennio del VI secolo, i *comitatenses* del IV secolo ancora possedevano questa capacità e le gravi difficoltà di due armate diverse nel transito armato del Reno risultano inspiegabili, dal momento che tra l'estate 354 e l'autunno 359 l'*exercitus praesentalis* di Costanzo II e l'*exercitus Gallicanus* furono le due armate più attive tra i quattro *exercitus* principali dei *comitatenses* (gli altri due erano stanziati nell'*Illyricum* e nell'*Oriens*). In tale contesto l'anonimo autore dell'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis*, piuttosto che manifestare le lacune tecniche di un dilettante in materia di arte tattica, sembra ritrarre la strana e deprimente consuetudine del suo tempo.

Poiché i *comitatenses* del IV secolo avevano perso tale competenza, il precetto di Maurizio può provenire soltanto da un autore tecnico dell'Alto Impero. Maurizio lesse molto bene il resoconto letterario di Arriano sulla sua *acies contra Alanos*

11; XXX, 1, 11; XXXI, 12, 2 e 16. Cfr. anche Amm. XVI, 12, 46; XX, 7, 10; XXVI, 8, 8; XXVII, 1, 3; XXXI, 6, 3, 7, 14, 10, 8. Quattro menzioni del libro XXIX riguardano esclusivamente gli *equites IV Sagittarii*, allora puniti con metodi draconiani dal *magister equitum praesentalis* Teodosio il Vecchio e dislocati nella *dioecesis Africae* ancora ai tempi del *patricius* Costanzo: *Not. dign. Occ.* 6, 72 = 7, 191.

199 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 16, 5. Per le istruzioni di Maurizio v. n. 120.

200 Mauric. *Strateg.* XII B 21, rr. 45–51.

e lo adattò in maniera personale allo schieramento contemporaneo della fanteria tardoromana<sup>201</sup>. Nei due secoli tra il disastro di Adrianopoli e il manuale militare di Maurizio ci furono saltuariamente offensive o contrattacchi dell'esercito tardoromano oltre il Danubio e il Tigri (l'ultima spedizione di un esercito romano oltre il Reno ebbe luogo nell'inverno 392–393), ma nessuna fonte riferisce mai il passaggio armato dell'uno o dell'altro fiume. Perciò la subitanea riscoperta della tattica obliata può affondare le sue radici effettivamente in una fonte tecnica dell'Alto Impero.

Dobbiamo valutare bene sei dettagli storici. Nel 235 la spedizione transrenana di Massimino giunse fino all'Elba inferiore; soltanto nel 287 Massimiano Erculio guidò una grande campagna oltre il Reno mettendo a ferro e fuoco l'*Alamannia* da Mogontiacum a Guntia. Massimino sembra essere stato anche l'ultimo imperatore a colpire duramente i Sarmati oltre il medio Danubio nel 236, prima che nel 294 Diocleziano occupasse e costruisse due teste di ponte romane in *Sarmatia*. Le due sole spedizioni oltre il Danubio in questo arco di tempo ebbero luogo nel 253 e nel 272; entrambe le campagne furono rivolte contro i Goti a settentrione del basso Danubio<sup>202</sup>. Poco più di mezzo secolo e quasi sessanta anni, intervallati da due isolate spedizioni in una sola zona del *barbaricum*, furono sufficienti a dimenticare integralmente la teoria e la prassi del transito armato con un ponte fluviale.

Un rilievo della Colonna Traiana attesta che i barbari Daci avevano saputo adoperare proprio le nuove *ballistae* ovvero i vecchi *scorpiones* e le tradizionali *catapultae* contro le armate di Traiano nel 102<sup>203</sup>; questo fatto trova riscontro puntuale in due brani di Cassio Dione sulla prima guerra dacica<sup>204</sup>. Nel 552 i germanici Ostrogoti, poco prima della battaglia finale al *mons Lactarius*, usarono piuttosto bene le βαλλίστραι contro i soldati di Narsete<sup>205</sup>. Perciò la vecchia solfa della barbarizzazione e della germanizzazione<sup>206</sup>, un dogma ormai ridimensionato

201 COLOMBO, «Lanciarrii» (n. 24), pp. 171–172 e 181–182.

202 Zos. I, 28, 1–2 e Zon. XII, 21; Hist. Aug. *Aurel.* 22, 2.

203 SETTIS, LA REGINA, AGOSTI, FARINELLA (n. 53), pp. 364–365 tavv. 106–107 scena LXVI.

204 V. n. 56.

205 Procop. *Goth.* IV, 35, 9.

206 E. GABBA, «Tecnologia militare antica», in *Tecnologia, economia e società nel mondo romano. Atti del Convegno di Como 27/28/29 settembre 1979*, Como 1980, Banca Popolare Commercio e Industria, pp. 230–231.

in larga misura<sup>207</sup>, non vale a giustificare la repentina sparizione delle *carroballistae* dai campi di battaglia e l'evanescenza dei *Ballistarii* nelle fonti storiografiche. I due fenomeni in verità costituiscono due questioni molto diverse.

Il crepuscolo campale delle *carroballistae* molto probabilmente cade nel mezzo secolo dal combattimento presso lo Harzhorn all'avvento di Diocleziano. La situazione strategica dell'impero romano subì un deterioramento molto grave verso la metà del III secolo. Come abbiamo già osservato, il governo imperiale perse quasi ovunque la capacità di condurre offensive, contrattacchi o spedizioni punitive oltre i *limites* tra la morte di Massimino e l'ascesa di Diocleziano. Negli anni Sessanta del III secolo il brillante Odenato ricacciò definitivamente i Persiani oltre l'Eufrate e giunse due volte fino a Ctesifonte, ma le sue vittorie furono dovute all'originale ed efficace combinazione tra la fanteria pesante delle legioni orientali e le milizie specializzate di Palmyra, *equites sagittarii* ed *equites clibanarii*. Tranne le due spedizioni transdanubiane contro i Goti, tutti gli altri contrattacchi romani ebbero luogo su suolo romano e non varcarono la riva romana del Reno o del Danubio. Entrambi gli usi delle *ballistae* in campo aperto (le *acies* e i *pontes nauales*) scompaiono bruscamente proprio durante la lunga e travagliata transizione dall'Alto Impero al Tardo Impero.

La presenza delle *carroballistae* sui campi di battaglia richiedeva che i Romani potessero scegliere sempre e ovunque i terreni più adatti all'artiglieria mobile. L'incompatibilità tra le *acies* romane e le *carroballistae* non scaturì improvvisa dalla natura o dalla composizione del *comitatus* riformato sotto Gallieno, ma rispecchiò la parziale perdita della superiorità strategica da parte dell'esercito romano in poco più di un ventennio dal 238 al 260. Già sotto il regno congiunto di Valeriano e di Gallieno la gravità della crisi militare era drammatica.

Nonostante il dogma ancora predominante sulla grande riforma della cavalleria romana e del *comitatus* a opera di Gallieno<sup>208</sup>, la reale proporzione tra

207 Ad esempio, Hugh ELTON, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350-425*, Oxford 1996, Clarendon Press, pp. 134–154 e Martijn J. NICASIE, *Twilight of Empire. The Roman Army from the Reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople* (Dutch monographs on ancient history and archaeology 19), Amsterdam 1998, Gieben, pp. 97–116. Cfr. ora COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 156–159 e ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 13–86, 98–101, 133–136, 138–141, 148–150, 173–175, 181–183, 188–192, 204–209.

208 Emil RITTERLING, «Zum römischen Heerwesen des ausgehenden dritten Jahrhunderts», in *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfelds sechzigstem Geburtstage*, Berlin 1903, Weidmann, pp. 345–349; Robert E. GROSSE, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn*

cavalleria scelta (*equites singulares, equites praetoriani, equites Mauri, equites Dalmatae*) e fanteria scelta (*cohortes praetoriae* e *uexillationes* legionarie) nel *comitatus* riformato di Gallieno coincide sostanzialmente con l'analoga relazione tra cavalleria (*equites praetoriani, equites singulares, legionarii equites, alares equites, cohortales equites, Mauri equites, Pannonii ueredarii*) e fanteria (*cohortes praetoriae, legiones, uexillarii legionum, cohortes equitatae, cohortes peditatae, symmacharii*) nell'armata campale dello stesso Traiano durante la prima o la seconda guerra con i Daci<sup>209</sup>. La fanteria legionaria del *comitatus* ha integralmente sostituito le *cohortes* e i *symmacharii* inglobando le percentuali di entrambe le categorie; gli *equites* del *comitatus* hanno assorbito la piccola percentuale dei *classici* e degli *exploratores* (500 *classici Misenates*, 800 *classici Rauennates*, 200 *exploratores*).

Ammettiamo che il *comitatus* riformato di Gallieno annoverasse tutti gli *equites singulares* (60 *turmae*) e gli *equites praetoriani* (60 *turmae*), tutte le *cohortes praetoriae* (10 *cohortes milliariae*, ognuna 984 uomini), circa 1000 o 2000 *equites Mauri* e circa 5000 *equites Dalmatae*, ma soltanto le diciassette *uexillationes* legionarie del *comitatus* originario fino al 260: l'aumento percentuale della cavalleria nel *comitatus* andrebbe dal 2,6% al 4,6% rispetto all'armata campale di Traiano, dove i *classici* e gli *exploratores* rappresentavano il 3,5% (la media del minimo e del massimo incremento è 3,6%). Gli *equites* del

---

*der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Berlin 1920, Weidmann, pp. 15–18; András ALFOLDI, «Zur Kenntnis der Zeit der römischen Soldatenkaiser I. Der Usurpator Aureolus und die Kavalleriereform des Gallienus», *ZfN* 37 (1927), pp. 197–212 e ID., «The Crisis of the Empire (A.D. 249–270)», in Stanley A. COOK, Frank E. ADCOCK, Martin P. CHARLESWORTH, Norman H. BAYNES (Eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. XII. The Imperial Crisis and Recovery A.D. 193–324*, Cambridge 1939, At the University Press, pp. 216–217; HOFFMANN (n. 142), pp. 246–248; Lukas DE BLOIS, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society 7), Leiden 1976, Brill, pp. 26–30; Bruno BLECKMANN, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (Quellen und Forschungen zur antiken Welt 11), München 1992, Tuduv, pp. 227–236; Andreas GOLTZ & Udo HARTMANN, «Valerianus und Gallienus», in Klaus-Peter JOHNE (Hrsg.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser. Krise und Transformation des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, I, Berlin 2008, Akademie-Verlag, pp. 245 con n. 123 e 277–278 con n. 249; Michael P. SPEIDEL, «Das Heer», *ibid.*, pp. 677–679.

<sup>209</sup> Le legioni e gli *equites* nel *comitatus*: COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 132–133 e ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 102–117, 127–130 e 157–158. L'armata campale di Traiano: ID., «Forza» (n. 74), pp. 106–112 e 117.

*comitatus* riformato e la cavalleria dell'*exercitus* traiano e raggiungono in realtà una forza praticamente uguale sul piano dei numeri assoluti.

Gli *equites* dei *comitatus* tetrarchici esibiscono una composizione maggiormente variegata. Diocleziano ridimensionò gli *equites singulares* e gli *equites praetoriani* (rinominati rispettivamente *Comites* ed *equites Promoti*), ma affiancò gli *equites Mauri* e gli *equites Dalmatae* con gli *equites Sagittarii* e gli *equites Cataphractarii* o *Clibanarii*; anche le *scholae Scutariorum* dei due *Caesares*, così come gli *equites Promoti* e gli *equites Scutarii* degli eserciti provinciali, furono sue innovazioni. Gli *equites*, le *cohortes praetoriae* e le *uexillationes* delle legioni già esistenti furono equamente divisi tra i quattro *comitatus*; altri reggimenti di *equites*, quattro unità di *Lancierii* (un'altra creazione di Diocleziano) e le *uexillationes* delle nuove legioni (ad esempio, *I Iouia* e *II Herculia*) pareggiarono la ripartizione. Quindi la proporzione tra *equites* e *legiones* di un *comitatus* rimase sostanzialmente uguale al termine di paragone traiano e anche nell'età della prima Tetrarchia, poco prima che Costantino sferrasse il suo "assalto al cielo".

Il problema risiedeva nelle tattiche campali, che prima poterono essere quasi sempre imposte, poi dovettero essere molto spesso adattate al nemico; la scelta del terreno più vantaggioso, un fattore fondamentale per le *carroballistae*, non faceva più parte delle prerogative romane. La decisiva battaglia di Naissus (ultimo alloro di Gallieno sui barbari nel 268 o massimo trionfo di Claudio II nel 269) è un *terminus ante quem* molto verosimile; la tattica romana secondo Zosimo (vera o finta fuga, ricostituzione nascosta dell'*acies* e attacco a sorpresa da una direzione inaspettata) esclude assolutamente la presenza delle *carroballistae* dietro le spalle dell'*acies* in qualsiasi momento della battaglia<sup>210</sup>. Se la descrizione di Zosimo, come sembra certo, riassume molto concisamente i dettagli di Dexippo, la tattica romana di Naissus manifesta il pieno e felice adattamento del *comitatus* originario alle conseguenze tattiche della crisi strategica.

Zosimo è fonte unica anche per la battaglia altrettanto decisiva di Emesa nel 272; la fanteria legionaria di Aureliano (le *cohortes praetoriae* e la *II Parthica* con le *uexillationes* di dieci legioni occidentali e di nove orientali), capovolgendo rapidamente il fronte dello schieramento romano, attaccò e distrusse i *clibanarii* palmyreni, che avevano travolto e disperso gli *equites Mauri* e gli *equites*

---

<sup>210</sup> Zos. I, 43, 2.

*Dalmatae*. Lo svolgimento della battaglia non ammette la presenza delle *carroballistae* né alle spalle degli *equites* né dietro l'*acies* dei pretoriani e delle legioni. In quella occasione le *uexillationes* della *VI Ferrata* e della *X Fretensis* affrontarono la cavalleria corazzata con mazze e clave, forse già allora rinforzate con *graues ferratique nodi*<sup>211</sup>.

La fanteria legionaria del *comitatus* conservava le tattiche tradizionali e i *pila*. In circostanze ordinarie i legionari scelti delle singole legioni, i *lanciarrii*, stabilmente armati di una *hasta/lancea* da urto, costituivano la sola e limitata eccezione. Quando il nemico schierava i lancieri a cavallo (gli Alani) o i *cataphracti equites* (Parthi, Sarmati, Persiani), metà dei legionari, cioè i *lanciarrii* e una parte dei legionari normalmente equipaggiati con il *pilum*, formava le file anteriori della *pedestris acies* e adoperava la *hasta/lancea*; l'altra metà, cioè la maggioranza dei comuni legionari, componeva le file posteriori e proseguiva a impiegare il *pilum*<sup>212</sup>. Ma duemila fanti delle *uexillationes* orientali, oltre alle armi consuete delle legioni, brandirono mazze e clave, che essi avevano imparato a usare appositamente contro i *clibanarii*.

Qui incontriamo un esempio singolare e molto significativo di adattamento tecnologico e tattico. Le *carroballistae*, il tipo più sofisticato e potente di artiglieria mobile a torsione, risultarono totalmente inadatte alle conseguenze tattiche della crisi strategica; a Emesa le mazze e le clave, il genere più primitivo di arma offensiva per il combattimento ravvicinato, ricoprirono un ruolo determinante contro la panoplia dei *clibanarii* palmyreni, il modello più avanzato, complesso ed efficace di armamento difensivo.

Le campagne germaniche di Costantino concorsero a plasmare il nucleo originario dei *comitatenses*, ma esso fu concepito soprattutto in funzione delle guerre civili, di cui le operazioni ossidionali furono una parte fondamentale tanto quanto le battaglie campali. Già il *comitatus* riformato di Gallieno e dei "Soldatenkaiser", così come i *comitatus* tetrarchici, avevano assediato quasi sempre città romane nel corso di usurpazioni, secessioni, rivolte provinciali e insurrezioni locali. La nascita dei *Ballistarii* a opera di Costantino coincise appunto con la necessità strategica di assediare e di espugnare non *oppida*

211 Zos. I, 52,4 e 53, 2. I *graues ferratique nodi* compaiono al più tardi nel 312 ad Augusta Taurinorum: Nazario, *Paneg.* 4, 24, 3 Mynors.

212 COLOMBO, «Lanciarrii» (n. 24), pp. 165–180.

barbarici o roccaforti persiane, ma le città romane del *tyrannus* Massenzio e del legittimo collega Licinio *Augustus*<sup>213</sup>.

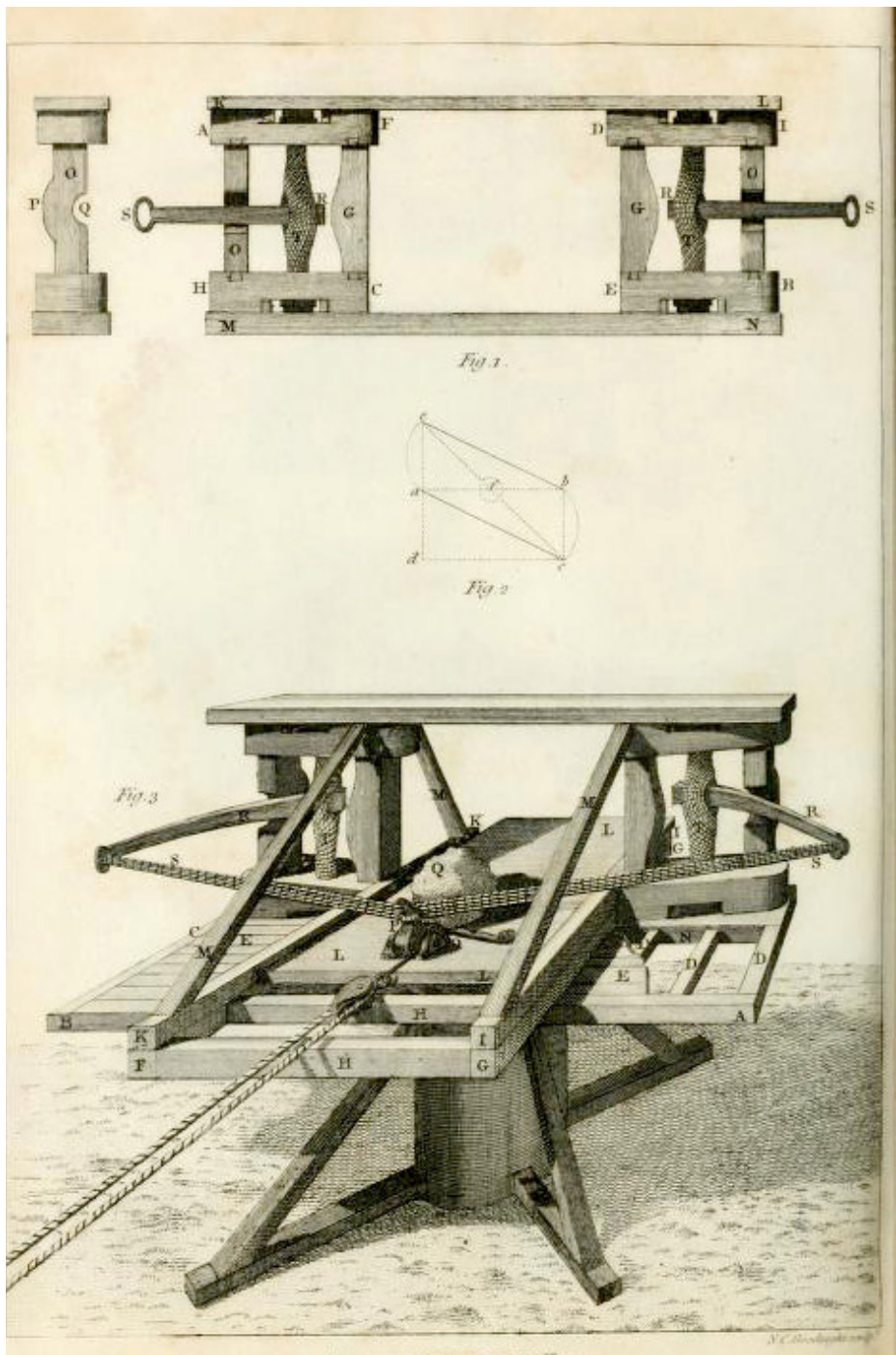
Costantino perseguì parallelamente l'altro obiettivo strategico di semplificare e di uniformare al massimo grado le mansioni tattiche della fanteria. Quasi tutte le *legiones* assolvevano i doveri della *gravis armatura*; gli *auxilia* appartenenti alla fanteria leggera d'assalto affiancavano o addirittura sostituivano i legionari in tutti i generi di operazioni belliche, gli *auxilia* specializzati nel combattimento a distanza garantivano il tiro di appoggio e di copertura alle *legiones* e agli altri *auxilia* in campo aperto o durante gli assedi. Tra le fonti del Tardo Impero gli scrittori latini conoscono soltanto *sagittarii* e *funditores*, la *Notitia dignitatum* registra i *sagittarii* e uno *pseudocomitatensis numerus* di *Funditores*, gli autori greci, compreso il manuale militare di Maurizio, continuano ad associare i τοξόται, gli σφενδονῆται e gli ἀκοντισταί; ma i *funditores* e gli ἀκοντισταί potrebbero portare il nome colloquiale e fallace di *Excultatores* oppure appellativi analoghi<sup>214</sup>. Dobbiamo comunque rilevare tanto il peso secondario dello σφενδόβολον nell'equipaggiamento bellico degli σκουτάτοι e tra le armi da lancio degli ψιλοί quanto il ruolo secondario degli σφενδοβολισταί ovvero σφενδονισταί tra gli ψιλοί<sup>215</sup>.

I soli *Ballistarii* facevano eccezione tra le *legiones* e condividevano parzialmente il ruolo tattico con la *levis armatura*; infatti essi erano sia i soli esperti delle armi ossidionali e degli assedi sia i soli *milites* delle legioni specializzati nel combattimento a distanza. La creazione poco più tarda dei *Ballistarii Daphnenses* riconobbe apertamente la peculiare specializzazione dei *Ballistarii* anche nell'uso difensivo delle armi ossidionali. È legittimo congetturare che già i *Constantini sen.* e *\*iun.* fossero stati abbinati con i *Ballistarii sen.* e *iun.*, per svolgere il compito di scudo tattico appunto nel corso di un assedio o nella difesa di una città piuttosto che in campo aperto. Costantino, istituendo i *Ballistarii* come unità

213 Nazario, *Paneg.* IV, 21, 1, 25, 3, 27, 1, 27, 3 Mynors. *Anon. Vales. p. pr.* 25; Zos. II, 23, 1 e 25, 1.

214 COLOMBO, «Lanciarrii» (n. 24), pp. 189–190 e ID., *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 167–170. Ma cfr. William B. GRIFFITHS, «The Sling and its Place in the Roman Imperial Army» in Carol VAN DRIEL-MURRAY (Ed.), *Roman Military Equipment: the Sources of Evidence. Proceedings of the Fifth Roman Military Equipment Conference* (BAR Int. Ser. 476), Oxford 1989, British Archaeological Reports, pp. 267–274.

215 Mauric. *strateg.* XII B 3, r. 4; 4, r. 4; 5, r. 8; 8, r. 9; 12, rr. 14–15; 18, rr. 11–12; 20, rr. 84–87.



autonome e distinte nell'ambito delle *legiones comitatenses*, non provocò la scomparsa dell'artiglieria mobile dai campi di battaglia, ma diede semplicemente forma organizzativa e riconoscimento ufficiale a una specializzazione dei compiti tattici ormai vigente nei fatti dagli anni Cinquanta o Sessanta del III secolo.

L'apparente evanescenza dei *Ballistarii* è il curioso frutto di un equivoco interpretativo. Le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* sotto Costanzo II e Giuliano svolsero un ruolo determinante così nella difesa delle città romane contro i Persiani<sup>216</sup>, come anche negli assedi romani delle città persiane<sup>217</sup>. I *comitatenses* di Costanzo II e di Giuliano furono certamente i protagonisti delle operazioni ossidionali contro i Persiani. Possiamo citare un esempio paradigmatico. Nel 363 i *cuniculi* romani sotto le mura di Maiozamalcha furono scavati da *Lanciarrii sen.* e *Mattiarrii sen.* (allora due *legiones comitatenses*, poi a partire dal 365 *legiones palatinae*); un soldato dei *Victores sen.* o *iun.* (allora un *auxilium \*comitatense*, poi a partire dal 365 *auxilium palatinum*) fu il primo a irrompere clandestinamente nella città persiana<sup>218</sup>.

Ma nessun passo di Ammiano o di un altro autore collega esplicitamente i *tormenta* degli assedi romani con i *Ballistarii*. Il silenzio delle fonti rispecchia le convenzioni letterarie e il gusto stilistico del Tardo Impero. Anche le classificazioni gerarchiche delle truppe (*scholares*, *comitatenses*, *ripenses*), le categorie generali dei *numeri* (*uexillationes equitum*, *legiones*, *auxilia*), i nomi ufficiali delle singole unità e gli appellativi secondari dei reggimenti omonimi (in primo luogo *seniores* e *iuniores*) erano termini tecnici, che la lingua letteraria o evitava sistematicamente in nome del purismo linguistico o impiegava con oculata parsimonia.

Ammiano, lo storiografo di lingua latina più aperto ai termini tecnici e colloquiali soprattutto in campo militare, concede una sola menzione al nome ufficiale *Ballistarii*, come egli fa anche con altre *legiones comitatenses* (*Primani*, *Tzanni*, *Martenses sen./iun.*, *Tungricani iun.*, *Diuitenses sen.* e *Tungricani sen.*)<sup>219</sup>; i *Lanciarrii iun.* e i *Mattiarrii iun.*, così come gli *Herculiani sen./iun.* e i

216 V. n. 151.

217 Amm. XX, 11, 12 e 20–22; XXIV, 2, 13. 4, 12. 4, 16. 4, 28.

218 Amm. XXIV, 4, 21–23; Zos. III, 22, 2–4.

219 Amm. XVI, 12, 49; XXV, 1, 19; XXVI, 6, 7 e 12; XXVII, 1, 2. Altre legioni ricevono la 'traduzione' letteraria dei nomi ufficiali: ad esempio, Amm. XIV, 11, 15; XXIX, 5, 18 e 6, 13.

*Diuitenses iun.*, collezionano appena due occorrenze a testa nelle *Res gestae*<sup>220</sup>. Soltanto la legione socia degli *Herculiani sen./iun.*, gli *Iouiani sen./iun.*, ottiene ben cinque menzioni e rappresenta una isolata eccezione tra le *legiones comitatenses*<sup>221</sup>. L'appellativo *seniores* è sempre assente nelle *Res gestae*, mentre *iuniores* fa una sola apparizione<sup>222</sup>. I *ballistarii* deputati ad azionare le *ballistae*, l'insieme dei *ballistarii* e i *ballistarii* incaricati di servire gli *scorpiones/onagri* sono rinominati elegantemente *artifices* in tre passi di Ammiano<sup>223</sup>.

Le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* dei *comitatenses* in realtà implicano necessariamente la partecipazione costante e attiva dei *Ballistarii* agli assedi delle città persiane: i *Ballistarii iun.* con Costanzo II, *Ballistarii sen.* e *iun.* ovvero i soli *Ballistarii sen.* con Giuliano. I *sagittarii* erano un elemento tradizionale del lessico storiografico, i *cataphractarii* e i più rari *clibanarii* rimanevano un ingrediente esotico; il funzionamento, l'azione e gli effetti delle *ballistae* e degli *onagri* risultavano molto più pittoreschi dei *ballistarii* stessi.

Le altre *legiones comitatenses*, benché siano state sistematicamente private dei propri *ballistarii*, sembrano avere conservato la familiarità pratica con le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* almeno fino agli anni Sessanta del IV secolo. Nel 359 il *magister equitum per Orientem*, il decrepito e incompetente Sabinianus, ebbe il buon senso di inviare 300 o 400 cavalieri e 4000 fanti dei *comitatenses* in soccorso di Amida, cioè la *pars maior* di una *uexillatio equitum* (*Comites sagittarii sen.* o *iun.* ovvero *Comites sagittarii Armenii*), due *legiones* (*Tricesimani* e *Decimani Fortenses*) e quattro *auxilia* (*Superuentores* e *Praeuentores*, *Magnentiaci* e *Decentiaci*)<sup>224</sup>. Ammiano rivolge dure critiche a *Magnentiaci* e *Decentiaci*, due *auxilia* recentemente trasferiti dai *comitatenses* gallici ai *comitatenses* dislocati nella *dioecesis Orientis*; egli li dipinge valorosi e abili nelle battaglie campali, ma totalmente inadatti alle arti ossidionali e incapaci di contribuire alla difesa della città-fortezza *neque in machinis neque in operum constructione*<sup>225</sup>.

220 *Lanciararii* e *Mattiararii*: Amm. XXI, 13, 16 e XXXI, 13, 8. *Herculiani*: Amm. XXII, 3, 2 e XXV, 6, 2. *Diuitenses iun.*: Amm. XXVI, 6, 12 e 7, 13.

221 Amm. XXII, 3, 2; XXV, 5, 8 e 6, 2; XXVII, 10, 10; XXIX, 3, 7. Almeno due occorrenze riguardano sicuramente gli *Iouiani sen.*: Amm. XXVII, 10, 10 e XXIX, 3, 7.

222 Amm. XXVI, 6, 12.

223 Amm. XXIII, 4, 2; XXIV, 4, 14 e 28.

224 Amm. XVIII, 9, 3–4.

225 Amm. XIX, 5, 2. MARSDEN, *Development* (n. 1), 195–196 fraintende questo passo, poiché

Questo giudizio ha due implicazioni: gli altri due *auxilia* presenti, *Superuentores* e *Praeuentores*, avevano concorso alla difesa della città-fortezza almeno *in operum constructione*, ma *Tricesimani* e *Decimani Fortenses*, le due *legiones* in senso proprio, avevano dato il proprio contributo alle attività difensive tanto *in machinis* quanto *in operum constructione*. Il complemento di stato in luogo figurato *in machinis* abbraccia certamente anche le *ballistae*, poiché Ammiano, narrando l'assedio di Amida, usa la perifrasi ridondante *tormentorum machinae* e il termine generico *machinae* come sicuri sinonimi del vocabolo specifico *ballistae*<sup>226</sup>. C'era sovrabbondanza di pezzi ad Amida, poiché proprio là Costanzo II *Caesar* aveva dislocato un *conditorium muralium tormentorum*, cioè un arsenale statale di *ballistae* e di *onagri*<sup>227</sup>.

Un altro episodio offre un collegamento molto più diretto tra le *legiones comitatenses* e i *tormenta*: le due *legiones Constantiacae*, che nel 361 occuparono e difesero ostinatamente Aquileia contro le truppe di Giuliano<sup>228</sup>, adoperarono con grande efficienza le *ballistae* ai danni degli assediati, scagliando *malleoli* e dardi ordinari<sup>229</sup>. Le due testimonianze sono tenui indizi, ma concordano significativamente sulla perdurante familiarità delle altre *legiones comitatenses* con l'uso delle *ballistae* dalle postazioni di tiro murali.

La facoltà pratica di utilizzare le *ballistae* richiedeva soltanto nozioni elementari; l'altra faccia della medaglia era l'assoluta e ovvia incapacità di curare la manutenzione ordinaria e le riparazioni più semplici dei pezzi per la totale carenza di conoscenze tecnologiche. Se una *ballista* avesse funzionato male, si fosse inceppata o avesse manifestato un'altra avaria minore, i *Ballistarii* dei

---

egli confonde l'accezione tecnica e ordinaria del vocabolo *legio* con la consuetudine ammiana, dove *legio* può significare legione in senso proprio ovvero *pedites* in senso lato, oppure assumere un valore generico, cioè *manus* o *numerus*. A questo proposito cfr. ora Maurizio COLOMBO, «Alcune questioni ammiane», *RomBarb* 16 (1999), pp. 53–54 e ID., *Prolegomena Ammiana con specimen di commento filologico, linguistico e storico al libro XXVII delle Res Gestae*, PhD Thesis, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa 2005, pp. 47–48.

226 Amm. XIX, 2, 8. 5, 6. 6, 10. Suet. *Cal.* 46 e *Nero* 38, 1 adopera nel primo passo *machinae* per le *catapultae* e gli *scorpiones*, nel secondo la locuzione *bellicae machinae* per l'insieme dei *tormenta*.

227 Amm. XVIII, 9, 1.

228 Amm. XXI, 11, 2–12, 20. La natura di *legiones comitatenses* emerge implicita in Amm. XXI, 9, 5 e 11, 2.

229 Amm. XXI, 12, 7 e 10. Per i *malleoli* v. n. 121.

*comitatenses* e i *ballistarii* dei *ripenses* avrebbero saputo riparare personalmente il guasto nella postazione stessa di tiro. Nelle medesime circostanze i comuni *pedites* delle *legiones comitatenses*, dopo avere interrotto il tiro e chiesto l'intervento urgente di un *ballistarius* dell'una o dell'altra classe, sarebbero dovuti tornare alle armi inastate da getto o avrebbero dovuto reperire un'altra *ballista*<sup>230</sup>.

Ora possiamo spiegare in modo soddisfacente l'anomalia dei *Ballistarii* presenti tra i *comitatenses* gallici nel 356, ma assenti dai *comitatenses* occidentali della *Notitia dignitatum*. La *legio comitatensis* dei *Ballistarii sen.* aveva seguito Giuliano dalle Gallie appositamente per il *bellum Persicum* e nella primavera 364, quando *militares partiti sunt numeri* tra Valentiniano I e Valente nei dintorni di Naissus<sup>231</sup>, era reduce dalla tragica spedizione nella Mesopotamia meridionale. Lo stesso vale per i *Constantini sen.*; essi seguirono sicuramente la fortuna e le peregrinazioni dei *Ballistarii sen.*, accompagnando la legione socia anche nel *bellum Persicum* di Giuliano. Valentiniano I allora lasciò volontariamente i *Constantini sen.* e i *Ballistarii sen.* a suo fratello Valente. La cessione spontanea dei *Ballistarii sen.* da parte di Valentiniano riflette l'incertezza dello scenario strategico in Oriente dopo la pace ignominiosa di Gioviano con la Persia.

La temporanea dislocazione di entrambe le *legiones comitatenses* nella cruciale *dioecesis Orientis* e la successiva permanenza dei soli *Ballistarii sen.* nella medesima sede suffragano fortemente la connessione del trasferimento con il pericolo latente del *bellum Persicum*. In questo caso i *Constantini sen.* e i *Ballistarii sen.*, già *legiones comitatenses* dell'*exercitus Gallicanus* fino alla primavera 364, militarono tra i *comitatenses* regionali dell'*Oriens* sotto il regno di Valente, prima che la terribile e lunga crisi del *bellum Gothicum* imponesse il trasferimento definitivo di dieci *legiones comitatenses* dalla *dioecesis Orientis* alla *dioecesis Thraciarum*, compresi i *Constantini sen.* e la *\*I Felix Valentis Thebaeorum*, poi distrutta ad Adrianopoli o in una disfatta successiva. La nebbia cruenta del *bellum Gothicum* offusca e appiattisce ogni prospettiva di ricostruzione certa; esso infatti da un lato divorò una parte dei *numeri comitatenses* mancanti

230 Giovanni BRIZZI, «Il trattato de rebus bellicis e l'impiego delle artiglierie in età tardoantica», in ID., *Studi militari romani* (Studi di Storia Antica 8), Bologna 1983, pp. 49–76, soprattutto pp. 69–74, dà una interpretazione molto diversa degli stessi fatti.

231 Amm. XXVI, 5, 3: COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), pp. 152–153. Per l'esegesi erronea di HOFFMANN e di TOMLIN v. n. 157.

all'appello, dall'altro provocò alterazioni profonde e permanenti all'usuale dislocazione dei *comitatenses* orientali<sup>232</sup>.

Valente già aveva ai suoi ordini le altre due *legiones comitatenses* di *Ballistarii*, i *Ballistarii iun.* e i *Ballistarii Daphnenses*, che con i *Constantini Daphnenses* fecero sicuramente parte dei *comitatenses* traci durante il suo regno; dai tempi di Costanzo II all'epoca di Valente la *dioecesis Thraciarum* ospitò appunto un esercito minore di *comitatenses* regionali sotto il comando di un *comes rei militaris per Thracias*<sup>233</sup>. Non sappiamo se nel 376 i *\*Constantini iun.* fossero ancora abbinati con i *Ballistarii iun.* e siano periti successivamente nel corso del *bellum Gothicum* oppure se essi già fossero stati distrutti nel *bellum Persicum* o nel *bellum Magnenticum*; ma è molto probabile che allo scoppio del *bellum Gothicum* perlomeno dieci *legiones comitatenses*, incluse tre create da Valente stesso, fossero stanziati nelle *Thraciae*. Le disfate iniziali dei *comitatenses* traci contro i Goti offrono il contesto perfetto alla retrocessione collettiva del piccolo esercito<sup>234</sup>.

Le *legiones comitatenses* effettivamente disponibili per le operazioni belliche contro i Goti nel 377 erano appena otto; *Ballistarii iun.* e *Ballistarii Daphnenses*, anche se erano utili per la protezione dell'*agmen* e la difesa dei *castra* temporanei, ormai erano totalmente inadatti a combattimenti e battaglie campali. La *carrago* dei Goti in pianura o su un colle avrebbe offerto il bersaglio ideale alle *carroballistae*, ma i *comitatenses* orientali non sfruttarono mai il vantaggio tecnologico in campo aperto; neppure la crisi gravissima del *bellum Gothicum* poté riportare le *carroballistae* sui campi di battaglia. Inoltre a partire dal 370/375 i *Ballistarii iun.* o i *Ballistarii Daphnenses* diventarono totalmente indisponibili per ragioni geografiche; essi infatti, anche se continuarono a essere registrati nella lista ufficiale dei *comitatenses* traci, allora furono dislocati stabilmente a Chersonesus, dove li troviamo ancora nel 487/488<sup>235</sup>.

La presenza dell'una o dell'altra *legio comitatensis* sulle possenti fortificazioni di Chersonesus chiarisce molto bene perché la città, nonostante la lontananza dal corpo principale del territorio romano e la prossimità alle tribù nomadi della

232 COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 183–188.

233 Amm. XXI, 12, 22; XXVI, 7, 5; XXXI, 4, 8.

234 *Not. dign. Or.* 8, 22 e 45–53; COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 184–185.

235 IOSPE I<sup>2</sup>, 449 e CIG IV, 8621: cfr. anche Constantine ZUCKERMAN, «The Early Byzantine Strongholds in Eastern Pontus», *T&M* 11 (1991), pp. 549–550.

steppa pontica, sia sempre rimasta un possedimento imperiale fino al principio dello VIII secolo. Costantino Porfirogenito tramanda la memoria molto distorta dei *Ballistarii* stanziati a Chersonesus, ma conserva due dettagli preziosissimi: i Βαλιστάριοι formavano un ἄριθμός (il termine tecnico indica propriamente un *numerus* dei *comitatenses* nel greco amministrativo e giuridico del Tardo Impero) e ancora usavano le *carroballistae*, più precisamente χειροβολίστραι montate e operate su ἄρματα πολεμικά<sup>236</sup>.

Dal momento che il solo Costantino Porfirogenito tra tutti gli autori bizantini menziona le χειροβολίστραι, dobbiamo contestualizzare adeguatamente lo ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, per interpretare giustamente il suo valore. Già nel manuale militare di Leone VI (lo stesso Costantino Porfirogenito curò la pubblicazione dell'opera paterna) βαλιστάριοι equivaleva a μαγγανάριοι, il termine tardoromano βαλίστραι designava i μαγγανικά chiamati ἀλακάτια e le ἄμαξαι βαλιστροφόροι portavano sia le τοξοβολίστραι sia gli ἀλακάτια<sup>237</sup>. Si noti bene: gli ἀλακάτια (artiglieria a trazione) talvolta scagliavano anche dardi, ma erano soprattutto πετροβόλοι. Perciò le χειροβολίστραι di Costantino Porfirogenito, piuttosto che evocare propriamente la χειροβαλλίστρα di Erone e le *manuballistae* di Vegezio, assumono la funzione estesa di sinonimo generico e significano le normali βαλλίστραι; la licenza semantica consente di distinguere chiaramente le antiche χειροβολίστραι = βαλλίστραι del Tardo Impero (artiglieria a torsione) dalle contemporanee τοξοβολίστραι dell'impero bizantino (artiglieria a tensione).

La sopravvivenza delle *carroballistae* durante il Tardo Impero trova il terzo riscontro puntuale dopo l'anonimo opuscolo *De rebus bellicis* e il manuale militare di Maurizio; inoltre Costantino Porfirogenito conferma esplicitamente che le *carroballistae* erano le armi peculiari dei *Ballistarii* ancora nel 370/375, quando i *Ballistarii iun.* o i *Ballistarii Daphnenses* giunsero a Chersonesus e iniziarono a presidiare le sue fortificazioni. La ricostruzione della *manuballista* come "balestra romana" e la conseguente interpretazione dei *Ballistarii* quali "legioni di balestrieri" devono cedere il passo alle χειροβολίστραι e ai πολεμικά

236 Const. Porph. *adm. imp.* 53 (pp. 245–246 e 250–252 Bekker = pp. 258–261 e 264–265 Moravcsik).

237 Leo *tact.* 5, 6; 6, 23; 14, 74. Gli ἀλακάτια compaiono anche in *tact.* 5, 6; 14, 74; 15, 26. Le occorrenze delle τοξοβολίστραι sono più numerose: *tact.* 5, 6; 6, 23; 14, 74; 15, 51; 19, 60; *epil.* 60. Per gli ἀλακάτια cfr. George T. DENNIS, «Byzantine Heavy Artillery: the Helepolis», *GRBS* 39 (1998), pp. 99–115, soprattutto pp. 99–102.

ἄρματα dei *Ballistarii* sulle mura di Chersonesus.

L'eventuale ripresa del *bellum Persicum* avrebbe costretto Valente a utilizzare esclusivamente le risorse militari dell'Oriente, come era già accaduto a Costanzo II dal 337 al 350; anche il suo predecessore allora aveva avuto a sua disposizione soltanto un'armata minore e due eserciti maggiori di *comitatenses*, più precisamente i *comitatenses* dislocati nella *dioecesis Thraciarum* (appena sufficienti a coprire il basso Danubio lungo *Moesia II* e *Scythia*), i *comitatenses* regionali dell'*Oriens* (già *comitatus* di Costanzo II *Caesar*) e l'*exercitus praesentalis* (già secondo *comitatus* di Costantino a partire dal 318)<sup>238</sup>. Quando il *bellum Persicum* ricominciò nel 359, Costanzo II ordinò di trasferire in Oriente circa la metà dei *comitatenses* gallici scatenando la ribellione di Giuliano<sup>239</sup>, che a sua volta dové mobilitare la medesima porzione dell'*exercitus Gallicanus* per la propria spedizione nella Mesopotamia meridionale<sup>240</sup>.

Nella primavera 364, quando i due imperatori pannonici si divisero i *militares numeri*, Valentiniano I manifestò sagacia e lungimiranza nelle questioni militari cedendo preventivamente i *Constantini sen.* e i *Ballistarii sen.* a suo fratello Valente, poiché da un punto di vista strategico i *Ballistarii sen.*, i legionari specialisti delle armi ossidionali e degli assedi, erano molto più utili contro i Persiani in Oriente che contro Germani e Sarmati in Occidente. Poco prima che il *bellum Gothicum* sconvolgesse il corso della storia romana, Valente progettava di invadere appunto la Persia con tre *agmina* nella primavera 377<sup>241</sup>. Se la ribellione generale dei Tervingi appena accolti nelle *Thraciae* non avesse stroncato i suoi piani nella culla, egli avrebbe potuto mobilitare i *Ballistarii sen.* e *iun.* o i *Ballistarii sen.* e i *Ballistarii Daphnenses* per due colonne romane su tre.

Nonostante la rinuncia di Valentiniano ai *Ballistarii sen.*, le *ballistae* proseguirono a svolgere un ruolo strategico nell'apparato difensivo dell'Occidente romano. L'organizzazione stessa delle *fabricae* depone in questo senso. La *fabrica scutaria et armamentaria* di Edessa era sufficiente a curare la produzione dei *tormenta* per i *ballistarii dei ripenses* e i *Ballistarii dei comitatenses* in Oriente<sup>242</sup>. La situazione dell'Occidente è ben diversa; infatti la *Notitia dignitatum* registra

238 COLOMBO, *Auxilia* (n. 106), pp. 171–172.

239 Amm. XX, 4, 2.

240 COLOMBO, «Constantinus» (n. 106), p. 144.

241 Amm. XXX, 2, 6.

242 *Not. dign. Or.* 11, 23.

la *fabrica loricaria, ballistaria et clibanaria* di Augustodunum e la *fabrica ballistaria* di Treueri<sup>243</sup>. La *fabrica* di Augustodunum produceva i tre articoli più complessi della metallurgia militare: le armature ordinarie (*loricae*), le parti metalliche delle *ballistae* e le speciali armature dei *cataphractarii* (*clibani*). La *fabrica* di Treueri, dal momento che aveva carattere strettamente specializzato, curava la produzione di tutte le parti e di intere *ballistae*.

L'esistenza e l'attività simultanea delle due *fabricae* galliche sembra essere una reliquia materiale dell'età valentiniana, che fu l'epoca dell'Occidente romano più adatta alla produzione massiva di artiglieria. Tra gli imperatori del IV secolo Valentiniano I si distinse al massimo grado non soltanto per zelo, competenza ed efficacia nella *cura limitum*<sup>244</sup>, ma anche per i personali contributi allo sviluppo tecnologico degli *arma*<sup>245</sup>. *Castra* e *castella* dei *limites*, così come le cinte murarie delle città-fortezze lungo il Reno e il Danubio, erano i naturali destinatari dei *tormenta* prodotti ad Augustodunum e a Treueri.

Per una curiosa coincidenza il *ballistarium* del distaccamento principale della *X Gemina* a Vindobona fu restaurato appunto su ordine di Valentiniano I nel 367/368<sup>246</sup>. L'epigrafe di Vindobona nomina separatamente Graziano tra i tre *Augusti* e conferisce il titolo di *uir perfectissimus* al *dux limitis*; la posizione anomala del terzo *Augustus* è un segno palmare di prossimità alla sua nomina e fornisce il terminus post quem, mentre il titolo stesso del *dux limitis* offre il terminus ante quem. Graziano fu proclamato *Augustus* dal padre Valentiniano I il 24 Agosto 367<sup>247</sup>; il *dux limitis Scythiae* portava il titolo di *uir clarissimus* già nel 369<sup>248</sup>.

Qualsiasi sorte abbia portato i *Ballistarii sen.* in Oriente, dobbiamo sottolineare

243 *Not. dign. Occ.* 9, 33 e 38. Incontriamo l'aggettivo *ballistarius* anche in Veg. *r. mil.* III, 24, 14 *cum sub ictu teli accesserint, bestiae [scil. elephantii] sagittis ballistarii transfiguntur.*

244 *Symm. or.* 2, 1, 14–16, 18–22, 24–26, 28. *Amm.* XXVIII, 2, 1–4 e 5, 11; XXIX, 6, 2; XXX, 3, 1. 7, 6. 9, 1. *Zos.* IV, 12, 1. Cfr. anche *CIL* III, 3653. 5670a. 10596; XIII, 11537–11538 e 11543; *RIU* III 804 e *Suppl.*, 128. *Amm.* XXVIII, 2, 5–9 e XXIX, 6, 3–5 accusa Valentiniano I di eccessivo zelo in questo ambito, ma scarica tendenziosamente gli errori dei *duces* locali e dei funzionari palatini sulle spalle dell'imperatore.

245 *Amm.* XXX, 10, 4 *nouorum inuentor armorum; epit. de Caes.* 45, 6 *noua arma meditari.*

246 Martin MOSSER & Ekkehard WEBER, «Eine spätrömische Bauinschrift aus dem Legionslager Vindobona», *FWien* 26 (2023), pp. 160–172.

247 *Amm.* XXVII, 6, 4–15 e 8, 1; *Hier. chron.* p. 245 b Helm; *Socr.* IV, 11, 3; *Cons. Const.* ad a. 367, 2 = *Chron. Min.* I, p. 241 Mommsen; *Chron. Pasch.* I, p. 557 Dindorf.

248 *CIL* III, 7494.

l'apparente paradosso, che compendia la transizione storica dal predominio strategico lungo e oltre i *limites* allo stato quasi cronico di guerra difensiva e alla lunga interruzione delle offensive, dei contrattacchi e delle spedizioni punitive *in barbarico*: nella fase finale dell'Alto Impero (235–285) l'uso delle *carroballistae* in campo aperto scompare totalmente, ma nel corso del IV secolo le *ballistae* come *tormenta muralia* o armi ossidionali proseguono a sperimentare una rigogliosa fioritura.

A questo proposito incontriamo un esempio paradigmatico nel 361; i preparativi militari di Costanzo II per la guerra esterna contro i Persiani e la guerra civile con Giuliano inclusero l'esazione straordinaria di *uestis*, *arma* e *tormenta*, oro e argento, vettovaglie e *iumenta*<sup>249</sup>. I *tormenta*, cioè i materiali necessari alla fabbricazione delle *ballistae* e degli *onagri*, avevano raggiunto una tale rilevanza rispetto agli altri *arma*, da costituire un titolo specifico e autonomo in ambito fiscale. Costantino Porfirogenito riporta una lista piuttosto verosimile: tendini, canapa, ferro, olio<sup>250</sup>. Le molle potevano essere fabbricate ugualmente con tendini o corde, il telaio e le altre parti metalliche esigevano il ferro, infine il lubrificante antico per antonomasia era l'olio.

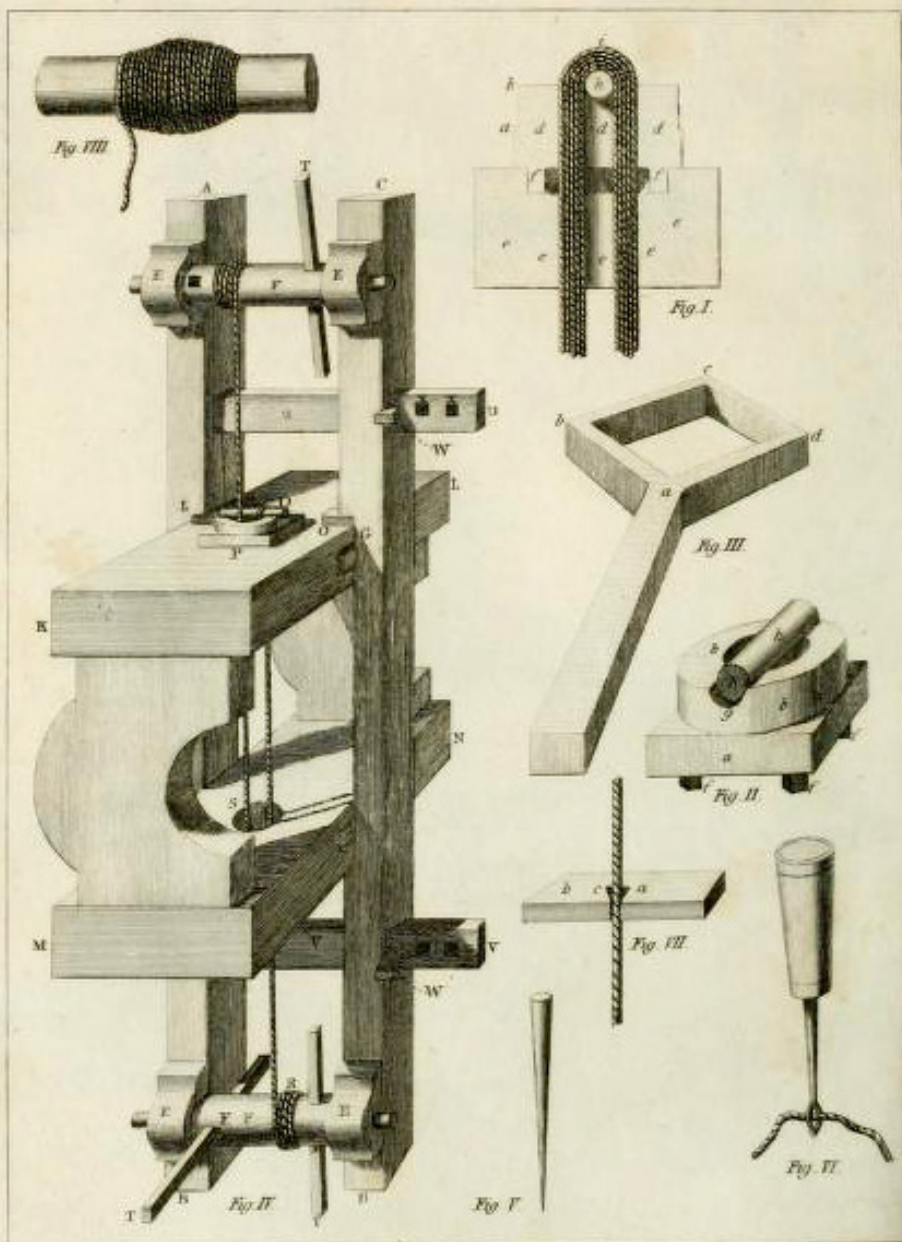
Le quattro *ballistae* romane dei Persiani ad Amida, una preda catturata in una precedente *direptio* di Singara, furono montate su altrettante torri mobili; essi, *τοξόται* e *ιπποτοξόται* per tradizione nazionale, ritenevano l'artiglieria romana a torsione una valida e più micidiale alternativa all'arco e alle frecce in ambito ossidionale. L'assedio romano di Bezabde fallì, ma le *ballistae* di Costanzo II ebbero un ruolo fondamentale nel corso dei combattimenti e furono il principale bersaglio delle sortite persiane. I *tormenta* romani colsero una parziale rivincita durante il *bellum Persicum* di Giuliano, una sconfitta strategica, ma costellata di vittorie campali e di città-fortezze espugnate, prima che l'imperatore ricevesse una ferita mortale in battaglia e morisse prematuramente<sup>251</sup>.

Ancora nel 378 i *tormenta muralia* ebbero un peso decisivo nella resistenza vittoriosa di Adrianopoli dopo la catastrofe romana dell'omonima battaglia. Ammiano riporta espressamente questo dettaglio: *ad emittenda undique tela uel saxa tormenta per locos aptata sunt habiles*, dove i *tela* sottintendono le

249 Amm. XXI, 6, 6.

250 Const. Porph. *adm. imp.* 53 (p. 251 Bekker = pp. 266–267 Moravcsik).

251 V. nn. 47, 118, 133 e 217.



ANCIENT ARTILLERY. PLIV

*ballistae* e i *saxa* evocano gli *scorpiones/onagri*. I difensori della città respinsero sanguinosamente tutti gli assalti di Goti, Unni e Alani investendo i barbari con un diluvio di armi da lancio, che andavano dalle *glandes* delle *fundae* ai *lapides* più pesanti degli *scorpiones/onagri*<sup>252</sup>.

L'anonimo autore dell'opuscolo *De rebus bellicis*, che viene abitualmente datato al regno congiunto di Valentiniano I e di Valente<sup>253</sup>, ma in realtà fu composto negli anni di Costanzo II con Giuliano *Caesar*<sup>254</sup>, manifesta uno speciale interesse verso le *ballistae*; egli sembra cogliere ed esprimere, per così dire, lo “Zeitgeist” tecnologico dell'Impero Romano negli anni Cinquanta del IV secolo. Il primo e l'ultimo dei dodici capitoli *de bellicis machinis* espongono rispettivamente la *ballista quadrirotis* e la *ballista fulminalis*.

La *ballista quadrirotis*, una versione migliorata della *carroballista*, è destinata esplicitamente alla sola difesa: *Habet foramina per quattuor partes, quibus pro commoditate rerum circumducta et flexa facillime ad omnes impetus parata consistat*<sup>255</sup>. Le quattro possibili direzioni di tiro e la doppia mobilità del pezzo (*circumducta* concerne il trasporto della *ballista* sul carro, *flexa* riguarda il brandeggio della *ballista*) implicano necessariamente che il complemento di fine *ad omnes impetus* descriva un'azione difensiva; la *ballista quadrirotis* era

252 Amm. XXXI, 15, 6 e 12–13.

253 Otto SEECK, Art. «Anonymi 3», *RE I* (1894), c. 2325; Edward A. THOMPSON, *A Roman Reformer and Inventor*, Oxford 1952, Clarendon Press, pp. 1–2; Alan CAMERON, «The Date of the Anonymus De rebus bellicis», in Mark W. C. HASSALL (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I: Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers Presented to Professor E. A. Thompson* (BAR Int. Ser. 63), Oxford 1979, British Archaeological Reports, pp. 1–10; Thomas E. J. WIEDEMANN, «Petitioning a Fourth-Century Emperor. the De Rebus Bellicis», *Florilegium 1* (1979), pp. 140–150; Alan E. ASTIN, «Observations on the De rebus bellicis», in Carl DEROUX (Ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, III (Coll. Latomus 180), Bruxelles 1983, pp. 394–397; Daniele FORABOSCHI, «Economia e guerra nel “De rebus bellicis”», in *Studi di antichità in memoria di Clementina Gatti*, Milano 1987, Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, pp. 111–127.

254 Santo MAZZARINO, *Aspetti sociali del IV secolo. Ricerche di storia tardoromana*, Roma 1951, “L'Erma” di Bretschneider, pp. 72–99, 122–131, 314–329 e ID., *Antico, tardo antico ed era costantiniana*, I, Bari 1974, Dedalo, pp. 221–228; Andrea GIARDINA (Ed.), *Anonimo. Le cose della guerra*, Milano 1989, Mondadori, pp. XXXVII–LII. Le mie argomentazioni circa Valentiniano I trarrebbero grande vantaggio dalla datazione erronea agli anni 364–375, ma dal punto di vista scientifico la teoria di Mazzarino è nettamente superiore sotto tutti gli aspetti.

255 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 7, 3.

pronta a fare muro in qualsiasi punto e in ogni direzione. Le argomentazioni stesse dell'anonimo autore in favore della *ballista quadrirotis* sottintendono che ai suoi tempi l'esercito imperiale ormai avesse dimenticato anche l'uso difensivo delle *carroballistae* sui campi di battaglia. La trattazione più lunga riguarda la *ballista fulminalis*, che è adibita esclusivamente ad armare le mura e a proteggere i *limites*<sup>256</sup>. Le altre menzioni delle *ballistae* o le pongono in contesti ossidionali o ne prescrivono un uso difensivo in campo aperto<sup>257</sup>. Proprio la descrizione della *ballista* apre la famosissima digressione di Ammiano sulle *obsidionales machinae*<sup>258</sup>. Questo spirito influenza anche un contemporaneo molto più giovane di Ammiano.

Claudiano mette in bocca a Teodosio I *praecepta* offensivi di tattica ossidionale; il destinatario degli insegnamenti paterni sarebbe stato il precoce e marziale Onorio<sup>259</sup>. Niente poteva essere più lontano dalla realtà bellica delle campagne militari sotto il regno di Teodosio e dalla vera personalità del suo successore in Occidente, ma i τόποι ossidionali di Claudiano, un'eccellente dimostrazione di abilità retorica e di tecnica poetica, riflettono il senso comune dei suoi contemporanei. I *praecepta* claudiane si aprono proprio con la *ballista* e l'*onager*, che precedono l'ariete, la formazione a testuggine e le gallerie scavate sotto le mura: *Fidit si moenibus hostis, | tum tibi murali libretur machina pulsu; | saxa rota; praeceps aries protectaque portas | testudo feriat; ruat emersura iuuentus | effossi per operta soli*<sup>260</sup>.

L'espressione *murali* [...] *pulsu* rielabora l'analoga locuzione di Sil. VI, 269 *donec murali ballista coercuit ictu*. In entrambi i poeti l'aggettivo *muralis*, posto in ipallage (la *ballista* o la *machina* dovrebbe essere detta *muralis*), significa per estensione semantica 'proprio/degno dell'artiglieria murale, potente come l'artiglieria murale'. La presenza del termine quasi tecnico *pulsus* allude apertamente al funzionamento di una *ballista* tardoromana, come ricaviamo facilmente dal duplice confronto con Anon. *De reb. bell.* 8, 1 *Hoc iaculi genus, quod in modum sagittae pennis uidetur instructum, non arcus neque ballistae*

256 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 18, 1–6 e 11.

257 Anon. *De reb. bell.* 8, 1; 16, 5; 18, 8; 19, 5 e 8.

258 Amm. XXIII, 3, 9–4, 1.

259 Claud. *IV cons. Hon.* 328–336.

260 Claud. *IV cons. Hon.* 328–332.

*pulsu consuevit emitti* e Amm. XXIII, 4, 3 *Cum ad extremitatem neruorum acumen uenerit summum, percita [scil. sagitta] interno pulsu a ballista ex oculis auolat.*

Il verbo *libro* è attestato soprattutto con le armi inastate da lancio e le *sagittae*<sup>261</sup>. Come i termini specifici *scorpio*, *catapulta* o *ballista*, la parola vaga e metricamente utile *machina* (un dattilo perfetto) significa il dardo stesso; proprio Ammiano offre un puntuale riscontro, poiché egli usa la perifrasi ridondante *tormentorum machinae* e il vocabolo generico *machinae* come certi sinonimi della parola specifica *ballistae*<sup>262</sup>. Anche la topica *ballista* di Claudiano, come le reali *ballistae* di Ammiano, lanciava *iacula* o *sagittae* ed era una *obsidionalis machina*.

Le *ballistae* e gli *onagri* di Vegezio, poi le βαλλίστραι di Procopio e di Maurizio dimostrano che nei due secoli posteriori alla battaglia di Adrianopoli lo stato tecnologico dell'artiglieria a torsione rimase quasi invariato; le βαλλίστραι di Maurizio imbarcate sulle navi fluviali addirittura segnano il tardivo recupero di una tattica altoimperiale. La sola eccezione sono le *arcuballistae* e gli *arcuballistarii* di Vegezio<sup>263</sup>, che permette di datare approssimativamente al primo quarto del V secolo la silenziosa e significativa rinascita dell'artiglieria a tensione in Oriente<sup>264</sup>. Accantoniamo il controverso problema della parentela tecnologica e linguistica tra le *arcuballistae* tardoromane e le τοξοβολίστραι bizantine, così come l'interpretazione storica del felice ritorno a una tecnologia più semplice e meno potente; qui basta sottolineare che la portata e la potenza delle βαλλίστραι dimostrano decisamente la continuità tecnologica con le *ballistae* di Ammiano e di Vegezio. Una terza prova trova anche riscontri archeologici: le βαλλίστραι scagliavano un βέλος sostanzialmente uguale alle *sagittae* delle *ballistae*<sup>265</sup>.

261 ThLL VII, 2, c. 1352, 14–43.

262 V. n. 226.

263 V. nn. 63, 96, 123, 126 e 129.

264 Per la datazione e la collocazione di Vegezio v. n. 132.

265 Contra Paul E. CHEVEDDEN, «Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages», in Ivy CORFIS & Michael WOLFE (Eds.), *The Medieval City under Siege*, Woodbridge 1995, Boydell and Brewer, pp. 131–173, soprattutto pp. 135–164, che riscuote oggi ampi consensi in ambito scientifico: ad esempio, John HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204*, London 1999, UCL Press, p. 135 (ma cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 187 e 189) e Alexander SARANTIS, «Military Equipment and Weaponry: A Bibliographic Essay», in Alexander SARANTIS & Neil CHRISTIE (Eds.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, I, Leiden–

Nel 539, quando le *ballistae* ancora formavano l'artiglieria usuale dell'arsenale tardoromano, una situazione paradossale sul piano delle competenze tecniche coinvolse proprio i *Ballistarii* dei *comitatenses* orientali; essi uscirono dalla scena storica del Tardo Impero assumendo mansioni francamente imprevedibili, che avrebbero sconcertato e allarmato Taruttieno Paterno. Il contesto storico qui riveste la massima importanza, per comprendere il vero senso di un ordine altrimenti bizzarro.

Fino dai tempi della prima Tetrarchia le due categorie degli operai militari, i *fabricenses* (il personale delle *fabricae* centrali) e i *deputati* (gli ὄπλοποιοί distaccati presso i singoli *numeri*), producevano gli *arma* destinati ad equipaggiare l'esercito imperiale<sup>266</sup>. Una legge di Giustiniano emanata allora (*Nouell.* 85) introdusse il monopolio statale su produzione e vendita degli ὄπλα, abrogando tacitamente *Nouell. Valent.* 9 (440) e *Nouell. Maior.* 8 (457), entrambe *de reddito iure armorum* (la tradizione manoscritta ha conservato soltanto il titolo della seconda legge). I *fabricenses* e i *deputati* diventarono i soli autorizzati a produrre gli ὄπλα, che non potevano essere acquistati dai comuni cittadini e dovevano essere riservati esclusivamente allo Stato. Gli armaioli privati dovevano cessare la propria attività, ma gli *artifices* adatti potevano essere arruolati tra i *fabricenses* ed entrare al servizio dello Stato.

Nella medesima legge l'imperatore proclamò che i Βαλλιστάρριοι e gli esperti da lui appositamente aggiunti ai loro τάγματα dovevano riparare e rinnovare tutti gli ὄπλα degli arsenali statali<sup>267</sup>. Egli incidentalmente premette di avere dislocato i Βαλλιστάρριοι “in varie città”, ma non precisa se i singoli τάγματα, cioè le cinque *legiones comitatenses* e *pseudocomitatenses* dei *Ballistarii* orientali, fossero interi oppure ripartiti in due o tre distaccamenti, come allora accadeva spesso.

Ancora negli anni Trenta del VI secolo la fantomatica barbarizzazione o germanizzazione dell'esercito tardoromano non lascia tracce visibili nelle conoscenze tecnologiche dell'ambiente militare. La legge di Giustiniano

---

Boston 2013, Brill, p. 170.

<sup>266</sup> I *deputati*, le *fabricae* e i *fabricenses*: Arnold Hugh Martin JONES, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, II, Oxford 1964, Basil Blackwell, pp. 671 e 834–836.

<sup>267</sup> *Iust. Nouell.* 85, 2.

comanda espressamente che gli ὄπλα inventati dai *fabricenses*, dai *deputati* e dai Βαλλιστράριοι fossero depositati sempre nell'arsenale imperiale di Costantinopoli o negli arsenali statali delle altre città<sup>268</sup>.

Un sospetto è lecito; se Giustiniano seguiva l'esempio dei suoi predecessori in materia di tecnologia bellica, forse le *arcuballistae*, attuali già verso il 425 (la datazione qui accolta dell'*Epitoma rei militaris*), erano state 'inventate' dai *fabricenses* di Teodosio I o di Arcadio, cioè gli operai militari dell'uno o dell'altro imperatore avevano riscoperto inconsapevolmente l'antica artiglieria a tensione di Filippo II e di Alessandro Magno. Varrebbe la pena di indagare se l'impatto e l'influenza degli Unni sull'evoluzione dell'esercito orientale possano avere resuscitato l'artiglieria fondata sul funzionamento dell'arco composito.

Gli esperti inseriti nei τάγματα dei Βαλλιστράριοι dovevano implicitamente svolgere due mansioni: da un lato riparare e produrre personalmente gli ὄπλα, dall'altro istruire e addestrare i commilitoni alla riparazione e alla fabbricazione degli ὄπλα. Poiché le *ballistae* erano le armi più sofisticate dell'esercito tardoromano, l'imperatore sembra avere stimato che le competenze specialistiche dei *Ballistarii* nella manutenzione ordinaria e nelle riparazioni minori delle sole *ballistae* li rendessero automaticamente capaci di apprendere e di applicare le tecniche necessarie a riparare e a fabbricare tutti i comuni *arma*. Ammettiamo che l'ordine di Giustiniano abbia riscosso pieno successo; le sue implicazioni comunque evidenziano un problema piuttosto serio.

I *deputati* dei singoli *numeri* lavoravano sempre al seguito e ad esclusivo beneficio dei propri commilitoni, garantendo su scala quotidiana la manutenzione, la riparazione e la produzione delle armi difensive e offensive; le *fabricae* centrali producevano la grande maggioranza degli *arma* per l'insieme dei *numeri*. La nomina formale dei Βαλλιστράριοι a tecnici polivalenti degli ὄπλα per gli arsenali statali autorizza a nutrire il legittimo sospetto che i *fabricenses* ormai risultassero sufficienti a curare soltanto la produzione degli ὄπλα per i *numeri*. Questo provvedimento, benché fosse stato emanato due anni prima della grande peste (541–549, poi nuove ondate a livello regionale fino al tramonto del VI secolo), sottintendeva un carico eccessivo di lavoro per i *fabricenses*.

Qui abbiamo un indizio finora trascurato circa la pericolosa sproporzione tra

<sup>268</sup> Iust. *Nouell.* 85, 1–2.

le ambizioni imperialistiche di Giustiniano e i mezzi effettivamente disponibili già prima della grande peste; una parodia grottesca e perniciosa dell'imperialismo romano divorò le risorse appena sufficienti alla difesa del vecchio territorio, se l'impero romano d'Oriente avesse dovuto combattere simultaneamente su due fronti. La capacità produttiva di garantire una fornitura di materiale bellico proporzionata ai bisogni dell'esercito orientale costituiva la base industriale dell'apparato militare. Nel 539, appena un anno prima che Cosroe I rompesse la "pace eterna", le guerre di conquista in Italia e in Africa settentrionale già assorbivano circa 30'000 uomini<sup>269</sup>; nel 559 l'insieme dell'esercito orientale contava 150'000 uomini<sup>270</sup>.

Ignoriamo se il totale delle forze orientali annoverasse 150'000 uomini già nel 539. Secondo lo scenario migliore in quell'anno un quinto dei *comitatenses* e dei *foederati* a disposizione di Giustiniano combatteva nelle guerre occidentali, ma è ugualmente probabile che le campagne militari in Italia e Africa settentrionale in realtà assorbissero una porzione ancora maggiore dell'esercito imperiale. In questo contesto i Βαλλιστράριοι rilevarono i *fabricenses* dall'onere secondario di riparare e di rinnovare gli ὄπλα degli arsenali statali, affinché gli operai militari delle *fabricae* centrali potessero dedicare la propria attività soprattutto alla necessità primaria di produrre ὄπλα per i due teatri di guerra occidentali. Dopo soli dodici anni di regno Giustiniano già stava raschiando consapevolmente il fondo del barile anche nel campo dell'industria militare.

---

269 Procop. *Vand.* I, 11, 2–12 e II, 19, 1; *Goth.* III, 3, 4 e 21, 5.

270 Agath. V, 13, 7.

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- ALFÖLDI, András, «Zur Kenntnis der Zeit der römischen Soldatenkaiser I. Der Usurpator Aureolus und die Kavalleriereform des Gallienus», *ZfN* 37 (1927), pp. 197–212
- ALFÖLDI, András, «The Crisis of the Empire (A.D. 249–270)», in Stanley A. COOK, Frank E. ADCOCK, Martin P. CHARLESWORTH, Norman H. BAYNES (Eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. XII. The Imperial Crisis and Recovery A.D. 193–324*, Cambridge 1939, At the University Press
- ASTIN, Alan E., «Observations on the *De rebus bellicis*», in Carl DEROUX (Éd.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, III (Coll. Latomus 180), Bruxelles 1983, Latomus, pp. 388–439
- BAATZ, Dietwulf, «Recent finds of ancient artillery», *Britannia* 9 (1978), pp. 1–17
- BAATZ, Dietwulf, *Bauten und Katapulte des römischen Heeres* (Mavors XI), Stuttgart 1994, Steiner
- BAATZ, Dietwulf, «Vegetius' Legion and the Archaeological Facts», in Richard J. BREWER (Ed.), *Roman Fortresses and their Legions. Papers in Honour of George C. Boon*, London–Cardiff 2000, Society of Antiquaries of London–National Museum and Galleries of Wales, pp. 149–158
- BARNES, Timothy D., *The New Empire of Diocletianus and Constantine*, Cambridge, Mass.–London 1982, Harvard University Press
- BERGER, Frank, BITTMANN, Felix, GESCHWINDE, Michael, LÖNNE, Petra, MEYER, Michael, MOOSBAUER, Günther, «Die römisch-germanische Auseinandersetzung am Harzhorn, Lkr. Northeim, Niedersachsen», *Germania* 88 (2010), pp. 313–402.
- BISHOP, Michael C. & COULSTON, Jonathan C. N., *Roman Military Equipment from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, Oxford 2006<sup>2</sup>, Oxbow Books
- BLECKMANN, Bruno, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras* (Quellen und Forschungen zur antiken Welt 11), München 1992, Tuduv
- DE BLOIS, Lukas, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society 7), Leiden 1976, Brill
- BRENNAN, Peter, «Combined Legionary Detachments as Artillery Units in Late-Roman Danubian Bridgehead Dispositions», *Chiron* 10 (1980), pp. 553–568
- BRIZZI, Giovanni, «Il trattato *de rebus bellicis* e l'impiego delle artiglierie in età tardoantica», in ID., *Studi militari romani* (Studi di Storia Antica 8), Bologna 1983, Clueb, pp. 49–76
- BROWN, Francis E., «Arms and Armor», in Michail I. ROSTOVITZEFF, Alfred R. BELLINGER, Clark HOPKINS, Charles B. WELLES (Eds.), *The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University, and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Preliminary Report of Sixth Season of Work, October 1932–March 1933*, New Haven 1936, Yale University Press, pp. 439–466.

- CAMERON, Alan, «The Date of the Anonymus De rebus bellicis», in Mark W. C. HASSALL (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I: Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers Presented to Professor E. A. Thompson* (BAR Int. Ser. 63), Oxford 1979, British Archaeological Reports, pp. 1–10
- CAMPBELL, Duncan B., «Auxiliary Artillery Revisited», *BJ* 186 (1986), pp. 117–132.
- CAMPBELL, Duncan B., «Ancient Catapults: Some Hypotheses Reexamined», *Hesperia* 80 (2011), pp. 677–700
- CHEVEDDEN, Paul E., «Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages», in Ivy CORFIS & Michael WOLFE (Eds.), *The Medieval City under Siege*, Woodbridge 1995, Boydell and Brewer, pp. 131–173
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Alcune questioni ammiane», *RomBarb* 16 (1999), pp. 23–75
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, *Prolegomena Ammiana con specimen di commento filologico, linguistico e storico al libro XXVII delle Res Gestae*, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa 2005 (tesi di PhD inedita)
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Constantinus rerum nouator: dal comitatus diocleziano ai palatini di Valentiniano I», *Klio* 90 (2008), pp. 124–161
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «La forza numerica e la composizione degli eserciti campali durante l'Alto Impero: legioni e auxilia da Cesare Augusto a Traiano», *Historia* 58 (2009), pp. 96–117
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «La lancea, i lanciarii, il pilum e l'acies di Arriano: un contributo alla storia dell'esercito romano», *Historia* 60 (2011), pp. 158–190
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «La datazione dell'Epitoma rei militaris e la genesi dell'esercito tardoromano. La politica militare di Teodosio I, Veg. r. mil. 1.20.2-5 e Teodosio II», *AncSoc* 42 (2012), pp. 255–292
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Lancea pugnatoria e minores subarmales: contributo all'esegesi linguistica di Tab. Luguall. 16 (AE 1998, 839)», *Arctos* 49 (2015), pp. 9–23
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «La disfatta di Boudicca e la battaglia del mons Graupius: la composizione delle forze romane, il ruolo tattico delle cohortes equitatae e la forza numerica delle cohortes miliariae», *Latomus* 75 (2016), pp. 403–433
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Nuove prove per la datazione di Vegezio sotto Teodosio II e la sua collocazione nell'impero romano d'Oriente», *Klio* 101 (2019), pp. 256–275
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Note esegetiche a quattro passi di Ammiano Marcellino», *WS* 134 (2021), pp. 174–176
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, *Auxilia e Legiones. La fanteria romana nel IV secolo* (Fvcina di Marte 5), Roma 2022, Società Italiana di Storia Militare.
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «Arabia Eudaemon ed Aethiopia: le altre facce della vittoria augustea», *NAM* 18 (2024), pp. 175–214
- DENNIS, George T., «Byzantine Heavy Artillery: the Helepolis», *GRBS* 39 (1998), pp. 99–115

- DREW-BEAR, Thomas, «A Fourth-Century Latin Soldier's Epitaph at Nakolea», *HSPh* 81 (1977), pp. 257–274
- ELTON, Hugh, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350-425*, Oxford 1996, Clarendon Press
- FORABOSCHI, Daniele, «Economia e guerra nel “De rebus bellicis”», in *Studi di antichità in memoria di Clementina Gatti*, Milano 1987, Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, pp. 111–127
- GABBA, Emilio, «Tecnologia militare antica», in *Tecnologia, economia e società nel mondo romano. Atti del Convegno di Como 27/28/29 settembre 1979*, Como 1980, Banca Popolare Commercio e Industria, pp. 219–234.
- GIARDINA, Andrea (Ed.), *Anonimo. Le cose della guerra*, Milano 1989, Mondadori
- GOLTZ, Andreas & HARTMANN, Udo, «Valerianus und Gallienus», in Klaus-Peter JOHNE (Hrsg.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser. Krise und Transformation des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, I, Berlin 2008, Akademie-Verlag, pp. 223–295
- GRIFFITHS, William B., «The Sling and its Place in the Roman Imperial Army» in Carol VAN DRIEL-MURRAY (Ed.), *Roman Military Equipment: the Sources of Evidence. Proceedings of the Fifth Roman Military Equipment Conference* (BAR Int. Ser. 476), Oxford 1989, British Archaeological Reports, pp. 255–279
- GROSSE, Robert E., *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Berlin 1920, Weidmann
- GUDEA, Nicolae & BAATZ, Dietwulf, «Teile spätrömischer Ballisten aus Gornea und Orşova», *SJ* 31 (1974), pp. 50–72
- HALDON, John, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565–1204*, London 1999, UCL Press
- HOFFMANN, Dietrich, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum* (ES VII 1), I, Düsseldorf 1969, Rheinland-Verlag.
- HOLLEY, Andrew E., «The Ballista Balls from Masada», in Joseph AVIRAM, Gideon FOERSTER, Ehud NETZER (Eds.), *Masada IV. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965. Final Reports*, Jerusalem 1994, Israel Exploration Society, pp. 349–365
- IRIARTE, Aitor, «The inswinging theory», *Gladius* 23 (2003), pp. 111–139
- JAMES, Simon, *Excavations at Dura Europos 1928–1937. Final Report VII. The Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment*, Oxford 2010, Oxbow Books
- JONES, Arnold Hugh Martin, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, II, Oxford 1964, Basil Blackwell
- MARSDEN, Eric W., *Greek and Roman Artillery. Historical Development*, Oxford 1969, Clarendon Press
- MARSDEN, Eric W., *Greek and Roman Artillery. Technical Treatises*, Oxford 1971, Clarendon Press
- MAZZARINO, Santo, *Aspetti sociali del IV secolo. Ricerche di storia tardoromana*, Roma 1951, “L'Erma” di Bretschneider
- MAZZARINO, Santo, *Antico, tardo antico ed era costantiniana*, I, Bari 1974, Dedalo

- MOOSBAUER, Günther, *Die vergessene Römerschlacht: Der sensationelle Fund am Harzhorn*, München 2022<sup>2</sup>, C. H. Beck
- MOSSER, Martin & WEBER, Ekkehard, «Eine spätrömische Bauinschrift aus dem Legionslager Vindobona», *FWien* 26 (2023), pp. 160–172
- NICASIE, Martijn J., *Twilight of Empire. The Roman Army from the Reign of Diocletian until the Battle of Adrianople* (Dutch monographs on ancient history and archaeology 19), Amsterdam 1998, Gieben
- PETERSEN, Eugen, «Beschreibung der Bildwerke», in Eugen PETERSEN, Alfred VON DOMASZEWSKI, Guglielmo CALDERINI (Hrsgg.), *Die Marcus-Säule auf Piazza Colonna in Rom*, München 1896, F. Bruckmann, pp. 39–104
- POLLASTRINI, Alberto Maria, «Studio preliminare sui proiettili di ballista da Nelson Island – Abuqir - Egitto», in Guido GUARDUCCI & Stefano VALENTINI (edd.), *Il futuro nell'archeologia: il contributo dei giovani ricercatori. Atti del IV Convegno Nazionale dei Giovani Archeologi, Tuscania (VT), 12–15 Maggio 2011*, Roma 2012, Scienze e Lettere, pp. 89–96.
- RANCE, Philip, «Battle», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES, Michael WHITBY (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, II, Cambridge 2007, Cambridge University Press, pp. 342–378
- RITTERLING, Emil, «Zum römischen Heerwesen des ausgehenden dritten Jahrhunderts», in *Festschrift zu Otto Hirschfelds sechzigstem Geburtstag*, Berlin 1903, Weidmann, pp. 345–349
- ROTH, Jonathan, «The Size and Organization of the Roman Imperial Legion», *Historia* 43 (1994), pp. 346–362
- SARANTIS, Alexander, «Military Equipment and Weaponry: A Bibliographic Essay», in Alexander SARANTIS & Neil CHRISTIE (Eds.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, I, Leiden–Boston 2013, Brill, pp. 153–175
- SCHARF, Ralf, «Seniores-Iuniores und die Heeresteilung des Jahres 364», *ZPE* 89 (1991), pp. 265–272
- SCHULTEN, Adolf, Art. «pilum», *RE* XX 2 (1950), cc. 1333–1369
- SEECK, Otto, Art. «Anonymi 3», *RE* I (1894), c. 2325
- SETTIS, Salvatore, LA REGINA, Adriano, AGOSTI, Giovanni, FARINELLA, Vincenzo, *La Colonna Traiana* (Saggi 716), Torino 1988, Einaudi
- SHATZMAN, Israel, «Stone-Balls from Tel Dor and the Artillery of the Hellenistic World», *SCI* 14 (1995), pp. 52–72
- SPEIDEL Michael P., «The Later Roman Field Army and the Guard of the High Empire», *Latomus* 46 (1987), pp. 375–379
- SPEIDEL, Michael P., «Das Heer», in Klaus-Peter JOHNE (Hrsg.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser. Krise und Transformation des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, I, Berlin 2008, Akademie-Verlag, pp. 673–690
- THOMPSON, Edward A., *A Roman Reformer and Inventor*, Oxford 1952, Clarendon Press

- TOMLIN, Roger S. O., «Seniores-Iuniores in the Late-Roman Field Army», *AJPh* 93 (1972), pp. 253–278
- WIEDEMANN, Thomas E. J., «Petitioning a Fourth-Century Emperor. the De Rebus Bellicis», *Florilegium* 1 (1979), pp. 140–150
- WILKINS, Alan, «Reconstructing the cheiromballistra», *JRMES* 6 (1995), pp. 5–59
- WILKINS, Alan, «Scorpio and cheiromballistra», *JRMES* 11 (2000), pp. 77–101
- WILKINS, Alan, *Roman Imperial Artillery. Outranging the Enemies of the Empire*, Oxford 2024<sup>3</sup>, Archaeopress
- WILKINS, Alan, BARNARD, Hans, ROSE, Pamela J., «Roman Artillery Balls from Qasr Ibrim, Egypt», *Sudan & Nubia* 10 (2006), pp. 66–80
- ZUCKERMAN, Constantine, «The Early Byzantine Strongholds in Eastern Pontus», *T&M* 11 (1991), pp. 527–553

# Riflessioni sulle componenti tecniche e sull'uso tattico della *ballista quadrirotis* e del *tichodifrus* (*De rebus bellicis* 7-8)

di FRANCESCO FIORUCCI

**ABSTRACT:** The paper proposes a comprehensive analysis of the paragraphs that the Anonymus author of the treatise known as *De rebus bellicis* dedicates to the explanation of the *ballista quadrirotis* (a type of mobile field artillery) and of the *tichodifrus* (a portable shelter on wheels). The description does not concentrate on their mechanism and offers some difficult interpretative problems. The paper discusses the theses advanced by scholars so far and proposes a new interpretation of the devices with considerations on their tactical use on the battlefield.

**KEYWORDS:** ANCIENT ARTILLERY, ANCIENT SIEGE WARFARE, DE REBUS BELLICIS

**L**a singolarità e potremmo dire anche l'anomalia del *De rebus bellicis* (d'ora in avanti *DRB*) è ormai un dato acclarato tra gli studiosi, così come il suo fondamentale valore quale testimonianza dei mutamenti economici e sociali del Tardoantico<sup>1</sup>.

Com'è noto, uno spazio piuttosto rilevante nel trattato è assegnato all'esposizione di un articolato apparato militare di originale concezione che dovrebbe, agli occhi dell'anonimo estensore, contribuire a garantire l'integrità dell'Impero, stretto nella morsa di nazioni barbare (cfr. 6, 1 *imperium Romanum circumlatrantium ubique nationum perstringat insania*) e difendere le frontiere, anche grazie

1 Diversi i tentativi (così come anche divergenti i risultati) per datare il *DRB*, che possiamo situare, con buona approssimazione, nella seconda metà del IV sec. d. C. (ma non mancano proposte di datazione più tarda): per una panoramica si rimandi a Hartwin BRANDT, *Zeitkritik in der Spätantike. Untersuchungen zu den Reformvorschlägen des Anonymus De rebus bellicis*, Beck, München 1988, pp. 135-162; Andrea GIARDINA, *Anonimo. Le cose della guerra*, Mondadori, Milano 1996<sup>2</sup>, pp. XXXVII-LII e Philippe FLEURY, *De rebus bellicis. Sur les affaires militaires*, Les belles lettres, Paris 2017, pp. XXVIII-LIII.

all'adozione di fortificazioni limitanee<sup>2</sup>.

Tra queste macchine innovative figurano un modello di ballista trasportabile (*ballista quadrirotis*) e un tipo di carro da guerra ideato allo scopo di coordinarsi con la stessa ballista, proteggendola durante l'attacco alle mura e negli scontri campali (*tichodifrus*). Notevole è stato l'interesse degli studiosi intorno a queste armi e credo sia utile fare ordine e ridiscutere nel dettaglio tutti i pareri finora formulati, anche alla luce di recenti risultati.

Prima di addentrarci nella discussione, è necessaria una premessa metodologica. In parte della tradizione degli studi è invalsa la consuetudine di attribuire un certo rilievo alle illustrazioni che corredano tutti i manoscritti (tranne V)<sup>3</sup>, consi-

2 È sempre arduo valutare, negli autori di cose militari ed antichi in generale, il grado di innovazione apportato dallo scrivente, ed in che senso dobbiamo intendere termini come *inventio* e simili (vd. Robert IRELAND, *De Rebus Bellicis*, Part 2: *Text edited by Robert Ireland*, Oxford, BAR, 1979, p. 118 e GIARDINA, cit., pp. XVIII-XXIII). La questione emerge per esempio tra gli altri in Ath. Mech. r. 94 ss. ed. Gatto, quando si elencano le 'invenzioni' attribuite a Diade (vd. in proposito Maurizio GATTO, *Il ΠΕΡΙ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΜΑΤΩΝ di Ateneo Meccanico. Edizione critica, traduzione, commento e note*, Aracne, Roma 2010, p. 332 s.). Di recente FLEURY, cit., p. LVIII s., sulla base delle parole in *praef.* 16 (*utilia uestrae felicitati undique redacta conferre gestiui*), ha voluto riconoscere nell'A. per lo più uno scopritore e raccogliitore di utili provvedimenti (vd. in proposito anche Fabrizio PAGANO, «Sulla *praefatio* dell'Anonimo *De rebus bellicis*», *Koinonia* 23, 1999, p. 36 s., che propone il confronto con altre opere tecnico-scientifiche latine). Coglie inoltre secondo me nel giusto GIARDINA, cit., pp. XXVII s. (e prima di lui già Thompson 1952, 77), che valorizza l'affermazione di *praef.* 11 (*his etiam adnectenda credidimus quae bellorum necessitatibus terra uel mari in acquirendis uictoriis procurentur; ex quibus fastidii leuandi gratia pauca machinarum inuenta referemus*), deducendone che "l'esposizione relativa ai *machinarum inuenta* ha carattere aggiuntivo", per quanto notevole, rispetto ai temi precedentemente trattati (sulla prefazione, oltre ai saggi ora rammentati, si vedano Carlo SANTINI, «*La praefatio del De rebus bellicis*», in Carlo Santini, Nino Scivoletto (cur.), *Prefazioni, prologhi, proemi di opere tecnico-scientifiche latine*, Vol 2, Herder, Roma 1992, pp. 991-999 e Domenico LASSANDRO, «*Note sul De rebus bellicis*», in Marta Sordi (cur.), *Il pensiero sulla guerra nel mondo antico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2001, pp. 246-248). Naturalmente continua a rimanere per certi versi sfuggente il contributo originale dell'A. (se ne discuterà più nel dettaglio nel commento), ma è indubbio che egli desideri presentare le sue macchine come novità (non sussiste altro modo di interpretare dichiarazioni come *praef.* 14 *noui pontis inuentio* e 6, 4 *diuersis et nouis armorum ... machinis*). Le aporie emergono tuttavia quando veniamo edotti (18, 1) che gli effetti della *ballista fulminalis* sono comprovati dal suo utilizzo: vd. comunque in proposito i dubbi di Edward A. THOMPSON, *A Roman Reformer and Inventor*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1952, p. 65. Sulle proposte dell'A. come recupero della tradizione vd. Immacolata ERAMO, «*Inventori di guerra nella tarda antichità*», *Atti e relazioni*, 57, 2022, pp. 177-193.

3 Per una descrizione dei testimoni e per osservazioni sulla collazione vd. IRELAND, cit., pp.

derandole un'utile fonte di informazioni per comprendere le macchine del *DRB*<sup>4</sup>. Già a partire dalle osservazioni di Berthelot, cui si rinvia per ulteriori dettagli<sup>5</sup>, si è potuto constatare che i disegni attualmente in nostro possesso riproducono abbastanza fedelmente gli originali del manoscritto *Spirensis*, oggi perduto, capostipite dell'intera tradizione, perciò siamo nella condizione di affermare che essi rimontano all'epoca della stesura dello stesso, cioè all'inizio del X sec<sup>6</sup>. Tutta-

---

37-75 e soprattutto FLEURY, cit., pp. LXXXV-XCVIII, che ha preso in esame anche il codice siglato B (Vat. Barb. Lat. 157).

- 4 Vd. p. e. Mark W. C. HASSALL, «The inventions», in Mark W. C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E. A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, p. 84 e da ultimo soprattutto FLEURY, cit., pp. XCVIII-CVII; più cauto GIARDINA, cit., pp. LIII-LV. Non mancano di contro pareri palesemente critici nei confronti di chi ha dato credito alle immagini: vd. Paul E. CHEVEDDEN, «Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages», in Ivy A. Corfis, Michael Wolfe (Eds.), *The Medieval City under Siege*, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 1995, p. 155 n. 100 e lo stesso GIARDINA, cit., p. 75 in riferimento proprio alle immagini della *ballista quadriotis* sotto studiata. Sulle probabili variazioni apportate dagli illustratori altomedioevali nel tentativo di riprodurre gli originali più antichi, per loro non sempre facilmente comprensibili, avverte anche Stefanie GRÄF, «Die Abbildungen des Codex Spirensis», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard Meißner (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt 2023, p. 72 ss. (con rimandi bibliografici). La questione del connubio tra testo scritto e illustrazioni costituisce in effetti un tema delicato e non secondario quando si affronta lo studio degli autori tattici e meccanico/poliorcetici: vd. le riflessioni di Alfred STÜCKELBERGER, *Bild und Wort: das illustrierte Fachbuch in der antiken Naturwissenschaft, Medizin und Technik*, von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1994, pp. 95-99 e 105-109; o di Wolfgang LEFÈVRE, «Drawings in Ancient Treatises on Mechanics», in Jürgen Renn, Giuseppe Castagnetti (Eds.), *Homo Faber: Studies on Nature, Technology, and Science at the Time of Pompeii. Presented at a conference at the Deutsches Museum Munich, 21-22 March 2000*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma 2002, pp. 109-120, il quale, preso atto delle inevitabili difficoltà dovute al processo di trasmissione manoscritta, teorizza che “authenticity can, therefore, at best mean that a drawing can be conceived of as being descended in an unbroken line from the original” (p. 110). Per quanto riguarda la situazione di singoli autori: vd. Walter SACKUR, *Vitruv und die Poliorketiker*, Ernst, Berlin 1925, pp. 12-22 (soprattutto su Vitruvio); Otto LENDLE, *Texte und Untersuchungen zum technischen Bereich der antiken Poliorketik*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden 1983, p. 34 e p. 181 s. e David WHITEHEAD, *Apollodorus Mechanicus, Siege-matters* (Πολιορκητικά). *Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2010, p. 26 s. (sulle immagini cui rimanda Apollodoro Meccanico nel suo trattato: gli studiosi negano la possibilità di ricondurre le illustrazioni dei manoscritti oggi disponibili agli originali dell'autore); ancora LEFÈVRE, cit., pp. 111-113 (con una panoramica che abbraccia anche Filone Meccanico e Bitone) e GATTO, cit., pp. 189-203 (secondo cui il trattato di Ateneo Meccanico era originariamente privo di figure).
- 5 M. BERTHELOT, «Sur le traité *De Rebus Bellicis*, qui accompagne la *Notitia Dignitatum* dans les manuscrits», *Journal des Savants*, 1900, pp. 171-177.
- 6 Per lo *Spirensis* BERTHELOT, cit. dà un'ampia datazione tra il IX-XI sec., ma a partire dall'e-

via per poterli utilizzare come solido confronto dobbiamo presupporre che anche l'illustratore dello *Spirensis* e quelli a lui precedenti fino all'età dell'A. siano stati altrettanto rigorosi e fedeli nel copiare dai modelli. L'ipotesi è tanto suggestiva quanto, purtroppo, indimostrabile<sup>7</sup>. Inoltre, come si può immediatamente verificare prendendo visione delle immagini in questione, sono talvolta palesi le incongruenze con la descrizione del testo<sup>8</sup>. Sulla base dei motivi appena esposti,

---

same di un frammento del manoscritto ritrovato ed identificato dopo l'uscita dei lavori di Berthelot già Paul LEHMANN, *Die mittelalterliche Dombibliothek zu Speyer*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Abt., 4, München 1934, p. 22 s. indica la datazione anche oggi accettata, cioè tra la seconda metà del IX e l'inizio del X sec. È noto che soprattutto aderente ai modelli va considerata la serie di illustrazioni fatta eseguire in un secondo momento (tra il 1550 e il 1551) dal conte Palatino O. Heinrich e aggiunte alla fine del cod. M (*Monacensis latinus* 10291). È oggi possibile confrontare quest'ultime con quelle realizzate al momento della copia dallo *Spirensis* nel 1542, grazie alla loro riproduzione (insieme a quelle di cui sono fregiati altri codici) in appendice a IRELAND, cit.

- 7 Ciò vale anche ammettendo che tra il codice di Spira e l'originale sia da collocare solo un testimone intermedio del IX sec.: vd. Guglielmo CAVALLO, «Libri e continuità della cultura antica in età barbarica», in Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (cur.), *Magistra Barbaritas. I Barbari in Italia*, Libri Scheiwiller, Milano 1984, p. 603. Si noti inoltre che Jonathan J. G. ALEXANDER, «The illustrations of the *Anonymus De Rebus Bellicis*», in Mark W. C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E. A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, p. 12, partendo dalla notizia che la riproduzione delle immagini dello *Spirensis* fu in un primo momento negata allo Heinrich a causa delle labili condizioni del codice, solleva legittimamente qualche dubbio sull'assoluta preminenza della seconda serie rispetto soprattutto alle illustrazioni dei testimoni C e P, copiati un secolo prima del *Monacensis*, quando l'archetipo di Speyer era sicuramente meglio conservato. Come segnalato ancora da Jonathan J. G. ALEXANDER, «The illustrated manuscripts of the *Notitia Dignitatum*», in Roger Goodburn, Philip Bartholomew (Eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum. Papers presented to the conference in Oxford December 13 to 15, 1974*, Oxford 1976, p. 14 (giudizio tuttavia formulato in relazione alla *Notitia Dignitatum*, tramandata insieme alla nostra opera) non sempre la più recente serie di illustrazioni voluta dallo Heinrich si rivela più accurata.
- 8 Se ne indicheranno esempi nel seguito dello studio. Al fine di valutare ponderatamente il valore delle immagini, è necessario indagarne le caratteristiche. L'esame del materiale iconografico che accompagna le opere meccanico-polioretiche (e non solo) permette di distinguere piuttosto nettamente due categorie. Da una parte troviamo disegni schematici e più propriamente tecnici, corredati di lettere dell'alfabeto cui si rimanda nei testi (vi si mostrano la relazione reciproca delle componenti); dall'altra artistiche illustrazioni che colgono le macchine in fase operativa. Le immagini del *DRB* appartengono al secondo gruppo (e del resto non poteva essere altrimenti, dato che l'A. non prevede il rimando a punti delle macchine identificati con lettere dell'alfabeto). La classificazione appena esposta è ben evidenziata già in Kurt WEITZMANN, *Ancient book illumination*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts 1959, pp. 7-10. Lo studioso addita come ulteriore

le conclusioni che seguono poggiano sostanzialmente sullo studio del testo.

## I. LA BALLISTA A QUATTRO RUOTE.

L'Anonimo così descrive la sua versione di ballista da battaglia, denominata *quadrirotis*:

### 7. *Expositio ballistae quadrirotis*<sup>9</sup>

[1] *Exemplum ballistae, cuius fabricam ante oculos positam subtilis pictura testatur.*  
 [2] *Subiecta namque rotarum quattuor facilitas, duobus subiunctis et armatis equis, ad usum hanc bellicos trahit; cuius tanta est utilitas pro artis industria ut omni latere in hostem sagittas impellat, sagittarii libertatem et manus imitata.* [3] *Habet foramina per quattuor partes, quibus pro commoditate rerum circumducta et flexa facillime ad omnes impetus parata consistat.* [4] *Quae quidem a fronte cochleae machina et deponitur celerius et erigitur subleuata.* [5] *Sed huius temo in quamuis partem necessitas uocet cita et facili conuersione deflexus erigitur.* [6] *Sciendum est autem quod hoc ballistae genus duorum opera uirorum sagittas ex se non, ut aliae, funibus sed radiis intorta iaculatur*<sup>10</sup>.

#### Descrizione della ballista a quattro ruote

[1] Modello di ballista la cui struttura è illustrata da un minuzioso disegno che lo propone ai vostri occhi. [2] È montata su quattro ruote che la muovono agevolmente, per mezzo di due cavalli appaiati e muniti di corazza, laddove lo richiede la battaglia; tale è il suo vantaggio, grazie all'ingegnosità del progetto, che può scagliare saette sui nemici da ogni lato, imitando la libertà di movimento e la destrezza manuale di un arciere. [3] Presenta aperture nei quattro lati per mezzo delle quali, girata e tesa come lo richiedono le circostanze, può respingere nel modo più facile qualsiasi assalto. [4] Grazie a un meccanismo a vite posto nella parte frontale può essere rapidamente abbassata o alzata. [5] Il suo timone può essere girato

---

discriminante per riconoscere il grado di elaborazione delle immagini la presenza di figure umane, da considerare aggiunte medievali e spia di una minore attendibilità delle stesse. Weitzmann elabora a proposito una massima, calzante anche per il *DRB*, che serve da monito “even where a classical pictorial ancestry seems likely in principle, not to accept every medieval copy as a faithful rendering of the archetype, but to take in consideration changes and accretions during the long process of repeated copying” (p. 9). In tutte le immagini del *DRB* spiccano proprio le figure umane e quindi, applicando il criterio appena enunciato, è indispensabile la massima prudenza nel valutarle.

9 Sui termini *ballista* e *quadrirotis* vd. IRELAND, cit., p. 126 e GIARDINA, cit., 75.

10 Il testo non presenta particolari difficoltà ed è stampato pressoché identico nelle edizioni. Si riporta qui quello di GIARDINA, cit., p. 20, con la relativa traduzione.

intorno e alzato rapidamente e facilmente, nella direzione richiesta. [6] Bisogna infine precisare che questo tipo di ballista, azionato da due uomini, scaglia saette per mezzo della torsione non di funi, come le altre balliste, ma di stanghe radiali.

7, 1 *subtilis pictura testatur*: l'autore si premura immediatamente di rinviare alla relativa raffigurazione grafica, dalla quale confida che il lettore possa trarre ulteriori e decisivi ragguagli per ricevere una chiara idea della macchina, seguendo un principio annunciato appena prima in 6, 5: *Verum ne qua difficultas in excitandis armorum generibus oriatur, imaginem tormentorum nihil a uero distantem coloribus adumbratam orationi subieci, ut sit facilis imitandi confectio*<sup>11</sup>. Proprio in relazione a quest'ultime righe, Ireland ha proposto un confronto con Philo Mech., Bel. 62, 14 s. (προφανῆ δέ σοι καὶ τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ θήσομεν ἐπ' ἐσχάτῳ σχηματογραφήσαντες), giudicato tuttavia a ragione labile già da Giardina e da Á. Sánchez-Ostiz<sup>12</sup>. In realtà l'A. non ha in mente un precedente specifico, ma esprime qui semplicemente un'esigenza comune tra gli autori meccanico/poliorcetici (vd. tra gli altri Bito Mech. 48, 1) e militari in genere (vd. il rimando ai diagrammi in Ael. Takt. 1, 5)<sup>13</sup>. Come emerge dall'insistenza sulla precisione e realismo delle illustrazioni (cfr. *subtilis pictura e imaginem ... nihil a vero distantem*) e da tutto il periodo, l'A. segnala apertamente che testo ed immagini debbano integrarsi, dando forse preminenza a quest'ultime<sup>14</sup>. Tale approccio potrebbe, perlomeno in parte, spiegare una caratteristica manifesta delle descrizioni dell'opera<sup>15</sup>, che

11 "Affinché non sorgano problemi nella costruzione di questi tipi di armi, ho allegato alla mia esposizione l'immagine delle macchine, in nulla distante dal vero e disegnata a colori, in modo tale che risulti facile riprodurle" (trad. GIARDINA, cit., p. 21). Osservazioni stilistiche sulla frase in IRELAND, cit., p. 149.

12 Robert IRELAND, *Anonymi auctoris De rebus bellicis*, Teubner, Leipzig 1984, p. IX; GIARDINA, cit., p. 74 e Álvaro SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, *Anónimo sobre asuntos militares. Introducción, edición, traducción y comentario de Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2004, p. 117.

13 Si rimandi al già citato STÜCKELBERGER, cit., pp. 105-109.

14 FLEURY, cit., p. CI s. ha piena ragione, in polemica con John H. W. G. LIEBESCHUETZ, «Realism and Phantasy: The Anonymus *de rebus bellicis* and its Afterlife», in Edward Dąbrowa-Dąbrowa (Ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, Univ. Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1994, p. 132, a rimarcare questo ruolo determinante delle immagini secondo l'A. (ma vd. sopra sugli oggettivi impedimenti cui si incorre nel tentativo di utilizzare quelle restituite nei codici come supporto per la ricostruzione delle macchine). Si confronti quanto esplicita Apoll. Mech. 137 nel proemio dei *Poliorketika*, su cui vd. WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 69 s.

15 Vd. in proposito già GIARDINA, cit., p. XXXIV s.

tendono sovente al vago o mancano di quelle indicazioni (come, per esempio, la specifica delle misure, la discussione dei materiali da utilizzare, le fasi dell'assemblaggio, l'interazione tra le componenti) da ritenersi invece essenziali per il fine che si propone l'A., cioè per riprodurre le macchine in parola (cfr. 6, 5 *ut sit facilis imitandi confectio*). Questa genericità accomuna in effetti l'A. allo stile di Vegezio (il quale tuttavia offre una rassegna di macchine già note e non ha pretese di originalità), o agli storiografi come Ammiano Marcellino (che solo di rado forniscono dati numerici e quando lo fanno interviene anche l'intento di impressionare il lettore sulla grandiosità di quanto illustrato), più che a quello degli autori tecnici. Anche da questo punto di vista divengono evidenti le ambiguità che caratterizzano l'opuscolo: da una parte emerge con una certa energia la volontà precettistica dell'A., dall'altra quest'ultimo non fornisce gli strumenti necessari per perseguire quanto sopra annunciato e (segnatamente per le sezioni dedicate alle macchine belliche), pare affidarsi più che altro alle immagini.

7, 2 *subiecta namque rotarum quattuor facilitas*<sup>16</sup>: contrariamente a quanto afferma Marsden, secondo il quale la presenza di quattro ruote, da considerare forse un'innovazione introdotta dall'A., implicherebbe che la nostra ballista avesse dimensioni maggiori rispetto per esempio all'artiglieria montata della Colonna traiana, che ne esibisce due<sup>17</sup>, dobbiamo immaginare la *quadrirotis* un'arma piuttosto leggera, la cui caratteristica principale non risiedeva tanto nella potenza del tiro, connessa alle dimensioni, quanto in quella di operare in prossimità dei bastioni e delle linee nemici<sup>18</sup>. Per tale motivo la fonte insiste sulla sua agilità e

16 Con questa singolare espressione, che poggia sul peso espressivo del termine *facilitas*, l'A. intende sottolineare la grande agilità di questo modello di *ballista*: rimando in particolare all'esautiva analisi di Antonella BRUZZONE, «Contributo ad una analisi stilistica del *De rebus bellicis*: qualche aspetto dell'uso dell'astratto», *Romanobarbarica* 13, 1994-5, p. 41. L'ampio impiego degli astratti nell'A. era stato già segnalato da IRELAND, cit., p. 127 s.

17 Vd. Eric W. MARSDEN, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Technical Treatises*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1971, p. 241 n. 2, opinione fatta propria da GIARDINA, cit., p. 75 e FLEURY, cit., p. 59. Non credo infine che quattro ruote provvedessero una maggiore stabilità per sparare in tutte le direzioni rispetto a due, come propone Alan E. ASTIN, «Observation on the *De rebus bellicis*», in Carl Deroux (Ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History. III*, Latomus, Bruxelles 1983, p. 410.

18 Il rapporto tra dimensioni e prestazioni dell'artiglieria è dichiarato in Veg., *mil.* 2, 25, 3 e 4, 22, 2. Ad una quantità maggiore di corda nelle matasse corrisponde una più lunga gittata del proiettile, come spiega Philo. Mech., *Bel.* 57, 1 (ovviamente il confronto vale presupponendo che la *quadrirotis* sia un'arma a torsione, opinione dominante tra i commentatori, ma vd. anche più sotto).

maneggevolezza, nonché sulla capacità di difendersi efficacemente dagli assalitori che sopraggiungevano da tutti i lati (vd. sotto). Come scopriremo più avanti, sono in realtà le dimensioni del veicolo a necessitare di quattro ruote. Quest'ultime avevano senz'altro un raggio sufficiente per superare agevolmente le inevitabili asperità del terreno e permettere un'andatura adeguata alla macchina, molto esposta ai contrattacchi avversari<sup>19</sup>.

7, 2 *duobus subiunctis et armatis equis*: sono cavalli corazzati, probabilmente non dissimili nell'armamento da quelli che tirano il carro falcato (cfr. 12, 2 e 14, 5)<sup>20</sup>. L'A. ripone completa fiducia nella capacità bellica dei veicoli che descrive (tra cui appunto anche tre modelli di carro falcato), nonostante i gravi limiti del loro impiego sui campi di battaglia siano stati ben evidenziati da molti autori<sup>21</sup>.

19 L'osservazione vale anche tenendo conto che probabilmente, come si spiegherà meglio in seguito, lo scenario ideale per sfruttare al massimo le potenzialità delle macchine illustrate nel *DRB* era un clima secco.

20 Dalla testimonianza di 14, 5 (*catafracto ... per quod vestiti equi*) si evince che nell'insieme l'immagine di cavalli e carro non doveva discostarsi di molto da quanto descritto in Vegezio (*mil.* 3, 24, 7: *bini catafracti equi iungebantur ad currum*), che nel frangente tratta dei metodi per contrastare sul campo gli elefanti. Un elenco delle testimonianze antiche sull'impiego dei cavalli in contesti bellici è raccolto in Antonio SESTILI, *Bellator equus I. Il cavallo da guerra nella Grecia antica*, Aracne, Roma 2010; con riferimento al *DRB*, in Antonio SESTILI, *Bellator equus 2. Il cavallo da guerra nell'antica Roma*, Aracne, Roma 2017, pp. 204-206, dove le conclusioni dipendono tuttavia ampiamente dall'edizione di Giardina e dove il passo sulla *quadrirotis* non è ricordato. Sulla cavalleria corazzata, il suo armamento ed il suo impiego nell'esercito romano vd. almeno John W. EADIE, «The Development of Roman Mailed Cavalry», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 57, 1/2, 1967, pp. 161-173; Dietrich HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum, Teil I*, Rheinland-Verlag, Düsseldorf 1969, pp. 265-277; Michael P. SPEIDEL, «*Catafractarii clibanarii* and the Rise of the Later Roman Mailed Cavalry. A Gravestone from Claudiopolis in Bithynia», *Epigraphica Anatolica*, 4, 1984, pp. 151-156 e Mariusz MIELCZAREK, *Catafracti and Clibanarii. Studies on the Heavy Armoured Cavalry of the Ancient World*, Oficyna Naukowa MS, Łódź 1993, soprattutto pp. 73-85.

21 Vd. l'ampio commento in GIARDINA, cit., pp. 83-89, con analisi approfondita delle fonti. Come fa notare lo studioso nelle stesse pagine (sulla base di quanto affermato dalla fonte in 19, 7), la proposta dell'A. prevede un impiego tattico meno tradizionale del carro falcato, cioè non nelle fasi iniziali dello scontro, bensì quando questo “è già deciso e i nemici volgono in fuga”. Ciò risulta tuttavia solo parzialmente vero, e l'A. preferisce sfruttare la duttilità delle armi che descrive, come confermato da *praef.* 13: *in terrenis uero congressibus talis est excogitata sollertia ut equus, siue aciem rupturus inuadat siue fugientibus ingerat se*. In queste righe della prefazione l'A. anticipa le potenzialità belliche di una qualche variante di carro falcato, simile a quello descritto nel cap. 14 (vd. GIARDINA, cit., p. 48, ma diversamente FLEURY, cit., p. 35): si evince chiaramente che esso serviva anche a sfondare lo schieramento avversario.

Alle riflessioni finora avanzate dalla critica possiamo aggiungere ulteriori approfondimenti. Nonostante il pesante armamento difensivo, questi animali si trovavano in una posizione estremamente esposta (vd. anche meglio più sotto), pertanto eventuali perdite potevano diventare un problema per la mobilità delle armi trasportate. Nelle fonti antiche emerge chiaramente che un punto debole nell'uso dei carri (ciò vale evidentemente tanto per i carri falcati quanto per qualsiasi altro veicolo come quello che trasporta la *quadrirotis*) erano appunto i cavalli, che potevano venire facilmente abbattuti dai proiettili avversari (vd. soprattutto le chiare affermazioni di Veg., *mil.* 3, 24, 2).

Per ovviare a queste enormi difficoltà, di cui si dimostra conscio, l'A. si affida da una parte (con una visione invero poco realistica nel frangente) all'ausilio dell'armatura (cfr. 14, 5: *catafracto ... per quod vestiti equi ad omnes telorum muniuntur incursus*) atta a garantire senza impedimenti l'impiego dei cavalli sui campi di battaglia; dall'altra consiglia, con atteggiamento fin troppo scontato e generico, di tenere a disposizione un elevato numero di animali, per essere pronti in ogni evenienza (cfr. 19, 9 *Erit tamen utilior cura si duplex animalium numerus ad subuectionem tormentorum ducatur, ut sit copia in dubiis rebus uel lassitudini uel casibus subuenire*).

Ancora, la fonte non offre dettagli su come il carro della *quadrirotis* si disponesse in battaglia rispetto ai cavalli. L'artiglieria montata ritratta sulla Colonna Traiana (scena XL tav. XXXI Cichorius) mostra il carro coi cavalli rivolti verso il nemico al momento dell'azione<sup>22</sup>. Per quanto concerne la *quadrirotis*, sembra

---

22 Non è chiara, tuttavia, la posizione dell'artiglieria nello schieramento, ma pare che stia compiendo un'incursione verso le prime file, a diretto contatto col nemico, quindi secondo un assetto analogo a quello che l'A. prevede per la sua *quadrirotis*. In questo modo interpreta Conrad CICHORIUS, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule. Erster Textband: Commentar zu den Reliefs des ersten dakischen Krieges*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin- Leipzig 1927, p. 202. Maurizio Colombo (in cortese revisione di questo articolo) rileva che le due *carroballistae* della scena XL tav. 31 Cichorius sono collocate sopra un rilievo naturale, cioè la linea ondulata e frastagliata sotto il primo legionario, la ruota e i muli della *carroballista* anteriore. La prospettiva suggerita della scena (Traiano nell'angolo basso a sinistra) comporta che i due pezzi in realtà stiano bersagliando i Daci da una altura posta dietro la *acies* romana, come riscontriamo puntualmente nella ἔκταξις di Arriano contro gli Alani, quando le μηχαναί furono schierate sulle due alture dietro la φάλαγξ, per colpire la carica dei lancieri a cavallo con βέλη e λίθοι. Anche la *carroballista* della scena LXVI tav. 46 rivolge i muli verso il nemico, ma occupa una posizione di tiro difensiva e coordinata con la *ballista* posta dietro le *concaedes* nella scena successiva (LXVI tav. 47); la *carroballista* protegge i legionari impegnati nella costruzione delle *munitiones*, la *ballista* difende quelli di rinfor-

ragionevole pensare che i cavalli manovrassero, una volta raggiunta la posizione desiderata, fermandosi rivolti verso il proprio esercito, con la ballista alle spalle, puntata verso i nemici. In questo modo si otterrebbe il vantaggio di avere il carro già pronto a ripiegare verso le fila amiche, in caso di repentino pericolo, salvando macchina ed equipaggio. Ancora, senza la frapposizione dei cavalli, gli uomini dietro il *tichodifrus*, addetti alla difesa della ballista, avrebbero un contatto diretto con quest'ultima (vd. sotto)<sup>23</sup>.

7, 3 *habet foramina per quattuor partes ... consistat*<sup>24</sup>: Thompson evoca il confronto con Vitr. 10, 10, 1, dove si parla dei fori praticati nel telaio delle armi da getto a torsione, attraverso i quali passavano le matasse nervine verticali, a loro volta intersecate dai bracci lignei formanti l'arco<sup>25</sup>. Tuttavia egli preferisce non esprimere un giudizio definitivo, anche perché indotto dalla convinzione che la *quadrirotis* non fosse un'arma a torsione (vd. più sotto)<sup>26</sup>. Maggiormente per-

---

zo alle *concaedes*. La scena evidenzia l'utilità della *carroballista* anche in difesa, consentendo rapidi interventi in aggiunta ai *tormenta* fissi delle fortificazioni campali.

- 23 Non potendo ricostruire con certezza tali dinamiche, rimane di primo acchito incerto se ai due artiglieri (cfr. 7, 6 *duorum opera virorum*) spettasse anche il compito di condurre il carro. In realtà, anche alla luce di quanto si dirà sui *foramina*, sembra più logico ipotizzare la presenza di cavalieri. Nel qual caso dobbiamo aspettarci che anche quest'ultimi indossassero delle corazze, i modelli delle quali vengono infatti menzionati dall'A. in 15, 2: vd. GIARDINA, cit., p. 91 s., con ulteriore bibliografia.
- 24 IRELAND, cit., p. 121 s. segnala un utilizzo a volte atipico delle preposizioni nell'A., affrontando anche il nostro passo. Come si tenterà di dimostrare qui di seguito, i fori sono praticati sui quattro lati del carro, il che giustifica pienamente l'occorrenza di *per*.
- 25 In effetti nelle descrizioni dell'artiglieria delle nostre fonti i fori sono per lo più quelli che intende Vitruvio (cfr. Hero Mech., *Bel.* 94, 5 e 113, 6; e Philo. Mech., *Bel.* 53, 8). Diverso, ma altrettanto poco chiarificatore, il caso di Bito Mech. 63, 2-3, dove si dice che un modello di gastrafete (arma ad arco sul tipo della balestra medievale) attribuito all'ingegno di Zopiro di Taranto era munito di due fori paralleli alla slitta: εἶτα διώσθωσαν δύο φῶτα παράλληλα τῇ διώστρα, ὅθεν τὰ βέλη διωσθήσεται. L'interpretazione di tutto il passo è molto problematica, ma possiamo comunque concludere che le suddette aperture, formate dalla slitta e da una componente che vi si adagiava sopra, servivano al lancio simultaneo di due dardi: vd. MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 99 e Francesco FIORUCCI, «Contributi al testo di Bitone», in Francesco Fiorucci (cur.), *La scienza militare antica – Das antike Militärwesen. Autori, opere e loro fortuna – Autoren, Werke und ihr Nachleben*, Rombach Wissenschaft, Baden-Baden 2024, p. 50.
- 26 Thompson 1952, 62 s. Non risulta del tutto perspicuo cosa intenda lo studioso quando pare connettere la capacità di lanciare i dardi in varie direzioni con “an increase in the number of *foramina*”. Al di là del fatto che in realtà, come cercheremo di dimostrare, non sussiste coincidenza tra le aperture dell'A. e di Vitruvio (che erano comunque in entrambi i casi quattro), dal testo non si evince affatto che sia un 'aumento' del loro numero il fattore de-

suaso che i *foramina* corrispondano con buona probabilità a quanto illustrato nel *De architectura* è invece Marsden<sup>27</sup>.

Più di recente Fleury ha ipotizzato che sulla base del carro fosse montato un perno verticale girevole e solo sopra questo un cassone con dentro l'arma. Tutto il cassone quindi, e non la sola *ballista*, poteva ruotare grazie all'ausilio di stanghe infilate dentro le aperture (*foramina*) praticate ai quattro angoli dei lati lunghi dello stesso<sup>28</sup>. Tale ricostruzione evidenzia tuttavia diversi punti deboli. Innanzitutto si congetturano probabilmente troppi elementi non menzionati dalla fonte: la doppia base (del carro e del cassone), il perno verticale, le leve che attraversano le aperture. Inoltre proprio il fatto che la rotazione sarebbe avvenuta facendo forza su queste (ipotetiche) stanghe, relega i *foramina* ad una funzione subalterna, mentre il *quibus* che segue in 7, 3 si riferisce proprio a quest'ultimi. L'A. puntualizza inoltre che la ballista era governata da soli due uomini (cfr. 7, 6 *duorum opera uirorum*), quindi due delle quattro stanghe previste da Fleury sarebbero state superflue, così come i relativi fori. La medesima manovrabilità infatti poteva essere ottenuta tramite due fori al centro dei lati lunghi (anziché quattro negli angoli).

Una caratteristica che accomuna in pratica tutte le ricostruzioni è l'aver associato la funzione dei *foramina* con i participi *circumducta et flexa*. In altre parole

---

terminante.

27 MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 241 s., ma vd. in proposito le critiche di GIARDINA, cit., p. 76, che suggerisce di lasciare aperta la questione. Dissentendo radicalmente dagli altri commentatori, Sebastiano CONDORELLI, *Riforme e tecnica nel «De rebus bellicis» (testo con commento e versione di S. Condorelli)*, Peloritana, Messina 1971, p. 108 li ritiene “semplici fessure ai lati del meccanismo girevole, attraverso cui è possibile ai due addetti far girare l'arma in senso orizzontale”. Poco originale nel frangente il contributo di Maria Antonietta TOMEI, «La tecnica nel tardo impero romano: le macchine da guerra», *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, 1, 1982, p. 70, che segue alla lettera Thompson, e di SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 119. Difficile da seguire CHEVEDDEN, cit., p. 155 n. 100, quando afferma che l'A. “refers to the pyramidal stand of the machine which has sockets on its four sides for the placement of an elevation device”. Oltre all'ovvia evidenza che un sostegno di forma piramidale è del tutto congetturale, perché la fonte non lo menziona, rimane opaco il ruolo di queste ipotetiche ‘cavità’ al fine di collocare un qualche meccanismo.

28 FLEURY, cit., p. 59 s. Rimanda invece ai *foramina* vitruviani ancora Burkhard MEIBNER, «Die Geräte und Geschütze des Anonymus», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard Meißner (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt 2023, p. 105, riproponendo il parere espresso già in Burkhard MEIBNER, *Die technologische Fachliteratur der Antike. Struktur, Überlieferung und Wirkung technischen Wissens in der Antike (ca. 400 v. Chr.–ca. 500 n. Chr.)*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1999, p. 281 n. 618.

i fori farebbero parte del meccanismo di manovra e puntamento della macchina<sup>29</sup>. Ciò contrasta con quanto si legge poco sotto sul *temo*: vedremo infatti che agendo su questo, e solo su questo, gli addetti volgevano a piacimento il tiro<sup>30</sup>.

Al fine di interpretare correttamente l'enunciato è allora indispensabile verificare innanzitutto che il seguente relativo *quibus* può introdurre unicamente *ad omnes impetus parata consistat* (si giustifica in questo modo il congiuntivo). I participi *circumducta et flexa* sono invece riferiti alla ballista nel suo insieme<sup>31</sup>.

D'accordo con Fleury sul fatto che le aperture fossero praticate sulle pareti del carro, ritengo che esse fungessero da feritoie da cui gli addetti al pezzo potevano, in caso di pericolo, colpire potenziali assalitori che tentavano una sortita contro la ballista<sup>32</sup>. Si tratta quindi di un espediente che contribuisce alla difesa dell'arma, come proclama palesemente la seconda parte dell'enunciato (cfr. *ad omnes impetus parata consistat*)<sup>33</sup>. Dobbiamo prendere atto che l'A. giudica efficace questa misura difensiva, tuttavia è probabile che la fase di caricamento richiedesse un certo tempo, per cui un assalto portato direttamente contro il carro, magari da più

29 Va detto che soltanto Marsden, nelle stesse righe sopra ricordate, partendo dal corretto presupposto che l'A. parla subito dopo del processo di puntamento, coglie una difficoltà in tale interpretazione. Egli di conseguenza propone come alternativa di connettere *circumducta et flexa* all'operazione di ripristinare la tensione delle matasse lasciate a riposo, agendo sugli *epizugides* e sui *modioli*, cui accenna lo studioso. Tale ricostruzione non ha trovato giustamente seguito nella critica, perché difficilmente si possono caricare i due verbi di un senso così specifico e tecnico (che implica tra l'altro il ricorso ad elementi non menzionati). Inoltre inspiegabile sarebbe l'espressione *pro commoditate rerum*. Dall'andamento espositivo di tutte le descrizioni sulle macchine nel *DRB*, appare inoltre evidente che l'A. desidera illustrarne le potenzialità in sé, colte nella loro efficienza operativa. Non gli interessa invece soffermarsi sulle fasi preliminari, come può essere considerata la preparazione delle matasse.

30 Ciò dimostra tra l'altro che solo il corpo della ballista era mobile, poggiando sul piano del carro, che era invece fisso. Una conferma ci giunge del resto da quanto sappiamo su tutti i modelli conosciuti di armi meccaniche da getto, dotate delle stesse caratteristiche.

31 Per maggior chiarezza interpungerei anzi nel modo seguente: *Habet foramina per quattuor partes, quibus, pro commoditate rerum circumducta et flexa, facillime ad omnes impetus parata consistat*. Su un testo del genere è del resto impostata la traduzione sopra riportata di GIARDINA, cit., p. 21 e di SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 55.

32 GIARDINA, cit., p. 76 sottolinea come *pars* indichi nel trattato sempre "il lato della macchina", dunque nel frangente i lati del carro. L'indicazione *per quattuor partes* riprende infatti, in chiave difensiva, lo stesso concetto espresso appena sopra da *omni latere* in riferimento alla capacità offensiva della ballista.

33 Un'identica costruzione, con analogo significato, ricorre in 14, 5 (*equi ad omnes telorum muniuntur incursus*).

direzioni, sarebbe risultato difficile da parare, pur potendo contare sullo schermo costituito dalle pareti.

Come risulterà meglio da quanto osserveremo più sotto sull'uso coordinato di ballista e *tichodifrus*, l'arma qui descritta era studiata per attaccare i difensori annidati sulle mura e quindi il lancio orizzontale ai quattro lati è da intendersi che avvenisse solo qualora i nemici minacciassero la macchina da terra. Possiamo quindi escludere che dalle stesse aperture partissero i dardi indirizzati verso le mura, anzi la ballista sparava sopra le pareti del carro<sup>34</sup>.

7, 3 *circumducta et flexa*: cioè 'girata e diretta/rivolta/puntata'. Il primo si riferisce al movimento su un piano orizzontale, il secondo designa l'alzo, come confermato da *deflexus erigitur* di 7, 5 (vd. sotto).

7, 4 *cochleae machina*: sulla scorta già di Thompson e Condorelli, anche Giardina e Fleury intendono questo dispositivo come una 'vite' verticale<sup>35</sup>. Secondo me sono invece fondate le critiche a tale identificazione mosse già da Marsden

34 LASSANDRO, cit., p. 244 s. ha ventilato l'ipotesi (già di IRELAND, Anonymi cit., p. IX) che l'autore del *DRB* fosse un ex soldato, forse appartenente al corpo dei *ballistarii*. A smentire tale prospettiva valgono gli argomenti di GIARDINA, cit., p. XXXVI n. 2, che sottolinea tra l'altro come l'A. manchi decisamente di chiarezza nei capitoli sulle balliste.

35 Vd. rispettivamente THOMPSON, cit., p. 62; CONDORELLI, cit., p. 108; GIARDINA, cit., p. 76 s. e FLEURY, cit., p. 60 s. Giardina attribuisce a Marsden l'equivalenza *καρχήσιον* = 'rullo', mentre l'editore inglese intende qui il 'giunto universale' (vd. meglio più sotto). La tradizionale interpretazione come 'vite' è fatta inoltre poggiare dallo studioso sul fatto che *cochlea* in latino "vuol dire proprio «vite», a somiglianza della forma della chiocciola". Il rimando al passo di Ammiano 23, 4, 2 è comunque rivelatore, in quanto le *cochleae duae lignae* li menzionate, pur non essendo dei 'rulli', non sono propriamente neanche delle viti, bensì le ruote dell'organo posteriore che permettono la trazione della corda arciera e quindi il caricamento dell'arma. Subito dopo, infatti, Ammiano aggiunge che a fianco di una di queste prendeva posizione l'artigliere: *quarum prope unam assistit artifex contemplabilis* (il termine impiegato in J. den BOEFT *et alii*, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII*, Wolters, Groningen 1998, p. 62 per tradurre questo particolare tecnico è "rollers" ed è ovvio che i commentatori intendono le ruote, perché spiegano: "they turn the windlass, thus drawing back the slider"). Esse corrispondono quindi alle *duae rotae* della *ballista fulminalis* in *DRB* 18, 2 (come conferma lo stesso GIARDINA, cit., p. 99 s.). La rigida corrispondenza *cochlea* = 'vite' è superata già nelle fonti greche, come dimostrano tra l'altro le occorrenze in Bito Mech. 49, 9, dove il *κοχλίας* è un tamburo ferreo, trasversale rispetto al corpo dell'arma, in un lanciapietre; ed in 58, 19, dove quello montato sulla scala d'assalto chiamata *sambuca* è un tondello ligneo orizzontale: vd. Francesco FIORUCCI, «La sambuca di Damios di Colofone: commento a Bitone 57, 1-61, 1», *Frankfurter elektronische Rundschau zur Altertumskunde*, 46, 2022, pp. 25-59, con discussione dei pareri precedenti.

(ricordate anche dallo stesso Giardina)<sup>36</sup>. L'editore inglese ravvede la difficoltà nella lentezza della manovra di una *cochlea* verticale e l'ostacolo che essa avrebbe causato al movimento orizzontale del pezzo. A ciò va aggiunto che una vite verticale avrebbe necessitato di una ruota orizzontale per azionarla (a mo' di cabestano, come compare per esempio in Vitruvio 10, 2, 7<sup>37</sup>), non menzionata, la cui collocazione sotto il pezzo si dimostrerebbe soluzione estremamente scomoda da applicare, considerando anche che dovevano esserci, come già detto, le pareti del carro a ridurre ulteriormente gli spazi. Considerati gli scenari bellici per i quali la *quadrirotis* era progettata (vd. anche sotto), la velocità d'esecuzione delle manovre diveniva fattore determinante per la sopravvivenza dell'equipaggio e la conservazione della macchina stessa. Queste dovevano essere quindi più semplici possibile, come indicato del resto dall'insistito utilizzo di termini che corredano la descrizione quali *facillime*, *celerius*, *facilis*. L'eventuale distacco di uno dei due artiglieri sotto la parte anteriore del pezzo con l'unico scopo di girare la vite non sembra collimare con un tale scenario. Inoltre questa vite verticale, per permettere un alzo adeguato, avrebbe dovuto essere piuttosto lunga ed invadere così il canale di lancio del dardo, impedendo di fatto l'utilizzo dell'arma.

Ancora, nel descrivere i movimenti di cui la *quadrirotis* era capace, l'A. specifica: *sed huius temo in quamvis partem necessitas uocet cita et facili conuersione deflexus erigitur* (7, 5)<sup>38</sup>. Si evince che il brandeggio del *temo* esplicava la duplice funzione del movimento sul piano orizzontale (cfr. *in quamvis partem*) e dell'alzo (cfr. *deflexus erigitur*)<sup>39</sup>. Ponendo attenzione anche al solo sistema dell'alzo, si esclude l'impiego di una vite sottostante. Le voci *deflexus* ed *erigitur* descrivono i due momenti della stessa operazione e indicano che applicando una forza su un'estremità del fusto, l'altro capo si alzava, esattamente come il braccio di una bilancia, il cui fulcro non si trova però al centro, bensì spostato verso l'estremità anteriore e coincidente col punto di aggancio della *cochleae machina*<sup>40</sup>. Una tale

36 Vd. MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 242, ma anche CHEVEDDEN, cit., p. 155 n. 101.

37 Vd. le note di commento in Louis CALLEBAT, Philippe FLEURY, *Vitruve. De l'architecture, Livre X*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1986, p. 99.

38 Vd. anche *infra* il commento alla frase.

39 Si noti infatti che la frase spiega e sintetizza i concetti espressi appena sopra: dapprima (7, 3) l'A. tratta del puntamento orizzontale, poi (7, 4) dell'alzo, poi di come entrambe le operazioni fossero realizzabili semplicemente agendo sul *temo*.

40 Anche CONDORELLI, cit., p. 108, ammette che l'alzo è regolato tramite il *temo*.

oscillazione è possibile solo inserendo un perno orizzontale all'altezza del fulcro. La capacità di regolare l'alzo e l'intera operazione di puntamento in tutte le direzioni tramite il *temo* dimostra senza dubbio che sotto il fusto era montato un dispositivo sul modello del *καρχήσιον*<sup>41</sup>.

Di primo acchito l'interpretazione come 'vite' sembra avere dalla sua l'argomento che del medesimo meccanismo è equipaggiata anche l'altro pezzo di artiglieria presente in *DRB*, cioè la *ballista fulminalis*: *ballistam tamen ipsam ad dirigenda seu altius seu humilius tela cochleae machina prout uocet utilitas nunc erigit, nunc deponit* (18, 3)<sup>42</sup>. In realtà, benché la fonte menzioni per quest'ultima ballista solo l'alzo, possiamo concludere che la *cochleae machina* determinava verosimilmente anche lo spostamento laterale, corrispondendo quindi anche nel frangente ad un *καρχήσιον* (non avrebbe infatti senso una ballista che punta sempre sullo stesso punto).

Valutando nell'insieme quanto finora osservato, decade la possibilità che il puntamento fosse effettuato con due manovre distinte, cioè facendo ruotare il cassone con sopra la ballista e alzando questa tramite la vite (come suggerisce Fleury). Tutto ciò è incongruo con la sbandierata agilità della macchina. Altrettanto poco credibile il fatto che gli artiglieri stazionassero a terra, o smontassero dal carro per raggiungere le stanghe e far ruotare il cassone, esponendosi non poco agli assalti nemici.

La ricostruzione appena vista comprova invece che essi stavano all'estremità posteriore della ballista, al riparo insieme a questa dietro le pareti con le aperture, da dove compivano in sicurezza tutte le operazioni di caricamento, puntamento e rilascio. L'arma poggiava sul pianale del carro, che era perciò sufficientemente ampio da alloggiare sia il pezzo sia i due artiglieri. Per questa ragione serviva un veicolo relativamente ingombrante, che necessitava di quattro ruote (vd. sopra).

La *cochleae machina* (o *καρχήσιον*) imprimeva alla ballista un ampio angolo

41 Del resto era proprio tale congegno a comparire normalmente nei pezzi di artiglieria con la funzione sopra spiegata. Ha ragione poi MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 242, nell'affermare che *cochlea* corrisponde propriamente solo al perno cilindrico orizzontale e per estensione all'intero meccanismo. Il *καρχήσιον* ci viene descritto soprattutto da Hero Mech. Bel. 88, 4-89, 8 e Ath. Mech. rr. 324-328 Gatto: vd. l'approfondimento di GATTO, cit., pp. 464-471.

42 "Un meccanismo a vite ora solleva ora abbassa la stessa ballista, a seconda delle esigenze, per dirigere le saette più in alto o più in basso" (trad. GIARDINA, cit., p. 33).

di oscillazione e velocità di esecuzione, peculiarità collimanti perfettamente con lo scenario bellico in cui l'A. ne immagina l'impiego. Tutto quello di cui la *quadrirotis* abbisognava per sparare fino ai bastioni con l'uso di un tale dispositivo era un'altezza sufficiente del *temo* rispetto al pianale del carro. In altre parole, per evitare che tale superficie ostacolasse l'abbassamento del *temo*, il cavalletto o treppiedi sul quale la *cochlea* si innestava doveva essere sufficientemente alto, in modo che l'arma fosse comodamente manovrata dagli addetti<sup>43</sup>. La ballista, una volta posizionata dietro al *tichodifrus*, aveva piena libertà di far pressione con i suoi lanci sugli uomini appostati sulle fortificazioni, al fine di garantire una copertura a coloro che dovevano avvicinarsi alle mura per dare l'assalto.

7, 5 *sed huius temo in quamuis partem necessitas uocet cita et facili conuersione deflexus erigitur*: abbiamo in parte già discusso sopra la frase<sup>44</sup>. Si aggiunga qui soltanto che il *temo*, agendo sul quale si puntava l'arma, va identificato con la trave allungata formante il fusto della *ballista*, sul quale scorreva, nei tradizionali pezzi a torsione, l'elemento mobile o 'slitta' (gr. διώστρα) con il relativo proiettile. Si tratta cioè della componente denominata presso gli autori greci σῦριγξ (Hero. Mech., *Bel.* 77, 7 s.)<sup>45</sup>.

7, 6 *duorum opera uirorum*: abbiamo già accennato al fatto che si intende soltanto i due artiglieri (come è del resto chiaro da tutta la frase), pertanto lo spostamento del carro era affidato verosimilmente ad altri uomini. Sono d'accordo con Astin nel constatare che l'informazione qui esplicitata sia incidentale, non contenendo un confronto, né tantomeno una polemica, con Veg. *mil.* 2, 25, 2, dove la *carroballista* richiedeva un equipaggio di undici uomini<sup>46</sup>.

43 Valgono in proposito le considerazioni di MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 51 n. 22.

44 Sulle particolarità linguistiche della stessa vd. Sánchez-Ostiz 2004, 119; sul valore di *sed* vd. FLEURY, cit., p. 61.

45 Non coglie nel giusto Richard NEHER, *Der Anonymus De Rebus Bellicis*, Heckenhauer, Tübingen 1911, p. 48, secondo cui sarebbe invece la "Laufrinne", corrispondente alla 'slitta': vd. infatti già Fleury 2017, 61. Sulla nomenclatura dell'antica artiglieria, con riferimento ad Erone, Filone Meccanico e Vitruvio, vd. Mark J. SCHIEFSKY, «Technical Terminology in Greco-Roman Treatises on Artillery Construction», in Thorsten Fögen, (Hg.), *Antike Fachtexte/Ancient Technical Texts*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2005, pp. 253-270.

46 Vd. ASTIN, cit., p. 410 s. Era stato in particolar modo THOMPSON, cit., p. 48 s. a suggerire che la meccanizzazione delle armi in dotazione all'esercito proposta dall'A. servirebbe a compensare la penuria di uomini da arruolare (anche TOMEI, cit., p. 81; ma *contra* GIARDINA, cit., p. XXVII). Si tenga presente che un assalto alle mura con le scale, come sottin-

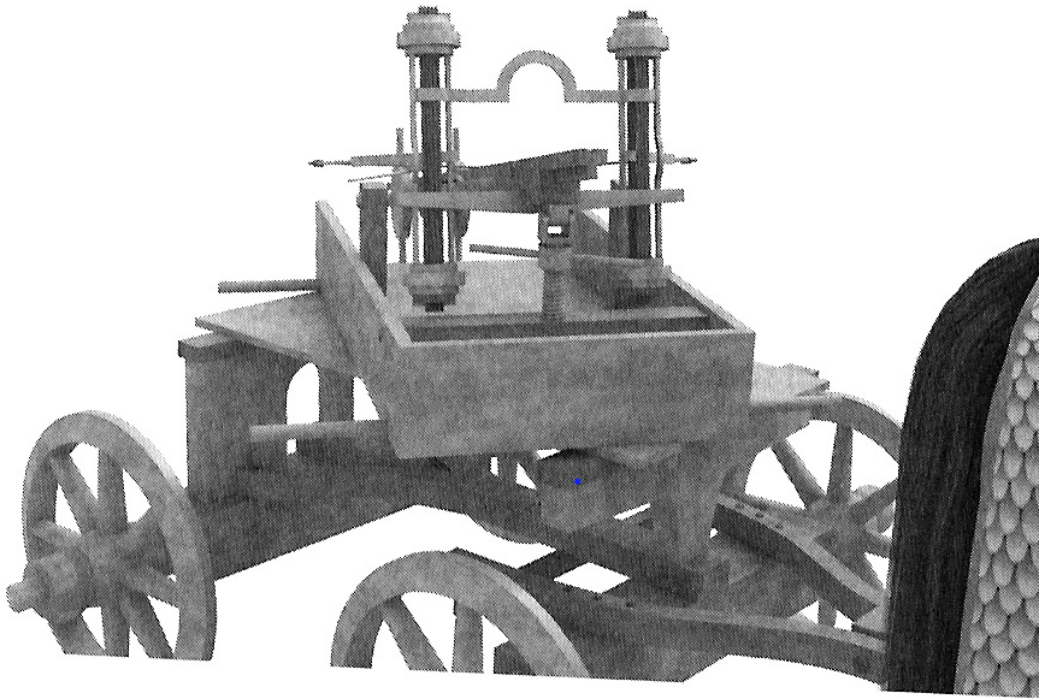


Figura 1: particolare della *ballista quadrirotis* da FLEURY, cit., p. 61 fig. 2. Si notino soprattutto la vite verticale sotto la parte anteriore del fusto e le quattro stanghe trasversali inserite in altrettante aperture (i *foramina* di cui parla l’A.) negli angoli dei lati lunghi del cassone. Quest’ultimo era ampio solo quel tanto per contenere l’arma (per cui gli artiglieri stazionavano a terra) e ruotava su un piano orizzontale grazie a un perno sottostante (non visibile dalla prospettiva della figura).

7, 6 *sagittas ex se non, ut aliae, funibus sed radiis intorta iaculatur*<sup>47</sup>: si trat-

tende l’A. (vd. sotto sul ticodifro), contempla una quantità di armati non indifferente. Vd. anche le osservazioni di Eric W. MARSDEN, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Historical Development*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969, p. 192, che include negli undici anche gli addetti agli animali, alle munizioni e al carro (Vegezio spiega che tale gruppo serviva “*ad armandum vel dirigendum*”). Purtroppo il secondo verbo è ambiguo, potendo designare sia lo spostamento del carro, sia il puntamento dell’arma). Un analogo ragionamento è sostanzialmente valido anche per la *quadrirotis*, se consideriamo, come appena accennato, che soltanto gli artiglieri erano due.

47 Si noti che *intorta*, come nel caso di *circumducta et flexa* in 7, 3, si riferisce alla ballista nel suo insieme. In IRELAND, cit., p. 115 si mette in evidenza l’inusuale concordanza (il participio dovrebbe stare con *genus*). Per evitare l’aporia CHEVEDDEN, cit., p. 155 traduce “after [its bow] is spanned” (lo studioso pensa che la *quadrirotis* sia un’arma a tensione: vd. sotto).

ta di un passo particolarmente controverso, che esibisce problemi interpretativi molto spinosi, difficilmente risolvibili in modo pacifico.

Partiamo dal constatare che, dato che l'A. intende sostituire un elemento con un altro, per poter conferire un significato proprio ai *radii*, dobbiamo prima identificare i *funes*. Possiamo innanzitutto escludere che si tratti della corda arciera, comparsa nelle nostre fonti come un elemento singolo<sup>48</sup>. Di conseguenza il riferimento può essere o alle matasse verticali o alle funi di trazione della corda arciera<sup>49</sup>. La questione risiede dunque nel capire se l'autore intende qui il sistema di immagazzinamento (e rilascio) dell'energia oppure quello di caricamento dell'arma<sup>50</sup>.

48 Una conferma giunge dal confronto interno col sistema di caricamento della *ballista fulminalis* (18, 1-2), in cui si precisa che la corda arciera era costituita da un singolo *nervi funis*. A questo proposito possiamo chiamare in causa anche testimonianze come Erone Meccanico, che menziona la corda arciera (gr. τοξίτης) definendola 'singola' in *bel.*, 110, 9 (μία γὰρ οὐσα). Anche in Amm. Marc. 23, 4, 2 (*multiplīci chorda nervorum tortilium*) la corda è singola, sebbene formata da più fibre nervine. L'ambiguità della definizione ha comunque spinto alcuni commentatori a ritenere che Ammiano intenda anche le matasse: vd. Den den BOEFT, cit., p. 62: "the *multiplēx chorda nervorum tortilium* is probably Amm.'s term both for the sinew-springs and the bow-strings, to which the slider is attached".

49 In Vitr. le matasse sono costantemente connotate dal plurale: 1, 1, 8: *e nervo torti funes*; 10, 10, 1: *nervi torti*; 10, 11, 2: *capillo maxime muliebri vel nervo funes*. Sulle seconde abbiamo poche testimonianze esplicite, per es. Bito Mech. 51, 1, che suggeriscono l'uso di fibre vegetali: sui diversi materiali utilizzati vd. da ultimo Burkhard MEIBNER, «Aus welchem Material waren die Federn antiker Torsionsgeschütze?», in Hans Beck/Benedikt Eckhardt/Christoph Michels/Sonja Richter (Hgg.), *Von Magna Graecia nach Asia Minor. Festschrift für Linda-Marie Günther zum 65. Geburtstag*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 327-338. Alcune posizioni sono da ritenersi definitivamente superate, come quelle di Salomon REINACH, «Un homme à projets du Bas-Empire», *Revue Archéologique* 16, 1922, p. 228 e THOMPSON, cit., p. 62, sulle quali vd. la critica di OLIVER, cit., p. 113 s., ripresa da GIARDINA, cit., p. 77.

50 Per certi versi ciò implica di comprendere anche la stessa categoria di appartenenza della macchina. È utile immediatamente precisare che solo pochi commentatori, come Rudolf SCHNEIDER, *Anonymi De rebus bellicis liber*, Weidmann, Berlin 1908, p. 37; THOMPSON, cit., p. 62 e CHEVEDDEN, cit., p. 155, ritengono che la *quadrirotis* sia un'arma ad arco, cioè sfrutti il principio della tensione/compressione di un grande arco composito, assomigliando quindi ad una balestra medievale (non funziona tuttavia il confronto portato da Revilo P. OLIVER, «A note on the *DE REBUS BELLICIS*», *Classical Philology*, 50, 2, 1955, pp. 113-118 con l'*arcus ferreus* della *ballista fulminalis* (18, 1), come dimostrato già da MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 245, seguito tra gli altri da GIARDINA, cit., p. 99). La maggior parte ritiene invece che l'A. stia qui illustrando un pezzo di artiglieria che sfrutta il principio della torsione (FLEURY, cit., p. 62 s., anche grazie a confronti con Vitruvio e Vegezio, individua nell'impiego del verbo *intorqueo* una spia in questo senso). In effetti

Le operazioni sul campo di battaglia esponevano in effetti la macchina a plausibili attacchi, constatazione che può aver spinto l'A. a studiare un meccanismo alternativo per una delle componenti summenzionate: tra le parti più vulnerabili di una ballista vanno infatti certamente annoverate sia le matasse, anche se queste erano verosimilmente incastonate in un telaio ligneo rinforzato da placche di ferro<sup>51</sup>, sia appunto le funi di trazione per il caricamento, facilmente sostituibili, ma la cui rottura avrebbe comunque reso inutilizzabile la macchina per un certo tempo.

Per trovare una possibile soluzione all'enigma partiamo da una fonte che testimonia chiaramente il tentativo, da parte dei progettisti antichi, di escogitare sistemi alternativi (s'intende sostanzialmente rispetto alle matasse) per immagazzinare l'energia necessaria al rilascio dei proiettili. Si tratta di Philo Mech, *Bel.* 72, 8 ss., che propone di sostituire i fasci verticali con placche di bronzo (οὐ διὰ νεύρων ἀλλὰ διὰ χαλκοῦ)<sup>52</sup>. Da notare che Filone sottolinea il valore dell'arma negli scontri campali (ἐν τε ταῖς ὑπαίθροις χρείαις) a causa della sua resilienza (si intende alle rotture e all'umidità), che è un elemento determinante anche per la *quadrirotis* nella concezione dell'A., perché operante in analoghi contesti. Quanto appena letto non può tuttavia essere considerato argomento conclusivo per riconoscere nei *radii* del *DRB* un sostituto delle matasse. Dovremmo infatti presumere che anche l'A. abbia avvertito la medesima esigenza di Filone, fatto non ovvio e non dimostrabile. Inoltre rimane del tutto opaco e molto difficile pensare che dei 'raggi' possano essere piegati, appunto 'torti', allo scopo<sup>53</sup>.

---

difficilmente nella descrizione poteva mancare la menzione dell'arco, qualora presente, ed il confronto con la *ballista fulminalis* fa propendere per quest'ultima interpretazione (ma vd. più sotto).

- 51 Se si immagina un modello sul tipo della carroballista effigiata sulla Colonna Traiana, simile in questo aspetto alla *cheiromballistra* di Erone, allora le matasse erano inserite in cilindri metallici.
- 52 Per un commento all'intera descrizione di questo innovativo sistema propulsivo rimando qui semplicemente a MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., pp. 175-177. Se l'Anonimo si riferisce ad un tipo di dispositivo in qualche modo analogo, allora dobbiamo constatare che la sua proposta non è originale.
- 53 A questo punto un paragone non peregrino può essere instaurato con un lanciadardi descritto in un'opera umanistica, il *De machinis et rebus mechanicis* di K. Gruter von Werden. Si tratta di una macchina la cui propulsione, perlomeno secondo il progetto dell'estensore del trattato, è generata dal contemporaneo piegamento di due file di pertiche verticali, fissate saldamente al terreno e fatte retrocedere fino al caricamento desiderato tramite una vite orizzontale. Un modello del genere è altrimenti ignoto ed esibisce deficienze notevoli (si rimandi semplicemente, per testo e commento, a Dietrich LOHRMANN, Horst KRANZ,

Ad ingarbugliare ulteriormente la questione intervengono alcuni confronti con altre fonti e passi. Prima di tutto l'A. sembra opporsi all'assunto di Vegezio *mil.*, 4, 9, 1: *onagri vel ballistae ceteraque tormenta nisi funibus nervinis intenta nihil prosunt*<sup>54</sup>. Se tuttavia si potrebbe facilmente obiettare che l'A. avesse in mente qualcosa di rivoluzionario, che fosse appunto in aperto contrasto con gli usuali modelli, evocati da Vegezio, rimane molto problematico l'impiego del termine *radius* per designare questa apparentemente 'nuova' componente<sup>55</sup>. Si osservi infatti la discrepanza di significato che il medesimo termine assume nel paragrafo sulla *ballista fulminalis*, dove indica le stanghe delle ruote per il caricamento: 18, 2 *sed retro duabus rotis uiri singuli radiorum nisibus adnitentes funem retrorsum tendunt* ("pertanto singoli uomini, facendo forza sulle stanghe di due ruote situate nella parte posteriore, tendono la fune all'indietro", trad. GIARDINA, cit., p. 33). Inoltre in 18, 3 l'A. designa la corda arciera come *nervi funis*, mentre nel passo qui in esame solo di semplici *funes*, come se stesse parlando di qualcos'altro, cioè delle matasse<sup>56</sup>.

Dubbi piuttosto seri persistono anche intorno alla tesi sostenuta da Marsden (e Fleury), secondo cui i *radii* sarebbero un originale sistema di caricamento non tramite funi, ma per mezzo di barre dentate (vd. fig. 2)<sup>57</sup>. Oltre al fatto di dover attribuire a *radius* il valore di 'dente di ingranaggio', cosa già di per sé non del tutto ovvia<sup>58</sup>, la difficoltà più seria risiede nel comprendere il reale vantaggio di

---

Ulrich ALERTZ (Hgg.), *Konrad Gruter von Werden, De machinis et rebus mechanicis. Ein Maschinenbuch aus Italien für den König von Dänemark 1393-1424, Bd. II. Edition*, Città del Vaticano 2006, pp. 241-243), ma serve a dimostrare, pur in epoche di molto posteriori all'A., la persistenza dei tentativi di inventare un'alternativa agli usuali sistemi di propulsione.

54 Già Santo MAZZARINO, *Aspetti sociali del quarto secolo. Ricerche di storia tardo-romana*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma 1951, p. 99 ravvedeva nella frase un possibile motivo di polemica da parte di Vegezio nei confronti dell'A (in tal caso ovviamente si tratterebbe ancora di sostituire le matasse).

55 Ha ragione OLIVER, cit., p. 114 (opinione formulata contro la traduzione di *radii* tramite "windlass" di Thompson) ad osservare che "in Latin *radii* in a mechanical context are always rods, bars, or spokes".

56 Non a caso già OLIVER, cit., p. 114 (non seguito da nessuno degli esegeti successivi) ritiene che il testo in 7, 6 vada così inteso "*funibus [sc. nervinis]*".

57 MARSDEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 242; FLEURY, cit., pp. 63-65. Tuttavia queste barre non servono a muovere le *cochleae*, come ritiene SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 120.

58 Molto interessante il confronto col valore del greco ἀκτίς avanzato da FLEURY, cit., p. 65, ma restano le osservazioni appena fatte sull'incongruenza interna del senso di *radius*

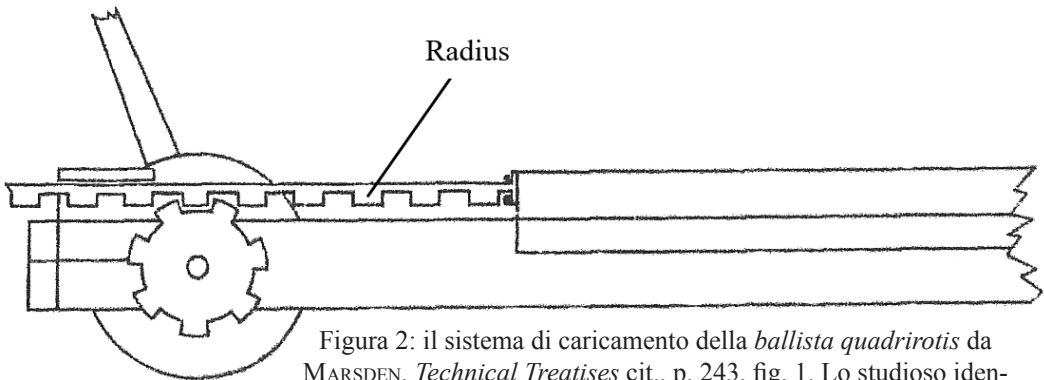


Figura 2: il sistema di caricamento della *ballista quadrirotis* da MARS DEN, *Technical Treatises* cit., p. 243, fig. 1. Lo studioso identifica i *radii* con un sistema di traino dentato che rappresenta in sostanza un prolungamento della slitta.

allestire un sistema del genere al posto delle più usuali funi. È pacifico che una cremagliera (oltretutto in ferro, secondo Marsden) avrebbe assicurato resistenza ai danni di gran lunga maggiore rispetto alle funi, ma a fronte di complicazioni non indifferenti in fase di costruzione che, a mio avviso, non possono giustificare pienamente la sostituzione delle prime. In proposito una testimonianza fondamentale si dimostra quella di Vitr. 10, 11, 1 sui differenti sistemi di caricamento delle balliste: *aliae enim uectibus, suculis, nonnullae polyspastis, aliae ergatis, quaedam etiam tympanorum torquentur rationibus* (“alcune infatti vengono caricate mediante un sistema di leve e verricelli, altre per mezzo di carrucole, altre ancora per mezzo di argani e talune tramite un sistema a tamburo”, trad. Luciano MIGOTTO, *Marco Vitruvio Pollione. De Architectura Libri X. Testo latino a fronte*, Edizioni Studio Tesi, Pordenone 1990, p. 507). È evidente che cambiano i dispositivi installati sul fusto, ma le corde di trazione sono comunque imprescindibili<sup>59</sup>.

Sulla base dell’oggettiva, duplice difficoltà, da una parte di identificare senza dubbio i *funes*, dall’altra di capire forma e funzione dei *radii*, sarei propenso a mantenere una posizione non netta, lasciando la questione aperta.

---

nell’A.

59 In questo gruppo di opinioni va considerata a parte quella di LIEBESCHUETZ, cit., p. 126 s., che ravvede nelle parole dell’A. una possibile eco di Philo. *Mech. bel.*, 75, 32 s., dove si descrive un sistema di caricamento a catena montato sulla catapulta a ripetizione. In realtà l’agilità di manovra e di lancio che l’A. attribuisce alla *quadrirotis* non va confusa con una maggiore cadenza di tiro. Nonostante le palesi incertezze nelle descrizioni ed un impiego non sempre cristallino del lessico, possiamo ragionevolmente pensare che l’A. non avrebbe mancato di ricordare una componente essenziale del modello di Filone come il serbatoio per i dardi.

## II. IL TICODIFRO.

Strettamente connessa alla *quadrirotis* è la macchina illustrata nel *DRB* subito dopo e denominata *tichodifrus*. Si tratta, come vedremo, di un modello di carro leggero dietro al quale poteva trovare protezione un piccolo manipolo di soldati e che serviva come scudo anche alla stessa *ballista quadrirotis*. L'A. dedica a questo carro un capitolo della sua esposizione, ma torna a parlarne in altri due momenti differenti, altrettanto fondamentali per la comprensione sia della struttura sia delle modalità di impiego dell'arma. È dunque opportuno prima di tutto riportare tutti i passi per poterne analizzare il contenuto complessivo<sup>60</sup>:

### 8. *Expositio tichodifri*

[1] *Tichodifrus quod est genus machinae ex rei suae commoditate, Graeca appellatione, uocabuli sumpsit exordium, eo quod per hunc facilius in murum paretur ascensus, ante ballistae semper ducendus incessum quo protectior eadem ballista operetur.* [2] *Erit ergo huius quoque compositio uel fabrica utili et commoda inuentione praeparanda.* [3] *Ergo hic idem tichodifrus non altior sed humilior fabricatur, ut intra se possit latenter incedentium celare uestigia: qui, duabus superimpositis cratibus fixoriisque confixis, intra se tectos ab omni incursione defendit, duabus sane rotis ad promouendam machinam latenter impulsus.* [4] *Cuius axium extremitates et frons nec non et superior latitudo fuscinis et lanceis armatur diligenter aptatis, ne aggrediendi cuiquam per uacantia defensore loca, id est superiorem partem, tribuatur facultas.*

### Descrizione del ticodifro

[1] Quel tipo di macchina che è il ticodifro ha preso originariamente nome, con terminologia greca, dalla sua utilità pratica, appunto perché grazie a esso è più facile scalare le mura; deve essere mosso sempre dinnanzi al procedere della ballista, in modo che la medesima ballista operi più protetta. [2] La sua costruzione, o assemblaggio, dovrà essere seguita in base a un progetto utile e adeguato. [3] Dunque questo ticodifro non deve essere costruito troppo alto, ma piuttosto basso, così da poter celare dentro di sé le orme di coloro che incedono nascosti: esso difende da qualsiasi attacco quanti vi si nascondono dentro grazie a due cortine di vimini poste sopra e fissate a chiodi; due ruote, adibite allo spostamento della macchina, la muovono in modo invisibile. [4] L'estremità degli assi e la parte frontale, oltre alla superficie superiore, sono armate con forche e con lance accuratamente disposte, affinché nessuno abbia la possibilità di attaccare attraverso gli spazi privi di difensori, cioè dalla parte superiore.

### 9. *Expositio clipeocentri*

*Parma, hoc est modicus clipeus, fixoriis minutis ad soliditatem sui diligenter munitus, uarie habetur idoneus; interdum enim operit gestientem, nonnumquam in fronte ticho-*

<sup>60</sup> Testo e relative traduzioni ancora da GIARDINA, cit.

*difri oppositus uel in temone suspensus munit inferius latitantes ab incurso comminus uenientum.*

#### Descrizione dello scudo chiodato

Una parma, cioè un piccolo scudo, guarnito accuratamente di chiodi minuti che lo rafforzano, è ritenuta utile a vari usi. In alcune occasioni protegge chi la imbraccia; in altre, disposta sulla faccia frontale del ticodifro, oppure appesa al timone, difende dall'attacco ravvicinato dei nemici gli uomini che vi si nascondono sotto.

#### 19, 4-6 *De bellico apparatu*

[4] *Persarum sane gens, cui praeter ceteras nationes et dolus cordi est et corpori suppetit uirtus, quadratis est agminibus et maiori bellorum apparatu superanda; ubi etiam machinarum est omnis quam rettulimus industria proponenda, quae et uiribus resistat et dolos callidae gentis refutet.* [5] *In huiusmodi igitur congressibus tichodifrus, duorum gestatus ministerio uirorum, protegat ballistam multum bellicis subsidiis profuturam.* [6] *Sub ipsius ergo tichodifri tegmine latentes scutati usque ad uiciniam pugnaturi hostis adueniant, qui post detecti protegendi sunt ab omni telorum nube, eiusdem tichodifri tabulatis, ut meminimus, acutis ferreis communitis.*

#### Sull'apparato bellico

[4] Quanto al popolo dei Persiani, che più di ogni altra gente ha l'inganno nell'animo e il valore nel corpo, esso deve essere sconfitto con schieramenti quadrati e con un apparato bellico preponderante. Qui è indispensabile dispiegare tutta la potenza, sopra descritta, delle macchine, che da un lato si opponga alla forza e dall'altro mandi a vuoto gli inganni di quella gente astuta. [5] Pertanto, in questi scontri il ticodifro, guidato con l'impiego di due uomini, protegga la ballista, molto utile alle forze militari. [6] Truppe dotate di scudo e nascoste sotto la protezione dello stesso ticodifro giungano dunque a stretto contatto con il nemico che si appresta a combattere; queste truppe poi, uscite allo scoperto, devono essere protette da ogni nube di proiettili nemici, mentre i tavolati dello stesso ticodifro – come abbiamo detto – sono muniti di punte di ferro.

8, 1 *tichodifrus*<sup>61</sup>: credo che dalla presenza congiunta del timone e delle ruote (vd. commento più sotto), che contraddistinguono questa macchina da tutte le altre del medesimo genere, nonché dalla sua manovrabilità, derivi la definizione

61 Sulle caratteristiche di questo *hapax* rimando a IRELAND, cit., p. 127 e soprattutto a Stefanie GRÄF, *Der Anonymus de rebus bellicis. Eine morphologische Untersuchung*, Verlag Dr. Kovač, Hamburg 2018, pp. 286-288, i quali sottolineano la singolarità dell'unione di un termine prosaico come *τείχος* (muro) e di uno con una forte connotazione poetica come *δίφορος* (carro). La ricercatezza dei nomi ha la funzione di esaltare il grado di novità delle invenzioni, come ravvisato già da LIEBESCHUETZ, cit., p. 125. Vd. anche GRÄF, *Der Anonymus*, cit., p. 289 s. Per osservazioni sulla lingua del passo vd. SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., pp. 120-123, con ulteriori rimandi.

di ‘carro’<sup>62</sup>.

8, 1 *per hunc facilior in murum paretur ascensus*: quest’affermazione, insieme alle caratteristiche del nome *tichodifrus*, ha indotto i commentatori a formulare pareri piuttosto disparati e non di rado anche decisamente immotivati.

Già Reinach ha ritenuto che il carro fungesse in qualche modo da struttura di supporto ai piedi delle mura avversarie per poterle più facilmente scalare<sup>63</sup>. Da più parti la nostra macchina è stata accostata anche alla *helepolis*, da cui divergerebbe sostanzialmente per la struttura semplificata e per le ridotte dimensioni<sup>64</sup>.

In realtà, molto più semplicemente, abbiamo qui a che fare con una protezione leggera, utile a rendere più sicura, e quindi a facilitare, l’operazione di avvicinamento alle mura per le truppe, che dovevano poi compiere la vera propria arrampicata per mezzo di scale tradizionali, la cui presenza è resa necessaria dal contesto.

L’ideazione del *tichodifrus* risponde in sostanza a quell’esigenza ben esplicitata anche in altri autori militari, cioè quella di proteggere l’operato delle truppe impegnate nelle prime linee di un assedio. Il corretto senso dell’espressione qui in esame va infatti inteso confrontando altri passi sull’argomento, tra cui determinante quello in Vegezio, *mil.* 4, 15, 6, concernente l’impiego del *pluteus*: *ut*

62 Cfr. le parole di Vegezio *mil.* 4, 15, 5 sul *pluteus* (sul quale si avrà modo di tornare): *in quamcumque partem volueris admoventur more carpenti*.

63 REINACH, cit., p. 231 s. MEIBNER, *Die technologische* cit., p. 282 n. 619 ha messo in evidenza che per tale scopo il carro non era adatto, sostenendo (ma senza argomenti persuasivi) che la frase sarebbe indizio di come l’A. abbia probabilmente tratto le sue descrizioni da una compilazione letteraria.

64 Vd. soprattutto GIARDINA, cit., p. 78 s. (parere fatto proprio anche di recente da ERAMO, cit., p. 191); BRANDT, cit., p. 156 e SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 120. In realtà già Condorelli 1971, 114 s., pur richiamando l’elepoli, osserva che le somiglianze sono in realtà piuttosto superficiali. Il confronto non regge pur tenendo presente che certe difese del *tichodifrus* (tridenti e le lance) utili a scoraggiare un attacco diretto contro di esso, compaiono anche nel modello di elepoli descritto da Amm. Marc. 23, 4, 12, come notato da THOMPSON, cit., p. 66. Secondo GRÄF, *Der Anonymus*, cit., p. 289 il nostro carro sarebbe pensato solo come protezione nelle operazioni campali e non come arma in operazioni ossidionali, ma l’esplicita menzione delle mura sembra smentire tale interpretazione. Molto interessante invece il confronto instaurato dalla stessa studiosa (GRÄF, *Der Anonymus*, cit., p. 158) con la macchina chiamata ‘Ribalde’, comparsa nel noto trattato tardomedievale *Bellifortis* di K. Kyaser, che attesta la fortuna di simili ripari per le truppe anche in tempi molto più recenti. Poco significative, infine, le brevi notazioni in SCHNEIDER, cit., p. 31 e NEHER, cit., p. 49 s.

*scalis ascendendi facilius praestetur occasio*<sup>65</sup>. Dello stesso tenore anche il ragguaglio di Ateneo Meccanico intorno a un modello di testuggine portatile: Ἐπὶ δὲ θελήσωσιν ἄσπον γίνεσθαι τοῦ τείχους οἱ πολεμοῦντες, τὴν ἀρτὴν ἀνέχοντες χελώνην, δι' αὐτῆς προσθήσουσι τὰς κλίμακας (rr. 352-354 ed. Gatto<sup>66</sup>).

Nei casi citati vengono esplicitamente indicate le scale come mezzo d'assalto alle mura, ma a parte questa divergenza il senso generale dell'enunciato combacia con quanto intende l'A. Si noti che in Ateneo Mecc. l'indicazione δι' αὐτῆς non significa che la sua χελώνη serviva 'materialmente' ad accostare le scale, ma che al riparo di questa i soldati potevano utilizzarle con maggior sicurezza. Analogamente quando l'A. scrive *per hunc* comunica che il *tichodifrus*, insieme all'azione della ballista che lo seguiva, facilitava l'avanzata verso le mura nemiche.

Anche le suddette affinità con la *vinea* ed il *pluteus*, evocati come confronto da vari commentatori, meritano un esame più accurato<sup>67</sup>. Abbiamo appena detto che in generale è corretto classificare queste macchine tra quelle utili a proteggere e sostenere l'avanzata delle truppe durante gli assedi, ma è altrettanto palese che ognuna esibisce caratteristiche proprie che le distingue dalle altre.

La *vinea* aveva innanzitutto sia dimensioni sia forma propri: era costituita da una struttura in legno e graticci quadrangolare e priva di ruote, larga otto piedi, alta sette e lunga sedici<sup>68</sup>. Costruita in vari esemplari, poi uniti insieme, essa cre-

65 In effetti da più parti si è già opportunamente richiamato, anche se non realmente approfondito, l'accostamento con la *vinea* ed il *pluteus* vegeziani: vd. THOMPSON, cit., p. 66; il già ricordato CONDORELLI, cit., p. 114 s., TOMEI, cit., p. 73; in un secondo momento anche GIARDINA, cit., 79 (sulla scorta di Thompson) e FLEURY, cit., p. 65.

66 "Quando gli assalitori vogliono avvicinarsi alle mura, sollevando la testuggine portatile, accostano con l'ausilio di questa le scale." Si adotta la nuova numerazione dell'edizione GATTO, cit., per il testo con commento vd. Francesco FIORUCCI, «La testuggine ἀρετή in Ateneo Meccanico (rr. 352-356 Gatto = 38, 10-14 Wescher)», *Giornale Italiano di Filologia*, 74, 2022, pp. 227-245, da cui è tratta anche la traduzione appena riportata.

67 Su queste ed altre macchine di simile natura rimando a LENDLE, cit., pp. 133-146 e Friedhelm L. MÜLLER, Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Abriß des Militärwesens*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1997, p. 307.

68 Vale la pena di riportare qui integralmente la descrizione di Veg. mil. 4, 15, 1-4, utile come termine di paragone anche in seguito: [1] *Vineas dixerunt veteres quas nunc militari barbaricoque usu caucias vocant. E lignis levioribus machina colligatur, lata pedibus octo, alta pedibus septem, longa pedibus sedecim.* [2] *Huius tectum munitione duplici tabulatis cratibusque contextitur;* [3] *latera quoque vimine saepiuntur ne saxorum telorumque impetu penetrentur;* [4] *extrinsecus autem, ne immisso concremetur incendio, crudis ac recentibus coriis vel centonibus operitur. Istae, cum plures factae fuerint, iunguntur in ordi-*

ava un tunnel sotto il quale gli assalitori raggiungevano la base delle mura per scavarne le fondamenta. A ben vedere dunque anche lo scopo della macchina va nettamente distinto da quello del *tichodifrus*. Inoltre Vegezio prevede che la minaccia maggiore provenisse dai proiettili nemici (cfr. *ne saxorum telorumque impetu penetrentur*), mentre l'A. si premura di mettere in guardia contro assalti portati direttamente contro il carro (cfr. *ab omni incursione ... ab incursu comminus uenientum*), evidentemente perché era destinato ad un diverso impiego.

Corrispondenze più solide si riscontrano con il *pluteus*<sup>69</sup>. Anche quest'ultimo era infatti munito di ruote e, nonostante la diversa forma ed ossatura<sup>70</sup>, costituiva un riparo per arcieri e frombolieri, i quali avevano il compito di coprire l'avanzata degli assediati. Per fare ciò tuttavia i soldati muniti di archi e fionde erano costretti ad accostarsi pericolosamente alle mura. Il confronto col passo vegeziiano mette in evidenza la diversa natura della proposta dell'A. e l'estrema fiducia riposta da questi nelle soluzioni tecniche e nel ricorso all'ingegno. Nell'A. la ballista sostituisce infatti da sola diverse più semplici armi da getto di Vegezio (cfr. *sagittis sive fundis vel missilibibus*), ottenendo una maggior potenza di fuoco e riducendo notevolmente l'esposizione degli attaccanti ai pericoli.

Strutturalmente il *tichodifrus* si presenta pertanto un po' a metà tra il *pluteus* e la *χελώνη* a cuneo descritta da Apollod. Mech. 140, 9-141,4<sup>71</sup>. Il carro dell'A. vantava una mobilità maggiore rispetto alla seconda, allo stesso tempo era più corazzato e resistente del leggero *pluteus*. La *χελώνη* era inoltre studiata per fronteggiare contromisure condotte dai difensori da posizioni elevate<sup>72</sup>. Le

---

*nem, sub quibus obsidentes tuti ad subruenda murorum penetrant fundamenta.* Nonostante l'omonimia, diverso appare il riparo denominato 'vigna' (gr. ἄμπελος) in Apollod. Mech. 141, 4-143,5: vd. WHITEHEAD, cit., pp. 82-84.

69 Così illustrato in *mil.* 4, 15, 5-6: [5] *Plutei dicuntur qui ad similitudinem absidis contextuntur e vimine et ciliciis vel coriis proteguntur ternisque rotulis, quarum una in medio, duae in capitibus apponuntur, in quamcumque partem volueris admoventur more carpenti; [6] quos obsidentes applicant muris, eorumque munitione protecti sagittis sive fundis vel missilibibus defensores omnes de propugnaculis civitatis exturbant, ut scalis ascendendi facilius praestetur occasio.*

70 Vd. più sotto nel commento a 8, 3 *duabus ... confixis*.

71 Si rinuncia in questo caso a riportare il testo, affetto da gravi oscurità, ma da cui è comunque possibile ricavare che l'autore intende illustrare due varianti di un piccolo modello di testuggine, adatto come riparo in caso di assalto a posizioni elevate. Sulla tormentata esegesi di questo passo vd. WHITEHEAD, cit., pp. 80-82.

72 Analogò l'utilizzo tattico era previsto per la già citata testuggine 'portatile' di Athen.

caratteristiche del *tichodifrus*, insieme alla menzione della *ballista quadrirotis* e degli altri carri da guerra che seguono nel *DRB*, sono invece chiari indizi che l'A. pensa ad assalti a fortificazioni poste in pianura e a scenari bellici in situazioni climatiche verosimilmente secche, dove veicoli con ruote potevano al meglio espletare il loro potenziale (vd. più sotto sugli aspetti tattici).

In margine ai raffronti appena suggeriti, vale la pena a questo punto affrontare anche il tema della (supposta) somiglianza con la macchina mietitrice descritta da Palladio nel suo *Opus agriculturae* (7, 2, 2-4)<sup>73</sup>. Da un esame delle due testimonianze non si riscontrano in realtà analogie davvero sostanziali, se non quelle accomunanti, potremmo dire quasi 'per natura', qualsiasi veicolo simile ad un carro. Nella parte frontale, cioè in corrispondenza dell'asse con le ruote, laddove il *tichodifrus* si sviluppa verso l'alto, creando la barriera dietro cui si riparano i soldati, la macchina di Palladio ha una superficie quadrangolare chiusa sui lati, che serve da contenitore per la raccolta delle spighe. Presenta inoltre due corti timoni al posto di quello singolo del *tichodifrus*, tuttavia comparabile è la posizione della forza motrice (due uomini nell'A. e un bue in Palladio), che imprime la locomozione spingendo<sup>74</sup>. Parzialmente somiglianti, ma solo nell'aspetto e non

---

Mech. rr. 352-356.

73 La similarità è stata ravvisata innanzitutto da Kenneth D. WHITE, «Harvesting, Palladius and technology in the later Roman empire», in M.W.C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E.A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, pp. 39-45, sostanzialmente negata da GIARDINA, cit., p. 79, evocata senza commento da FLEURY, cit., p. 65, e riproposta di recente da GRÄF, *Der Anonymus*, cit., p. 289, ma mai realmente sviscerata. Questo il testo di Palladio che ci interessa: *Fit itaque uehiculum, quod duabus rotis breuibus fertur. [3] Huius quadrata superficies tabulis munitur, quae forinsecus reclines in summo reddant spatia largiora. Ab eius fronte carpenti breuior est altitudo tabularum. Ibi denticuli plurimi ac rari ad spicarum mensuram constituuntur in ordine, ad superiorem partem recurui. A tergo uero eiusdem uehiculi duo breuissimi temones figurantur uelut amites basternarum. Ibi bos capite in uehiculum uerso iugo aptatur et uinculis, mansuetus sane, qui non modum compulsoris excedat. [4] Hic ubi uehiculum per messes coepit inpellere, omnis spica in carpentum denticulis comprehensa cumulatur abruptis ac relictis paleis altitudinem uel humilitatem plerumque bubulco moderante, qui sequitur.* Per una disamina su questa macchina vd. l'ancora valido Alwin NACHTWEH, «Rekonstruktion der ältesten gallischen Mähmaschine», *Journal für Landwirtschaft* 59, 1911, pp. 1-8, che ne offre anche diverse riproduzioni grafiche (comprese quelle proposte nei saggi precedenti) alle tavole I-III (pp. 459-563), e Marco J. BARTOLDUS, *Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus - Welt und Wert spätrömischer Landwirtschaft*, Wißner-Verlag, Augsburg 2012, pp. 105-108.

74 Sulla base di questa somiglianza ardisce forse troppo Daniele FORABOSCHI, «Economia e guerra nel «De rebus bellicis»», in *Studi di Antichità in memoria di Clementina Gatti*, Ci-

certo nella funzione, sono ancora i denti sporgenti della mietitrice, che servono a tranciare le spighe, e le difese appuntite del *tichodifrus*. La frase “*ab eius fronte carpenti breuior est altitudo tabularum*” significa che il lato anteriore del contenitore era più basso degli altri, restando cioè parzialmente aperto, per permettere alle spighe di scivolarvi dentro. Non sussiste pertanto corrispondenza con la precisazione dell’A. “*tichodifrus non altior sed humilior fabricatur*” (vd. commento più sotto).

8, 1 *quo protector eadem ballista operetur*: da queste parole emerge con chiarezza che il carro, pur operando nelle linee più avanzate, aveva una funzione prettamente difensiva nei confronti della ballista: si tratta evidentemente della *quadrirotis* descritta subito prima, la cui agilità, messa in evidenza dalla fonte, ben si adatta ad operare con altri mezzi muniti di ruote. A quest’ultima si attribuisce grande peso per la riuscita dell’attacco, come esplicitato anche in 19, 5 (*ballistam multum bellicis subsidiis profuturam*), sebbene in un contesto bellico parzialmente diverso (vd. sotto), e pertanto doveva essere mantenuta efficiente e al sicuro il più a lungo possibile. Proprio grazie alla pressione esercitata dall’azione della ballista sui difensori annidati sulle mura gli assediati potevano più agevolmente ascendere le mura.

8, 3 *non altior sed humilior fabricatur*: Finora la precisazione è stata interpretata per lo più nel senso che la struttura dovesse presentarsi ‘piuttosto bassa’ rispetto ad un ipotetico confronto, rintracciabile nelle grandi macchine d’assedio<sup>75</sup>. In linea di massima ciò corrisponde a realtà, come è facilmente intuibile dal contesto generale, in quanto la copertura doveva soltanto superare la media statura umana di quel tanto da permettere ai soldati di trasportarla senza troppa fatica stando in piedi (vd. commento in 8, 4). Tuttavia le parole contengono anche (anzi soprattutto) un’altra importante informazione per chi si incaricava di rico-

---

salpino-Goliardica, Milano 1987, p. 124 s., il quale, pur non ravvisando alcuna “linea di derivazione diretta” tra la macchina di Palladio ed il *tichodifrus* (seguendo in questo WHITE, cit., p. 44), afferma che il secondo “è in pratica l’applicazione bellica del principio con cui era stata costruita la mietitrice gallica”. Nel saggio, infatti, lo studioso sostiene la tesi del “trasferimento di tecnologia dal settore civile a quello militare” (p. 126). Per quanto concerne il *tichodifrus* penso invece che vada annoverato, come sopra già suggerito, tra le armi per proteggere l’avanzata delle truppe ed in tale contesto vada ricercata la sua genesi. La denominazione di ‘carro’ deriva semplicemente, come accennato, dalla presenza combinata di ruote e *temo* (vd. anche più sotto).

<sup>75</sup> Vd. da ultimo SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 122.

struire la macchina. L'autore intende qui spiegare che la protezione sfiorava il terreno, era cioè schiacciata verso il basso, per non lasciare scoperto nessun punto<sup>76</sup>. Questo è a mio avviso l'unico modo per comprendere l'affermazione seguente: *ut intra se possit latenter incedentium celare uestigia*. L'attenzione dell'autore si concentra con evidenza sulla parte inferiore della macchina, perché la struttura occultava completamente alla vista dei nemici quanto accadeva dietro (si noti l'insistenza sul concetto tramite *latenter/celare*), proteggendo i piedi dei soldati e le ruote (vd. anche più sotto)<sup>77</sup>.

A questo punto è utile discutere un'informazione fondamentale sulla struttura del *tichodifrus* comparsa nel citato cap. 9, dedicato al clipeocentro, uno speciale modello di scudo, applicabile secondo l'A. proprio al nostro carro nel modo seguente: *nonnumquam in fronte tichodifri oppositus uel in temone suspensus munit inferius latitantes ab incurso comminus uenientum*.

Particolarmente significativa la menzione del *temo*. Secondo Condorelli questo serviva per gli spostamenti in contesti non bellici, che avvenivano con l'ausilio di animali da soma<sup>78</sup>. Sembra di capire che secondo lo studioso il *temo* non fosse parte integrante della macchina e dovesse essere verosimilmente staccato prima dell'assalto. A decretare come inadeguata tale interpretazione basterebbe semplicemente osservare che l'autore esplicita l'utilità dello scudo sul timone come difesa, quindi in un contesto chiaramente operativo. Inoltre la caratteristica configurazione del *tichodifrus*, costituito da un asse orizzontale<sup>79</sup> con ruote funge da base per una struttura che si sviluppa in senso verticale, impone necessariamente un *temo* per permettere agli uomini di spingerlo e manovrarlo. Senza l'equilibrio garantito da un elemento perpendicolare all'asse delle ruote, infatti,

76 Questo aspetto mi sembra colto nella traduzione di THOMPSON, cit., p. 115 e IRELAND, cit., p. 29. Ancora secondo lo stesso IRELAND, cit., p. 116, *altior/humilior* avrebbero senso positivo ed il grado comparativo risulterebbe in qualche modo dall'attrazione esercitata dal precedente *facilior* (8, 1). In realtà credo si tratti di comparativi assoluti ed in questo modo sono infatti puntualmente tradotti sia da Condorelli sia da Giardina.

77 Il termine *uestigia* sembra nel frangente comprendere per estensione, accanto al senso proprio di 'tracce', anche quello concreto di 'piedi', preferito infatti nella traduzione già da Thompson 1952, 115 e fuggacemente segnalato da HASSALL, cit., p. 89. Sulle occorrenze di participi sostantivati accompagnati da avverbio come *latenter incedentium* nell'A. vd. IRELAND, cit., p. 118.

78 CONDORELLI, cit., p. 115.

79 Sul plurale *axium* si discuterà più sotto.

l'avanzamento sarebbe stato molto più problematico e ad ogni ostacolo del terreno la macchina avrebbe rischiato di rovesciarsi in avanti.

Ancora, dalla descrizione sembra che la posizione dello scudo sul timone potesse in qualche modo contribuire alla difesa degli armati che manovravano il carro. In realtà il *temo* partiva dal punto mediano della struttura e veniva quindi a trovarsi al centro dello spazio creatosi dietro di essa, cioè in una posizione di per sé piuttosto esposta agli assalitori provenienti dai lati. Per i conducenti che lo afferravano quindi, una qualsiasi difesa disposta sul timone non avrebbe sortito alcun effetto. Più logico ritenere che i soldati appendessero gli scudi sul *temo* per sgravarsi di un ingombro al momento del trasporto, per poi servirsene una volta raggiunto il punto dove il carro assumeva la posizione di attacco<sup>80</sup>. Per tale motivo la fonte precisa la collocazione degli scudi col verbo *suspendere*, perché potevano essere agevolmente rimossi e impugnati. Probabilmente essi pendevano ai lati del timone, così da lasciare quest'ultimo libero di essere afferrato e manovrato<sup>81</sup>.

8, 3 *duabus superimpositis cratibus fixoriisque confixis*: soprattutto Fleury, anche grazie al confronto con il clipeocentro, dove questi *fixoria*<sup>82</sup> ricompaiono, identifica quest'ultimi con punte sporgenti<sup>83</sup>. Si tratterebbe quindi di uno stragemma difensivo, e non di chiodi per rendere la struttura più solida<sup>84</sup>.

Un argomento a sfavore di tale ipotesi risiede nelle dimensioni di queste punte nel clipeocentro, definite 'piccole' (cfr. 9 *minutis fixoriis*)<sup>85</sup>, per cui appare poco realistico che esse abbiano potuto assolvere una qualche funzione difensiva supplementare in aggiunta alle picche e forche sporgenti descritte immediatamente

80 Come di consueto l'A. parla del *clipeus* al singolare, ma è meglio qui pensare a più scudi appesi.

81 In 19, 6 leggiamo che i soldati al riparo del *tichodifrus* erano armati di scudo (*scutati*): si tratta degli stessi due uomini addetti al trasporto, che hanno impugnato lo scudo una volta raggiunto il punto dello scontro. È tuttavia probabile che truppe aggiuntive abbiano accompagnato l'avanzata del carro, per contribuire alla difesa dello stesso e della *ballista quadrirotis* (vd. più sotto).

82 Si segue qui IRELAND, cit., p. 125 (ripreso p.e. da Sanchez-Ostiz, 123 e GIARDINA, cit., p. 80) nel ritenere il termine un neutro. Non univoca la posizione di FLEURY, cit., p. LXIX e 66.

83 FLEURY 2017, cit., p. 66 s., ma vd. già GIARDINA, cit., p. 79 s. Per IRELAND, cit., p. 125 sono dei chiodi particolari "perhaps rivet".

84 Si noti comunque subito che FLEURY 2017, cit., p. 68 s. interpreta *soliditas* in 9 in modo poco adatto al contesto (e isolato tra gli studiosi), cioè col senso di "totalité".

85 Nella descrizione del ticodifro la qualifica non compare.

dopo (vd. commento 8, 4)<sup>86</sup>. Di contro le ridotte dimensioni (estendendo tale caratteristica ai *fixoria* del ticodifro) possono più logicamente giustificarsi perché adatte a fermare i sottili graticci sulla struttura sottostante (vd. subito sotto). Neanche l'utilizzo del clipeocentro secondo l'A. sembra ben armonizzarsi nella ricostruzione di Fleury: esso pendeva infatti dal *temo* ed eventuali punte protese dalla sua superficie si sarebbero rivelate piuttosto scomode, per non dire dannose, per i soldati che cercavano protezione dietro il ticodifro. Riterrei quindi perlomeno dubbio sia che i *fixoria* del clipeocentro siano da identificare *tout court* con quelli del ticodifro, sia che i primi sporgano dalla superficie dello scudo, con funzione difensiva e non strutturale.

A questo punto diviene determinante la precisazione che troviamo in 19, 6, la cui importanza è stata finora trascurata dai commentatori: *eiusdem tichodifri tabulatis, ut meminimus, acutis ferreis communitis*. L'informazione non contrasta con la presenza di *crates*, ma anzi completa l'immagine del carro. Se ne deduce infatti che la struttura portante fosse assemblata con queste tavole, evidentemente leggere per non aumentare troppo il peso della macchina, ma senz'altro capaci di garantire una maggior resistenza rispetto ai soli graticci<sup>87</sup>. Non a caso la fonte qui esplicita che le punte ferree con funzione difensiva (da identificare con le forche e picche di 8, 4, come si evince da *ut meminimus*), erano piazzate su queste tavole e non sui troppo fragili graticci, intuitivamente inadatti ad assolvere da soli funzione portante<sup>88</sup>. Alla luce di quanto appena emerso, sembra più probabile che i *fixoria* fossero dei chiodi convenzionali, necessari a far aderire saldamente i gra-

86 Non convince infatti la spiegazione secondo cui questi *fixoria* (tra l'altro definiti "pointes longues", in contrasto con *minuta* della fonte) sarebbero stati disposti sulla faccia anteriore del ticodifro, rivolta ai nemici, mentre le forche e lance sopra e sui lati, perché proprio in 8, 4 si dichiara che quest'ultime erano sulla *frons*.

87 HASSALL, cit., p. 89 interpreta l'oggetto rettangolare che pare adagiato a terra di fronte al carro nelle illustrazioni dei codici come i due lati di graticci, formanti, una volta rimessi al loro posto e appoggiati sulle forche (8, 4), la struttura del carro (vd. fig. 3). Tale interpretazione ignora la precisazione *eiusdem tichodifri tabulatis* e attribuisce a queste forche, che sono espedienti difensivi, una funzione portante che sicuramente non avevano, come dimostrano i due participi *aptatis* (8, 4) e *communitis* (19, 6). Secondo FLEURY, cit., p. LXVIII n. 170 le *crates* sarebbero "panneaux faits de matériaux légers", ma in tal caso rimarrebbe opaca la funzione dei tavolati di 19, 6, invece ben esplicitata dalla fonte, né del resto possiamo pensare che *crates* e *tabulata* coincidano.

88 Nel suo insieme dunque l'intelaiatura del *tichodifrus* non sembra molto diversa da quella delle *vineae* di Veg. *mil.* 4, 14: *huius tectum munitione duplici tabulatis cratibusque contextitur* (cui rinvia infatti anche GIARDINA, cit., p. 79, ma senza approfondimenti).

ticci alle tavole sottostanti (vd. commento in 8, 4)<sup>89</sup>. Il participio *superimpositus* indicherebbe appunto il posizionamento dei graticci sull'intelaiatura e non una sovrapposizione tra due strati di graticci<sup>90</sup>.

8, 3 *intra se tectos*: abbiamo accennato sopra all'utilizzo a volte peculiare delle preposizioni nell'A. Nel caso in esame (come immediatamente sopra) *intra* pare giustificarsi col fatto che la struttura, sebbene non del tutto chiusa, offriva un riparo su più lati (vd. più sotto). Possiamo pertanto attribuire alla preposizione il senso proprio di 'dentro, all'interno'. Vd. anche 19, 5: *sub ipsius ergo tichodifri tegmine*.

8, 3 *duabus sane rotis ad promouendam machinam latenter impulsus*: Il carro avanzava su due ruote, montate internamente alla struttura corazzata, con l'evidente intento di proteggerle da eventuali incursioni nemiche o comunque per evitare al massimo l'esposizione e quindi possibili danni<sup>91</sup>. Queste venivano infatti azionate senza che il nemico potesse accorgersene (si noti ancora l'insistenza sul concetto di agire *latenter*, che ribadisce i precedenti *latenter/celare*), tanto che il veicolo doveva dare l'impressione di muoversi da solo. La capacità di spostarsi piuttosto velocemente in ogni direzione e con un certo grado di sorpresa offriva un vantaggio tattico non indifferente non solo durante un assedio, ma anche negli scontri campali, dove il *tichodifrus* trovava ulteriore impiego, a detta dei precetti dell'A. in 19, 5-6. Un carro che operava in combinazione con la ballista trainata da cavalli, i quali potevano imprimere un'andatura spedita, abbisognava di ruote relativamente grandi, per consentire appunto ai due portatori di superare eventuali ostacoli e di stare al passo col resto delle truppe.

8, 4 *cuius axium extremitates et frons nec non et superior latitudo fuscinis et lanceis armatur diligenter aptatis*: una prima considerazione concerne gli assi del

89 Consideriamo quindi *confixis* unito a *cratibus*, e *fixoribus* strumentale.

90 Nel qual caso avremmo forse trovato l'aggettivo *duplex*: vd. Vitr. 10, 14, 3 intorno alla protezione ignifuga montata sulla testuggine da riempimento: *percrudis coriis duplicibus consutis*. In proposito non mi sembra del tutto evidente, stando perlomeno alle relative figure (vd. sotto), se FLEURY, cit., p. 66, intenda una sovrapposizione in senso verticale. Corretta e condivisibile invece la rappresentazione grafica delle superfici ricoperte di cuoio per resistere agli attacchi incendiari, nonostante il silenzio della fonte.

91 Vd. soprattutto già CONDORELLI, cit., p. 115. Le ruote costituivano una componente sensibile del mezzo, danneggiata la quale la macchina diveniva inutilizzabile, compromettendo la riuscita dell'assalto e ponendo gli uomini bloccati dietro di essa in una situazione di grave pericolo.

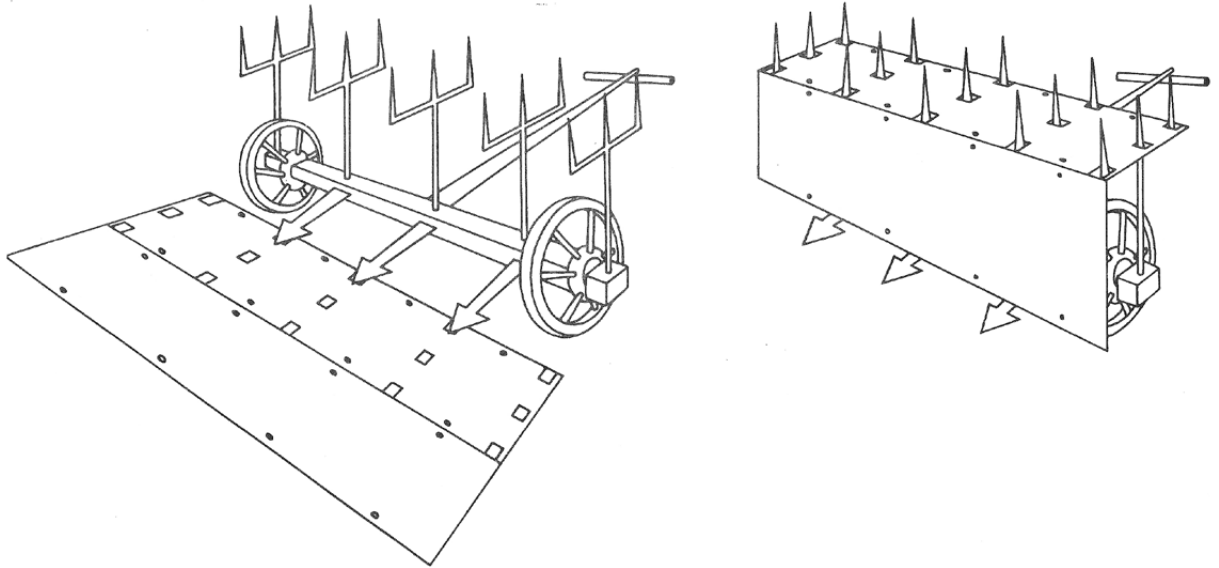


Figura 3: il *tichodifrus* da HASSALL, cit., p. 88 (a sinistra la raffigurazione dei codici, a destra la possibile ricostruzione). A detta di vari commentatori (CONDORELLI, cit., p. 115; GIARDINA, cit., p. 79 e FLEURY, cit., p. 65 s.) l'illustrazione tràdita è molto difficile da interpretare. Si noti la trave orizzontale a sezione quadrata, nella quale verosimilmente si innestavano i singoli assi delle ruote. Dato che il lato frontale della struttura proteggeva le ruote, la distanza tra quest'ultime coincideva in pratica con la larghezza della macchina. In base a quanto detto sopra, non può essere corretta la disposizione verticale dei tridenti sui mozzi, né tantomeno la loro funzione portante. Si noti inoltre l'altrettanto errata collocazione dei tridenti e delle lance sulla trave orizzontale, quando invece ne era munita l'intelaiatura (cfr. 19, 6 *tabulatis ... acutis ferreis communitis*).

carro, perché da tali parole sembra evincersi che le ruote disponessero di due assi distinti. In tal caso dobbiamo presupporre che il carro fosse dotato di una qualche struttura orizzontale alle cui estremità venivano inseriti due corti assi, uno per ogni ruota (vd. fig. 3)<sup>92</sup>. L'accorgimento di impiegare un asse per ogni ruota risultava indispensabile su strutture imponenti come certi modelli di testuggini da riempimento (cfr. Ath. Mech. rr. 155 ss. Gatto), ma le modeste dimensioni del *tichodifrus* inducono a ritenere che le due ruote fossero solidali ad un unico asse

<sup>92</sup> Dalle descrizioni degli altri veicoli del *DRB* non provengono notizie omogenee in proposito. Troviamo infatti il plurale in 12, 3 sul carro falcato, ma il singolare in 14, 4, sul carro falcato munito di *clipeus*.

orizzontale. Entrambe le soluzioni sono comunque tecnicamente ammissibili.

Veniamo ora alla forma e composizione della struttura portante. Si noti innanzitutto quanto segue: dato che queste picche e forche coincidono con i ferri di 19, 6, come già dimostrato, e dato che ne erano muniti la *frons* ed il *superior latitudo*, significa che questi lati della struttura erano composti di tavolati. Sembra inoltre palese che qui si indicano due lati distinti della struttura (frontale e superiore)<sup>93</sup>. A questo punto si spiega bene anche l'indicazione *duabus superimpositis cratibus* in 8, 3: la concomitanza di due graticci e due lati dimostra che i primi erano appunto disposti rispettivamente sui secondi (vd. fig. 4)<sup>94</sup>.

Ancora, l'A. parla indistintamente di forche/tridenti e lance (*fuscinis et lanceis*), ma non specifica dove e come queste andassero disposte<sup>95</sup>. Possiamo facilmente immaginare che le armi fissate sui mozzi delle ruote (quali che fossero) sporgessero il più possibile dalla struttura, per tenere alla massima distanza gli aggressori. A proposito si rivela istruttivo il confronto con la versione corazzata del *currodrepanus*, dove si legge esplicitamente: *hic etiam licet conuertere laxatis funibus explicatas falces et ad perniciem hostium longius ab axe porrectas* (14, 4)<sup>96</sup>.

Grazie all'impiego di queste misure difensive e alla sua mobilità il *tichodifrus* si pone perfettamente in linea col principio progettuale che anima anche le altre invenzioni dell'A., mirante a massimizzare gli effetti e ad ampliare il più possi-

93 Quest'ultimo considerato particolarmente esposto dall'A., perché privo di difensori, come spiegato nel seguito del passo (cfr. *ne aggrediendi ... facultas*). Se i nemici potevano tentare l'assalto del carro anche da sopra, ovviamente questo non era particolarmente alto, come del resto ci viene espressamente detto in 8, 3 *non altior sed humilior fabricatur* (vd. commento sopra).

94 Meno efficaci nel frangente, e francamente poco perspicua, l'interpretazione di FLEURY, cit., p. 67 s., secondo il quale “le *superior* de la fin de la phrase ne nous paraît pas avoir exactement le même sens que le *superior* du début”. Difatti egli identifica la *superior pars* della fine della frase con il lato frontale, appena chiamato *frons*, parere poco convincente. Di conseguenza (pur ammettendo che ci fosse un “bord supérieur”, corrispondente a *superior latitudo*) disegna il suo tichodifro con un solo lato frontale dritto, ma con ogni verosimiglianza l'A. prevedeva anche una specie di copertura (*latitudo* indica infatti una qualche superficie). Possiamo anzi dedurne, pur senza certezza, che dalla fronte si dipartissero anche due (corti) tavolati laterali che permettessero di sorreggere meglio la copertura (vd. del resto l'indicazione in 8,3 *intra se tectos*).

95 Come nota FLEURY, cit., p. 66.

96 “Anche in questo tipo di carro è possibile, allentando le funi, dispiegare, a danno dei nemici, le falci che vengono a sporgere in fuori rispetto ai mozzi”, trad. GIARDINA, cit., p. 27.

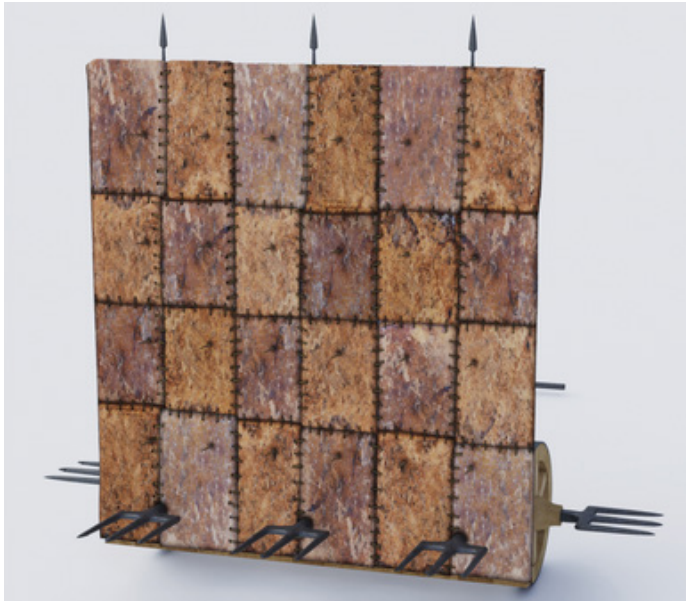


Figura 4: il *tichodifrus* da FLEURY, cit., planche IV (vista frontale) Nonostante la chiara indicazione *superior latitudo* di 8, 4, il tiodifro è qui rappresentato con un solo lato frontale. Probabilmente invece, nell'idea dell'A., era previsto anche un qualche tipo di copertura. Lo studioso interpreta i *fixoria* come piccole punte sporgenti. La disposizione di forche e lance è congetturale, perché la fonte non fornisce dettagli. Si noti anche la condivisibile decisione dell'editore di rappresentare la superficie frontale munita di materiale di rivestimento (cuoio o simili), per resistere ad eventuali attacchi incendiari, nonostante l'assenza di indicazioni nel *DRB*.

bile l'area di influenza di mezzi altrimenti piuttosto piccoli, mantenendo al contempo (e diremmo anzi proprio in questo modo) al sicuro da eventuali minacce coloro che li manovravano e in generale il resto delle truppe<sup>97</sup>. È verosimile immaginare che l'A. prevedesse un ruolo prominente per il *tichodifrus* negli scontri campali, dove una serie di questi carri schierati affiancati era in grado di creare una barriera senz'altro ardua da superare (vd. meglio più sotto).

19, 5 *tichodifrus, duorum gestatus ministerio uirorum, protegat ballistam multum bellicis subsidiis profuturam*: l'A. prevede un impiego di tiodifro e bal-

<sup>97</sup> Grazie all'adozione di queste punte sporgenti l'A. offre un modello di protezione piuttosto originale, come riscontrato da FLEURY, cit., p. LXVIII, il quale ha pienamente ragione nel sottolineare che i nemici erano impediti ad accostarsi al carro e quindi costretti a rimanere allo scoperto nel tentativo di avere la meglio sui soldati al riparo.

lista anche negli scontri campali, non in contrasto con quanto affermato sopra<sup>98</sup>. L'Anonimo si sforza anzi di utilizzare lo stesso mezzo in differenti scenari, forse al fine di ridurre la varietà di armi che un esercito doveva allestire e trasportare. In queste parole apprendiamo che il carro era manovrato da soli due uomini<sup>99</sup>.

Bisogna prestare attenzione anche al valore di *subsidia* nel contesto. Il termine possiede uno spettro di significati piuttosto ampio e ben osservabile proprio in autori militari<sup>100</sup>, tanto è vero che le traduzioni moderne del passo esibiscono differenze notevoli, cosicché mi sembra opportuno approfondire la questione. Sánchez-Ostiz e Fleury intendono 'truppe di riserva'<sup>101</sup> (come in *DRB* 5, 8) e del resto a favore di tale opinione va considerato che *bellicis subsidiis* è un dativo di vantaggio. Il problema di tale interpretazione risiede tuttavia nelle tattiche esposte proprio in cap. 19 (vd. anche più sotto). Immediatamente dopo veniamo infatti edotti che i soldati al riparo del tichodifro entravano in contatto col nemico (cfr. 19, 6: *usque ad uiciniam pugnaturi hostis adueniant*), quindi stazionavano in posizione avanzata (di fronte allo schieramento principale disposto in quadrati, come si vedrà) e non come riserve<sup>102</sup>. Del resto anche l'occorrenza dell'aggettivo

98 Una certa contraddizione coglie invece, mi sembra, SANCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 156.

99 La notizia va presa semplicemente come realistica, essendo coerente con quanto possiamo ricostruire del mezzo. Del tutto inconsistente quindi (e del resto ignorato dalle edizioni successive) il dubbio di HASSALL, cit., p. 89 s. secondo cui le parole *duorum gestatus ministerio uirorum* deriverebbero da una nota a margine (evidentemente confluita nel testo) e spiegherebbero il significato etimologico di δῖφορος. Prima di tutto sarebbe stato forse più logico attendersi un simile intervento all'inizio del cap. 8, quando l'A. spiega l'origine greca (cfr. *Graeca appellatione*) del composto. Qui si vuole invece semplicemente istruire sul ruolo del *tichodifrus* nelle tattiche da utilizzare contro genti barbare. In base al suo ragionamento, Hassall aggiunge che forse il carro veniva in realtà spinto da due cavalli. Tale ricostruzione, oltre a contraddire la frase sopra citata dell'A., viene smentita da diverse considerazioni: per proteggere i cavalli la struttura avrebbe dovuto essere ben più alta e massiccia, e quindi meno maneggevole, di quella descritta; inoltre con gli animali aggiogati verosimilmente ai due lati del *temo*, sarebbero risultati inservibili gli scudi ad esso appesi. Ancora, i cavalli avrebbero occupato gran parte di quello spazio dietro la protezione destinato ai soldati, rendendo in pratica inutile il *tichodifrus*.

100 Sui diversi valori, appunto in ambito militare, si consulti l'ancora utile Arnold GERBER, Adolf GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum*, Teubner, Lipsiae 1903, s.v. *subsidium*, p. 1559 s. Per quanto concerne il periodo tardoantico si richiamino, oltre a quelle in *DRB*, le diverse occorrenze in Vegezio.

101 Probabilmente in questo gruppo va annoverata anche la traduzione "forze militari" di Giardina.

102 Sull'impiego di queste truppe vd. quanto spiega Veg. *mil.* 3, 17.

*bellicus* sembra deporre contro il senso ora discusso. Sarei quindi più propenso a interpretare nel senso di ‘sforzi militari’<sup>103</sup>.

19, 6 *scutati*: non mi pare che la critica abbia rilevato la specifica valenza del termine. Gli *scutati* costituivano infatti una particolare categoria di truppe appiedate, che nel Tardoantico adottarono un armamento leggero, a differenza del periodo repubblicano e primo imperiale<sup>104</sup>. Le informazioni ricavabili dal *DRB* risultano coerenti col tipo di equipaggiamento previsto all’epoca della stesura del trattato (vd. sopra), come si evince dalla constatazione che gli *scutati* restavano al riparo del *tichodifrus* (pur operando nelle immediate vicinanze delle linee nemiche: vd. sotto) e assumevano verosimilmente il compito di difendere la *quadrirotis* che sparava alle loro spalle. In conformità con quanto l’A. afferma nel cap. 9, essi si munivano della *parma*.

19, 6 *post detecti protegendi sunt ab omni telorum nube*<sup>105</sup>: gli uomini, s’intende al riparo dietro al *tichodifrus*, giunti a contatto con le forze avversarie, dovevano affrontare i missili solo dopo essere usciti allo scoperto<sup>106</sup>. Nel qual caso si rivelavano indispensabili anche gli scudi appesi al *temo*. Non era invece compito della *ballista quadrirotis* proteggere queste truppe: essa puntava sulle mura o contro i nemici. Difficile comunque immaginare che gli sparuti armati che potevano trovare posto dietro ai tichodifri schierati (nonostante il consistente numero di quest’ultimi, su cui vd. anche sotto) potessero sostenere da soli uno scontro con

103 IRELAND, cit., p. 36 traduce “combat-equipment”; HÉLÈNE JOUFFROY, «Le *De rebus bellicis*, source d’histoire militaire? Traduction française du *De rebus bellicis*», in Yann Le Bohec, Catherine Wolff (dir.), *L’armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien I<sup>er</sup>. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (12-14 septembre 2002)*, Lyon – Paris 2004, p. 67 “potentiel de guerre”; Stefanie GRÄF, Burkhard MEIBNER, «De rebus bellicis. Über Fragen des Krieges», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard MEIBNER (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt 2023, p. 68 “gesamte Militärausrüstung”.

104 Sull’evoluzione dell’armamento di queste truppe, con discussione delle fonti, vd. Sylvain JANNIARD, «*Armati, scutati* et la catégorisation des troupes dans l’Antiquité tardive», in Yann Le Bohec, Catherine Wolff (dir.), *L’armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien I<sup>er</sup>. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (12-14 septembre 2002)*, Diffusion de Boccard, Lyon – Paris 2004, p. 392 ss. Critica in Maurizio COLOMBO, «La datazione dell’*Epitoma rei militaris* e la genesi dell’esercito tardoromano. La politica militare di Teodosio I, Veg. r. mil. 1.20.2-5 e Teodosio II», *AncSoc* 42, 2012, pp. 255–260.

105 Sul carattere poetico dell’espressione *ab omni telorum nube* vd. SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, cit., p. 156.

106 FLEURY, cit. p. 101 avverte sulle ambiguità di questa frase, ed in effetti GIARDINA, cit., p. 37 specifica oculatamente in traduzione “proiettili nemici”.

forze ben organizzate e numerose. In un eventuale combattimento così impostato sarebbe stato fondamentale anche il costante appoggio e l'avvicendamento dei soldati provenienti dalle file dell'esercito schierato subito dietro.

19, 8 *longus ordo machinarum sive tormentorum*: tra le *machinae* qui evocate figurava senz'altro anche il ticodifro, menzionato del resto più volte nel paragrafo. Al di là dell'iperbole retorica della frase, era necessario che questo, trattandosi di un riparo leggero e maneggevole, ma che doveva al contempo offrire uno schermo sicuro alla *quadrirotis* e alle truppe per favorire l'assalto alle mura, fosse costruito in parecchi esemplari (vd. anche subito sotto)<sup>107</sup>. Di primo acchito curioso invece l'impiego del generico *tormenta*, considerando che i due pezzi di artiglieria esposti dall'A. sono definiti più precisamente *ballistae*. Il termine compare comunque già in 6, 5 (*imaginem tormentorum nihil a uero distantem coloribus adumbratam orationi subieci*) e non sussistono dubbi che il riferimento sia a quanto dopo descritto. L'A. non sembra cioè contemplare ulteriori modelli di artiglieria non illustrati nel trattato.

#### CONSIDERAZIONI SULL'IMPIEGO TATTICO.

A questo punto possiamo aggiungere qualche considerazione sull'uso tattico delle macchine appena studiate, secondo i precetti dell'A. Innanzitutto va premesso che il grave impedimento della ridotta mobilità dell'artiglieria, che aveva fortemente condizionato il suo impiego nei campi di battaglia, era stato risolto tramite l'adozione di carri<sup>108</sup>. Di questa innovazione troviamo testimonianza nei fregi della Colonna Traiana e, come vedremo meglio subito dopo, in Vegezio, che si riferisce all'armamento della legione imperiale dei secoli a lui precedenti<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> Valgono, cioè, i precetti di Apollod. Mech. 140, 17, espressi in merito alla testuggine 'a cuneo' (e applicabili tra gli altri anche alla menzionata testuggine portatile di Ath. Mech. e al *pluteus* vegeziano).

<sup>108</sup> Per una esaustiva panoramica sull'evoluzione nell'uso delle armi da lancio negli scontri campali dalle prime attestazioni fino al Tardoantico rimando a MARSDEN, *Historical Development* cit., pp. 164-168 e 174-198 e Giovanni BRIZZI, «Il trattato *de rebus bellicis* e l'impiego delle artiglierie in età tardoantica», in Giovanni Brizzi, *Studi militari romani*, Clueb, Bologna 1983, pp. 49-76.

<sup>109</sup> Per la questione inerente a quale periodo Vegezio alluderebbe vd. semplicemente ancora BRIZZI 1983, cit., p. 65, con ulteriori rimandi bibliografici. Si consideri tuttavia che l'armamento riportato dall'autore latino sarebbe in realtà, secondo certe ricostruzioni, una sua

L'A. sfrutta dunque una tradizione e una pratica già note, ma propone una significativa innovazione nel posizionamento di questa artiglieria nelle prime file in caso d'assedio e nel suo conseguente uso coordinato con il *tichodifrus*<sup>110</sup>.

I commentatori hanno messo puntualmente a confronto la *quadrirotis* con la *carroballista* di Vegezio, notando che anche per il traino di quest'ultima fossero previsti due cavalli o muli<sup>111</sup>. Nonostante tale aspetto in comune, molto diversa risulta la concezione progettuale e quindi anche l'impiego sul campo di queste armi. Abbiamo visto che la *quadrirotis* era concepita per operare dietro al *tichodifrus*, che le garantiva la protezione frontale nelle vicinanze delle mura o dello schieramento nemici. L'autore ci dice che poteva sparare da tutte le parti ed era così pronta *ad omnes impetus*, una posizione fortemente pericolosa. La *carroballista* di Vegezio stazionava invece molto indietro nello schieramento, in quinta fila (*mil.* 3, 14, 13: *in quinta acie*), o dietro l'esercito schierato (*mil.* 3, 24, 14: *post aciem*) o dietro la fanteria pesante (*mil.* 2, 25, 3: *post aciem gravis armaturae*), godendo quindi di una disposizione decisamente meno esposta, ma al contempo necessitava di maggior potenza e quindi maggiori dimensioni, per essere efficace dalla lunga distanza, rinunciando parzialmente al fattore agilità<sup>112</sup>.

Informazioni determinanti sull'impiego combinato di tichodifro e ballista montata troviamo in cap. 19, in parte già sopra discusso<sup>113</sup>. In quest'ultimo dunque, con specifico riferimento alle tecniche per combattere i Persiani, si introduce lo schieramento *quadratis ... agminibus* (19, 4)<sup>114</sup>. Già Thompson aveva notato che la formazione ad *agmen quadratum* non rappresentava una novità e venne adotta-

---

proposta personale più che un'effettiva descrizione: vd. da ultimo Philip RANCE, «Battle», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES, Michael WHITBY (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, vol. II Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 345.

110 Tradizionalmente l'artiglieria impiegata dagli attaccanti negli assedi stazionava sui piani superiori di grandi macchine come torri mobili: vd. p.e. Polyb. 9, 41, 5 (assedio di Echino del 210 a. C.) e tra i manualisti Ath. Mech. r. 120 ss. ed. Gatto.

111 Vd. tra gli altri GIARDINA, cit., p. 75 s. e FLEURY, cit., p. 59.

112 Vegezio parla inoltre, proprio in *mil.* 3, 24, 14, di *carroballistas aliquanto maiores*, a dimostrazione che si trattava di artiglieria piuttosto pesante. Il posizionamento dell'artiglieria dietro le ali e l'esercito schierato è adottato anche da Arr., *Ektaxis* 19, dove probabilmente si tratta proprio di armi montate su carri, come suggerisce già MARSDEN, *Historical Development* cit., pp. 190.

113 Vd. anche le osservazioni di MEIBNER, *Die Geräte* cit., p. 104 s.

114 Su questa formazione rimando semplicemente a GIARDINA, cit., p. 102 e FLEURY, cit., p. 100.

ta dall'esercito romano in diverse occasioni<sup>115</sup>. A ben vedere, tuttavia, la proposta dell'A. si dimostra, da questo punto di vista, originale e articolata, essendo previsti due possibili scenari, con diverse soluzioni tattiche.

Secondo lui i quadrati da soli non bastano, ma è una combinazione tra questi e un potente apparato bellico (19, 4 *maiori bellorum apparatu*), nel quale ovviamente le (nuove) armi fanno la differenza (19, 4 *machinarum est omnis ... industria proponenda*), che deve assicurare la supremazia. Abbiamo già visto come il carro proteggesse la ballista posizionata dietro (19, 5), ora notiamo che i soldati muniti di scudo (cfr. *scutati*), pur se con l'ausilio del riparo assicurato dallo stesso ticodifro, entrano in contatto col nemico (19, 6 *usque ad uiciniam pugnaturi hostis adueniant*). Tale informazione, in unione a quanto appena detto sullo schieramento compatto, indica senza dubbio che l'A. prevedesse una fila di ticodifri (con dietro le balliste) distribuiti di fronte ai quadrati<sup>116</sup>. Con una visione in verità poco realistica, già emersa, questa tattica basterebbe a scompaginare il nemico, che messo in fuga deve poi essere fatto a pezzi dalla corsa dei carri falcati<sup>117</sup>.

Qualora invece i luoghi dello scontro fossero angusti e lo schieramento non potesse così dispiegarsi normalmente (19, 8), l'A. consiglia di schierare le macchine e l'artiglieria (cioè il *tichodifrus* e la ballista *quadrirotis*) tutto intorno all'esercito così serrato e salvaguardare la sicurezza dei lati (19, 8 *coartatam aciem longus machinarum siue tormentorum ordo circumdet, ne constrictum latus liberior hostis infestet*).

115 THOMPSON, cit., p. 71 s.

116 Mi sembra questo l'unico modo sensato di intendere le parole del *DRB*. Infatti i soldati addetti ai ticodifri, se questi avessero stazionato dietro all'esercito, sarebbero entrati in contatto col nemico solo nel caso i quadrati fossero stati sgominati e la battaglia persa e non è di certo questo il messaggio che l'A. intende far passare. La disposizione dell'artiglieria su carri di fronte allo schieramento è attestata già nella battaglia di Mantinea del 207 a.C. (Polyb. 11, 12, 4), che vide opposte le truppe dello spartano Macanida agli Achei di Filopemene. Dal racconto di Polibio non è chiara la sorte toccata a questi artiglieri, ma dal prosieguo dello scontro e dal suo esito si deduce che non ebbero un ruolo significativo. Probabilmente la rapida reazione di Filopemene, che lanciò subito la veloce cavalleria tarantina all'assalto, proprio per evitare di subire il lancio dei missili avversari, rese vana la superiorità tecnica degli Spartani (vd. Frank W. WALBANK, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, Commentary on Books VII-XVIII*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1967, p. 288 s e soprattutto MARSDEN, *Historical Development* cit., p. 167 s.). Proprio da episodi del genere l'A. poteva aver tratto l'idea innovativa (seppure probabilmente poco efficace nella pratica) di introdurre il ticodifro a difesa delle balliste.

117 Su quest'ultimi vd la già ricordata disamina di GIARDINA, cit., pp. 83-89.

Ancora, l'esplicita menzione dei Persiani (19, 4) potrebbe far pensare che le proposte riformatrici dell'A. rispondessero, perlomeno in parte, alla necessità di adattare il modo di combattere proprio contro i popoli orientali<sup>118</sup>. Tuttavia non va dimenticato che l'A. in cap. 6 elenca tutta una serie di condizioni geografiche nelle quali i barbari trovano rifugio (dalle selve ai monti, dai ghiacci ai deserti o alle paludi, o alle città fortificate) e dove le sue macchine dovrebbero rivelarsi utili a scovarli e sconfiggerli (cfr. 6, 4: *nationes ... diversis et novis armorum sunt machinis prosequendae*). Le caratteristiche delle stesse escludono però il loro l'utilizzo nella maggior parte degli scenari appena menzionati e da ciò si deduce che l'A. era animato da una forte spinta ideologica, che tende in qualche modo a sminuire la realtà fattuale o a non prenderne pienamente atto.

L'A. predica una tattica che prevede di scovare i nemici nel loro territorio e da questo punto di vista le sue macchine sono coerenti, perché si tratta di armi per lo più concepite per l'attacco (fa eccezione la ballista *fulminalis*). Comunque non sembra che le proposte dall'A., nonostante il loro potenziale offensivo e quindi in dotazione ad un esercito perlomeno virtualmente in grado di assumere l'iniziativa, siano in grado, da sole, di conquistare città fortificate e quindi di operare in territorio nemico con fini strategici di ampio respiro<sup>119</sup>.

Ancora, se cogliamo nell'insieme le innovazioni dell'apparato bellico nel *DRB*, risulta del tutto palese la completa assenza delle classiche macchine osidionali che ormai da secoli accompagnavano gli eserciti imperiali. Come si evince infatti soprattutto dalle parole in 6, 4 e dalle tattiche esposte nel cap. 19, pare che le macchine dell'A. siano da interpretare come un'alternativa, s'intende ovviamente migliorativa, al tradizionale apparato bellico e non come un suo complemento<sup>120</sup>. In pratica l'A. promuove una tattica dinamica, che preferisce piccole e duttili macchine, ma in grado di condurre attacchi coordinati, in sostituzione

118 In effetti i veicoli con ruote espletavano la massima efficacia in condizioni pianeggianti e secche: vd. p.e. già GIARDINA, cit., p. XXXVIII s.

119 Si è tentato di interpretare questo atteggiamento dell'A. parlando, forse con qualche ragione, di "azioni di contropiede": vd. Gabba, *Tecnologia militare antica* ..., 232.

120 Certamente il nostro giudizio potrebbe risultare parziale, se prendiamo come realistica l'affermazione di *praef. 11* (*ex quibus fastidii levandi gratia pauca machinarum inventa referemus*), secondo cui l'A. si limiterebbe a ricordare solo pochi macchinari (si intende tra quelli evidentemente in dotazione all'esercito o nei quali il Nostro riponeva la propria fiducia), tuttavia non possiamo fare altro che prendere atto di quanto esposto nel *DRB*.

delle grandi macchine del passato<sup>121</sup>.

Partendo dalla prospettiva ora osservata, possiamo constatare che in effetti l'uso combinato di *tichodifrus* e *ballista quadrirotis* evitava il problema degli ostacoli opportunamente disseminati dai difensori lungo il percorso di fronte alle mura, che rendevano precaria l'avanzata delle più massicce torri e testuggini, ma non dei piccoli carri.

Dalle parole dell'A. traspare che l'arsenale da lui descritto rappresenta quanto di meglio la tecnica possa esprimere e sia perfettamente adatto a perseguire gli scopi che si prefigge. Dobbiamo tuttavia constatare che, se egli davvero non prevede l'utilizzo di arieti, torri mobili, testuggini e simili, la sua visione tattica si rivela poco realistica, per usare un eufemismo, come prova la vasta gamma di testimonianze sulla presenza delle classiche armi ossidionali in contesti bellici anche posteriori alla stesura dell'operetta<sup>122</sup>. Di contro, da quello che possiamo ricostruire secondo i dati in nostro possesso, le 'invenzioni' proposte dall'A. non sembrano aver conosciuto alcun impatto sulle battaglie successive, né hanno lasciato traccia significativa nelle fonti storico-letterarie o trattatistiche<sup>123</sup>.

121 Non pare superfluo qui rammentare l'opera poliorcetica di Apollodoro Meccanico, nella quale già emerge l'idea di preferire macchine facilmente realizzabili con la manodopera a disposizione e con materiali semplici e reperibili (139, 4-7), o la coordinazione tra le già menzionate 'vigna' e 'testuggine a cuneo'. Le gigantesche macchine degli arsenali ellenistici operavano invece in sostanza singolarmente, cioè in momenti diversi (la coordinazione avveniva nel senso che per esempio le macchine riempitrici preparavano la strada alle grandi torri, oppure che più macchine attaccassero i punti diversi).

122 Tra le varie disamine sugli assedi descritti p.e. da Ammiano Marcellino e Procopio di Cesarea vd. Noel LENSKI, «Two Sieges of Amida (AD 359 and 502-503) and the Experience of Combat in the Late Roman Near East», in Ariel S. Lewin, Pietrina Pellegrini (Eds.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest. Proceedings of a colloquium held at Potenza, Acerenza and Matera, Italy (May 2005)*, Oxford 2007, pp. 219-236; CONOR WHATELY, «Procopius on the Siege of Rome in AD 537/538», in Jeremy Armstrong, Matthew Trundle (Eds.), *Brill's Companion to Sieges in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2019, pp. 265-284; Francesco FIORUCCI, «Tecniche poliorcetiche e macchine nell'assedio di Petra (Lazica) del 551 d. C.», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, 4, 14, 2023, pp. 115-141; per una panoramica esaustiva sulla poliorcetica tardoantica vd. Leif I. R. PETERSEN, *Siege Warfare and Military Organization in the Successor States (400-800). Byzantium, the West and Islam*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013.

123 Basti ricordare, tra gli altri, la *Tattica* dell'imperatore Leone VI (che tratta di poliorcetica in cap. 15: vd. John HALDON, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C. 2014, pp. 294-309), o l'anonimo Autore dei cosiddetti *Parangelmata Poliorcetica* (vd. Denis F. SULLIVAN, *Siegecraft. Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals by "Hero of Byzantium"*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 2000, pp. 153-248).

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- ALEXANDER, Jonathan J. G., «The illustrated manuscripts of the *Notitia Dignitatum*», in Roger Goodburn, Philip Bartholomew (Eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum. Papers presented to the conference in Oxford December 13 to 15, 1974*, Oxford 1976, pp. 11-25.
- ALEXANDER, Jonathan J. G., «The illustrations of the *Anonymus De Rebus Bellicis*», in Mark W. C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E. A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, pp. 11-16.
- ASTIN, Edgar, «Observation on the *De rebus bellicis*», in Carl Deroux (Ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History. III*, Latomus, Bruxelles 1983, pp. 388-439.
- BARTOLDUS, Marco J., *Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus - Welt und Wert spätrömischer Landwirtschaft*, Wißner-Verlag, Augsburg 2012.
- BERTHELOT, M., «Sur le traité *De Rebus Bellicis*, qui accompagne la *Notitia Dignitatum* dans les manuscrits», *Journal des Savants*, 1900, pp. 171-177.
- BRANDT, Hartwin, *Zeitkritik in der Spätantike. Untersuchungen zu den Reformvorschlägen des Anonymus De rebus bellicis*, Beck, München 1988
- BRIZZI, Giovanni, «Il trattato *de rebus bellicis* e l'impiego delle artiglierie in età tardoantica», in Giovanni Brizzi, *Studi militari romani*, Clueb, Bologna 1983, pp. 49-76.
- BRUZZONE, Antonella, «Contributo ad una analisi stilistica del *De rebus bellicis*: qualche aspetto dell'uso dell'astratto», *Romanobarbarica* 13, 1994-5, pp. 1-42.
- CALLEBAT, Louis, FLEURY, Philippe, *Vitruve. De l'architecture, Livre X*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1986.
- CAVALLO, Guglielmo, «Libri e continuità della cultura antica in età barbarica», in Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (cur.), *Magistra Barbaritas. I Barbari in Italia*, Libri Scheiwiller, Milano 1984, pp. 603-662.
- CICHORIUS, Conrad, *Die Reliefs der Traianssäule. Erster Textband: Commentar zu den Reliefs des ersten dakischen Krieges*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin- Leipzig 1927.
- CHEVEDDEN, Paul E., «Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages», in Ivy A. Corfis, Michael Wolfe (Eds.), *The Medieval City under Siege*, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 1995, pp. 131-173.
- COLOMBO, Maurizio, «La datazione dell'Epitoma rei militaris e la genesi dell'esercito tardoromano. La politica militare di Teodosio I, Veg. r. mil. 1.20.2-5 e Teodosio II», *AncSoc* 42, 2012, pp. 255-292.
- CONDORELLI, Sebastiano, *Riforme e tecnica nel «De rebus bellicis» (testo con commento e versione di S. Condorelli)*, Peloritana, Messina 1971.
- EADIE, John W., «The Development of Roman Mailed Cavalry», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 57, 1/2, 1967, pp. 161-173.
- ERAMO, Immacolata, «Inventori di guerra nella tarda antichità», *Atti e relazioni*, 57, 2022, pp. 177-193.

- FIORUCCI, Francesco, «La sambuca di Damios di Colofone: commento a Bitone 57, 1-61, 1», *Frankfurter elektronische Rundschau zur Altertumskunde*, 46, 2022, pp. 25-59.
- FIORUCCI, Francesco, «La testuggine ἀπετή in Ateneo Meccanico (rr. 352-356 Gatto = 38, 10-14 Wescher)», *Giornale Italiano di Filologia*, 74, 2022, pp. 227-245.
- FIORUCCI, Francesco, «Tecniche poliorcetiche e macchine nell'assedio di Petra (Lazica) del 551 d. C.», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, 4, 14, 2023, pp. 115-141.
- FIORUCCI, Francesco, «Contributi al testo di Bitone», in Francesco Fiorucci (cur.), *La scienza militare antica – Das antike Militärwesen. Autori, opere e loro fortuna – Autoren, Werke und ihr Nachleben*, Rombach Wissenschaft, Baden-Baden 2024, pp. 39-66.
- FLEURY, Philippe, *De rebus bellicis. Sur les affaires militaires*, Les belles Lettres, Paris 2017.
- FORABOSCHI, Daniele, «Economia e guerra nel «De rebus bellicis»», in *Studi di Antichità in memoria di Clementina Gatti*, Cisalpino-Goliardica, Milano 1987, pp. 11-127.
- GATTO, Maurizio, *Il ΠΕΠΙ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΜΑΤΩΝ di Ateneo Meccanico. Edizione critica, traduzione, commento e note*, Aracne, Roma 2010.
- GERBER, Arnold, GREEF, Adolf, *Lexicon Taciteum*, Teubner, Lipsiae 1903.
- GIARDINA, Andrea, *Anonimo. Le cose della guerra*, Mondadori, Milano 1996<sup>2</sup>
- GRÄF, Stefanie, *Der Anonymus de rebus bellicis. Eine morphologische Untersuchung*, Verlag Dr. Kovač, Hamburg 2018.
- GRÄF, Stefanie, «Die Abbildungen des Codex Spirensis», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard Meißner (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt 2023, pp. 72-87.
- GRÄF, Stefanie, MEIBNER, Burkhard, «De rebus bellicis. Über Fragen des Krieges», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard Meißner (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt 2023, pp. 17-71.
- HALDON, John, *A Critical Commentary on the Taktika of Leo VI*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 2014.
- HASSALL, Mark W.C., «The inventions», in Mark W. C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E. A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, pp. 77-95.
- HOFFMANN, Dietrich, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum, Teil I*, Rheinland-Verlag, Düsseldorf 1969.
- IRELAND, Robert, *De Rebus Bellicis, Part 2: de rebus bellicis: the text edited by Robert Ireland*, Oxford 1979.
- IRELAND, Robert, *Anonymi auctoris De rebus bellicis*, Teubner, Leipzig 1984.
- JANNIARD, Sylvain, «Armati, scutati et la catégorisation des troupes dans l'Antiquité tardive», in Yann Le Bohec, Catherine Wolff (dirr.), *L'armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien I<sup>er</sup>. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (12-14 septembre 2002)*, Diffusion de Boccard, Lyon – Paris 2004, pp. 389-395.

- JOUFFROY, Hélène, «Le *De rebus bellicis*, source d'histoire militaire? Traduction française du *De rebus bellicis*», in Yann Le Bohec, Catherine Wolff (dirr.), *L'armée romaine de Dioclétien à Valentinien I<sup>er</sup>. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (12-14 septembre 2002)*, Lyon – Paris 2004, pp. 55-67.
- LASSANDRO, Domenico, «Note sul *De rebus bellicis*», in Marta Sordi (cur.), *Il pensiero sulla guerra nel mondo antico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2001, pp. 243-251.
- LEFÈVRE, Wolfgang, Drawings in Ancient Treatises on Mechanics, in Jürgen Renn, Giuseppe Castagnetti (Eds.), *Homo Faber: Studies on Nature, Technology, and Science at the Time of Pompeii. Presented at a conference at the Deutsches Museum Munich, 21-22 March 2000*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma 2002, pp. 109-120.
- LEHMANN, Paul, *Die mittelalterliche Dombibliothek zu Speyer*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Abt., 4, München 1934.
- LENDLE, Otto, *Texte und Untersuchungen zum technischen Bereich der antiken Poliorchetik*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden 1983.
- LENSKI, Noel, «Two Sieges of Amida (AD 359 and 502-503) and the Experience of Combat in the Late Roman Near East», in Ariel S. Lewin, Pietrina Pellegrini (Eds.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest. Proceedings of a colloquium held at Potenza, Acerenza and Matera, Italy (May 2005)*, Oxford 2007, pp. 219-236.
- LIEBESCHUETZ, John H. W. G., «Realism and Phantasy: The Anonymus *de rebus bellicis* and its Afterlife», in Edward Dąbrowa (Ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, Univ. Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1994, pp. 119-139.
- LOHRMANN, Dietrich, KRANZ, Horst, ALERTZ Ulrich (Hgg.), *Konrad Gruter von Werden, De machinis et rebus mechanicis. Ein Maschinenbuch aus Italien für den König von Dänemark 1393-1424, Bd. II. Edition*, Città del Vaticano 2006.
- MARSDEN, Eric W., *Greek and Roman Artillery. Historical Development*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969.
- MARSDEN, Eric W., *Greek and Roman Artillery. Technical Treatises*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1971.
- MAZZARINO, Santo, *Aspetti sociali del quarto secolo. Ricerche di storia tardo-romana*, L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma 1951.
- MEIBNER, Burkhard, *Die technologische Fachliteratur der Antike. Struktur, Überlieferung und Wirkung technischen Wissens in der Antike (ca. 400 v. Chr.–ca. 500 n. Chr.)*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1999.
- MEIBNER, Burkhard, «Aus welchem Material waren die Federn antiker Torsionsgeschütze?», in Hans Beck/Benedikt Eckhardt/Christoph Michels/Sonja Richter (Hgg.), *Von Magna Graecia nach Asia Minor. Festschrift für Linda-Marie Günther zum 65. Geburtstag*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 327-338.
- MEIBNER, Burkhard, «Die Geräte und Geschütze des Anonymus», in Stefanie Gräf, Burkhard Meißner (Hgg.), *Anonymus. De rebus bellicis*, Philipp von Zabern, Darmstadt

2023, pp. 104-114.

- MIELCZAREK, Mariusz, *Cataphracti and Clibanarii. Studies on the Heavy Armoured Cavalry of the Ancient World*, Oficyna Naukowa MS, Łódź 1993.
- MIGOTTO, Luciano, *Marco Vitruvio Pollione. De Architectura Libri X. Testo latino a fronte*, Edizioni Studio Tesi, Pordenone 1990.
- MÜLLER, Friedhelm L., *Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, Abriß des Militärwesens*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1997.
- NACHTWEH, Alwin, «Rekonstruktion der ältesten gallischen Mähmaschine», *Journal für Landwirtschaft* 59, 1911, pp. 1-8, (tavole I-III, pp. 459-563).
- NEHER, Richard, *Der Anonymus De Rebus Bellicis*, Heckenhauer, Tübingen 1911.
- OLIVER, Revilo P., «A note on the *De Rebus Bellicis*», *Classical Philology*, 50, 2, 1955, pp. 113-118.
- PAGANO, Fabrizio, «Sulla praefatio dell' Anonimo *De rebus bellicis*», *Koinonia* 23, 1999, pp. 15-38.
- PETERSEN, Leif I. R., *Siege Warfare and Military Organization in the Successor States (400-800). Byzantium, the West and Islam*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013.
- RANCE, Philip, «Battle», in Philip SABIN, Hans VAN WEES, Michael WHITBY (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, vol. II Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, pp. 342-278.
- REINACH, Salomon, «Un homme à projets du Bas-Empire», *Revue Archéologique*, 16, 1922, pp. 205-265.
- SACKUR, Walter, *Vitruv und die Poliorketiker*, Ernst, Berlin 1925.
- SÁNCHEZ-OSTIZ, Álvaro, *Anónimo sobre asuntos militares. Introducción, edición, traducción y comentario de Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2004.
- SANTINI, Carlo, «La praefatio del *De rebus bellicis*», in Carlo Santini, Nino Scivoletto (curt.), *Prefazioni, prologhi, proemi di opere tecnico-scientifiche latine*, Vol. 2, Herder, Roma 1992, pp. 991-999.
- SCHIEFSKY, Mark J., «Technical Terminology in Greco-Roman Treatises on Artillery Construction», in Thorsten Fögen, (Hg.), *Antike Fachtexte/Ancient Technical Texts*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2005, pp. 253-270.
- SCHNEIDER, Rudolf, *Anonymi De rebus bellicis liber*, Weidmann, Berlin 1908.
- SESTILL, Antonio, *Bellator equus I. Il cavallo da guerra nella Grecia antica*, Aracne, Roma 2010.
- SESTILL, Antonio, *Bellator equus 2. Il cavallo da guerra nell'antica Roma*, Aracne, Roma 2017.
- SPEIDEL, Michael P., «*Catafractarii clibanarii* and the Rise of the Later Roman Mailed Cavalry. A Gravestone from Claudiopolis in Bithynia», *Epigraphica Anatolica*, 4, 1984, pp. 151-156.
- STÜCKELBERGER, Alfred, *Bild und Wort: das illustrierte Fachbuch in der antiken Naturwis-*

- senschaft, Medizin und Technik*, von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1994.
- SULLIVAN, Denis F., *Siegecraft. Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals by "Hero of Byzantium"*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 2000.
- THOMPSON, Edward A., *A Roman Reformer and Inventor*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1952.
- TOMEI, Maria Antonietta, «La tecnica nel tardo impero romano: le macchine da guerra», *Dialoghi di Archeologia*, 1, 1982, pp. 63-88.
- WALBANK, Frank W., *A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, Commentary on Books VII-XVIII*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1967.
- WEITZMANN, Kurt, *Ancient book illumination*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. 1959.
- WHATELY, Conor, «Procopius on the Siege of Rome in AD 537/538», in Jeremy Armstrong, Matthew Trundle (Eds.), *Brill's Companion to Sieges in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2019, pp. 265-284.
- WHITE, Kenneth D., «Harvesting, Palladius and technology in the later Roman empire», in M.W.C. Hassall (Ed.), *De Rebus Bellicis, Part I. Aspects of the De Rebus Bellicis. Papers presented to Professor E.A. Thompson*, Oxford 1979, pp. 39-45.
- WHITEHEAD, David, *Apollodorus Mechanicus, Siege-matters* (Πολιορκητικά). *Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2010.



Miguel Jiméñez, Sant'Elena di Costantinopoli e l'imperatore Eraclio che riportano la Santa Croce a Gerusalemme, olio su tavola (1483/87), Museo de Zaragoza. Wikimedia Commons.

# L'imperatore e la guerra. Eraclio e la 'guerra santa'

di FRANCESCO MORACA

ABSTRACT. The figure of Heraclius fully reflects the characteristics of the Byzantine *basileus*, being simultaneously an envoy, emanation and warrior of Christ on earth. The process of glorification enacted by George of Pisidia during and after the conflict with Khosraw II follows a path made up of comparisons that intertwine Heraclius' qualities with those of figures from the Greek epic, biblical, and Roman literary traditions. But a positive image of the *basileus* is provided by Arab sources, which praise his knowledge, albeit in part, of the Koran, and in general his great moral and religious integrity.

## 1. *L'imperatore cristiano e la guerra*

**N**ei numerosi trattati militari che circolarono a Bisanzio nel corso del tempo, dallo *Strategikos* di Onasandro<sup>1</sup>, allo *Strategikon* dell'imperatore Maurizio<sup>2</sup> fino ai *Tactica* di Leone VI<sup>3</sup>, erano contenute raccomandazioni riguardanti il rapporto fra Dio e il *basileus*. Esse hanno via via co-

1 W.A. Oldfather, A.S. Pease, J.B. Titchener (Ed.), *Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, Onasander*, Cambridge, Mass., 1923 (repr. 1962), 368-526.

2 Mauricii imperatoris *Strategicon: Das Strategikon des Maurikios. Einführung*, Edition und Indices von G.T. Dennis. Übersetzung von E. Gamillscheg (Hg.) (CFHB 17), Wien 1981. Sulla cronologia e la paternità dell'opera vd. H. Mihăescu, *Mauricius, Arta Militară*, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970, pp. 8-10; John Earl Wiita, *The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises*, University of Minnesota, Ph.D. 1977, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1978, pp. 25-49. Sulla paternità dell'opera si è ampiamente dibattuto: Wiita ha ipotizzato che l'autore del trattato fosse Filippico, il cognato di Maurizio; Cfr. G. Dennis, *Maur. strat.*, 15-18; secondo Dennis invece l'opera può essere frutto o del lavoro dell'imperatore stesso, oppure di qualche generale da lui incaricato. Un quadro generale si legge in E.N. Luttwak, *La grande strategia dell'impero bizantino* (trad. it.), Milano 2009, 303ss.

3 *The Taktika of Leo VI. Text, Translation, and Commentary* by G. Dennis (CFHB 49), Washington, D.C., 2010.

struito l'immagine di un sovrano sottomesso a Dio, di cui è il primo servo, ma che, come riportato nello *Strategikon* dell'imperatore Maurizio, «può pregare Dio come se si rivolgesse ad un amico»<sup>4</sup>. Rappresentante di Dio in terra, il *basileus* è emanazione fisica e spirituale del Signore<sup>5</sup>: elementi, questi due, centrali all'interno di tutta una serie di raffigurazioni imperiali, che, a partire dal IV secolo<sup>6</sup>, contribuiscono alla costruzione della perfetta immagine che il *basileus* deve dare di sé, partendo dalle vesti, che acquisivano un forte significato sacrale. Costantino Porfirogenito, nel X secolo, ne avrebbe affermato<sup>7</sup> l'origine divina, giacché consegnate a Costantino da un angelo, accompagnate dall'ordine d'indossarle solo nelle occasioni più solenni<sup>8</sup>. La sacralità del potere è presente anche in tante altre cerimonie, ad esempio nella scelta, nel periodo di Natale, d'invitare dodici persone a cenare con l'imperatore “seguendo l'esempio dei dodici apostoli”<sup>9</sup>.

Sulla scia del *basileus* si pone il generale, figura principale della trattatistica militare bizantina: nella stessa misura in cui il *basileus* «può pregare Dio come se si rivolgesse ad un amico»<sup>10</sup>, anche il generale deve prestare grande cura al rapporto con Dio:

Per questo è necessario che tu, o generale, curi e osservi prima di ogni altra cosa ciò che attiene al servizio di Dio. In particolare onora e riverisci i suoi preti e vescovi e tieni i suoi santi templi come luoghi d'asilo e che non siano strappati da essi quelli che vi hanno trovato rifugio, senza l'autorizzazione della nostra Maestà. Conserva liberi da danni e violenza e degni di venerazione i santi asceteri dei monaci e quelli che osservano la verginità in essi. Per dirla in breve, preserva ogni cosa consacrata a Dio senza molestie,

4 Maurizio, *Strategikon*, 8, 2, 1.

5 Legittimato ancora di più dalla nascita nella sala della porpora. Sul tentativo di associare visivamente l'immagine dell'imperatore con quella di Cristo si veda M. Studer-Karlen (Ed.), *The Emperor's Image in Byzantium Perceptions and Functions*, in *Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th – 15th Centuries)*, Leiden, Brill, 2022, pp. 134-171.

6 Jean-Michel Spieser, «Le Christ et le pouvoir impérial à Byzance», in Laura Andreani e A. Paravicini Bagliani (cur.), *Cristo e il Potere teologia, antropologia e politica*, Florence, 2017, pp. 17-31, soprattutto 17-18.

7 Costantino Porfirogenito, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Moravcsik-Jenkins, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, 2012, cap. 13, 1. 28.

8 G. Ostrogorsky, *The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order*, «The Slavonic and East European Review», Vol. 35, No. 84 (Dec., 1956), p. 3.

9 Ostrogorsky cit., p. 4.

10 Maurizio, *Strategikon*, 8, 2, 1.

onorata e rispettata perché essa è tutta santa e dedicata a Dio che è santo<sup>11</sup>.

Sempre il generale deve avere «timore di Dio, una mente acuta e un pensiero attento in ogni tempo, luogo e affare, come anche essere pronti per ogni eventualità»<sup>12</sup>.

E ancora:

proprio come non è possibile far navigare una nave in mare senza conoscenza di navigazione, neppure è possibile sbaragliare i nemici senza disciplina e strategia, grazie alla quale - e con l'aiuto di Dio - non solo è possibile prevalere su una forza nemica di uguale potenza ma anche sopra una di gran lunga sovrastante. Offrendo il presente trattato sulla strategia, come abbiamo detto, come un altro *procheiros nomos*, vi esortiamo ad ascoltarci attentamente e seriamente.<sup>13</sup>

Il generale al quale si rivolge Maurizio, così come Leone VI, vive una situazione ambivalente: dovrà essere in grado di soddisfare i requisiti morali tracciati nello *Strategikon*, ma nel contempo dovrà riuscire con ogni tipo di tattica a portare a termine un conflitto; in questo senso Gastone Breccia afferma che «non vi è alcun accenno ad una ipotetica condotta “onorevole” delle operazioni: la guerra è un male, da evitare se possibile, comunque da limitare e risolvere nel modo più rapido e indolore. Di fronte a queste considerazioni, per Maurizio - e in generale per i teorici bizantini di strategia, forse per i Bizantini *tout court* - sarebbe assurdo avere delle remore di qualsiasi tipo»<sup>14</sup>. Quelle a cui Breccia fa riferimento sono remore facenti capo alle categorie di pensiero elaborate dagli scritti di Tertulliano<sup>15</sup> (il quale indica l'uso della spada come del tutto incompatibile con la fede in Cristo<sup>16</sup>),

11 Leon. *tact.*, epil. 8-9.

12 *The Taktika of Leo VI* cit., V, 12, pp. 78-79.

13 *The Taktika of Leo VI* cit., Prol., 9, pp. 8-9.

14 G. Breccia, «Con assennato coraggio...». *L'arte della guerra a Bisanzio tra Oriente e Occidente*, in «Medioevo greco», 1 (2001), pp. 61-62.

15 Primo vero autore cristiano ad affrontare il problema della guerra dal punto di vista etico. Sull'argomento si veda J.A. McGuckin, *A Conflicted Heritage: The Byzantine Religious Establishment of a War Ethic*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers» 65/66, (2011-2012), pp. 29-44.

16 Tertulliano, *De Patientia* 3 (PL 2, 120): «Egli [Gesù] non approvò la spada vendicatrice di un solo discepolo. La pazienza del Signore fu ferita nella [ferita di] Malco. E così, maledisse per il tempo a venire le opere della spada». In *Sulle corone dei soldati* 13 (PL 2, 90), afferma che «Quando un uomo è diventato credente e la fede è stata sigillata, deve esserci o un immediato abbandono della professione militare, che è stata la linea d'azione tra mol-

di Cipriano<sup>17</sup>, di Clemente di Alessandria<sup>18</sup>, di Basilio di Cesarea: a loro è dovuto l'atteggiamento di rifiuto verso la guerra tipico del Cristianesimo orientale, ben esplicitato nel *De re strategica*, attribuito alla figura di Siriano Magistro<sup>19</sup>:

So bene che la guerra è un male e il peggiore di tutti i mali. Dal momento però che è chiaro che i nostri nemici considerano lo spargere il nostro sangue come uno dei loro fondamentali doveri e il culmine della virtù, e siccome ognuno ha il dovere di resistere senza timore per il suo paese e il suo popolo con la parola, la penna e l'azione, noi abbiamo deciso di scrivere sulla strategia.<sup>20</sup>

Sebbene diversi autori cristiani si trovino su posizioni sostanzialmente convergenti, talune voci forniscono una prospettiva nuova: ad esempio, Lattanzio, andando oltre Clemente di Alessandria, Cipriano e Tertulliano, critica sì l'uso delle armi, ma si scaglia ancor di più contro la sottile incoerenza che si cela dietro alla violenza degli eserciti e alla loro glorificazione: egli vede la guerra come una macchina omicida che tenta di nascondersi sotto un finto velo di patriottismo; esemplare è il parallelismo successivo che sviluppa: un uomo che deruba e uccide un vicino viene da subito additato come un mostro, ma al contrario una nazione che compie omicidi di massa, saccheggiando altre terre e sottomettendone i popoli, viene invece lodata come forza pacificatrice<sup>21</sup>. Lodare (incoerentemente secondo Lattanzio) la nazione che massacra altri popoli, sottomettendoli e saccheggiandoli, è un'operazione delicata che passa anche attraverso le parole, utili a comporre una narrazione capace di legittimare azioni militari anche disdicevoli.

---

ti di noi; o si dovrà ricorrere a tutti i tipi di cavilli per evitare di offendere Dio, e ciò non è consentito nemmeno al di fuori del servizio militare”.

17 Cipriano, *Ad Donatum* 6, in *Cypriani Opera Omnia*, ed. G. Härtel, CSEL 3.1, Wien 1868.

18 Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati: Note di vera filosofia*, Paoline editoriale libri, 1985, p. 594.

19 Il *De Re Strategica* è generalmente datato al VI sec., ma la critica più recente ha proposto una cronologia più tarda, in epoca medio-bizantina: l'opera sarebbe parte di un più ampio *Compendium* attribuito a Siriano Magistro: vd. C. Zuckerman, *The compendium of Syrianus Magister*, in «Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik», 40 (1990), 209-224; S. Cosentino, *The Syrianos' Strategikon. A 9th Century Source?*, in «Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi», serie 2, 2 (2000), 243-280; P. Rance, *The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (formerly the Sixth-century Anonymus Byzantinus)*, in «Byzantinische Zeitschrift», 100/2 (2007), 701-737.

20 G. T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treaties*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington 1985, p. 21.

21 Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, 6.20.15-17 (PL 6, 707).

## 2. Eraclio e i Persiani: valenze e giustificazioni ideologiche del conflitto

Un esempio calzante di come i conflitti siano stati ammantati di valenze religiose o di discorsi utili a glorificare la missione di un esercito, è rintracciabile nel conflitto romano-persiano, in particolare nella fase di scontro tra Eraclio e Cosroe II: il loro rapporto partì da infauste premesse diplomatiche, con il primo invio da parte di Eraclio (dopo essere asceso al trono di Costantinopoli) di messaggeri, splendidi tesori e lettere al re Cosroe II, così da ottenere la pace. Difatti la risposta del sovrano persiano non tardò ad arrivare: «quel regno è mio e io ho fatto Teodosio, figlio di Maurizio, re. Ma costui è diventato re senza il nostro permesso e ci offre i nostri tesori in dono»<sup>22</sup>. Tutto il loro rapporto epistolare è caratterizzato da continui riferimenti (o minacce, come la seguente) al sacro, al volere di Dio, tutti *topoi* che saranno utili ad avvalorare il concetto di “guerra giusta”. E infatti scrive:

Non avrò alcuna pietà di voi finché non rinuncerete a colui che fu crocifisso, e adorerete il Sole<sup>23</sup>.

O ancora:

Non hai voluto sottometterti a noi, ma hai insistito a chiamarti signore e re. Sperperi il mio tesoro, che si trova presso di te; derubi i miei servitori; e dopo aver raccolto un'armata di briganti, non mi concedi riposo. Non dovrei dunque distruggere i Greci? Ma tu affermi di avere fiducia nel tuo dio. E perché allora non ha salvato Cesarea e Gerusalemme, e poi la grande



Fig. 1 Solidus di Eraclio, coniato nel 610-613. Classical Numismatic Group, GNU Free licence, Wikimedia Commons.

22 A. Piras, *Ritualità della comunicazione: scambi di lettere tra Bisanzio e la Persia*, in «Bisantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi», XI, 2009 [2010], pp. 301-316 (*A proposito delle relazioni tra Persia e Bisanzio: il trattato della Lazica*, Ravenna, DiSMEC (Dipartimento di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali), Facoltà di Conservazione dei Beni Culturali, Università di Bologna, 24 marzo 2010).

23 G. Breccia, *Lo scudo di Cristo*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 2018, p.180. Theoph. (ed. De Boor), A.M. 6109, p. 301.

Alessandria, sottraendole alle mie mani? Sarà quindi solo Costantinopoli che io non riuscirò a distruggere?<sup>24</sup>.

Le lettere di Cosroe II sono diventate la base per rendere il conflitto una guerra di religione (in accordo con la visione di storici medievali e moderni, che hanno a loro tempo visto nella guerra tra Eraclio e Cosroe “l’antesignana delle crociate successive”<sup>25</sup>); ad avvalorare il tutto è una densa componente escatologica, accesi ancor di più con la caduta di Gerusalemme, evento questo che segna una svolta nella sensibilità del popolo, che dal furto della croce inizia ad aspettarsi l’imminente fine del mondo<sup>26</sup>, e, nel contempo, il conflitto con la Persia inizia a diventare una sorta di giudizio divino su Eraclio e sulla legittimità del suo governo<sup>27</sup>.

In contrapposizione all’aura apocalittica creatasi dopo la caduta di Gerusalemme, troviamo, sia durante il conflitto che negli anni a seguire, le voci di intellettuali come Giorgio di Pisidia<sup>28</sup>, Teodoro Sincello<sup>29</sup> e Teofilatto Simocatta<sup>30</sup>, che contribuiscono fortemente all’idealizzazione della figura di Eraclio, che viene presentato come salvatore dell’impero e nuovo Davide: lo stesso Teodoro Sincello cerca di dimostrare la perfetta aderenza tra le profezie dell’Antico Testamento circa la distruzione di Gerusalemme e l’assedio avaro-persiano di Costantinopoli: nella misura in cui Costantinopoli è Gerusalemme, gli Avari e i Persiani sono Siria e Samaria, Eraclio viene identificato con Davide, e il figlio con Salomone<sup>31</sup>:

...perché il nostro βασιλεύς è come Davide nella sua pietà verso il divino e nella sua gentilezza. Ma possa il Signore incoronarlo di vittorie, proprio come con Davide; possa rendere suo figlio che regna con lui saggio

24 Sebeos 26. 101; cfr. Kaegi W.E., *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, pp. 122-124.

25 S.S. Alexander, *Heraclius, byzantine imperial ideology and the David plates*, in «Speculum», LII, 2, 1977, p. 220.

26 S.J. Shoemaker, “*The Reign of God Has Come*”: *Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* in «Arabica», 61, 2018, p. 537.

27 G. Breccia, *Lo scudo* cit., p. 179.

28 Giorgio di Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica*.

29 Membro del clero di Santa Sofia oltre che uomo designato per trattare con gli avari dopo l’assedio; cfr. Alexander cit., p. 222.

30 Theophylacti Simocattae *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor; editionem correctiorem curavit explanationibusque recentioribus adornavit Peter Wirth, Stutgardiae, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1972.

31 Alexander cit., p. 223.

e pacifico come Salomone, concedendogli pietà e ortodossia, proprio come con suo padre.<sup>32</sup>

Il parallelo tra Davide ed Eraclio appare quasi inevitabile in rapporto all'episodio della reintroduzione della Croce a Gerusalemme, in quanto esso costituisce un riferimento importante all'introduzione dell'arca dell'alleanza, proprio per mano di Davide: è proprio in questa direzione che volge l'ipotesi di S.S. Alexander<sup>33</sup>, secondo cui la scelta di riportare la Croce dopo la fine della guerra fosse finalizzata proprio a legare più strettamente Eraclio alla figura di Davide. Le analogie in questo senso sono molteplici: sia Eraclio che Davide non sono diventati imperatori tramite una successione dinastica, così come entrambi hanno dovuto affrontare complicate dinamiche legate alla successione al trono a causa dei loro matrimoni<sup>34</sup>; il forte legame tra le due figure trova una sua realizzazione importante anche sul piano materiale, oltre che metaforico: la serie di nove piatti, scoperti nel 1902 e ora conservati tra il Metropolitan Museum of Arts di New York e il Museum of the Antiquities di Nicosia, che rappresentano scene della vita di Davide e che sembrano essere stati realizzati per Eraclio stesso<sup>35</sup>, creano delle analogie tra i due; in questo senso un episodio della vita dell'imperatore sembra aderire perfettamente allo scontro tra Davide e Golia: secondo quanto riportato da alcuni cronisti, tra i quali Niceforo negli *Opuscola Historica*<sup>36</sup>, Eraclio venne sfidato dal generale persiano Razatis in un duello che si concluse con la vittoria del primo, il 12 dicembre 627 nei pressi del Grande Zab<sup>37</sup>. Episodio questo che viene menzionato anche nell'*Hexameron* di Giorgio di Pisidia; André Grabar propende per l'ipotesi secondo cui colui che ha realizzato le illustrazioni dei piatti abbia voluto creare un parallelo tra le due figure e l'episodio citato in precedenza<sup>38</sup>. Altro accostamento non sottovalutabile è quello con Noè, presente

32 Teodoro Sincello, *Homilia de bello Avarico*, ed. L. Sternbach, in «Studien zu Georgios Pisides», Krakow, 1900, p. 320, 20-24.

33 Alexander cit., p. 226.

34 Ivi, p. 230.

35 S.H. Wander, *The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath*, in «Metropolitan Museum Journal», 8, 1973, p. 103.

36 Nicephorus, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. Charles de Boor (Leipzig, 1880) p. 19; Sebēos, *hist.* 36 in C. Gugerotti (a cura di), Sebēos, *Storia*. Traduzione dall'armeno, introduzione e note, Verona 1990, p. 94; Theoph. *Chron.*, CSHB XLVI (Bonn, 1851), pp. 489-492.

37 A. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century I*, Amsterdam 1968, pp. 210-212.

38 A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, Paris, 1936, pp. 96-97.

nei versi di Giorgio di Pisidia, secondo cui l'imperatore avrebbe salvato l'umanità dal "diluvio di Cosroe"<sup>39</sup>;

Ora il Noè della nuova ecumene comprese che la sua arca era il proprio cuore: vi immise tutte le energie del proprio essere e lo lancio contro le schiere armate, poich'esso era tenuto in serbo per il diluvio che avrebbe provocato Cosroe. Si può quasi dire che ogni uomo era stato corrotto da una marea d'ogni sorta di peccati, finché egli non prese il ramoscello d'ulivo che giaceva dimenticato e mise in salvo ciò che restava della vita.<sup>40</sup>

Il paragone con Noè e il diluvio universale, esattamente come gli altri, si accorda perfettamente con altre narrazioni<sup>41</sup> anteriori e posteriori, circa la figura di Eraclio, e con il tono apocalittico che assunsero le azioni dell'imperatore, prima fra tutte la restituzione della Croce a Gerusalemme.

Nella sostanza, quanto fatto da Eraclio sembra essere un'opera ben calcolata, nei gesti e, per l'appunto, nelle analogie; associando sé stesso a una figura di tale rilievo sarebbe stato possibile altresì 'ricostruire' l'immagine pubblica di un imperatore asceso al trono non sotto i migliori auspici (primo fra tutti lo scandalo generato dal matrimonio, incestuoso per il cristianesimo calcedoniano e ugualmente condannato dalle leggi, con la nipote Martina<sup>42</sup>).

I paragoni con la figura di Mosè compaiono più volte nei versi di Giorgio di Pisidia, con Eraclio che «imitando Mosé<sup>43</sup>, rivolse le schiere contro il secondo faraone»:

La notte cupa dei nemici era calata su tutta l'ecumene; saziatà non conosceva l'ingordigia della Persia, che anzi aveva esteso le sue brame fino a compiere stragi. Ma di fronte a un buio così pesto e tetro tu non ti abbandonasti affatto al sonno: senza alcun dubbio la tua costante preoccupazione

39 Giorgio di Pisidia, *Eracliade I*, 84-92; pp. 198-201.

40 D. Olster, *The Date of George of Pisidia's "Hexaemeron"*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», 1991, Vol. 45 (1991), p.162.

41 Gerrit Jan Reinink, *Heraclius, the New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius*, in Gerrit Jan Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Eds.) *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, Leuven, Peeters 2002, pp. 62, 66-67.

42 Georg Ostrogorsky, *Storia dell'Impero bizantino*, traduzione di Pietro Leone, Torino, Einaudi, 1993, p. 98.

43 L'imperatore come novello Mosè è un *topos* risalente ad Eusebio di Cesarea. Cfr. Giorgio di Pisidia, *Per l'imperatore Eraclio e le guerre di Persia. Quando mosse in armi la capitale*, in *Carmi*, a cura di L. Tartaglia. Torino, Utet 1998, p. 80, nota 29.



Fig. 2. Rappresentazione allegorica della sottomissione di Cosroe II ad Eraclio, placca da una croce (smalto champlevé su rame dorato, 1160–1170, Parigi, Louvre). Public Domain, Wikipedia Commons.

per noi tutti teneva da te lontano il sonno<sup>44</sup>. [...]

Dopo aver celebrato il giorno solenne nel quale il genere umano è risorto ad una nuova e santa rigenerazione, subito nel di seguente, ad imitazione di Mose, guidasti l'esercito contro il secondo Faraone, ove mai non sia un errore dire secondo colui che in verità e primo nel peccato<sup>45</sup>.

### 3. Eraclio e la "guerra giusta"

La mitizzazione della figura di Eraclio raggiunge il suo apice con la fine della guerra contro Cosroe II: Giorgio di Pisidia nel suo *Hexameron* identifica i suoi sei anni di campagna militare contro l'impero persiano (e il successivo periodo di pace) con i sei giorni della creazione (e il settimo di riposo)<sup>46</sup>, così che la sua vittoria potesse corrispondere al completamento dell'opera divina, anche se il vero apice lo si raggiunge con il viaggio di Eraclio volto a restituire la croce a Gerusalemme<sup>47/48</sup>, atto definito da Cyril Mango come

44 Giorgio di Pisidia, *Esamerone*, I, 104-111, in Tartaglia cit., p. 78.

45 Ivi, I 132-138, p. 80.

46 Tartaglia cit., p. 27.

47 Gerrit Jan Reinink, Bernard H. Stolte (Eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius* cit., pp. 83-84.

48 Sempre Giorgio di Pisidia nella sua *In restitutionem S. Crucis* esprime un senso di mera-

“deliberatamente apocalittico”<sup>49</sup>. Sebbene questo parallelo con i sei giorni della creazione rappresenti, come detto in precedenza, l’apice delle narrazioni su Eraclio, in quanto il metro di paragone è Cristo stesso, Giorgio di Pisidia, circa la restituzione della croce non si limita solo a usare *exempla* cristiani, ma anche si serve di riferimenti alla cultura classica, lodando Eraclio con l’utilizzo di paragoni o nomi che spaziano dalla religione cristiana all’epica greca:

Un eroe apparisti quando, nel nome del Signore, strappasti il vello d’oro al drago che avevi sgozzato: tu uccidesti quella belva senza l’aiuto dei filtri di Medea, ma trapassandola con il legno della Croce<sup>50</sup>.

O ancora:

Veramente resto sbalordito quando considero il modo in cui, con risultati contrari [ad ogni legge di natura], il nostro pio imperatore- ch’ e primo fra i sovrani- ridusse in cenere il fuoco con il Legno ardente della Croce; la Croce che Cosroe disprezzava come vile legno, ma che sperimento come lancia nel proprio cuore<sup>51</sup>

Questa mossa non rappresenta quindi un caso isolato, perché a seguito degli scambi con Cosroe II, Eraclio inizia sapientemente a utilizzare il riferimento alla “guerra giusta” e al fatto di essere “guerrieri di Cristo” per legittimare le scelte militari e gli attacchi contro i persiani: anche in questo caso risulta fondamentale quanto riportato da Giorgio di Pisidia, che nella sua *Expeditio Persica* fa pronunciare all’imperatore un discorso basato sulla necessità per i bizantini di combattere il nemico idolatra che ha usurpato i loro altari e contaminato le loro chiese, chiudendo poi il discorso attraverso la citazione di *Ps.* 139, 6, e affermando che coloro che uccideranno i figli di Persia saranno benedetti:

Contro nemici che con barbarica spada agognano di estirpare la vite coltivata dal Verbo, per i quali Davide divinamente ispirato tuonò dicendo “Beato colui che i figli della Persia abbatte e schiacciò contro le rocce”.

---

viglia nei confronti delle azioni di Eraclio, capace di spegnere il fuoco (simbolo della fede zoroastriana) con il legno della Croce, la stessa che poi sarà metaforicamente la causa della morte di Cosroe. Cfr. *In restitutionem S. Crucis*, ed. A. Pertusi, Giorgio di Pisidia. *Poemi*, I. *Panegirici epici*, Ettal 1959.

49 Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p. 205.

50 Giorgio di Pisidia, *Versi improvvisati in occasione della lettura dell’ordinanza emanata per il ricollocamento dei venerati legni della croce*, 6, 21-24, in Tartaglia cit., pp. 240-242.

51 Ivi, 6, 65-68, p. 244.

Così parlando facesti in modo che tutti passassero dall'indolenza alla premura e allo zelo; così preponendo ovunque Iddio come stratega e sovrano fortifichi il tuo potere.<sup>52</sup>

Eraclio usa coscientemente l'idea del *basileus* come emanazione diretta di Cristo, suo servitore, e guerriero, ed esattamente come Cristo, il suo potere non si fonda sull'incutere timore, bensì sull'amore; ed in egual misura ogni decisione bellica si fonda sulla necessità di vendicare le colpe verso Dio:

Il carattere e la natura del mio potere di imperatore ha unito voi a me come fratelli, e io proclamo che l'autorità imperiale non risplende tanto nella paura quanto nell'amore. Pertanto ho per mia norma di contrapporre ora alle violenze disumane, che la tirannide schiero contro le leggi, la forza dell'amore per gli uomini, e di opporre a quelle violenze quest'unica forza soltanto, la quale sempre nelle sventure di cui non si ha colpa rafforza le leggi giustamente sancite. Tale io sono per natura e carattere; ma e Questi il nostro comune imperatore e sovrano, e il condottiero dei nostri eserciti: con il suo aiuto più sicuro e il comando; per mezzo di Lui più giusta e pia e la vittoria: in Lui fiducioso sono proprio ora qui giunto, e come uno di voi mi armo per affrontare le fatiche della guerra.<sup>53</sup>

O ancora, prima dell'attacco del 20 aprile del 624:

Uomini, miei fratelli, temiamo Iddio e combattiamo per vendicare l'insulto arrecatogli! Rispettiamo la sovranità dello stato dei Romani e opponiamoci ai suoi nemici... Il pericolo non sarà senza ricompensa: no, perché conduce alla vita eterna! Affrontiamolo valorosamente, e il signore nostro Dio ci sarà al fianco e distruggerà il nemico!<sup>54</sup>

I parallelismi con figure eroiche e con Cristo stesso sono, come già visto, un *topos* ricorrente nelle narrazioni sulla figura di Eraclio, più volte accostato o paragonato a Eracle<sup>55</sup> (nel primo caso, nel carme *Per Bono patrizio e luogotenente dell'imperatore*, la dedica è anche nei confronti dello stesso Bono, descritto non a caso come un uomo che preferisce di gran lunga la pace alla guerra<sup>56</sup>), a Perseo<sup>57</sup>,

52 *Per l'imperatore Eraclio e le guerre di Persia* cit. II, 111-119, p. 94.

53 Ivi. II, 88-104, p.94.

54 G. Breccia, *Lo scudo di Cristo*, cit., p. 195.

55 Giorgio di Pisidia, *Per Bono* cit., 3, 1-9, p. 142.

56 Ivi, I 8-9.

57 *Eracliade* cit., II, 5-18, in Tartaglia cit., p. 210.

come detto in precedenza, a Cristo stesso<sup>58</sup>; o ancora la richiesta a Plutarco<sup>59</sup> a non impegnarsi nello scrivere di tutti i condottieri presenti nelle *Vite Parallele*<sup>60</sup>, in quanto potrà ritrovare in Eraclio tutte le loro qualità e anche di più: accanto ai paragoni mitologici qui è presente un elogio dei meriti di Eraclio circa la “resurrezione” della disciplina e dell’ordine dell’esercito bizantino, ponendolo su un piano superiore anche ad Alessandro Magno, che fu invece accompagnato da compagni d’arme di grande valore:

O Plutarco, taci, mentre scrivi le *Vite Parallele*! Perché molto ti affatichi continuando a raccogliere le biografie di tanti condottieri? Racconta la vita del nostro sovrano, e le avrai scritte tutte! Plutarco, volendo esaltare il figlio di Filippo e magnificarlo al massimo grado, si diede pensiero di mostrare a tutti che ciò che lo ostacolò fu la sorte contraria e a lui avversa: essendo un eccellente storico, non ignorava che se lo avesse descritto come una persona favorita dalla fortuna, avrebbe attribuito il merito delle vittorie non a lui, ma alla sua buona sorte. Tuttavia il tuo condottiero, o Plutarco, più ancora che la buona sorte, ebbe dalla sua parte compagni d’arme di grande valore. Ma chi mai avrebbe potuto persuadere a prendere le armi e munire dei suoi soli discorsi un esercito pervaso dalla paura per i Persiani, un esercito per il quale la fuga era il solo modo di combattere senza pericolo, tanto da diventare un’abitudine connaturata? Chi avrebbe potuto mutare la codardia di quei soldati trasformandone la viltà in coraggio, se non li avesse ridestati la tua saggezza e la tua potenza, essi che gravavano la terra con lo sterile peso dei loro corpi simili a pietre inerti?<sup>61</sup>

Sul paragone tra Eraclio-Eracle e Bono-Euristeo:

Anticamente Eracle ebbe in Euristeo un promotore di imprese di poco conto, a mio parere: infatti quale vantaggio poté derivare alla generalità dell’esistenza dalla uccisione di un cinghiale e dallo strangolamento di un leone? Oggi invece l’Eracle salvatore del mondo, per ricompensare le tue eccezionali virtù, affida a te, suo commilitone, l’Impero tutto in trepidante attesa: egli sa bene che tu non sei un arciere abile nel compiere stragi, bensì un uomo espertissimo nel garantire la salvezza<sup>62</sup>.

Il secondo paragone con Eracle invece è unicamente indirizzato ad Eraclio e

58 Reinink, Stolte cit., p. 157.

59 *Eracliade* cit., I, 110, p. 200.

60 Ivi, 110-121, pp. 200-202.

61 *Eracliade* cit., 110-130, pp. 200-202.

62 *Per Bono* cit., 3, 1-9, p. 142.

alla sconfitta di Foca, sulla scia del parallelo con Perseo:

Omero, non sei nel giusto quando senza un alcun motivo saluti come un dio il vano Eracle di un tempo: infatti quale vantaggio poté derivare alla generalità dell'esistenza dalla uccisione di un cinghiale o dallo strangolamento di un leone? Serba piuttosto la tua meraviglia per l'Eracle che, unico fra gli uomini, è considerato a giusta ragione il liberatore del mondo. È questo Eracle che discese fino alla porta dell'Ade, che strozzò la furia rabbiosa del cane vorace, che riportò in vita Alceste, vale a dire l'ecumene; è lui che uccise il drago assetato di sangue, che abbatté l'idra, mostro dalle molte teste; che purgò la vita prima coperta di lordura, che strangolò il leone devastatore del mondo; ed è lui che ora avanza come il vero Eracle, giacché ha conquistato i pomi aurei, vale a dire tutte quante le città. Passò la fonte della notte senza chiarore, la luce si insediò e la tenebra scomparve: ecco nascere adesso una nuova vita, un altro mondo, un più nuovo creato!<sup>63</sup>

L'uccisione del drago delle Esperidi, dell'idra di Lerna, la pulizia delle stalle di Augia, l'uccisione del leone Nemeo indicano le spedizioni di Eraclio e l'eliminazione di Cosroe. Il parallelo presente sempre nell'*Eracliade* di Giorgio di Pisidia, tra Eraclio e Perseo fa però capo al periodo del rovesciamento di Foca, il quale viene invece paragonato alla Gorgone uccisa dall'eroe greco:

Già era stato estinto il fuoco della tirannide, Foca, l'uragano, l'ubriacchezza fattasi persona, la causa principale delle nostre sciagure, il supplizio degli incubi notturni, colui che credeva di avere a disposizione delle sue infelicissime mani lo spargimento del nostro sangue, quel mostro della terra, quel volto di Gorgone. Tu non lo uccidesti con l'inganno adoperato da Perseo, giacché al violatore delle vergini contrapponesti l'immagine veneranda della Vergine incorrotta: in tuo soccorso tu avevi la sua effigie, quando ti accostasti alla bocca vorace della belva. Tu l'abbattesti salvando non una sola fanciulla sospesa nel vuoto, ma tutte quante le città<sup>64</sup>.

Giorgio di Pisidia non fa quindi differenze fra *exempla* cristiani e classici per lodare il suo imperatore: abbiamo osservato i paragoni afferenti alla religione cristiana o all'epica greca: Eraclio è il guerriero di Dio, e al contempo diventa una figura dal valore di molto superiore rispetto a figure non solo mitologiche, ma anche storiche, come Filippo II, padre di Alessandro Magno, anch'egli usato come metro di paragone utile a magnificare ancora di più le imprese di Eraclio. In

<sup>63</sup> *Eracliade* cit., 65-79, p. 198.

<sup>64</sup> *Eracliade* cit., II 5-18, p. 210.

sostanza Giorgio di Pisidia si appoggia a mondi concettuali diversi, dal cristiano al pagano:

Fatti avanti, Demostene, e parla in piena libertà! Adesso sono i discorsi a tenere il campo. Non essere ora sconvolto dalla paura: qui non c'è Filippo, ma il nostro sovrano. Non corri alcun pericolo, anche nel caso in cui tu taccia, poiché tutti sono stati senza eccezione e bellamente sconfitti<sup>65</sup>

Qui Giorgio di Pisidia fa riferimento all'aneddoto narrato da Eschine, *De legat.*, 34s.: Demostene, inviato come ambasciatore presso Filippo il Macedone, giunto dinanzi al re, mentre tutti attendevano di ascoltare la sua forbita eloquenza, impaurito dalla presenza del sovrano, non fu in grado di pronunciare il suo discorso e tacque. Il Pisida unisce al ricordo di questo aneddoto un *topos* retorico già utilizzato<sup>66</sup>: in sostanza il poeta - novello Demostene - ha intenzione di rincuorare sé stesso nel caso di una eventuale *défaillance*, in primo luogo, perché non c'è ora motivo di avere paura essendo Eraclio un sovrano dall'indole diametralmente opposta rispetto a quella di Filippo; in secondo luogo, perché l'argomento che tratta è arduo non solo per le sue forze, ma anche per quelle di chiunque altro, sicché risultare sconfitti è la sorte che tutti sono chiamati a condividere di buon grado<sup>67</sup>.

E ancora:

Insegnami a muovere con sagacia contro i nemici la spada di cui dispongo, la lingua, arma tagliente e aguzza! Conducimi là dove è concesso di descrivere i prodigi della tua potenza! È infatti accaduto che l'imperatore, ubbidiente al tuo comando, si è schierato contro le minacce degli empi barbari, per i quali è legge adorare le creature più di te stesso, che sei il Creatore<sup>68</sup>.

Lungo tutto l'arco del conflitto che lo ha visto protagonista, Eraclio riesce a farsi portatore di quei valori presenti nello *Strategikon* di Maurizio, e al contempo a sfruttare l'immagine del condottiero di Dio, colui che aveva sconfitto i persiani e il loro sacro fuoco, per consolidare la sua autorità morale, e per fare altrettan-

65 *Per l'imperatore Eraclio e le guerre di Persia* cit., II, 1-5, p. 89.

66 Tartaglia cit., pp. 88-89, nota 46.

67 Ivi.

68 Ivi, I, 12-20.



Fig. 3. Eraclio (al centro) venera l'icona di Maria prima di partire per la campagna contro i Persiani. Miniatura 44 in Ivan Duichev, *Miniatures from the Manasses Chronicle*, Bulgarski hudojnik Publishing house, Sofia, 1962. Licensed in Public Domain. Wikimedia Commons.

to con la figura della moglie Martina<sup>69</sup>, che lo accompagnerà nel viaggio atto a restituire la Croce a Gerusalemme<sup>70</sup>. Programmate o meno che fossero, tutte le sue scelte, dai discorsi usati con i suoi soldati, alle parole contro Cosroe, fino alle azioni vere e proprie, sono state utili ad edificare la figura di un *basileus* pienamente associabile non solo alla figura di Davide, ma anche a quella di Costantino: rendere nuovamente sicuro l'impero per i cristiani, restituire la croce a Gerusalemme (in parallelo alla "scoperta" della croce da parte di Costantino secoli prima), assegnare i proventi delle tasse della Siria al patriarca di Gerusalemme per

69 A. Frolow avanza l'ipotesi che la presenza di Martina a Gerusalemme sia stata fondamentale per purificarsi dal matrimonio incestuoso e per dimostrare a tutti che senza dubbio il Cielo era stato con loro: A. Frolow, *La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Heraclius en Perse*, in «Revue des Etudes Byzantines», 11 (1953), pp. 101-105.

70 Anche qui Frolow ipotizza che la restituzione della croce a Gerusalemme potesse simboleggiare il preludio ad una serie di discussioni e concili pianificati per il 631 d.C.: A. Frolow, *La Vraie Croix* cit., pp. 101-105.

finanziare la ricostruzione di monumenti<sup>71</sup>; quest'operazione di accostamento alla figura di Costantino, si pone su un altro livello rispetto al passato dei predecessori come Marciano, Giustino I e Giustiniano, tutti indicati come 'nuovi Costantino': Eraclio fonde infatti il suo nome con quello di Costantino, dandolo a diversi suoi figli<sup>72</sup>. Come suggerito da Paul Magdalino, questo accostamento sembra derivare anche dalla scarsità di termini di paragone alternativi e veramente significativi<sup>73</sup>.

#### 4. *Eraclio agli occhi 'degli altri'*

Accanto al contributo dato dalle fonti bizantine, non si può non menzionare la testimonianza delle fonti arabe, anche in virtù del fatto che le campagne di Eraclio contro l'impero persiano (che le forze arabe smembreranno tempo dopo) precedettero di poco l'espansione dell'Islam.

Emblematica è l'immagine restituitaci da Al-Tabari, storico e teologo arabo del X secolo, circa l'incontro di alcuni mercanti con Eraclio nei pressi dell'odierna Homs, la romana Emesa:

Io [Abf Sufytn b. Harb] sono andato con un gruppo di mercanti Quraysh in Siria... Siamo arrivati lì quando Eraclio aveva sconfitto i Persiani e li aveva scacciati dal suo territorio, riconquistando da loro la Grande Croce che i Persiani avevano depredato... Eraclio poi uscì da Hims, che era il suo quartier generale, e camminò a piedi... per pregare nella Città Santa. Dei tappeti furono stesi per lui e delle erbe aromatiche furono gettate sui tappeti. Una volta arrivato a Ilya, Eraclio pregò, insieme ai nobili del Rum.<sup>74</sup>

Vi è quindi l'immagine di un imperatore umile, e, fra l'altro, conoscitore di parte del Corano: a dimostrarlo è un episodio secondo cui Eraclio scrisse una lettera al califfo Omar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, nella quale chiese dove si trovasse quell'albero che aveva fatto ombra alla vergine Maria quando venne sorpresa dalle doglie<sup>75</sup>. Accanto all'immagine di Eraclio come conoscitore del Corano non mancano nemmeno gli elogi riguardanti la sua persona, come quelli riportati dallo storico

<sup>71</sup> Alexander cit., p. 225.

<sup>72</sup> Ivi, p. 226.

<sup>73</sup> P. Magdalino, *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992, p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wal Mulik*, Prima Series, III, pp. 1561-1562.

<sup>75</sup> L'albero, più precisamente una palma, alla quale Eraclio faceva riferimento era quello descritto nella Sura XIX.



Fig. 4. Il messaggio del Messaggero, pace e benedizioni su di lui, a Eraclio. Presunta lettera inviata da Maometto a Eraclio, imperatore di Bisanzio. Foto di ((55يٲيغل55))

Ibn Khatir, che ne lodò l'acume politico, ma anche l'astuzia, la profondità e la saggezza, nonché l'ostinazione<sup>76</sup>. A cementare ancor più l'idea di Eraclio come un capo ideale, è la lode nei confronti degli arabi ormai suoi nemici, dopo alcune sconfitte emblematiche come quella che decise la campagna dello Yarmuk<sup>77</sup>, a seguito della quale affermò che sapeva già che i suoi soldati sarebbero stati sconfitti da loro (gli arabi) in quanto questi ultimi sembravano amare la morte ben più di quanto i suoi sembrassero invece amare la vita. Aderente o meno alla realtà, quest'affermazione consolida il 'mito' di Eraclio nella cultura araba come modello del comandante ideale, che anche nella sconfitta riesce a mantenere la mente lucida, arrivando addirittura a lodare il nemico. Altrettanto importante è l'idea

<sup>76</sup> Cfr. N.M. El-Cheikh (Ed.), *Muhammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy*, in «Studia Islamica», No. 89 (1999), pp. 5-21.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Azadi, *Kitab futuh al-sham*, p. 212.

secondo cui Eraclio non solo avrebbe svolto nelle fonti islamiche una funzione fondamentale, ma che indirettamente avrebbe avuto una responsabilità, ovvero quella di riconoscere e ammettere il carattere profetico dell'opera di Maometto e dei suoi successori<sup>78</sup>.

In totale contrasto all'immagine positiva che ci viene restituita dalle fonti arabe, troviamo un importante rovescio della medaglia nella *cronaca* di Michele Siro:

Eraclio non permise agli ortodossi di comparire davanti a lui, né accettò le loro lamentele per il furto delle loro chiese. Per questo il Dio della vendetta, che solo è onnipotente, che cambia l'impero degli uomini a suo piacimento, lo dà a chi vuole e innalza i più umili, vedendo la malvagità dei Romani che, ovunque governassero, saccheggiavano crudelmente le nostre chiese e i nostri monasteri e ci condannavano senza pietà, fece venire i figli di Ismaele dalla regione meridionale, per liberarci attraverso loro dalle mani dei Romani. E se, in verità, subimmo qualche danno, perché le chiese cattoliche che ci erano state tolte e date ai Calcedoniani rimasero presso di loro: mentre quando le città si sottomisero ai Taiyayê, questi ultimi assegnarono a ciascuna confessione i templi che trovavano in loro possesso,

78 Rimando sempre a N.M. El-Cheikh, *Muhammad and Heraclius* cit., e più in particolare al dialogo contenuto all'interno del *Ṣaḥīḥ* di al-Bukhārī, in cui Eraclio interroga il mercante Abū Sufyān per informarsi su Maometto. Importante è l'ultimo passaggio del dialogo, all'interno del quale Eraclio fa quasi un resoconto del profeta di cui tutti parlavano: «Heraclius told his translator: tell him. I asked you about his lineage, you said that it is amongst the best; and so are the prophets sent in the best lineage of their people. I asked, has anyone among you ever made such claims, and you said no; had anyone made such claim previously, I would have said that he is a man who is sharing these claims. I asked whether any of his ancestors was sovereign, you said no; had any of his ancestors been sovereign, I would have said that he is a man reclaiming the inheritance of his ancestors. I asked you whether you used to accuse him of lying, before he started saying what he says, you said no; so, I know that he did not sprinkle lies on people or lie to God. I asked you whether it was the honorable people who followed him or the weak ones, you said the weak; and those are the followers of prophets. I asked you whether they increase or decrease in number, and you said, they increase; and so is faith until it is accomplished. I asked you whether anyone has recanted this religion and you said no; and so is belief when its cheerfulness penetrates the hearts. I asked you whether he is treacherous and you said no; and so are prophets. I asked you what he orders you to do and you mentioned that he orders you to worship God and not associate with him anything and that he forbids you from worshipping idols and that he orders you to pray, be truthful and rightful. Verily, if what you say is true, he will rule the ground beneath my feet. Whereas I knew that he was coming, I did not know that he was coming among you. Had I known, I would have taken it upon myself to meet him and if I were with him, I would have washed his feet». Cfr. per il dialogo integrale 'Abdallh al-Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ* (Cairo, 1936), vol. 1, pp. 7-8.

e a quel tempo la Grande Chiesa di Edessa e quella di Harran ci erano state sottratte, tuttavia non fu un piccolo vantaggio per noi essere liberati dalla crudeltà dei Romani, dalla loro malvagità, dalla loro rabbia, dal loro zelo crudele nei nostri confronti, e trovarci in pace<sup>79</sup>.

Qui per l'appunto è una fonte cristiana, ostile ad Eraclio, ad elogiare il nemico e a criticare lo stesso *basileus*. Lo stesso schema è altresì rintracciabile in Giovanni di Nikiou:

Abba Beniamino, patriarca degli Egiziani, tornò nella città di Alessandria nel tredicesimo anno dopo la fuga dai Romani, si recò nelle chiese e le ispezionò tutte. E tutti dissero: “Questa cacciata (dei Romani) e vittoria dei musulmani è dovuta alla malvagità dell'imperatore Eraclio e alla sua persecuzione degli ortodossi attraverso il patriarca Ciro. Questa fu la causa della rovina dei Romani e della sottomissione dell'Egitto da parte dei musulmani<sup>80</sup>”.

Qui il quadro dipinto da Giorgio di Pisidia, con Cosroe II che viene sconfitto a causa degli insulti arrecati a Dio e ad Eraclio, viene completamente rovesciato: adesso è Eraclio stesso, che per la sua malvagità e per gli insulti verso i cristiani ('monofisiti'), a trovarsi nella stessa situazione.

Proprio in riferimento all'uso che viene fatto dell'elemento sacro durante il conflitto con Cosroe II, si potrebbe parlare di “Guerra santificata”, piuttosto che di “Guerra Santa”, in quanto l'elemento religioso non rappresenta il punto di partenza dello scontro bizantino-sasanide, ma un utilissimo elemento narrativo (nel caso di Giorgio di Pisidia) e motivazionale (si veda per esempio il discorso



Fig. 5 Heraclius I, c. 575-641, Roman Emperor 610 [obverse], Parisian, XV century (1402/1413), Samuel H. Kress Collection, Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, CC0.

<sup>79</sup> *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, a cura di J.B. Chabot (dir.), Paris 1908, p. 412.

<sup>80</sup> *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text, a cura di R.H. Charles (Ed.), London-Oxford 1916, p. 14.

di Eraclio<sup>81</sup>). Alexander aveva visto in questa guerra l'“antesignana delle crociate successive”<sup>82</sup>, ma tale idea appare più associabile ai conflitti combattuti dal X secolo in poi. In questo caso tutti gli elementi religiosi, come il furto della Croce, le lettere di Cosroe e i suoi riferimenti alla mancata difesa da parte di Dio delle città cristiane appaiono come uno strumento più che come una vera e propria causa; in ragione di ciò lo scontro tra Eraclio e Cosroe può anche essere definito come un conflitto di “legittimazione”, utile allo stesso Eraclio per riabilitarsi come legittimo *basileus*, in primis agli occhi di Dio, e conseguentemente a quelli del popolo. Delle tre tipologie di “Guerra Santa” esposte da Kolia-Dermitzaki<sup>83</sup>, quella tra Eraclio e Cosroe risulta di difficile collocazione, anche in virtù del confine molto sfumato tra il concetto di guerra giusta e guerra santa.

#### FONTI

- Aeneas Tacticus, Asclepiodotus, and Onasander*, Translated by Illinois Greek Club, [William Abbott Oldfather / Charles Henry Oldfather / Arthur Stanley Pease / John B. Titchener], Loeb Classical Library 156, London William Heinemann / New York, Putnam's Sons, 1923, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1928.
- Cipriano, *Ad Donatum* 6, in *Cypriani Opera Omnia*, ed. G. Härtel, CSEL 3.1, Wien 1868.
- Clemente di Alessandria, *Gli Stromati: Note di vera filosofia*, Paoline editoriale libri, 1985.
- Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Greek Text edited by Gy. Moravcsik, English translation by R. J. H. Jenkins, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, 2012.
- The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text, a cura di Robert Henry Charles (Ed.), London-Oxford 1916.
- Giorgio di Pisidia, *Carmi*, a cura di L. Tartaglia. Torino, Utet 1998.
- Giorgio di Pisidia. *Poemi*, I. *Panegirici epici*, a cura di A. Pertusi, Ettal 1959.
- [*Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*] *The Taktika of Leo VI*. Text, Translation, and Commentary by G. Dennis (CFHB 49), Washington, D.C., 2010.
- Mauricii imperatoris *Strategicon: Das Strategikon des Maurikios. Einführung*, Edition und Indices von G.T. Dennis. Übersetzung von E. Gamillscheg (Hg.) (CFHB 17), Wien 1981.

81 Vd. *supra*, n. 54.

82 *Alexander* cit., p. 220.

83 Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki, «“Holy War” In Byzantium twenty Years Later: a Question of term definition and Interpretation», in *Byzantine War Ideology between roman imperial concept and Christian religion*. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011), pp. 125-126.

- Mauricius, Arta Militară*, Ediție critică, traducere și introducere de H. Mihăescu, București, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1970.
- Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, éd. Jean-Baptiste Chabot (dir.), Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1908.
- Nicephori Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula Historica*, edidit Carolus de Boor Lipsiae, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1880.
- Sebēos, *Storia*, Claudio Gugerotti (cur.), Traduzione dall'armeno, introduzione e note, Verona 1990.
- Teodoro Sincello, *Homilia de bello Avarico*, ed. L. Sternbach, in «Studien zu Georgios Pisides», Krakow, 1900.
- Tertulliano, *De Patientia* 3 (PL 2,120): *Sulle corone dei soldati* 13 (PL 2, 90).
- Theophylacti Simocattae *Historiae*, edidit Carolus de Boor; editionem correctiorem curavit explicationibusque recentioribus adornavit Peter Wirth, Stutgardiae, in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1972.
- Dennis, George T. *Three Byzantine Military Treaties*, Text, Translation and Notes, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, 1985.

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- Alexander, Suzanne Spain. «Heraclius, byzantine imperial ideology and the David plates», *Speculum*, LII, 2, 1977, pp. 217-237.
- Breccia, Gastone, «'Con assennato coraggio...'. L'arte della guerra a Bisanzio tra Oriente e Occidente, Medioevo greco, 1 (2001), pp. 53-78.
- Cosentino, Salvatore, «The Syrianos' Strategikon. A 9th Century Source? », *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, serie 2, 2 (2000), 243-280.
- El-Cheikh Nadia Maria, «Muhammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy», *Studia Islamica*, No. 89 (1999), pp. 5-21.
- Frolow, Anatole, «La Vraie Croix et les expeditions d'Heraclius en Perse», *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 11 (1953), pp. 101-105.
- Grabar, André, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin. Recherches sur l'Art Officiel de l'Empire d'Orient*, Paris, Les Belles-Lettres, 1936.
- Kaegi Werner E., *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003.
- Kolia-Dermitzaki, Athina, «“Holy War” In Byzantium twenty Years Later: a Question of term definition and Interpretation», in *Byzantine War Ideology between roman imperial concept and Christian religion*. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.-21. Mai 2011), pp. 121-132.
- Luttwak, Edward N., *La grande strategia dell'impero bizantino* (trad. it.), Milano 2009.
- Magdalino, Paul (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast, Variorum 1994.
- Mango, Cyril, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980.

- McGuckin, John Anthony, «A Conflicted Heritage: The Byzantine Religious Establishment of a War Ethic», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 65/66, (2011-2012), pp. 29-44.
- Olster, David M., «The Date of George of Pisidia's 'Hexaemeron'», *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 45, 1991, pp. 159-172.
- Ostrogorsky, Georg, *Storia dell'Impero bizantino*, traduzione di Pietro Leone, Torino, Einaudi, 1993.
- Ostrogorsky, Georg, «The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order», *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No. 84 (Dec., 1956).
- Piras, Andrea, «Ritualità della comunicazione: scambi di lettere tra Bisanzio e la Persia», *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, XI, 2009 [2010], pp. 301-316 (*A proposito delle relazioni tra Persia e Bisanzio: il trattato della Lazica*, Ravenna, DiSMEC (Dipartimento di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali), Facoltà di Conservazione dei Beni Culturali, Università di Bologna, 24 marzo 2010).
- Rance, Philip, «The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (formerly the Sixth-century Anonymus Byzantinus)», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 100/2 (2007), pp. 701-737.
- Reinink, Gerrit Jan, «Heraclius, the New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius», in Gerrit Jan Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte (Eds.) *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641): Crisis and Confrontation*, Leuven, Peeters 2002.
- Shoemaker, Stephen J. «'The Reign of God Has Come': Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam», *Arabica*, 61, 2018.
- Spieser, Jean-Michel, «Le Christ et le pouvoir impérial à Byzance», in Laura Andreani e A. Paravicini Bagliani (cur.), *Cristo e il Potere teologia, antropologia e politica*, Florence, 2017, pp. 17-31.
- Stratos, Andreas N., *Byzantium in the Seventh Century I*, Amsterdam, Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968.
- Studer-Karlen, Manuela, «The Emperor's Image in Byzantium Perceptions and Functions», in Ead. and M. Bacci (eds.), *Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th – 15th Centuries)*, The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures 400-1500, vol. 130, Leiden, Brill, 2022, pp. 134-171.
- Wander, Steven H. «The Cyprus Plates: The Story of David and Goliath», *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 8, 1973, pp. 89-104.
- Wiita, John Earl, *The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises*, University of Minnesota, Ph.D. 1977, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1978.
- Zuckerman, Constantin, «The compendium of Syrianus Magister», *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 40, 1990, pp. 209-224.

# Le ‘facteur scythe’ dans la ‘dernière grande guerre de l’Antiquité’

## Les ‘peuples scythes’ (Avars, Turcs) et leurs *foederati* dans les ‘guerres persiques’ d’Héraclius

GUILLAUME SARTOR

**ABSTRACT.** This study questions the importance of the «Scythian peoples» (Avars, Turks) in the «Last Great War of Antiquity» opposing Romans and Persians in 622-628 under Heraclius and Chosroes II. It analyzes the reasons that pushed Heraclius to seek, by means of treaties (*foedera*, *spondai*, *synthékai*), the alliance (*philia*, *symmachia*, *homaichmia*) of the Avars of Qaghan Baïan and the Western Turks of Qaghan Yabghu T’ong. If the Avars remained enemies of the Empire, the Western Turks, by becoming a *gens foederata*, represented a decisive asset for the success of the *expeditiones persicae* by campaigning for the Empire in Albania and Atropatene (626) and by providing external *foederati* (*symmachoi*) to accompany the emperor during the final *expeditio persica* (627-628). The commitment of the Turks, a Eurasian power with imperial vocation, alongside Heraclius demonstrates that the Romans – while being aware of the diplomatic and geostrategic stakes of the Eurasian world – had acquired sufficient knowledge of the “art of war” of the “Scythian peoples” and the diplomatic, military, tactical and strategic advantages that they could gain from it. Finally, the intervention of the Turks and their *foederati* confirms in the tragic years 610-620 that the *gentes foederatae* and their *foederati* were considered by the imperial power as weapons of the Empire in the defense of its interests, confirming a trend that began in the 5th century in the two *Partes Imperii*.

**KEYWORDS.** Heraclius, Chosroes, Turks, Avars, Romans, Persians, *foedera*, *foederati*, Caucasus, Persia, imperial army, diplomacy, strategy, tactics, war, *expeditiones persicae*.

### *Introduction*

**E**n triomphant, en décembre 627, au cœur de l’Empire perse, du Grand Roi Chosroès II, l’empereur Héraclius (610-641) pouvait légitimement apparaître, après six terribles années de guerre (622-628), aux yeux des contemporains, comme « le sauveur du monde » (*kosmorystês*), voire

comme un messie et nouveau David, annonçant le renouveau du monde puisqu'il avait rapporté « la vivifique Croix du Sauveur » à Jérusalem, ce « lieu approprié [...] qui assure la sécurité de l'*oikuménè* »<sup>1</sup>. Mais dans ce retournement inédit de situation puisque l'Empire assailli de toutes parts, à l'Est et à l'Ouest, amputé d'une partie de ces provinces les plus riches<sup>2</sup>, avait été sauvé de l'abîme, Héraclius n'avait pas seulement compté sur les forces romaines<sup>3</sup> : à ces dernières, il avait ajouté des *foederati* extérieurs des *gentes* caucasiennes (Lazes, Abasges, Ibères, Arméniens, Persarméniens, Albaniens)<sup>4</sup> et des *gentes* saracènes qui furent renforcés par les contingents des « peuples scythes »<sup>5</sup>.

- 1 GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclius*, I, 65-70, 82-84 ; *In Restitutionem S. Crucis*, 1-8, 109-110. Pour George de Pisidie : A. PERTUSI, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*, Ettal, 1959 ; L. TARTAGLIA, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Carmi*, Turin, 1998. Les thématiques apocalyptique et eschatologiques : S. J. SHOEMAKER, *The Apocalypse of Empire. Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018, p. 77-79. Les modèles bibliques de Moïse, Noé et David et leurs significations : Ma. WHITBY, « Defender of the Cross : George de Pisidie on the Emperor Heraclius and his Deputies » dans Ma. WHITBY (dir.), *The Propaganda of Power : The Role of Panegyrics in Late Antiquity*, Leiden, 1998, p. 247-273. Le retour de la Croix : J. W. DRIVERS, « Heraclius and the «Restitutio Crucis» : Notes on Symbolism and Ideology » dans G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE, (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 175-190.
- 2 Les conquêtes et occupations perses et avars : J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius' Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire 622-630 », *War in History*, 1, (1999), pp. 1-44, 1-4, 14-15, 19-22 ; W. E. KAEGI, *Heraclius, emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 58-99 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 8-173. Le siège de Constantinople : M. HURBANIČ, *The Avar Siege of Constantinople in 626 : History and Legend*, Springer, 2019. Les pertes financières et humaines : M. F. HENDY, « East and West : the Transformation of Late Financial Structures » dans *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente*, Spolète, 2002, II, p. 1307-1370, 1353-1355 ; W. BRANDES, J. HALDON, « Towns, Taxes and Transformation. State, cities and their hinterlands in the East Roman World, ca. 500-800 » dans G. P. BROGILOLO, N. GAUTHIER, N. CHRISTIE (dir.), *Towns and Their Territories. Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden, 2000, p. 141-172, 160-161 ; J. HALDON, « The Reign of Heraclius. A Context for Change ? » dans G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE, (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 1-16, 4-6.
- 3 Les raisons du triomphe d'Héraclius : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 360-372.
- 4 G. SARTOR, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). 1<sup>ère</sup> partie : La diplomatie impériale », *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire ancienne*, 10, (2021), pp. 289-318 ; G. SARTOR, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). 2<sup>e</sup> partie : Combattre pour l'Empire », *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire ancienne*, 11, (2022), pp. 385-416.
- 5 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 40-42 ; C. ZUCKERMAN, « The Khazars and Byzantium – The First Encounter » dans P. B. GOLDEN, H. SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS (dir.), *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives. Selected Papers from The Jerusalem 1999 Inter-*

Pourtant, quelques années plutôt, lorsque l'empereur Maurice (582-602) consacrait, dans son *Strategikon*, un développement aux *gentes/ethnè* contre lesquelles le *stratègos* devait savoir vaincre<sup>6</sup>, il plaçait aux côtés des « peuples blonds » (Lombards, Francs ...) et des Perses, des Sclavènes et des Antes, les « peuples scythes » (*ta Skythika ethnè*)<sup>7</sup>, soit les Avars, Turcs et « tous ceux dont les modes de vie ressemblent à ceux des peuples hunns »<sup>8</sup>. De fait, si un contemporain d'Héraclius avait souhaité écrire un traité similaire, il aurait identifié les mêmes *gentes/ethnè* parmi les ennemis de l'Empire avec cependant un intérêt marqué pour les Perses, les Sclavènes et les Avars qui tous réunis, représentèrent, par leurs menaces conjointes, les principaux périls qui mirent en question la survie de l'Empire en 610-620<sup>9</sup>.

Pour autant, si le *Strategikon* décrivait ces *gentes/ethnè* comme hostiles, elles pouvaient aussi être des partenaires diplomatiques qui, comme d'autres *gentes/ethnè*, fournissaient des contingents servant aux côtés de l'armée romaine<sup>10</sup> – ré-

---

*national Khazar Colloquium*, Leiden, 2007, p. 399-432 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 221, 238-239, 295-304.

6 MAURICE, *Strategikon*, XI, 1-4. Pour le *Strategikon* : G. T. DENNIS, E. GAMILLSHEG, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, Vienne, 1981 ; G. T. DENNIS, *The Strategikon of Maurice*, Philadelphie, 1984 ; Ph. RANCE, *The Roman Art of War in Late Antiquity : The Strategikon of the Emperor Maurice*, 2 volumes, Birmingham, à paraître en 2026.

7 On trouve l'équivalent latin de cette expression chez PRISCIE DE CÉSARÉE, Éloge de l'empereur Anastase, 298-299 qui évoque les *gentes scythae* repoussées par le général Hypatios. Citons également PACATUS, *Pan. Lat.* XII, 32, 3-4 au sujet des *omnes Scythae nationes* (Goths, Alains, Huns) rassemblées par Théodose contre Maxime. Pour ces deux auteurs : A. CHAUVOT, *Procopé de Gaza, Priscien de Césarée, Panégyriques de l'empereur Anastase I<sup>er</sup>*, Textes traduits et commentés, Bonn, 1986 ; Éd. GALLETIER, *Panégyriques Latins. XI-XII*, Tome III, Paris, 2002 ; C. E. V. NIXON, *Pacatus : Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, Liverpool, 1987.

8 L'ethnonyme « scythe » : A. CARILE, « I nomadi nelle fonti bizantine » dans *Popoli delle steppe : Unni, Avari, Ungari*, Spolète, 1988, p. 55-99. Les différents « peuples scythes » : P. B. GOLDEN, « The Peoples of the South Russian Steppes » dans D. SINOR (dir.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 256-284 ; P. B. GOLDEN, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middel East*, Wiesbaden, 1992 ; P. B. GOLDEN, *Studies on the Peoples and Cultures of the Eurasian Steppes*, Bucarest, 2011, p. 136-163.

9 Par exemple avec le siège avaro-perse de 626 : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 246-283.

10 *NJUST.* CXXX, 8 (545) mentionnait « tous ceux que nous enverrons, de quelque peuple que ce soit, au secours de notre Empire » (*qui ex qualibet gente in auxilium nostram rei-publicae nobis mittuntur*). Dans la version grecque du texte, l'expression *ex qualibet gente*

alités évoquées par le *Strategikon* même si ces contingents étaient génériquement nommés *ethnikoi* ou *symmachoi*<sup>11</sup> – comme cela fut le cas, de Justinien à Maurice, pour les Avars<sup>12</sup>, les Antes<sup>13</sup> ou les Turcs<sup>14</sup>. Et ce constat vaut également pour Héraclius ainsi qu'on l'a rappelé précédemment de la même manière que l'empereur le faisait lorsque George de Pisidie mettait en scène l'empereur au palais de Hierieia, préparant les *expeditiones* contre les Perses pour son armée et ses peuples (*tois ethnésin*)<sup>15</sup>, gentes/*ethnè* derrière lesquelles il faut voir, notamment, les foederati lazès, abasges et ibères (*symmachoi tôn Lazôn kai tôn Abasgôn kai tôn Ibêrôn*)<sup>16</sup>.

Précisément, c'est l'emploi qu'a fait l'empereur Héraclius des « peuples scythes » (*ta Skythika ethnè*) dans ses *expeditiones persicae* (624-628) que nous

---

*in auxilium* était rendue par *ethnous eis symmachian*. Pour cette *novella* : R. SCHOELL, G. KROLL, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, 3, Berlin, 1895.

- 11 MAURICE, cit., VII, B, 4 et VIII, 2, 16, 17, 50, 80. MAURICE, cit., VII, A, 15 rappelle que les guerriers du même groupe ethnique que l'ennemi (*homogeneis*) ne devaient pas être engagés aux combats et en II, 6, les *ethnikoi* doivent être déployés pour les assauts et embuscades. *Ethnikoi* a également le sens de peuples étrangers, étrangers : MAURICE, cit., VII, B, 15. Pour ce vocabulaire : L. MACMAHON, *The Foederati, the Phoideratoi, and the Symmachoi of the Late Antique East (ca. A.D. 400-650)*, Ottawa, 2014, p. 65-66 et G. SARTOR, *Recherches sur les fédérés et l'armée romaine (de la fin du II<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C. au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.)*, thèse de doctorat inédite sous la direction de J.-M. CARRIÉ, 3 volumes, EHESS, Paris, 2018, ici volume I.
- 12 Sous Justinien : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 1-2 et *Frg.* 8 ; CORIPPE, *Éloge de l'empereur Justin II*, III, 270-347. Sous Justin II et Tibère II : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 1-5 ; *Frg.* 15 ; *Frg.* 21 et 25, 1-2. Pour Ménandre : R. C. BLOCKLEY, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, Liverpool, 1985. Pour Corippe : S. ANTÈS, *Corippe, Éloge de l'empereur Justin II*, Paris, 1981.
- 13 Sous Justinien : PROCOPE, *Bell.*, VII, 14, 32-33 et VII, 22, 2-3. Sous Maurice : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, *Hist.* VIII, 5, 8-13 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6094. Pour Théophane : C DE BOOR, *Theophanis Chronographia*, Leipzig 1885 et C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, G. GREATREX, *THE CHRONICLE OF THEOPHANES CONFESSOR : BYZANTINE AND NEAR EASTERN HISTORY, AD 284813*, Oxford, 1997. Pour Théophylacte : C. DE BOOR, *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, Stuttgart, 1972 ; Ma. WHITBY, M. WHITBY, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta : an English translation with introduction and notes*, Oxford, 1986. Pour Procope : H. B. DEWING, *Procopius, History of the Wars*, 7 volumes, Londres-Cambridge Mass., 1914-1940 ; J. HAURY (éd.), *Procopius, De Aedificiis*, Leipzig, 1964 ; H. B. DEWING, *Procopius, Anecdota*, Londres-Cambridge, Mass., 1935.
- 14 Sous Justin II et Tibère II : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10 et 19.
- 15 GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclias*, II, 98-143 avec PERTUSI, cit., p. 273 et SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., p. 295, 311 et SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », p. 387.
- 16 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309-310) avec SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., p. 294-305 et SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 187.



Fig. 1 La Bataille entre Héraclius et Khosro II. Défaite et décapitation des vaincus, fresque de Piero della Francesca, Détail du cycle de fresques de la «Légende de la Sainte Croix» dans le chœur de la basilique San Francesco d'Arezzo. Wikimedia Commons.

souhaitons étudier en interrogeant ce que nous proposons de nommer « le facteur scythe », soit l'ensemble des considérations – un ensemble plurifactoriel avec des spécificités éventuelles – qui ont poussé Héraclius à se tourner vers ces *gentes/ethnè* pour ses *expeditiones persicae* alors qu'il disposait déjà des *foederati* fournis par les *gentes/ethnè* sud-caucasiennes et saracènes<sup>17</sup>. Par ailleurs, l'appellation ethnonymique et générique « facteur scythe » – et non « facteur turc » – tient précisément au fait que derrière l'ethnonyme « peuples scythes » (*ta Skythika ethnè*) se dessine une relative diversité attestée par le *Strategikon* mais qui conserve sa pertinence dans le cas de notre étude puisque Héraclius chercha également – comme nous le verrons – à mobiliser les Avars pour ses *expeditiones Persicae* avant de s'en remettre aux Turcs<sup>18</sup>. Autrement dit, l'étude des sources –

17 Les contingents fédérés lazes, abasges, ibères, persarméniens et albanais participèrent aux deux *expeditiones* (624-625, 627-628) : SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>re</sup> partie », cit., et SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit. De la sorte leurs supposées défections ne sont pas des arguments pour justifier le recours au « facteur scythe ». Voir SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 391-412 et G. SARTOR, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). Troisième partie : Considérations stratégiques », *HiMA*, 13, (2024), à paraître.

18 Il est possible que le « choix turc » ait été dicté par l'impuissance impériale à faire des

essentiellement littéraires – sera centrée sur l’engagement militaire des « peuples scythes » contre les Perses et sur l’analyse des différents facteurs qui présidèrent à un emploi assumé de ces *gentes/ethnè* et de leurs combattants<sup>19</sup>. De la sorte, il s’agira de juger de la capacité du pouvoir impérial – et des modalités et moyens mis en place pour y parvenir – à mobiliser ces peuples pour accroître l’efficacité de sa machine de guerre face au rival perse en recourant à une gamme variée et complémentaire d’alliés.

Après avoir analysé le cadre diplomatique de l’emploi militaire de ces « peuples scythes », l’étude se portera sur les différentes considérations (politique et géopolitique, géographique et opérationnelle, tactique, stratégique) intervenues dans les choix romains de recourir à ces peuples.

### *Les « peuples scythes » et Héraclius : Avars et Turcs, des « peuples fédérés » soumis aux foedera*

Définissons d’abord le cadre dans lequel furent mobilisés ces « peuples scythes » : Turcs et Avars. Déterminer ce cadre diplomatique implique d’analyser le contexte et les éléments sémantiques utilisés par nos sources pour exposer ces accords et relations diplomatiques. Il conviendra, ensuite, de replacer l’ensemble documenté dans le cadre des pratiques plus générales de la diplomatie impériale déployée depuis la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle envers les « peuples scythes » (Huns, groupes proto-turcs, Bulgares, Coutrigours, Outigours, Huns Sabires).

Étant donné le contexte stratégique jusqu’en 619 et la priorité militaire de se porter contre les Perses, pour éviter les périls d’une guerre sur deux fronts, Héraclius chercha à négocier avec les Avars pour avoir la paix à l’Ouest et libérer Constantinople de leur menace<sup>20</sup>. Les sources – en premier lieu Nicéphore

---

Avars de solides alliés qui pourraient être engagés contre les Perses. Nous revenons sur ce point par la suite. Les Bulgares-Ounogundoures qui entrèrent dans l’alliance impériale ne paraissent pas avoir été partie prenante de la guerre contre les Perses.

19 Comme le fait VÉGÈCE, *Epitoma rei militaris*, II, 1, 8 sous Théodose I<sup>er</sup> (379-395), il convient de distinguer la *gens* des combattants qu’elle fournit au titre de ses obligations : ainsi Végèce indiquait que les *gentes foederatae* fournissaient des *auxilia*. Pour Végèce : M. D. REEVE, *Vegetius. Epitoma Rei Militaris*, Oxford, 2004 ; N. P. MILNER, *Vegetius : Epitome of Military Science*, Liverpool, 1996.

20 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6111 (302) : l’empereur encourageait le Qaghan à conclure la paix (*eirèneuein*) avec l’Empire car il souhaitait entreprendre une expédition contre la Perse, ce

et Théodore le Syncelle – mentionnent l'existence d'un traité (*symbasesin, epi spondais*) de paix<sup>21</sup> renouvelé en 623 au nom de la *philia*, le Qaghan avar devenant ainsi un « ami des Romains » (*philos ein Rhômaïois*)<sup>22</sup>. Dans le cadre de ce traité – *spondé* en grec dont l'équivalent latin est *foedus*<sup>23</sup> – d'importantes rétributions étaient versées aux Avars, des serments prêtés et des otages romains livrés<sup>24</sup>.

---

qui n'était possible qu'à la condition d'être en paix avec les Avars. Sur les attaques, les menaces et les difficiles négociations avec les Avars : *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 712-713, 719-720 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6110 (301-302) ; NICÉPHORE, *Hist.* X, I. GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Expeditio Persica*, III, 311-312 évoque le caractère urgent de la situation, Héraclius abandonnant les opérations contre les Perses en 622 car les « peuples de l'Ouest » inspiraient la méfiance en l'absence de traités (*ta pros Hesperan genê aspondon echein ex ethous hypopsian*), faisant craindre des périls sur Constantinople. Voir M. HURBANIČ, « The Eastern Roman Empire and the Avar Khaganate in the Years 622-624 AD », *Acta Ant. Hung.* 51, (2011), pp. 315-328, 316-317. Pour Nicéphore : C. MANGO, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short history*, Washington D. C., 1990. Pour la *Chronique paschale* : L. DINDORF, *Chronicon Paschale*, Berlin, 1832 ; Ma. WHITBY, M. WHITBY, *Chronicon Pascale 284-628 A. D.*, Liverpool, 1989.

- 21 THÉODORE LE SYNCELLE, *Homélie*, X cite « un traité de paix » (*eipi spondais dêthen eirênikaï*). THÉOPHANE, cit., 6111 (302) évoque l'envoi d'ambassadeurs par l'empereur auprès du Qaghan pour lui reprocher sa trahison et l'encourager à conclure un traité de paix (*eirênê*) ; le Qaghan, soucieux d'obtenir l'amitié de l'empereur, s'engagea à respecter la paix. Pour Théodore le Syncelle : F. MAKK, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626*, Szeged, 1975.
- 22 NICÉPHORE, cit., X. Ce dernier parle de l'attitude pleine de *philia* du Qaghan : *pros philian* (I. 7), *philos* (I. 8). Pour les négociations – et le désastre – d'Héraclée : *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 712-713. Pour le contexte et la date de 623 : HURBANIČ, « Eastern Roman Empire », cit., p. 315-323 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 207-213 ; W. POHL, *The Avars : A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567-822*, Cornell, 2018, p. 293 donne la date de 622.
- 23 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 5, 13 et III, 11, 3-4 montre cette parfaite équivalence au sujet des *phoïderatoi*. Tout d'abord, qu'il s'agisse du Livre III, 11, 3-4 comme du Livre VIII, 5, 13, l'explication que donne Procope de l'appellation *phoïderatoi* repose sur le lien établi avec l'existence de traités que Procope désigne en grec par les termes *spondai* et *synthêkai* et dont il donne le terme latin équivalent sous la forme du latinisme *phoïdera* provenant du sème latin pluriel *foedera* dont le singulier est *foedus*, en précisant que « les Latins désignent par *phoïdera* les traités (*synthêkas*) conclus en temps de guerre » (VIII, 5, 13) ou que les « Romains appellent *phoïdera* les traités (*spondas*) qu'ils concluent avec leurs ennemis » (III, 11, 4). Il en résulte, comme Procope l'indique, à propos des *phoïderatoi* goths en VIII, 5, 13 que ces derniers tenaient leur appellation de *phoïderatoi* des liens qui avaient été établis avec eux par l'Empire dans le cadre des traités (*foedera/phoïdera/synthêkai/spondai*) conclus : ils s'appelaient *phoïderatoi* puisque les Romains les avaient « alors désignés » ainsi « dans la langue des Latins [...] afin d'insinuer » que « les Goths n'étaient pas leurs ennemis vaincus à la guerre » et qu'ils « étaient devenus leurs alliés (*enspondoi*) ».
- 24 NICÉPHORE, cit., XIII ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6111 (302). THÉODORE LE SYNCELLE, cit., X men-

Si rien dans les sources faisant état de ce *foedus* de 623 ne suggère une alliance militaire, un passage transmis dans la *Chronographie* de Théophane doit être considéré avec attention. Celui-ci indique en effet, qu'Héraclius, dans ses préparatifs pour l'*expeditio persica* de 624/625 et avant son départ pour l'Orient<sup>25</sup>, avait adressé une lettre au Qaghan afin de l'encourager à assister l'Empire (*pros ton Khaganon tôn Abarôn paraklêseis tou epikourein ta tôn Rhômaiôn pragmata*) puisqu'ils étaient unis par un traité d'amitié (*hôs philian speisamenos pros auton*)<sup>26</sup>. Or la *philia*, notion majeure dans la diplomatie impériale, impliquait pour l'ami (*philos*) de ne rien entreprendre de contraire aux intérêts impériaux, c'est-à-dire aussi de répondre favorablement aux demandes impériales le cas échéant en fournissant des troupes dans le cadre d'une alliance militaire qu'un locuteur hellénophone nommait *symmachia* et/ou *homaichmia*<sup>27</sup>. Ainsi, rapportant une ambassade émanant du Qaghan turc Sizabul pour négocier un traité et une alliance militaire (*homaichmia*) avec Justin II, Ménandre indiquait que les Turcs étaient devenus des « amis des Romains » (*hoi Tourkoi philoi egenonto Rhômaïois*), ce qui faisait dire au Qaghan que « l'ami des Romains était son ami et [...] leurs ennemis étaient ses ennemis »<sup>28</sup>. Or les sources relatives aux liens unissant les Avars et l'Empire de Justinien à Tibère II montrent d'une part l'existence de *foedera*<sup>29</sup> ou *spondai* en grec<sup>30</sup> et d'autre part le contenu de ces accords : ainsi, moyennant

---

tionne l'argent, les biens et les trésors (*ta chrêmata*) reçus « par suite d'un traité de paix » (*epi spondais dêthen eirênikaïs*) accompagné, pour renforcer les « points du traité », d'une « formule ancienne de serment (*oirkois*), prêtée par ses émissaires ». Parmi les otages, on trouvait le fils de l'empereur, Jean Athalaric, son neveu ou encore un fils du patrice Bonus.

25 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (303) avec la date de 622 avec KÆGI, cit., p. 120-121.

26 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (303). Pour la forme et le contenu de cette lettre, voir nos remarques ci-après.

27 Analyses sémantico-diplomatiques : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I (sources et vocabulaire).

28 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1, 2-3 ; *Frg.* 19, 1.

29 CORIPPE, *Éloge*, cit., III, 270-302, 305-307 : *Si foedera pacis intemerata tibi, si mavis pacta manere, debita quaerenti transmittite munera regi.*

30 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 1 (*spondas*). Après la rupture du *foedus* en 568, le Qaghan envoya des ambassadeurs auprès de l'empereur pour négocier un traité (*kai peri spondôn logous prosagagein*) : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 5. Alternativement, on trouve aussi employé le sème *synthêkê* comme chez MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 25, 1 (*tas synthêkas*) qui utilise aussi (l. 64-65) *tôn spondôn* au sujet du *foedus* rompu par les Avars ; *Frg.* 25, 2 mentionne la paix et le traité (*allai eirênas te kai synthêkas*) que venait de violer le Qaghan en achevant la construction du pont sur la Save.

de substantielles contreparties<sup>31</sup>, une alliance militaire – que Ménandre nomme *homaichmia* ou *symmachia* – impliquait pour les Avars de combattre aux côtés de l'Empire (*hetairisasthai*) contre ses ennemis<sup>32</sup>. Mais ces *foedera* impliquait aussi l'amitié diplomatique, la *philia*, puisque les Avars, détruisant « en masse les barbares » des « alentours de la Thrace » au point qu'il n'en restait « plus un seul pour faire des incursions à travers les frontières thraces » sous Justinien avaient agi comme des « amis (*philoï*) des Romains »<sup>33</sup>. L'amitié, *philia*, exigeait de la *gens Avarum* qu'elle se mobilise au service des intérêts supérieurs de l'Empire, ce qui lui valait d'être récompensée par la générosité impériale dont la continuité devait être assurée pour garantir la paix et les bonnes dispositions de la *gens* envers l'Empire<sup>34</sup> : le Qaghan avar ne pouvait être « bien disposé » envers l'empereur et « l'État romain, si on ne lui remet[tait] pas auparavant ce pour quoi il a[vait] décidé de ne pas porter ses armes contre les Romains »<sup>35</sup>.

31 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 1. Rétributions et présents (*munera, dôra, dona, chrêmata*) sous Justinien et Justin II : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 2 ; *Frg.* 8 ; *Frg.* 12, 1 ; VICTOR DE TUNNUNA, *Chron.* 563, 2 ; CORIPPE, *Éloge*, cit., III, 305-307 ; JEAN D'ÉPHÈSE, *H.E.* VI, 24 (PAYNE SMITH, cit., p. 429). Pour Victor de Tunnuna : A. PLACANICA, *Vittore da Tunnuna : Chronica. Chiesa e impero nell'età di Giustiniano*, Florence, 1997. Pour Jean d'Éphèse : R. PAYNE SMITH, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus, now first translated from the original Syriac*, Oxford, 1860. Sur les relations entre Empire et Avars : A. SARANTIS, *Justinian's Balkan Wars. Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thrace and the Northern World A.D. 527-65*, Leeds, 2016, p. 334-335 ; G. KARDARAS, « The Avars : *foederati* of Byzantium ? » dans V. TURČAN (éd.), *Byzantská Kultura a Slovensko. Zborník štúdií*, Bratislava, 2007, p. 131-137, 132-133.

32 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 1-2 ; *Frg.* 8, 1. 39-56 : « Jamais je n'aurai besoin de conclure une alliance (*symmachia*) avec vous, et jamais vous ne recevrez de nous autre chose que ce que nous voulons vous donner, cela comme un juste présent pour prix de vos services (*doubleias*) et non, ainsi que vous l'attendez, comme un tribut (*phorologian*) que vous nous auriez imposé ».

33 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 8.

34 Comme le rapporte le récit des ambassades avars auprès de Justin II par MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 8 : « Nous sommes donc là pour recevoir les présents habituels (*dôra*). Sache qu'il n'est pas possible que notre chef soit très bien disposé envers toi et l'État romain, si on ne lui remet pas auparavant ce pour quoi il n'a pas décidé de ne pas porter les armes contre les Romains », « car nous avons récompensé ton père, qui nous témoignait son amitié par des cadeaux, en nous abstenant de faire, alors que nous le pouvions, des incursions à travers le territoire romain, mais aussi en faisant plus : nous avons en effet détruit en masse les barbares de votre voisinage qui dévastaient sans cesse les alentours de la Thrace [...]. C'est qu'ils craignent la puissance des Avars qui a des rapports amicaux envers l'Empire romain ».

35 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 8. Le récit que donne CORIPPE, *Éloge*, cit., III, 302-307, 345-347 confirme

La *philia* constituait donc un principe diplomatique fondamental du *foedus*, son respect constituant la base de tout rapport pacifique et un préalable à la coopération entre Empire et *gens*<sup>36</sup>, coopération qui pouvait être militaire puisque la *philia* impliquait aussi une alliance par les armes. D'ailleurs, c'est encore la *philia* qui est invoquée lorsque vers 577-578 Tibère II envoya une ambassade au Qaghan avar qui était, depuis le traité conclu avec celui-ci, ami de l'Empire, afin qu'il engage ses troupes contre les Slavènes<sup>37</sup>. De fait, dans l'action du Qaghan contre ceux-ci, l'évocation de la *philia* doit être liée au *foedus* qui impliquait paix et amitié (*eirênês te kai philias*), le Qaghan affirmant même que son projet d'attaque contre les Slavènes était conditionné par la *philia* qui l'unissait à l'empereur face à cet ennemi que les Avars et l'Empire avait en commun<sup>38</sup>. Il est donc tout à fait possible que l'exhortation adressée par Héraclius au Qaghan avar afin qu'il « puisse aider l'État romain dans la mesure où il avait conclu un traité d'amitié avec lui (*hôs philian speisamenos pros auton*) » renvoie aux implications militaires de la *philia* dans la droite ligne de ce qui a été observé pour les relations avaro-romaines de Justinien à Tibère II : si on transpose les propos du Qaghan ture Silzabul sur la *philia* à la situation de 623, Héraclius était en droit d'attendre l'engagement militaire avar contre les Perses puisque Romains et Avars devaient, au nom de la *philia*, avoir les mêmes ennemis. De cet espoir, voire de ce projet, on trouverait une allusion métaphorique et poétique dans le Livre II de l'*Heraclias*, poème composé après le 20 mai 628 pour célébrer les accomplissements de l'empereur<sup>39</sup>, puisque George de Pisidie fait référence aux intentions de l'empereur

---

cette logique des relations diplomatiques : ainsi, pour l'ambassadeur avar, « le temps est venu de recevoir les dédommagements que nous donnait chaque année la très grande libéralité » et Justin II devait également s'y soumettre : « ce que lui [Justinien] nous a scrupuleusement fourni, il vous faut à vous aussi nous le fournir. Si tu préfères que restent intacts pour toi notre traité de paix (*foedera pacis*), notre pacte (*si mavis pacta manere*), fais parvenir à notre roi qui les demande les présents (*munera*) qui lui sont dus ».

36 Soulignons la récurrence de la *philia* dans les négociations de 568 entre l'empereur et le Qaghan : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 5-6. Après la cession de Sirmium, un nouveau *foedus* fut conclu entre le Qaghan et Tibère II : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 15, 1-6. Il impliquait paix et amitié (*eirênês te kai philias*) : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 25, 1.

37 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21.

38 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 15, 5-6 et *Frg.* 25, 1-2. La *philia* et ses implications militaires : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 25, 1-2.

39 PERTUSI, cit., p. 240-263 ; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses to a world crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the seventh century*, Oxford, 2010, p. 22-24.

d'utiliser Charybde contre Gorgone<sup>40</sup>, deux figures mythologiques désignant des *gentes* contemporaines, à savoir les Avars (Charybde) et les Perses (Gorgone)<sup>41</sup>. Néanmoins, malgré les concessions faites par l'empereur<sup>42</sup> et en raison des intérêts propres du Qaghan, jamais ce projet d'alliance ne fut concrétisé.

Avec l'affirmation, au nord du Caucase, dans un vaste territoire de la Chine de l'Ouest aux steppes pontiques, de la puissance du Qaghanat des Göktürk (ou Köktürk) à partir des années 550-560<sup>43</sup>, l'Empire avait cherché, déjà sous Justin II, à trouver, auprès des Turcs, un partenaire diplomatique et un allié militaire dans sa confrontation avec les Perses. Héraclius renouvela cette entreprise<sup>44</sup>. C'est semble-t-il durant le printemps 625 ou avant l'hiver 624, peut-être février 625 – ou avant son départ de Constantinople au printemps 624<sup>45</sup> – que l'empereur envoya une ambassade auprès du Qaghan des Turcs occidentaux<sup>46</sup>. Selon Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, l'empereur confia au patrice André<sup>47</sup> le soin de négocier un

40 GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclius*, II, 90-96.

41 PERTUSI, cit., p. 273. Voir J.-L. DIETEN, « Zum "Bellum Avaricum" des Giorgios Pisides. Bemerkungen zu einer Studie von Paul Speck », *Byzantinischen Forschungen*, IX, (1985), pp. 149-178, 154-155.

42 Nous revenons sur ce point par la suite.

43 Le Qaghanat Göktürk était divisé entre Turcs orientaux et Turcs occidentaux : GOLDEN, *Introduction*, cit., p. 115-136, 146-149, 235-237 ; GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 17-64.

44 La confusion avec les Khazars : ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 401-417.

45 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 221.

46 La séquence diplomatique se fonde sur MOVSEŖS DASXURANC'I, *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, II, 11 et 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 83, 87-88).

Pour l'œuvre de Movsēs Dasxuranc'i : V. ARAK'ELIAN, *Movsēs Dasxuranc'i/Kalankatuac'i, Patmut'iwñ Aħuanic' Aħxarhi*, Erevan, 1983 ; C. J. F. DOWSETT, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, Londres, 1961. La mission d'André : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 16-17, 40-41 ; KAEGI, cit., p. 142 ; ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 413-414.

47 MOVSEŖS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) rapporte que l'empereur choisit le patrice André auquel il donna des instructions et l'envoya auprès du Qaghan pour lui faire connaître « des promesses d'un trésor immense et innombrable, disant : S'ils veulent m'aider par leur zèle, je me chargerai pour ma part d'étancher la soif d'or » des Turcs. On retrouve dans la *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPE*, 58-59 une mention des ambassades adressées par l'empereur au Qaghan : l'empereur, parvenu en Mingrélie, « envoya des messagers avec de nombreux présents au roi des Turcs. Or le roi des Turcs reçut largement les envoyés d'Héraclius et lui fit un pacte d'alliance » (58-59). Ces « messagers » ne peuvent que correspondre aux ambassades conduites par le patrice André. Pour cette chronique : M. VAN ESBRÖECK, « Une Chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople », *Bedi Kartlisa*, 34, (1976), pp. 74-96. Les sources grecques rapportent que l'empereur, depuis la Lazique, fit appel aux Turcs afin qu'ils deviennent

traité avec les Turcs occidentaux dirigé par le « roi du Nord », le Qaghan Yabghu T'ong<sup>48</sup>.

---

ses alliés (*eis symmachian*) (THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117, 315) et qu'il envoya des présents au *kyrios tôn Tourkôn* (NICÉPHORE, cit., X) afin de conclure une alliance (*epi symmachia*). Ils ne mentionnent pas le nom des ambassadeurs, ni les ambassades même si celles-ci se devinent indirectement. Les sources syriaques qui puisent chez Théophile d'Édesse rapportent que l'empereur écrivit au Qaghan pour lui demander la fourniture de troupes : THÉOPHILE D'ÉDESSE, *Chronique* (HOYLAND, cit., p. 73-74) = MICHEL LE SYRIEN, *Chron.* XI, 3 (CHABOT, cit., p. 409) = BAR HEBRAEUS, *Chronographie*, I, p. 121-122. C'est aussi, peut-être, à cette ambassade que pourrait faire allusion le Pseudo-Sebēos, dans l'introduction à son œuvre, lorsqu'il mentionne une « expédition d'Héraclius du côté du Nord, vers le roi des Thétals » : PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, *Hist.* VII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 2-3) avec le commentaire de Thomson *et alii* 1999, I, p. 159-160. Sur ce passage, voir aussi SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie » (à paraître). Une possible allusion à l'aide apportée par les Turcs se trouve dans Pseudo-Sebēos, XXIX (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 54) passage complexe pour lequel il faut voir THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 54 n. 342-343 puisque les faits évoqués concernent le règne de Maurice et non celui d'Héraclius. Les sources syriaques : Ph. TALON, *La Chronographie de Bar Hebraeus*, 3 volumes, Fernelmont, 2013 ; J. B. CHABOT, *Michel Le Syrien, Chronique*, Paris, 1899-1924 ; R. G. HOYLAND, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, Liverpool, 2011. Pour le Pseudo-Sebēos : G. V. ABGARYAN, *Sebēos, Patmut' iwn Sebēosi*, Matenagirk' Hayoc' 4, Ant' ilias, 2005, p. 449-565 ; R. W. THOMSON, J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, T. GREENWOOD, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, Liverpool, 1999.

- 48 Selon E. DE LA VAISSIÈRE, « Ziebel Qaghan identified » dans C. ZUCKERMAN (dir.), *Constructing the seventh century*, Paris, 2013, p. 741-748, le « roi du Nord » Qaghan Yabghu T'ong (Jebu Xak'an) est Tong qui dirigeait l'Empire occidental des Turcs et qui est issu de la dynastie des Ashinas tandis que Xeili (Hsieh-li) Qaghan régnait sur les Turcs orientaux (p. 741-742, 743). Ziebel serait Sipi, frère de Qaghan Yabghu T'ong (Jebu Xak'an) et commandait en second en tant que Qaghan inférieur du « Roi du Nord » (p. 743-744). Mais en 629, il se révolta contre Tong et devint alors – dans les sources grecques et arméniennes – le Qaghan Yabghu (Jebu Xak'an) ainsi que le nomme Movsēs Dasxuranc'i lors du siège de Tiflis (p. 744-745) : le fait qu'il soit considéré comme roi en second par les sources byzantines s'expliquerait par les témoins qui rencontrèrent en 627 Siebel/Sipi, les soldats byzantins, alors qu'il n'était encore qu'un Qaghan inférieur (p. 645). Quant au témoignage de Movsēs Dasxuranc'i qui fait de Ziebel/Sipi le Jebu Xak'an qui dirigea le siège de Tiflis, alors qu'il évoquait également le « Roi du Nord », il provient de différentes sources : le témoignage du Catholicos Viroy qui rencontra Šat' en Albanie (628-629) repose sur la situation politique nouvelle au sein de l'Empire turc occidental depuis la révolte de Ziebel/Sipi contre son frère, Qaghan Yabghu T'ong (p. 745). C'est par souci de cohérence que Ziebel/Sipi, présent dans le Caucase au printemps 627 à Tiflis, alors qu'il n'était que Qaghan inférieur, aurait alors été nommé Qaghan Yabghu (Jebu Xak'an). La confusion des sources arméniennes s'expliquerait aussi par l'emploi du mot Qaghan pour désigner à la fois le suprême chef des Turcs – Qaghan Yabghu T'ong (Jebu Xak'an) – et le Qaghan inférieur, tel Ziebel/Sipi (p. 745). Šat' est décrit comme le neveu du Roi du Nord, Qaghan Yabghu T'ong (Jebu Xak'an), fils de Ziebel/Sipi (p. 746).

La séquence, telle qu'elle est rapportée avec précision par Movsēs Dasxuranc'i – qui puisait dans une source locale bien renseignée nommée « l'Histoire de 682 »<sup>49</sup> – permet de comprendre le contenu des négociations du traité. Lors de sa mission, le patrice André devait obtenir du Qaghan, moyennant des promesses d'importantes rétributions, une alliance militaire<sup>50</sup> dont les sources grecques gardent la trace en utilisant le vocabulaire classique de l'alliance militaire puisqu'ils devaient combattre aux côtés de l'Empire (*eis symmachian, epi symmachia, symmachêsein*) contre les Perses<sup>51</sup>, alliance que le Qaghan Yabghu T'ong accepta, s'engageant à devenir l'allié de l'empereur<sup>52</sup>. Selon Nicéphore, les relations



Fig. 2 Pièce de monnaie en or à l'effigie de Khosro II. Cabinet des Medailles. Personal photograph 2007. GNU Free documentation License. Wikimedia Commons.

49 J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Armenian historians of Heraclius. An examination of the aims, sources and working-methods of Sebeos and Movses Daskhurantsi » dans G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE (dir.), *The reign of Heraclius (610-641) : Crisis and Confrontation. Groningen studies in cultural change*, Louvain, 2002, p. 41-62, 52-60 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 109-113, 121-124.

50 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87).

51 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316) : ... *eis symmachian [...] pros symmachian* ... ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 17 et 40 (*epi symmachia*), l. 19 (*symmachêsein*), l. 50 (*Tourkoi symmachousin Herakliôn*).

52 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT 1961, p. 87-88) donne la réponse du Qaghan au patrice André : « Je le vengerai de ses ennemis, je me lèverai et irai en personne à son secours avec ma vaillante armée. Je satisferai ses exigences par la guerre à l'épée et à l'arc, selon son désir ». Dans le passage, il est question d'une lettre adressée au Roi des Rois : « ils envoyèrent un ambassadeur au grand roi Chosroès pour l'informer de leur alliance avec l'empereur et de leur marche à son secours ». Après avoir énoncé les objectifs de cette alliance (« retirez-vous du territoire du roi des Romains et rendez-lui toutes les terres et villes que vous avez prises de force et remettez tous les prisonniers de son pays actuelle-

entre l'empereur et le Qaghan furent placées sous le signe de la *philia*, notion qui évoque l'état de bonnes dispositions réciproques entre les parties engagées, mais aussi un accord diplomatique en bonne et due forme, voire même l'alliance comme le laisse penser Nicéphore lorsqu'il rapportait que l'empereur avait conclu (*espeisato*) une amitié (*philian*) avec les Turcs (*meta Tourkôn*)<sup>53</sup>.

L'ambassade conduite par André fut un succès puisqu'elle permit la conclusion d'un traité à la suite du retour de l'ambassade auprès de l'empereur<sup>54</sup>. Le patrice André, accompagné d'une escorte turque, franchit les Portes Caspiennes pour traverser l'Ibérie, la Lazique et s'embarquer sur la Mer Noire afin de rejoindre l'empereur, vraisemblablement à *Trapezus* (Trébizonde)<sup>55</sup>. Il s'agissait de faire confirmer, par l'empereur<sup>56</sup>, l'accord négocié avec le Qaghan<sup>57</sup> en lui donnant la forme d'un traité que les sources grecques (Théophane, Nicéphore) ne désignent pas comme *spondê* ou *synthêké*<sup>58</sup> mais que Movsēs Daxuranc'i nomme

---

ment entre vos mains, ainsi que le bois de la Croix que toutes les nations chrétiennes vénèrent et honorent ; si vous ne rappelez pas vos troupes de son territoire ... », le Qaghan menaçait le Roi des Rois : « ... Je marcherai sur vos terres avec mon épée ... ».

- 53 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII : ... *ei ta tês philias ... Philia* pourrait avoir plutôt le sens d'« accord », de « traité » ou d'alliance.
- 54 On retrouve dans la *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 58-59 qui garde en mémoire une source grecque perdue et utilise Théophane ou Nicéphore, l'ensemble de la séquence diplomatique impliquant l'empereur et le Qaghan turc : il y est fait mention du « pacte d'alliance » entre l'empereur et le Qaghan (« roi des Turcs ») et de la fourniture, par ce dernier, des contingents (« il [...] promit sur sa propre tête de l'aider, et lui offrit en soutien la masse énorme de ses troupes avec lesquelles Héraclius partit en Perse »). Mais comme pour Théophane ou Nicéphore, l'auteur mêle dans un même récit des temps différents des relations diplomatiques romano-turques entre les ambassades survenues en 624/625 et la rencontre diplomatique de 627 sous les murs de Tiflis (Théophane, Movsēs Daxuranc'i).
- 55 MOVSĒS DAXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) : le Qaghan renvoya André escorté « d'une puissante troupe d'élite de cavaliers et d'archers, au nombre d'environ un millier » ; après avoir franchi les Portes Caspiennes, André et son escorte remontèrent la vallée de la Koura, à travers l'Ibérie jusqu'en Lazique pour rejoindre l'empereur (« et traversèrent la grande mer jusqu'au palais royal. Ils entrèrent en présence du grand empereur Héraclius »).
- 56 MOVSĒS DAXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87). Le « palais royal » pourrait être Constantinople : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 238-239 pour la séquence diplomatique.
- 57 MOVSĒS DAXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) : « pour confirmer le traité, il [le Qaghan] renvoya » André auprès de l'empereur.
- 58 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII suggère cependant la conclusion d'un traité lorsqu'il indique que l'empereur avait conclu (*espeisato*) une *philia meta Tourkôn*.

en arménien *niĵun* (*ukht*), terme synonyme de *foedus*, *spondê* ou *synthêkê*<sup>59</sup>. Ce traité (*foedus/spondê*)<sup>60</sup>, garanti par la prestation de serments<sup>61</sup>, imposait aux Turcs – moyennant de substantiels avantages et d'importants honneurs – *philia* et *symmachia* avec obligation d'apporter une aide militaire (*eis symmachian, epi symmachia, symmachêsein*) contre les Perses (*kata Persôn*)<sup>62</sup> par la fourniture de contingents<sup>63</sup>.

59 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) : un traité (*Յայմատանսուպէր ընդ նախարարին ընդ այնմիլ ան ի հաստատելոցնրոնրոյ պայմանին այնորիկ*) entre le Qaghan turc et l'empereur. Selon le NBHL (<https://calfa.fr>, entrée *niĵun*) *niĵun* (*ukht*) peut être équivalent de *spondê*, *synthêkê* ou *foedus* ou avoir pour synonyme *Դաշն* qui peut signifier « traité » ou « alliance » : <https://calfa.fr>, entrée *Դաշն* (NBHL).

60 *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59 mentionne le « pacte d'alliance » entre l'empereur et le Qaghan (« roi des Turcs »), la fourniture, par ce dernier, des contingents (« il [...] promit sur sa propre tête de l'aider, et lui offrit en soutien la masse énorme de ses troupes avec lesquelles Héraclius partit en Perse »). Plus loin (60), toujours utilisant l'*Histoire* de Nicéphore, on retrouve la lettre adressée par Chosroès à son général Shahrbaraz dans laquelle était rappelée l'alliance entre l'empereur et le roi des Turcs. L'empereur aurait intercepté cette lettre dont il aurait modifié le contenu afin de dissuader Shahrbaraz de venir en aide au Grand Roi en lui indiquant (61) : « J'ai vaincu au combat Héraclius et les Turcs, je les ai écrasés et mis en fuite en Azerbaïdjan ».

61 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) où il est aussi question des serments jurés par les deux parties.

62 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

63 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) : Ziebel/Sipi donna à l'empereur 40000 combattants comme alliés (*pros symmachian*), tandis que NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 41 parlait de *plêthos Tourkôn* pour parler des forces engagées par le Qaghan aux côtés de l'empereur (l. 50 : *Tourkoi symmachousin Herakliôn*), le substantif *plêthos* étant fréquemment usité pour désigner les contingents fédérés fournis par une *gens foederata*. Pour ce point, voir SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I. Les sources syriaques évoquent de manière générale l'appel à l'aide de l'empereur et l'envoi des contingents turcs : THÉOPHILE D'ÉDESSE, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 73-74) ; MICHEL LE SYRIEN, *Chron.* XI, 3 (CHABOT, cit., p. 409) ; BAR HEBRAEUS, cit., p. 121-122. On trouve des évocations très générales chez AL-MAS'ÛDÎ, *Livre de l'avertissement et de la révision*, p. 215, où Héraclius, « ayant équipé une nombreuse flotte [...] s'avança dans le détroit du côté de la mer des Khazars, fit voile vers Trébizonde et les portes de la Lâzikah, et là, demanda le secours des rois barbares des Alains, des Khazars ». Il est également possible que le PSEUDO-SEBÉOS, XXIX évoque l'envoi des contingents turcs à l'empereur même si le passage est confus : THOMSON ET ALII, cit., p. 54 n. 343. Enfin, parmi les sources géorgiennes, la *Vie de Vaxtang Gorgasali*, 97/225 (THOMSON, cit., p. 234-235) rapporte en termes vagues que l'empereur fit venir les Turcs de l'Ouest pour marcher contre le Grand Roi. Pour la *Vie de Vaxtang Gorgasali* : R. W. THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation. Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford, 1996. Pour al-Mas'ûdî : B. CARRA DE VAUX, *Maçoudi, Livre de*

Les informations rassemblées permettent donc d'établir que les Turcs et les Avars étaient liés à l'Empire par des traités que les sources hellénophones désignent comme *spondai* et que les auteurs latinophones auraient nommés *foedera*. Il s'ensuit que ces deux *gentes* étaient, du point de vue impérial, des *gentes foederatae*<sup>64</sup> puisqu'elles étaient liées à l'Empire par des *foedera* ou bien, pour un auteur hellénophone, des *enspondoi* ou des *hypospondoi*<sup>65</sup> à l'image, sous Justinien, des Maures<sup>66</sup>, des Antes<sup>67</sup>, des Saracènes du Jafnide Aréthas/al-Ĥārith<sup>68</sup>, des Lazes<sup>69</sup>, de Huns sabires<sup>70</sup>, des Gépides<sup>71</sup>, des Hérules<sup>72</sup>, des Outigours<sup>73</sup>, des Coutrigours<sup>74</sup> ou encore des Tzanes<sup>75</sup>. Pour autant, peut-on en faire des Avars et des Turcs des *gentes foederatae* pourvoyeuses de *foederati* alors que les vocables idoines (*gentes foederatae*, *foederati*, *enspondoi*, *hypospondoi*) ne sont pas employés à leur sujet ?

Nous avons constaté dans le cas des Avars comme dans celui des Turcs, la présence de sèmes relatifs aux traités (*espeisato*, *spondê*, *synthêkê*). S'y ajoutent le vocabulaire de la *philia*, celui de l'alliance militaire (*symmachia*, *homaichmia*) et des références à l'auxiliariat sous la forme de la mobilisation des contingents – dans le cas des Turcs sous Héraclius, dans le cas des Avars sous Justinien mais avec le même espoir pour Héraclius –. Or une observation de situations documentées des *gentes foederatae* mobilisant leurs *foederati* pour d'autres époques offre

---

*l'avertissement et de la révision*, Paris, 1896.

64 VÉGÈCE, cit., II, 1, 8 ; *NTHEOD.* XXIV, 2-3 (443). Cette *novella* : P. MEYER, *Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 2, Berlin, 1905.

65 D'autres *enspondoi* et *hypospondoi* attestés pour les IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles : Goths en Occident et en Orient, Ibères, Francs, Saracènes, Vandales, Suèves, Alains ... Voir SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I.

66 PROCOPE, cit., IV, 21, 2-5, 17-20 ; IV, 8, 9-11 ; IV, 11, 9-12. PROCOPE, *De Aed.*, VI, 3, 9-11

67 PROCOPE, cit., VII, 14, 32-33.

68 PROCOPE, cit., I, 17, 45-47 ; VIII, 11, 10.

69 PROCOPE, cit., II, 15, 14-19 ; AGATHIAS, *Hist.* IV, 7-10. Agathias : R. KEYDELL, *Agathiae Myrriinaei Historiarum libri quinque*, Berlin, 1967 ; P. MARAVAL, *Agathias, Histoires*, Paris, 2007.

70 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 11, 24-25.

71 PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 8-9 ; VII, 34, 10, 16-18, 32.

72 PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 13-14 ; VII, 34, 37.

73 AGATHIAS, cit., V, 12, 6 ; V, 24, 2-7, 2.

74 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 19, 1-7 ; VIII, 27, 9-10.

75 AGATHIAS, cit., V, 1, 2.

des similitudes avec les cas des Avars et des Turcs.

Ainsi, pour le V<sup>e</sup> siècle, un auteur comme Socrate décrivait le chef goth Alaric comme un « fédéré des Romains (*hypospondos Rhômaïois*) » puisqu'il était « lié par un traité aux Romains et à l'empereur Théodose, parce qu'il avait combattu avec lui dans la guerre contre l'usurpateur Eugène (*eis ton kata Eugeniou tou tyrannou polemon symmachêsas*) »<sup>76</sup>. Or ce même Alaric continua à négocier des *foedera* que les sources grecques définissent comme des traités « d'amitié et d'alliance militaire » (*eis philian kai homaichmian*) à l'image des accords négociés en 408-409 entre Alaric et l'empereur Honorius : le chef goth proposait « une alliance (*homaichmia*) avec l'empereur » et s'engageait à faire « campagne aux côtés des Romains contre quiconque s'aviserait de leur être hostile »<sup>77</sup> ; il s'offrait comme « comme allié » (*symmachos*) à l'empereur<sup>78</sup> et proposait, à la manière de Fritigern, le chef goth tervinges négociant avec Valens pour devenir un « ami et allié » (*quasi mox amicus futurus et socius*) de l'empereur, d'« apporter lui-même [...] le service de ses soldats »<sup>79</sup>. Sous Justinien, Hérules et Gépides étaient des *enspondoi*<sup>80</sup> soumis aux obligations militaires et diplomatiques : les Hérules, étaient ainsi des *symmachoi*<sup>81</sup> et leur chef Grépes, un *philos kai symmachos* de l'empereur<sup>82</sup>, tandis que les Gépides se percevaient comme « des alliés et des

76 SOCRATE, *H.E.* VII, 10, 1. Pour Socrate : P. PÉRICHON, P. MARAVAL, *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres IV-VI*, Paris, 2006 et P. PÉRICHON, P. MARAVAL, *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres VII*, Paris, 2007.

77 ZOSIME, *Hist. nov.* V, 42, 1 et V, 50, 3. Théodose avait conclu avec les Goths un « traité d'amitié et d'alliance militaire » (*eis philian kai homaichmian*) : ZOSIME, cit., IV, 56, 1. Pour Zosime : Fr. PASCHOUD, *Histoire nouvelle. Livre IV*, Tome II, 2<sup>e</sup> partie, Paris, 1979 et Zosime. *Histoire nouvelle. Livre V*, Tome III, 1<sup>ère</sup> partie, Paris, 1986.

78 SOZOMÈNE, *H.E.* IX, 7, 5. Pour Sozomène : G. SABBAB, L. ANGLIEVIEL DE LA BEAUMELLE, A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, B. GRILLET, *Sozomène. Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres VII-IX*, Paris, 2008.

79 AMMIEN MARCELLIN, *Res Gestae*, XXXI, 12, 9-14. C'est une proposition similaire que fit le roi goth Totila à Justinien : « je vous honorerai comme mon père et je vous servirai dans toutes les guerres qu'il vous plaira d'entreprendre » (*kai symmachous*) (PROCOPE, cit., VII, 21, 22-25). Pour Ammien : Éd. GALLETIER, G. SABBAB, J. FONTAINE, A.-M. MARIÉ, L. ANGLIEVIEL DE LA BEAUMELLE, *Ammien Marcellin, Histoires, Livres XVII-XXXI*, tomes I-VI, Paris, 1968-1999.

80 Hérules : PROCOPE, cit., VI, 14, 32 et 37. Gépides : PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 8-9 et VII, 34, 10, 32.

81 Hérules et *symmachia* : PROCOPE, cit., VII, 34, 42-43. Hérules comme *symmachoi* : PROCOPE, cit., VI, 14, 28-36 ; VII, 33, 13 ; VII, 25, 42.

82 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6020 ; JEAN MALALAS, *Chron.* XVIII, 6. Pour Jean Malalal : I. THURN,

amis » (*enspondoi kai philoi, enspondoi kai gnorimoi*), tenus à l'alliance militaire (*symmachia*) et à l'amitié (*philia*) envers l'empereur (*spondôn te kai symmachôn thesmous*)<sup>83</sup>.

Les cas relevés précédemment démontrent l'articulation entre *spondê, philia, symmachia* ou *homaichmia* et témoignent ainsi des obligations qui pesaient sur les *enspondoi* et/ou *hypospondoi*, soit des *ethnè* liées à l'Empire en vertu des *spondai*. On observe que la même sémantique se manifeste pour les Avars et les Turcs, la documentation non grecque confirmant – dans le cas des Turcs avec Movsēs Dasxuranc'ı – l'existence des traités.

Pour autant nous ne trouvons pas dans la documentation grecque – pour les Turcs comme pour les Avars – de références aux sèmes *enspondoi* et/ou *hypospondoi* qui correspondent aux *gentes foederatae* et *foederati* des sources latines, l'expression *gentes foederatae* mettant l'accent sur la dimension diplomatique du lien entre l'Empire et les *gentes* au moyen des *foedera*, tandis que le sème *foederati* renvoie aux contingents auxiliaires mis à disposition de l'Empire par ces *gentes* dans le cadre des *foedera*, ainsi que Végèce ou Justinien l'affirmaient en proclamant que les *gentes* apportaient leur *auxilium* à l'Empire en fournissant des *auxilia*<sup>84</sup>. Faut-il en déduire que les Avars et les Turcs ne furent pas des *gentes foederatae* pourvoyeuses de *foederati* pour Héraclius mais de simples alliés ?

L'absence des sèmes *enspondoi* et *hypospondoi* ne peut être considérée comme un élément suffisant comme le montre le cas des Lombards sous Justinien. En effet, Procope rapporte que les rois lombards Wacho et Auduin étaient des *philoi kai symmachoi* impériaux vers 539<sup>85</sup>. Quant aux Lombards, ils étaient établis sur des portions du *Noricum*, de la *Savia*, et des *Pannoniae* en vertu d'un *foedus*<sup>86</sup> que Procope évoque en le nommant *synthêkê*<sup>87</sup>. Dans le cadre de ce *foedus*, les Lom-

---

*Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, Berlin, 2000 et E. JEFFREYS, M. JEFFREYS, R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of John Malalas. A Translation*, Melbourne, 1986.

83 PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 7-9 ; VII, 34, 10-35.

84 VÉGÈCE, cit., II, 1, 8 ; *NJUST.* CXXX, 8. Pour cette sémantique : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume, I.

85 PROCOPE, cit., VI, 22, 12 et VIII, 27, 4 avec SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 95-100.

86 PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 10 et VII, 34, 38 et PAUL DIACRE, *Hist. Lang.* II, 1 avec SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 97-101. Pour Paul Diacre : L. K. BETHMAN, G. WAITZ (éd.), *Paulus Diaconus, Historia Langobardorum*, MGH, SRLI, Hanovre, 1871.

87 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 26, 12-13.

bards étaient soumis à des obligations militaires au titre de l'*homaichmia*<sup>88</sup> qui impliquait, *es symmachian*, l'envoi de contingents à la demande – par exemple contre les Goths à *Busta Gallorum* –, contingents désignés comme des *symmachoi*<sup>89</sup>.

Si le vocabulaire utilisé par Procope renvoie bien à la sémantique diplomatique classique de la *philia* et de la *symmachia* – similaire à celle observée pour les Avars et les Turcs en 550-620 –, le sème *foederati* – sous sa forme grecque soit *enspondoi* et/ou *hypospondoi*<sup>90</sup> – ne s'applique pas aux Lombards – comme pour les Avars et les Turcs – ce qui pourrait amener à nier leur statut de *foederati*. Mais une source tardive, « l'Histoire des Lombards » de Paul Diacre indique que Narsès « dans les préparatifs d'une guerre contre Totila, le roi des Goths, envoya une ambassade à Alboin [Auduin] – les Lombards étaient fédérés (*foederati*) de l'Empire depuis déjà quelque temps – pour obtenir un soutien armé dans ce prochain combat. Alboin [Auduin] envoya un contingent trié sur le volet pour seconder les Romains contre les Gètes »<sup>91</sup>. La source utilisée par Paul Diacre – peu douteuse<sup>92</sup> – trouve confirmation chez Procope comme le montre le tableau suivant :

88 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 25, 7 (*homaichmia*) et VIII, 26, 12-13 (*tês homaichmias synthêkê*).

89 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 26, 12-13 ; VIII, 31, 11 ; VII, 39, 20.

90 Le sème *phoideratoi* qui est une translittération grecque du sème latine *foederati* ne peut ici être considéré car il désigne des nouvelles troupes de l'armée impériale – les *phoideratoi* byzantins – créées à partir du règne de Justinien et tirant leur origine d'un groupe fédéré (*hypospondos*) de Goths thraces du chef Théodoric *Triarius*, allié privilégié du puissant généralissime Fl. Aspar. Aussi peut-on affirmer que les occurrences du sème *phoideratoi* s'applique essentiellement à ces nouvelles troupes et non aux *foederati* de première génération à l'exception des occurrences suivantes : OLYMPIODORE, *Frg.* 7 ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 15 et peut-être de *CJUST.* XII, 37, 19, 1-2 (entre 491 et 505) et *NJUST.* CIII, 3, 1 (536). Voir A. LANIADO, *Ethnos et droit dans le monde protobyzantin, V<sup>e</sup>-VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 2015 ; SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I. Pour Olympiodore et Malchus : R. C. BLOCKLEY, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of The Later Roman Empire*, 2 volumes, Liverpool, 1981-1983, p. 152-221, 402-463 (volume II : texte et traduction) ; R. MAISANO, *Olimpiodoro Tebano. Frammenti storici*, Naples, 1979 ; R. CRESCHI, *Malco di Filadelfia : frammenti. Testo critico, introduzione, traduzione e commentario*, Naples, 1982.

91 PAUL DIACRE, cit., II, 1 : *Cum iam Langobardos foederatos haberet, legatos ad Alboin dirigit, quatenus ei pugnaturum cum Gothis auxilium ministraret. Tunc Alboin electam e suis manum direxit, qui Romanis adversum Getas suffragium ferrent. Qui ... sociati Romanis pugnam inierunt cum Gothis.*

92 SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I.

	Procopé, <i>Bell. Goth.</i> VIII, 26, 13	Paul Diacre, <i>Hist. Lang.</i> II, 1
<b>Statut</b>	<i>Symmachia, homaichmia</i> <sup>93</sup>	<i>Langobardos foederatos</i>
<b>Traité</b>	<i>Synthékê</i>	<i>Foederatos</i> implique un <i>foedus</i>
<b>Obligations militaires</b>	<i>Es symmachian, tén tés homaichimas synthékê</i>	<i>Auxilium, sociati Romanis pugnam inierunt cum Gothicis</i>
<b>Chef</b>	Auduin	Alboin
<b>Troupes mobilisées</b>	<i>Pentakosious te kai discilious tón oi epomenón apolexamenos andras agathous</i>	<i>electam manum</i>

La comparaison entre le passage susdit de Paul Diacre et l'évocation de la mobilisation des troupes lombardes chez Procope offre des convergences qui éclairent sur le rôle des *foederati* et confirment, par le biais de Procope, la justesse des remarques de Paul Diacre sur le statut des Lombards : on observe des convergences sémantiques entre le vocabulaire latin de l'alliance (*societas*)<sup>93</sup> et de l'auxiliarat (*auxilium*) et le vocabulaire grec de la *symmachia*, ce qui démontre que ces sémantiques latines comme grecques permettaient d'explicitier le statut de *foederati* et que l'absence proprement dite de ce sème ne prouve en rien l'inexistence de ce statut.

En conséquence, tout laisse penser qu'Avars et Turcs furent des *gentes foederatae* pourvoyeuses de *foederati* au sens de contingents ethnico-tactiques fournis ponctuellement au nom d'un « traité d'amitié et d'alliance (*philia kai homaichmia*) » conclus entre leurs *gentes* « et les Romains contre quiconque prendrait les armes et se dresserait pour faire la guerre contre l'Empire »<sup>94</sup> puisque la lutte « pour la cause du nom romain » (*Romani nominis causa*)<sup>95</sup> répondait au principe de la *philia* selon lequel il fallait avoir les mêmes amis et ennemis que les Romains<sup>96</sup>.

93 JORDANÈS, *Rom.* 386 : *Langobardorum gens, socia Romani regni principibus ...* Les *Romana* de Jordanès : A.-L. MORAND, Édition critique, traduction et commentaire des *Romana de Jordanès*, Université de Lorraine, 2020, <https://hal.univ-lorraine.fr/tel-02904523>

94 ZOSIME, cit., V, 50, 3 au sujet d'un traité entre Alaric et Honorius.

95 OROSE, *Hist. ad. pag.* VII, 43, 13 (Goths de Vallia). Pour Orose : M.-P. ARNAUD LINDET, *Orose. Histoires contre les païens*, Paris, 1991-2003.

96 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1 et 19, 1.

Toutefois, si les Avars et Turcs étaient bien des *gentes foederatae* et leurs combattants des *foederati*, ils ne peuvent être assimilés aux *foederati* issus de *gentes* établies par *foedera* dans les deux *Partes Imperii* aux V<sup>e</sup> et VI<sup>e</sup> siècles : il ne s'agit pas de *foederati* intérieurs ou impériaux<sup>97</sup>, mais de *foederati* extérieurs, à savoir de combattants fournis par des *gentes foederatae* qui n'avaient pas été installées sur le territoire impérial<sup>98</sup> comme l'avaient été auparavant d'autres *gentes* à l'image, par exemple, sous Aurélien (270-275) des Vandales dont Dexippe décrit les conditions dans lesquelles ils conclurent un *foedus* (*te pros symbasin, kai hai spondai egenonto*) à condition de s'en retourner outre-Danube et de fournir « aux Romains quelque deux mille cavaliers auxiliaires (*Bandilôn hippeis eis dishilious*), les uns choisis pour le service parmi la multitude (*ek tou plêthous es tèn symmachian katalechtentas*), les autres enrôlés volontairement dans l'armée »<sup>99</sup>, certains guerriers vandales (*tôn te symmachôn Bandilôn*) étant enga-

97 SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volumes I et III.

98 La question de la position des Avars en tant que *gens foederata* établie *intra fines imperii* se discute dans la mesure où les Avars réclamèrent à Justinien de conclure une alliance (*homaichmia*) en échange des plus estimables présents (*dôrois timiôtatois*), de versements annuels (*kai chrêmasin etêsiois*) et de terres fertiles pour y vivre (*kai gês euphorôtatês oikêsei*) ce que l'empereur était prêt à accorder puisqu'une nouvelle ambassade avar se rendit à Constantinople pour régler la question des territoires qui leur seraient cédés pour y vivre (*to phylon thêsontai tas oikêseis*) : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 1 et 4. Le *magister militum* Justin avait conseillé l'empereur d'installer les Avars en *Pannonia Secunda* alors que les Avars préféraient la *Scythia Minor*, discordances qui aboutirent au refus impérial d'installer la *gens* sur le sol romain : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 4. Pour les raisons des préférences avars pour la Scythie : SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 352. Puis sous Justin II, les Avars obtinrent, par la force, de négocier un traité (*kai peri spondôn logous prosagagein*) afin d'obtenir Sirmium – en plus de versements annuels (*chrêmata, syntaxeis*) initialement accordés aux Outigours et aux Coutrigours par Justinien mais qui venaient de passer sous contrôle avar – car le Qaghan avait soumis les Gépides auxquels les Romains avaient cédé la cité et des terres environnantes (*kai chôran [...] peri ton Sirmion*) sous Justinien : ils prenaient ainsi le contrôle d'une partie (*gê, chôra*) de la *Pannonia Secunda* : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 3-7 et *Frg.* 25, 2. Du point de vue avar, la cession de Sirmium n'était pas une perte de souveraineté pour l'Empire puisque l'empereur remettait une portion du territoire impérial à son « fils adoptif » et *philos* : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 6-8. Les Avars furent donc, à un certain moment, une *gens foederata intra fines imperii* même s'il est douteux qu'ils étaient encore considérés comme tel sous Héraclius.

99 DEXIPPE, *Frg.* 24 avec Y. MODÉLAN, *Les Vandales et l'Empire romain*, Paris, 2014, p. 27-28 n. 46. Dexippe : C. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris, 1841-1873 (<https://www.dfhg-project.org/>) ; L. MECCELLA, *Dexippo di Atene. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Rome, 2013.

gés immédiatement contre les Juthunges en Italie du Nord<sup>100</sup>. Comme l'a noté Y. Modéran, les « auxiliaires » fournis permettent de qualifier ces Vandales de « fédérés dans la mesure où ils servaient après la conclusion d'un traité (*foedus*) »<sup>101</sup>.

Si on replace la diplomatie de *foedera* pratiquée par Héraclius envers Turcs et Avars, dans le cadre plus général des relations diplomatiques entre l'Empire et les « peuples scythes » depuis l'arrivée des Huns, on observe d'évidentes continuités dans la *Pars Occidentis* comme dans la *Pars Orientis*. Ainsi, selon l'auteur de la « Vie de Saint Martin », le *magister militum per Gallias* Litorius en 435-437 engagé contre les *bagaudae*, disposait de Huns : la Gaule les avait appelés « à son aide » et ces « auxiliaires (*auxiliores*) lui étaient à charge » alors que ces alliés (*socii*) se montraient plus cruels que l'ennemi et qu'ils ne respectaient pas même les « traités (*foedera*) convenus »<sup>102</sup>. Leur mobilisation répondait aux obligations de l'*amicitia* depuis le *foedus* négocié par Fl. Aetius en 433 avec le roi Rua<sup>103</sup> qui impliquait, au titre de l'alliance militaire, la fourniture de contingents ce que les auteurs hellénophones contemporains comme Priscus ou Olympiodore

100 DEXIPPE cité par MODÉRAN, cit., p. 27-28 n. 46

101 MODÉRAN, cit., p. 28 et 40.

102 PAULIN DE PÉRIGUEUX, *Vita S. Martini*, VI, 218-221 : *Cum subito pavefacta metu graviore periculo auxiliores pateretur Gallia Chunos, (nam socium vix ferre queas, qui durior hoste, extet et adnexum foedus feritate repellat) ...* Pour Paulin de Périgueux : S. LABARRE, *Paulin de Périgueux. Vie de Saint Martin*, Paris, 2016 et M. PETSCHENIG, *Paulinus Petricordus, De vita S. Martini*, CSEL 16, 1888.

103 PROSPER, *Chron.* 1310 (432) ; PRISCUS, *Frg.* 11, 2 (*kata synthêkas*) ; *Chron Gall. ad ann. CCCCLII*, 112 (433). Les Huns sont désignés par les sèmes de l'auxiliarat et de l'alliance : PROSPER, cit., 1335 (439) et 1326 (437) ; HYDACE, *Chron.* 108 (439) ; JORDANÈS, *Get.*, 176-177. Traitant de la guerre contre les Goths en 436-439, Salvien rappelait que « lorsque les Goths semblaient avoir peur, nous osions mettre notre espoir dans les Huns ». Enfin, dressant le bilan des choix faits par les chefs (*duces*), par les généraux (*magistri*) ou encore par « l'État-major » (*consilium*), Salvien notait que « l'État romain » (*Res publica romana*) même renforcé par les « auxiliaires barbares » (*cum barbarorum auxiliis*) ne pouvait triompher de ces adversaires barbares qui surpassaient ainsi les *vires* de la *Res Publica romana* : SALVIEN, *De Gub. Dei*, VII, 9, 35-39 et VII, 12, 53. Pour Priscus : Pour Priscus : BLOCKLEY, *The Fragmentary*, cit., II, p. 222-380 (texte et traduction). Pour Prosper : Th. MOMMSEN (éd.), *Prosper Tiro, Epitoma Chronicon*, MGH. AA. IX, Berlin, 1892. Pour Hydace : R. W. BURGESS, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and The Consularia Constantinopolitana : Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of The Roman Empire*, Oxford, 1993. Pour Salvien : G. LAGARRIGUE, *Salvien de Marseille : Du Gouvernement de Dieu*, Paris, 1975. Pour les *Getica* de Jordanès : Fr. GIUNTA, A. GRILLONE, *Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, Rome, 1991.

désignaient des sèmes *homaichmia*<sup>104</sup>, *symmachia* ou en qualifiant ces troupes de *symmachoi*, ce que nous constatons également pour des groupes hunniques du roi Uldin sous l'empereur Honorius ou encore pour les premiers groupes protobulgares sous Zénon<sup>105</sup>.

La diplomatie déployée par Justinien<sup>106</sup> envers les groupes hunniques pontiques, sabirs caucasiens ou danubiens<sup>107</sup>, révèle la même constance sémantique<sup>108</sup> : ainsi, Procope décrit des Huns transdanubiens « alliés (*symmachoi*, *es*

104 Pour des *gentes* hunniques : PRISCUS, *Frg.* 2 et *Frg.* 11, 2.

105 Contingents huns mobilisés *epi symmachian* par Aëtius : SOCRATE, cit., VII, 23, 8 et VII, 43, 1. Huns d'Uldin engagés comme *symmachoi* pour l'empereur Honorius : ZOSIME, cit., V, 26, 4 ; V, 33, 1-2 ; V, 34, 1 ; V, 35, 5-6. Selon les sources latines, ces Huns sont désignés comme *foederati* (CTHEOD. VII, 13, 16) ou comme *auxiliares Chunorum* (*Chronica Gallica ad. ann. CCCCLII*, 52). Le *foedus* avec Uldin se déduit de ZOSIME, cit., V, 22, 1-3 et GRÉGOIRE DE TOURS, *Decem Libri Historiarum*, II, 8. Pour la *Chronica Gallica* : R. W. BURGESS (éd.), « The Gallic Chronicle of 452 : A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction » dans R. W. MATHISEN, D. SHANZER (éd.), *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources*, Asghate, 2001, p. 52-84. Pour Grégoire de Tours : B. KRUSH, W. LEVISON (éd.), *Gregorius Turonensis, Decem Libri Historiarum*, MGH. SRM. II, Berlin, 1951. Pour le *Codex theodosianus* : Th. MOMMSEN, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Simondianis*, Berlin, 1905. L'emploi des Huns comme contingents étrangers fait aussi l'objet d'expressions plus littéraires comme chez OROSE, *Hist. ad pag.* VII, 37, 12 : les Huns d'Uldin avaient été engagés « pour la défense des Romains (*praesidio Romanorum*) » contre Radagaise. Parfois, l'expression *eis symmachian* est utilisée pour désigner la mobilisation des contingents huns : ZOSIME, cit., V, 50, 1. C'est encore le sème de la *symmachia* qui est utilisé par PRISCUS, *Frg.* 46 et 48 au sujet du traité que cherchait à négocier Dengizich, un des fils d'Attila, avec l'empereur Léon. Le vocabulaire de la *symmachia* est encore employé par JEAN D'ANTIOCHE, *Frg.* 211 à propos des Bulgares engagés *eis symmachian* contre les Goths mésiens et les Goths thraces en 481. Ces Bulgares sont certainement liés aux *Vulgares* mobilisés par l'Empire contre les Goths de Théodoric l'Amale : ENNODE, *Pan.* V, 19-20 et XII, 63-67. Pour Ennode : S. ROTA, *Magno Felice Ennodio. Pannegyrico del clementissimo re Teodorico (opusc. 1), Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Rome, 2002. Pour Jean d'Antioche : U. ROBERTO, *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta ex Historia Chronica*, Berlin-New York, 2005. Pour les peuples bulgares : D. ZIEMANN, *Vom Wandervolk zur Großmacht - Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.-9. Jh.)*, Cologne, 2007, p. 32-103.

106 SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 301-304.

107 GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 29-33, 70-71, 136-162 ; H. JIN KIM, *The Huns, Rome and the Birth of Europe*, Cambridge, 2013, p. 131-142 ; SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 31-36 ; D. SYRBE, « Reiternomaden des Schwarzmeerraums (Kutriguren und Utiguren) und byzantinische Diplomatie im 6. Jahrhundert », *ActaOrHung.* 65, (2012), pp. 291-316, 306-309.

108 Les cas des chefs huns sabir Zilgibi et pontique Grod sous Justin I<sup>er</sup> et Justinien connus grâce à Jean Malalas posent question car nous n'avons pas de référence à des accords en bonne et due forme que les sources pourraient désigner des sèmes *spondai*, *synthèhai* ou

*symmachian Rhômaïois*) » « aux Romains contre les Goths [...] ou d'autres ennemis » et agissant, même s'ils causaient des dommages aux provinciaux romains, « en tant qu'amis et alliés des Romains (*philoï kai symmachoi Rhômaïois*) »<sup>109</sup>. Ces *gentes* et leurs chefs recevaient « des dons considérables [...] en gage d'amitié »<sup>110</sup> et c'est au nom de cette *philia* qu'ils envoyaient leurs contingents combattre pour l'Empire, en Afrique, Italie ou en Orient ce qui faisaient d'eux, suivant la sémantique traditionnelle employée par Procope, des *symmachoi*, à l'image des 600 Huns déployés contre les Vandales sous commandement des chefs Balas et Sinnion<sup>111</sup>. Certaines de ces *gentes* étaient *foederatae* comme Procope le pré-

---

encore *eirênê*. Quant à l'appui militaire qu'ils apportèrent à l'Empire, seul THÉOPHANE, cit., 6013 utilise le verbe *symmachein* là où JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVII, 10 parle de *pros boêtheian Rhômaïôn* pour Zilgibi tandis qu'il décrit le ralliement du roi des Huns (*rêx tôn Ounnôn*) de Crimée, Grod, établi non loin de Chersôn et de Bosporos avec sa conversion au christianisme en présence de l'empereur à Constantinople, la fourniture de riches présents et son renvoi en Crimée pour y protéger, au nom de l'Empire, la cité de Bosporos : JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 14. Il n'est pas d'avantage fait mention de la *philia*. Bien entendu, les riches présents (*dôra*) donnés par l'empereur aux chefs huns ou encore les serments prêtés (*para autou labôn metha orkou, orkôn patriôn*) dans le cas de Zilgibi (Jean Malalas, Théophane, *Chronicon paschale*, p. 615-616) pourraient s'inclure dans le cadre de *foedera* d'autant que la prestation de serments concernaient également les chefs fédérés qu'il s'agisse du chef outigour Sandil/Sandilchos ou de Théodoric l'Amale *magister utriusque militiae (stratêgos)* et fédéré (*philos*) impérial : AGATHIAS, cit., V, 24, 2-7 ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 18, 2-3. De plus la conversion de Grod à Constantinople en présence de l'empereur n'est pas sans rappeler celle du roi hérule Grépès dont nous avons vu qu'elle fut accompagnée d'un *foedus*. Toutefois, en l'absence de sources complémentaires attestant d'accords diplomatiques, il paraît prudent de considérer que ces Huns n'étaient pas parmi les *gentes foederatae* de l'Empire. Voir SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 33-40, 47, 109-110.

109 PROCOPE, *Anecdota*, XXI, 26-28.

110 PROCOPE, *Anecdota*, XI, 3, 5. PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 18, 18-21 et MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 2 nous permettent d'identifier Outigours et Coutrigours comme récipiendaires de *chrêmata megala*. PROCOPE, *Anecdota*, VIII, 5 ajoute qu'« à ceux des Huns qui venaient constamment » visiter Justinien, celui-ci « fournissait, pour des raisons politiques, des sommes très importantes ».

111 En Afrique : PROCOPE, cit., III, 11, 9-12 ; III, 12, 8-10 ; III, 17, 3 ; IV, 1, 5-11. En Italie : PROCOPE, cit., V, 5, 4 ; V, 3, 15 ; V, 10, 29 ; V, 27, 1-2, 27 ; VI, 1, 4, 6-10 ; VI, 4, 11-12, 16-18 ; VIII, 26, 10-13 ; AGATHIAS, cit., II, 2, 5. En Lazique : PROCOPE, cit., I, 12, 6-9. À Édesse : PROCOPE, cit., II, 26, 25-26. À Dara, en juin 530, les officiers/chefs Aïgan, Sunicas, Ascan et Simmas conduisent 1200 cavaliers positionnés en deux contingents, de 600 cavaliers chacun, sur les deux ailes de l'infanterie. Néanmoins, ces cavaliers ne sont ni identifiés nommément comme Huns et pas davantage décrits comme des *symmachoi* même si leurs chefs sont des *Massagetai* : PROCOPE, cit., I, 13, 20-21 et I, 14, 39-50. Pour ces Huns et les officiers qui les commandaient : S. JANNIARD, « Procope, les Huns et les transformations tactiques de la cavalerie romaine au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle » dans G. GREATREX, S.

cise au sujet de ce groupe coutrigour établi en tant qu'*enspondoi* en Thrace<sup>112</sup> ou de ces Huns sabirs *enspondoi* rémunérés lorsqu'ils étaient engagés au combat au nom de leur *homaichmia* avec l'Empire<sup>113</sup>. C'est d'ailleurs, peut-être, à ces groupes qu'appartenaient les Huns de la reine Boa<sup>114</sup> puisqu'après avoir agi à l'avantage de l'Empire contre d'autres groupes hunniques favorables aux Perses, ils se rallièrent aux Romains (*proseryn Rhômaïois*), la reine ayant été préalablement honorée d'abondants et précieux diplomatiques<sup>115</sup>. La double mention de la paix (*eirênê*) et d'une alliance (*symmachia*) laisse penser à la conclusion d'un *foedus*<sup>116</sup> dans la droite ligne de ce que nous avons vu précédemment et que

---

JANNIARD (éd.), *Le monde de Procope/The world of Procopius*, Paris, 2018, p. 205-214.

112 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 18, 18 et VIII, 19, 1-20 avec SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 302-305.

113 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 11, 22-26 avec SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 35.

114 SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 35.

115 JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 13. Les transferts d'allégeance des Perses aux Romains de la part des *gentes* hunniques étaient fréquents : JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVII, 10 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6013 ; *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 596-597 ; AGATHIAS, cit., IV, 13, 7-9.

116 L'expression *symmachos kai eirênikê* est un ajout de THÉOPHANE, cit., 6020, information qui n'apparaît pas chez Jean Malalas. Étant donné la qualité des sources de celui-ci pour la diplomatie de Justinien – comme l'a souligné SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 47-48 – on peut s'interroger sur l'absence dans sa *Chronica* de la sémantique diplomatique au sujet de la reine Boa que Théophane utilise. Concernant le roi hérule Grépès, JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 6 indique qu'il reçut le baptême à Constantinople, avec douze chefs (?) hérules et des membres de sa famille. Couvert de présents, il regagna son pays (*tên idian chôran*) avec ses forces (*meta idikês boêthias, meta tês eautou boêtheias*), l'empereur lui indiquant : « Quand j'aurai besoin de toi, je te le ferai savoir ». Pour sa part THÉOPHANE, cit., 6020 ajoute que le roi était satisfait d'avoir gagné l'amitié de l'empereur (*ta idia philiôtheis*) et qu'il s'était engagé à combattre pour lui comme un allié (*symmachein*) dès que l'empereur l'exigerait de lui. Notons que dans le cas du roi hérule Grépès, THÉOPHANE, cit., 6020 reprend les deux composantes de l'amitié et de l'alliance (*ta idia philiôtheis, symmachein*) également absentes chez JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 6. Il pourrait donc, pour Boa comme pour Grépès s'agir d'ajouts abusifs de la part de Théophane ou bien de l'utilisation d'une autre source mobilisée par le chronographe pour enrichir le récit de Jean Malalas, sa source principale. Rien n'empêche donc de donner toute son authenticité à la description de Boa comme *symmachos kai eirênikê* chez Théophane d'autant que, concernant les Hérules, Procope donne des informations convergentes avec celles de Théophane : ainsi, il nous apprend que Justinien vers 527-528, avait obtenu, par l'octroi de meilleurs terres (*agathê chôra*) et d'autres richesses (*chrêmata*), l'amitié des Hérules et leur engagement à respecter leurs obligations d'alliés (*kai Rhômaïois kata to symmachikon ta polla tous polemious syntassounta*) et le *foedus* conclu (*enspondoi Rhômaïois diemeinan*) : PROCOPE, cit., VI, 14, 32-37 ; VII, 34, 42-43 où Procope rappelle que certains Hérules étaient toujours *symmachoi Erouloi* tandis qu'une grande partie d'entre eux s'étaient ralliés aux Gépides contre l'Empire. Concessions territoriales, foncières et rétributions en vertu du *foedus* :

Procopé et Agathias confirment au sujet des Outigours dont le *basileus* Sandil/Sandilchos était « très favorable aux Romains et leur fédéré (*enspondos*) » ce qui lui imposait, moyennant des contreparties financières et en vertu de la *philia* des « traités d'alliance » (*tas synthêkas*)<sup>117</sup>, de prendre les armes pour défendre l'Empire<sup>118</sup>.

Dans la continuité d'anciennes pratiques diplomatiques renouvelées aux temps de crises de l'Empire et dynamisées tout particulièrement à partir de la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, tout laisse donc penser que les Avars et les Turcs étaient des *gentes foederatae* de l'Empire – même si la position des Avars comme *gens foederata* d'Héraclius fut bien plus éphémère que celle des Turcs – à l'image d'autres *gentes foederatae externae*<sup>119</sup> que mobilisa l'empereur pour ses *expeditiones* qu'il

---

PROCOPE, cit., VII, 33, 13-14 et VII, 34, 37. Hérules définis comme *symmachoi* : PROCOPE, cit., VI, 14, 28-36 ; VII, 33, 13 ; VII, 25, 42 ; VIII, 26, 10-13. Comme le propose Alexander Sarantis, tout laisse penser que la conversion de Grépès et de plusieurs autres chefs hérules fut complétée par un *foedus/spondê* qui permettait, au moyen d'avantages conséquents, d'accroître les responsabilités militaires de leurs *gentes foederatae* qui fournirent des *foederati* – désignés comme *symmachoi* – pour les guerres impériales : A. SARANTIS, « The Justinianic Herules : From Allied Barbarians to Roman Provincials » dans F. CURTA (éd.), *Neglected Barbarians*, Leiden, 2010, p. 361-402, 391-392 et SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 40-41, 46-47 n. 147.

117 PROCOPE, cit. VIII, 5, 13 et III, 11, 3-4 montre cette parfaite équivalence au sujet des *phoideratoi*. Tout d'abord, qu'il s'agisse du Livre III, 11, 3-4 comme du Livre VIII, 5, 13, l'explication que donne Procope de l'appellation *phoideratoi* repose sur le lien établi avec l'existence de traités que Procope désigne en grec par les termes *spondai* et *synthêkai* et dont il donne le terme latin équivalent sous la forme d'un latinisme *phoidera* provenant du sème latin pluriel *foedera* dont le singulier est *foedus*, en précisant que « les Latins désignent par *phoidera* les traités (*synthêkas*) conclus en temps de guerre » (VIII, 5, 13) ou que les « Romains appellent *phoidera* les traités (*spondas*) qu'ils concluent avec leurs ennemis » (III, 11, 4). Il en résulte, comme Procope l'indique, à propos des *phoideratoi* goths en VIII, 5, 13 que ces derniers tenaient leur appellation de *phoideratoi* des liens qui avaient été établis avec eux par l'Empire dans le cadre des traités (*foedera/phoidera/synthêkai/spondai*) : ils s'appelaient *phoideratoi* puisque les Romains les avaient « désignés » ainsi « dans la langue des Latins [...] afin d'insinuer » que « les Goths n'étaient pas leurs ennemis vaincus à la guerre » et qu'ils « étaient devenus leurs alliés (*enspondoi*) ».

118 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 11, 22-26 ; VIII, 18, 17-24 (*philia, chrêmata*) ; VIII, 19, 1-8 ; AGATHIAS, cit., V, 12, 6 et V, 24, 2-7. Voir SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 302-305, 346-349. Pour les Coutrigours également liés de l'Empire par *foedera* : MÉNANDRE, *Frg. 2*. Allusion aux versements : PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 18, 19 ; *Anecdota*, XI, 5 mentionne des « chefs des Huns » recevant des « dons considérables » « en gage d'amitié », ce qui pourrait constituer une allusion aux Coutrigours. Voir SYRBE, cit., p. 291-316 ; SARANTIS, *Justinian*, cit., p. 289-291.

119 La sémantique républicaine serait ici parfaitement pertinente si on se souvient de ce que

s'agisse des Saracènes, des Ibères, des Abasges, des Lazes, des Persarméniens ou encore des Albaniens<sup>120</sup>. Nous retrouvons au sujet des Avars et des Turcs, une relative homogénéité dans leur traitement diplomatique par l'Empire et même si, dans le détail, le statut de ces *gentes* peut manquer de clarté, une grande cohérence sémantique apparaît avec des constances évidentes puisque les notions diplomatiques d'amitié (*philia*), d'alliance (*symmachia*, *homaichmia*) et d'auxiliarat (*symmachia*) constituent, en lien avec les occurrences de sèmes grecs (*synthékai*, *spondai*, *eirênê*) désignant les *foedera*, des éléments clefs dans la définition des grands principes structurant de ces accords liant l'Empire à ces *gentes* qui étaient

---

Festus ou Varron disaient des *auxilia* : FESTUS, *De Verborum*, XVI, 20-21 : *Auxiliares dicuntur in bello socii Romanorum exterarum nationum ...* ; VARRON, *De Lat. Lin.* V, 90 : *Auxilium appellatum ab auctu, cum accesserant ei qui adiumento essent alienigenae*. Pour Varron et Festus : J. COLLART, *Varron, De lingua Latina V*, Paris, 1954 ; W. M. LINDSAY, *Festus, De verborum significatu quae supersunt*, Stuttgart, 1913. Cette extériorité politique, ethnique, culturelle et militaire des premiers alliés de la Rome républicaine est aussi invoquée par des auteurs latins du V<sup>e</sup> siècle précisément au sujet de *gentes* avec lesquelles l'Empire avait conclu – ou pouvait le faire – des *foedera* : ainsi, ENNODE DE PAVIE, *Vita Epiphani*, 69 évoquait les *gentes externae* mobilisées par le patrice Fl. Ricimer contre l'empereur Anthémios et quelques années plutôt, Claudien décrivait les *foederati* alains du chef ethnique Saul à la fois *dux* et *praefectus gentis alanae*, comme des *auxilia externa* qui se distinguaient des troupes régulières (*nostrae acies*) : *Bell. Goth.* 580-583 ; *VI. Cons. Hon.* 461-464. Pour Épiphane : M. CESA, *Ennodius, Vita del beatissimo Epifanio vescovo della chiesa pavese*, Côme, 1988. Pour Claudien : J.-L. CHARLET, *Claudien. Œuvres. Poèmes politiques (395-398)*, Paris, 2000 et J.-L. CHARLET, *Claudien. Œuvres. Poèmes politiques (399-404)*, Paris, 2017. Cette extériorité des contingents fédérés est encore poétiquement rappelée par SIDOINE, *Carm.* VII, 327-330 au sujet des *foederati* que le patrice Aetius amenait – sans troupes régulières désignées du sème générique *miles* – d'Italie vers la Gaule pour y affronter Attila. Pour Sidoine : A. LOYEN, *Sidoine Apollinaire* : Poèmes, Paris, 1960. Dans le cas des Alains comme des *gentes* de Ricimer, c'est une extériorité politique, militaire, ethnique et culturelle qui ne se double pas d'une extériorité territoriale puisque la *gens* du chef Saul était établie en Italie : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume II. L'adjectif *externa* recouvre donc plusieurs sens et dans le cas des Turcs et des Avars, la qualification de ces *gentes* comme *externae* permet de signifier qu'elles sont extérieures à l'Empire tant politiquement, que militairement, culturellement et territorialement.

<sup>120</sup> Les *gentes* caucasiennes : SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître. Sur les Saracènes, en attendant notre contribution : J. HALDON, « Seventh-Century Continuities : the *Ajnād* and the “Thematic Myth” » dans AV. CAMERON (éd.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, III : *States, Resources and Armies*, Princeton, 1995, p. 379-423, 403-407 ; G. GREATREX, « Les Jafnides et la défense de l'Empire au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle » dans D. GENEQUAND, Ch. J. ROBIN (dir.), *Les Jafnides. Des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, Paris, p. 121-154, 142-143.

ainsi, en latin, des *gentes foederatae*<sup>121</sup> et en grec des *enspondoi* ou *hypospondoi* : ainsi Avars et Turcs devaient, en tant que *gentes foederatae* – *enspondoi* ou *hypospondoi* dans les sources grecques<sup>122</sup> – s’engager, dans le cadre des « traités d’amitié et d’alliance (*philia kai homaichmia*) avec l’empereur » à faire « campagne aux côtés des Romains contre quiconque prendrait les armes et se dresserait pour faire la guerre contre l’Empire »<sup>123</sup>. En vertu des *foedera*, ils devaient, au nom de la *philia*<sup>124</sup> être bien disposés envers l’Empire et ne rien entreprendre de contraire aux intérêts supérieurs de celui-ci<sup>125</sup>, ce qui impliquait de combattre pour lui en fournissant, lorsque « la situation l’exigeait », des contingents engagés aux côtés (*auxilium, symmachia*) des armées romaines<sup>126</sup> pour apporter leur « aide à l’État romain, lorsque le besoin s’en ferait sentir »<sup>127</sup>, exactement comme Héraclius l’attendait du Qaghan avar en 624 en l’encourageant à assister l’Em-

121 *NTHEOD.* XXIV, 2-3 (septembre 443) fait état de *gentes foederatae* qui peuvent partiellement désigner des *gentes* hunniques : PRISCUS, *Frg.* 2 et *Frg.* 11, 2.

122 Les sèmes *enspondoi* et *hypospondoi* peuvent s’appliquer à des *gentes foederatae* extérieures à l’Empire : Goths de la Mer Noire (PROCOPE, *De Aed.* III, 7, 13) : Lazes (PROCOPE, cit., II, 15, 14-19 ; AGATHIAS, cit., IV, 9, 4) ; Huns Sabirs (PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 11, 24-25) ; Outigours dont le *basileus* Sandil/Sandilchos était désigné comme « fédéré et salarié » (*enspondos te kai misthophoros*) (AGATHIAS, cit., V, 12, 6 ; V, 24, 2-7, 2). Ce constat vaut pour d’autres époques : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume I.

123 Ce passage évoque les négociations de 408 entre Alaric et Honorius : ZOSIME, cit., V, 42, 1 et V, 50, 3.

124 Certains Huns étaient qualifiés de *philoï* : PROCOPE, cit., II, 29, 15 ; *Anecdota*, XXI, 27.

125 Ainsi qu’AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXVII, 5, 1 le résumait en 366 au sujet des Goths terwinges qui avaient soutenu l’usurpateur Procope contre l’empereur Valens qui avait envoyé « chez les Goths », « Victor, maître de la cavalerie [...] avec mission de s’informer clairement de la raison pour laquelle une nation amie de Rome et constamment liée à elle par des traités de paix avait accordé des appuis à un tyran qui faisait la guerre aux empereurs légitimes ».

126 De manière générale, VÉGÈCE, cit., II, 1, 8 indique que les *gentes foederatae* devaient fournir des *auxilia*. Selon PAUL DIACRE, *Hist. Lang.* II, 1, Narsès « à la tête de l’Italie et dans les préparatifs d’une guerre contre Totila, le roi des Goths, envoya une ambassade à Alboin [Auduin le roi lombard] – les Lombards étaient des fédérés (*foederati*) de l’Empire depuis déjà quelque temps – pour obtenir un soutien armé (*auxilium*) dans ce prochain combat. Alboin [Auduin] envoya un contingent (*manus*) trié sur le volet pour seconder les Romains contre les Gètes ». C’est la même logique fonctionnelle que décrit, pour un autre contexte, SOCRATE, cit., VII, 10, 1 au sujet d’Alaric « lié par un traité (*hypospondos*) aux Romains et à l’empereur Théodose, parce qu’il avait combattu avec lui dans la guerre (*polemon symmachésas*) contre l’usurpateur Eugène ».

127 Goths de Fritigern sous Valens : AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXXI, 4, 1 et 12, 9. Goths de Vallia sous Honorius : JORDANÈS, *Get.*, 165.



Fig. 3 Solidus portant au recto l'effigie d'Héraclius et de ses deux fils, Héraclius Constantin et Héraclonas. Classical Numismatic Group, Free documentation License. Wikimedia Commons.

pire (*pros ton Khaganon tôn Abarôn paraklêseis tou epikourein ta tôn Rhômaiôn pragmata*) puisqu'ils étaient unis par un traité d'amitié (*hôs philian speisamenos pros auton*)<sup>128</sup> et comme il l'obtint du Qaghan turc en 624 qui apporta l'aide militaire de ses contingents (*eis symmachian, epi symmachia, symmachêsein*) contre les Perses au nom de la *philia* les unissant<sup>129</sup>.

La *philia* que les *foedera* (*spondai, synthêkai*) introduisaient dans les relations diplomatiques, impliquait donc pour les *gentes/ethnê* avars et turques des obligations militaires liées à la *symmachia*<sup>130</sup> puisqu'en préservant « une pure

128 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (303).

129 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

130 Ces mécanismes apparaissent dans les sources byzantines plus tardives l'image du « Livre des Cérémonies » et du traité « Au sujet de l'administration de l'Empire » composés sous Constantin VII Porphyrogénète. Expliquant « un traité en forme de chrysobulle [...] entre le curopalate d'Ibérie Ašot' II et l'empereur Romain Lécapène », l'empereur rappelait que « ledit curopalate a[vait] promis, comme il l'a confirmé par serment en l'écrivant de sa propre main, de rester dans la fidélité de notre Empire, de combattre nos ennemis et de protéger nos amis, de soumettre l'Orient à notre Empire, de se rendre maître de *kastra* et de faire de grandes œuvres à notre service » : CONSTANTIN PORPHYROGÉNÈTE, *De Administrando Imperio*, XLV, l. 99-113. Voir A. VOGT, *Constantin Porphyrogénète. Le Livre des Cérémonies. Tome I : Livres I et II. Tome II : Commentaire*, Paris, 1935-1967 ; G. Y. MORAVCSIK, R. J. H. JENKINS, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De Administrando Imperio*, Washington

amitié (*tês philias*) », l'ami (*philos*) était porteur du « zèle de l'alliance militaire (*tês symmachias*) », zèle dont il devrait faire montre « si la nécessité l'excite » : il exécutera alors ce qui lui « sera demandé en noble ami » témoignant ainsi de « la pureté de l'amitié (*philia*) » envers l'Empire<sup>131</sup>. C'est bien ce qu'espérait obtenir Héraclius des Avars et c'est ce qu'il devait obtenir des Turcs. Au moyen des *foedera*, Héraclius rechercha l'intérêt des gouvernants romains sur les plans diplomatique et militaire : il s'agissait en premier lieu de mobiliser au service de l'État impérial des ressources humaines combattantes, des techniques et modes de guerre – voire des technologies – afin de servir les intérêts supérieurs de l'Empire face à ses ennemis.

À présent que le cadre diplomatique d'intervention de ces deux « peuples scythes » est clarifié, il convient d'analyser les différents facteurs proprement militaires qui motivèrent Héraclius dans ses décisions de mobiliser le « facteur scythe » pour le plus grand avantage de l'Empire,

### *Avars et Turcs, des guerriers prêts à l'emploi pour Héraclius*

Comme tous les contingents fédérés des *gentes foederatae*, les « peuples scythes » offraient l'avantage d'apporter aux troupes romaines une expérience militaire technique et tactique spécifique qui pouvait faire défaut à celles-ci dans un contexte donné, par exemple lorsque la situation militaire réclamait du pouvoir impérial décisions et actions rapides. Et si les troupes romaines pouvaient apprendre aux contacts des peuples étrangers en bénéficiant de transferts de technologie comme en profitèrent les troupes romaines avec les Huns au V<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>132</sup>,

---

D.C. 1967. On consultera également : *Travaux et Mémoires*, 13, Paris, 2000 avec de nombreuses contributions (éditions, traductions, commentaires) consacrées au *Livre des Cérémonies*. Voir aussi B. MARTIN-HISARD, « Constantinople et les archontes caucasiens dans le Livre des cérémonies, II, 48 », *Travaux et Mémoires*, 13, Paris, (2000), pp. 359-530, 437-450 (curopalatinat), 444-450, 448-449.

131 Nous citons ici un passage emprunté à l'*epistola* CLXII du patriarche Nicolas adressée vers 925 à Giorgiôs, *ekousiastês* d'Abasgie sous le règne de Romain Lécapène. Pour cette lettre : MARTIN-HISARD, cit., p., 459-465, 463-464.

132 Des transferts de technologie au profit de la cavalerie impériale sont évoqués aussi par Végèce qui mentionne l'apport tactique des Huns et des Alains auxquels les Romains furent confrontés : VÉGÈCE, cit., III, 26, 36. Mais les chefs huns cherchaient à empêcher le passage de leurs troupes au service de l'Empire dans le cadre d'*homaichmia* ou de *symmachia* et/ou à récupérer les transfuges (*automoloi*, *phygades*, *kataphygontes*) : PRISCUS, *Frg.* 2 et

la maîtrise des technologies et des tactiques – quand bien même elle semblait avancée comme le suggère le *Strategikon* décrivant l'armement et l'équipement des cavaliers romains modelés sur les cavaliers avars<sup>133</sup> – pouvait nécessiter un certain temps avant une capacité d'exécution suffisante pour un engagement au combat à la fois efficace et le moins coûteux possible pour les troupes romaines, problème d'autant plus essentiel quand l'Empire souffrait d'insuffisantes ressources humaines comme c'était le cas pour Héraclius.

Précisément, en levant des troupes étrangères prêtes à l'emploi, l'empereur s'évitait les difficultés de l'équipement, de la formation et de l'entraînement des soldats romains au recrutement hétérogène mêlant nouvelles recrues et vétérans, tâche qui décrivent George de Pisidie et Théophane pour les troupes de l'armée de campagne que l'empereur avait rassemblées à Césarée de Cappadoce pour l'*expeditio persica*<sup>134</sup>.

Or la levée de contingents étrangers – si elle n'était pas sans risque<sup>135</sup> – offrait une certaine souplesse quand l'urgence pressait, ce que facilitaient des troupes prêtes à l'emploi comme le montre la demande de Tibère II au Qaghan avar d'engager ses contingents en 577/578 pour « faire la guerre aux Slavènes de manière à ce que tous ceux d'entre eux qui ravageaient le territoire romain [en Grèce]

---

11, 2. Pour ces « transferts de technologie » : S. JANNIARD, « Les adaptations de l'armée romaine aux modes de combat des peuples des steppes (fin IV<sup>e</sup>-début VI<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C.) » dans U. ROBERTO, L. MACELLA (éd.), *Governare e riformare l'impero al momento della sua divisione : Oriente, Occidente, Illirico*, Rome, 2015, p. 1-36, 20. <http://books.openedition.org/efr/2793>

133 MAURICE, cit., I, 2. L'équipement : J. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1206*, Oxford, 1999, p. 129-130 ; F. DAIM, « Avars and Avar Archaeology. An introduction » dans H. W. GOETZ, J. JARNUT, W. POHL (dir.), *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, Leiden, 2003, p. 464-570, 465-468 ; F. R. TROMBLEY, « The Operational Methods of the Late Roman Army in the Persian War of 572-591 » dans A. S. LEWIN, P. PELLEGRINI, Z. T. FIEMA, S. JANNIARD, (dir.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest*, Oxford, 2007, p. 321-356, 347.

134 GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Expeditio Persica*, II, 8-205 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (303-304). Voir J. HALDON, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550-950*, Vienne, 1979, p. 35-37 ; J. HALDON, *Byzantine Praetorians*, Bonn, 1984, p. 170-171 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 36 ; KAEGI, cit., p. 113 ; J. POLÁČEK, « Heraclius and the Persians in 622 », *Bizantinistica*, 10, (2008), pp. 105-124, 110-112.

135 Les recommandations de prudence du *Strategikon* sur l'emploi des *symmachoi* : MAURICE, cit., VII, A, 15 et VII, B, 4 ; VIII, 2, 16-17, 50, 80.

soient obligés de s'en retourner défendre leurs propres territoires »<sup>136</sup>. En 558-559, immédiatement après la conclusion du *foedus* avec les Avars, ceux-ci déployèrent leurs contingents contre Ounigours, Sabirs et Antes avec un tel succès qu'« il n'en rest[ait] plus un seul pour faire des incursions à travers les frontières thraces »<sup>137</sup>. C'est un mécanisme similaire qui est à l'œuvre lorsqu'Aurélien ordonna, dans le cadre du *foedus* conclu avec les chefs vandales, la levée de « deux mille cavaliers auxiliaires » soumis à des conditions de service différente : tandis que certains étaient « enrôlés volontairement dans l'armée » pour une incorporation dans les unités régulières – ce qui impliquait formation et entraînement avec des soldats romains, voire d'être mélangés à ces derniers dans les unités existantes ou en cours de création<sup>138</sup> – d'autres étaient « choisis pour le service parmi la multitude (*ek tou plêthous es tèn symmachian katalehtentas*) » pour être immédiatement engagés au combat contre les Juthunges en Italie du Nord, contingents que Dexippe identifie comme *symmachôn Bandilôn*<sup>139</sup>.

Ainsi, Héraclius, comme il avait disposé des *foederati* des dynastes caucasiens pour les *expeditiones* de 624-625 et 627<sup>140</sup>, put constater lors de sa rencontre avec le Qaghan turc sous les murs de Tiflis à l'été 627<sup>141</sup>, que celui-ci était venu avec son armée<sup>142</sup> au sein de laquelle il devait choisir une « masse considérable de Turcs » (*plêthos Tourkôn*), soit 40000 soldats, afin qu'ils accompagnent (*pros symmachian*) l'empereur contre le Grand Roi<sup>143</sup> tandis que le Qaghan « retour-

136 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21 ; MAURICE, cit., I, 2 et XI, 2. Le cavalier polyvalent : PROCOPE, cit., I, 1, 12-14.

137 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 5, 1-3 : l'engagement contre les ennemis de l'Empire (*kai kata tòn antipalôn hoplizesthai*) ; *Frg.* 8.

138 Comme dans le cas de l'enrôlement des Goths vers 379-380 : « lorsque l'empereur [Théodose] se rendit compte que l'armée était considérablement amoindrie, il autorisa à venir auprès de lui ceux qui le voulaient parmi les barbares établis au-delà du Danube, en promettant d'incorporer les réfugiés (*tous automolous entattein*) dans les unités armées (*tois stratiôtikois tagmasin*) ; ceux-ci acceptèrent cet arrangement (*synthêma*), vinrent auprès de lui et furent mélangés aux soldats (*kai anemignynto tois stratiôtai*) » : les Goths étaient incorporés (*entattein*) dans les « unités armées » (*stratiôtika tagmata*), où ils étaient « mélangés » (*mignymen*) aux soldats romains (*stratiôtai*) qui servaient déjà au sein de ces unités (*tagmata*) : ZOSIME, cit., IV, 30, 1 et 31, 1-3.

139 DEXIPPE, *Frg.* 24 avec MODÉRAN, cit., p. 27-28, n. 46.

140 SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie » cit., et SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., avec références.

141 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) ; MOVSËS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86).

142 MOVSËS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87-88).

143 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLÉ*, 59.

nait dans son pays »<sup>144</sup> après avoir donné le commandement suprême de ces contingents à un de ses chefs (*archonta*) qui portait le titre de Šat' (*Shad*), en l'occurrence le neveu du « Roi du Nord »<sup>145</sup> qui, assisté d'autres chefs ethniques<sup>146</sup>, conduisit ses troupes jusque dans l'Empire perse<sup>147</sup>.

Dans cette armée dont l'empereur attendait beaucoup pour renforcer, en vue de l'*expeditio* de l'automne-hiver 627, troupes romaines et *foederati* caucasiens<sup>148</sup>, les Romains espéraient trouver ces combattants qui apporteraient un atout tactique comme nous le verrons mais aussi un renfort numérique.

### *Avars et Turcs dans les expeditiones persicae : apport numérique et économie des forces romaines ?*

Compte tenu des pertes romaines depuis l'avènement de Phocas, en raison des guerres continuelles et de la crise financière consécutive qui réduisait les capacités romaines à lever de nouvelles recrues et de la difficile reconstitution d'une armée de campagne pour porter la guerre contre la Perse<sup>149</sup>, une armée dont il fallait

144 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) indique que le Qaghan se retira laissa ses contingents à l'empereur pour marcher sur la Perse. Une autre source rapporte le retrait du Qaghan : MOVSÈS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86).

145 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII parle d'un chef sans en donner le nom ; MOVSÈS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) mentionne le neveu du « roi du Nord » auquel ce dernier avait confié le commandement de l'armée turque en l'honorant du titre de Šat'. Voir aussi MOVSÈS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94-95) où le Šat' est présent aux côtés du Qaghan lors de l'assaut sur Tiflis.

146 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 décrit les chefs turcs (*archonta*) s'agenouillant devant l'empereur; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 30-31 parle de plusieurs chefs (*kai tous peri auton archontas*) en plus du chef responsable du commandement sur les contingents turcs (*archonta kai plêthos Tourkôn tô Basilei paradôsi*). On trouve des références aux autres chefs turcs et à leurs contingents ethniques chez MOVSÈS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94-95, 96, 100-101).

147 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74) : « Héraclius se prépara à attaquer les Perses et écrivit au Khagan, roi des Khazars, pour lui demander de lui fournir 40000 cavaliers [...]. Avec ces renforts, Héraclius monta en Syrie et commença à s'emparer, ville par ville, de ce qui était aux mains des Perses ». Sur le prétendu retrait turc, construction historiographique de Théophane : ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 466 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., à paraître.

148 SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit. ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit. ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., à paraître.

149 HALDON, *Recruitment*, cit., p. 34-37 ; J. HALDON, *Byzantine Praetorians*, Bonn, 1984, p. 96-100, 170-171 ; J. HALDON, « Military Service, Military Land, and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations », *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47, (1993), pp. 1-67, 11-12.

maintenir à la fois l'intégrité et l'efficacité tactique et opérationnelle, le recours aux *gentes* et à leurs contingents apparaissait comme une solution pour renforcer le poids numérique des troupes impériales, constituer une réserve démographique et économiser les forces romaines en privilégiant, en certaines occasions, l'emploi des *foederati*.

En premier lieu, les *gentes* fournissaient un apport numérique qui pouvait être appréciable si on estime que l'armée dont disposait Héraclius pour ses *expeditiones* devait compter entre 15000 et 25000 hommes<sup>150</sup>. S'il est impossible de déterminer la taille des contingents de *foederati* lazès, abasges, ibères, persarméniens et albanais engagés en 624-625 et 627-628<sup>151</sup>, les sources donnent des indications chiffrées sur le contingent turc mis à disposition de l'empereur en 627. Ainsi, les sources de la tradition syriaque font état de 40000 combattants turcs<sup>152</sup>, information reprise par Théophane qui utilisait une source syriaque liée à Théophile d'Édesse<sup>153</sup>, chiffre qui n'est pas invraisemblable puisque l'armée du Grand Roi à Ganzak en printemps 625 aurait rassemblé 40000 hommes<sup>154</sup>. De plus, l'insistance de plusieurs sources sur l'insuffisance des troupes du général perse Rahzadh/Razatès<sup>155</sup> pour l'affrontement avec Héraclius qui commandait une armée mieux équipée et beaucoup plus nombreuse<sup>156</sup>, laisse supposer que l'empereur avait pu renforcer ses troupes romaines en ajoutant aux *foederati* caucasiens, de nombreux guerriers turcs<sup>157</sup>.

150 MAURICE, cit., III, 8 et 10. Voir HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 31-32 et HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 219-220.

151 SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 397-398 où nous proposons un millier d'hommes pour chaque contingent.

152 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74-75).

153 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 268-312, 194-196, 274-276, 433.

154 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307) avec HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 222, 264 et 303.

155 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317) ; PSEUDO-SEBÈOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 83-84).

156 AL-TABARI, *Hist.* I, 1004 ; MOVSES DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 89). Les deux auteurs rapportent que Rahzadh/Razatès informa le Grand Roi sur l'insuffisance de ces troupes pour faire face à l'armée d'Héraclius et que l'abattement avait gagné les chefs comme la troupe. Pour Al-Tabari : C. E. BOSWORTH, *History of al-Tabari, volume 5 : The Sassanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids and Yemen*, New York, 1999.

157 Ce point est souligné par ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 417. MOVSES DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85) : Tiflis fut assiégée par l'immense multitude des forces du Nord (Turcs) et de l'Ouest (Romains et leurs alliés et fédérés caucasiens).

L'empereur escomptait certainement sur un apport numérique important qu'il pourrait avoir demandé – conformément à des pratiques et modes de communication habituels déployés à l'attention des *gentes foederatae*<sup>158</sup> – par son ambassadeur chargé de délivrer, dans le courant de l'année 626, au Qaghan ou à son Šat' en campagne en Atropatène et Médie, une lettre impériale portant un appel à la mobilisation des contingents<sup>159</sup>.

Les Romains devaient être assez bien renseignés sur les territoires et peuples soumis au Qaghan<sup>160</sup>, bénéficiant en cela des informations collectées par les anciennes ambassades<sup>161</sup> comme par celle du patrice André<sup>162</sup>. L'importance des présents, rétributions et des honneurs accordés aux chefs turcs et au Qaghan pourrait, au demeurant, s'expliquer par la volonté de l'empereur d'obtenir un appui

158 Des exemples de lettres impériales (*epistulae, grammata*) remises par des ambassadeurs pour demander l'envoi de contingents : AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXIII, 2, 2 et SOZOMÈNE, cit., VI, 1, 3 (Arsace roi d'Arménie sous Julien) ; AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXVIII, 5, 8-13 (Burgondes sous Valentinien) ; AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXXI, 6, 1-2 (Goths sous Valens) ; ZOSIME, cit., V, 31, 5-6 (Alaric sous Honorius) ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 18, 2-3 (Théodoric sous Zénon) ; PROCOPE, cit., II, 16, 4-6 (Aréthas/al-Ĥārith sous Justinien) et *Anecdota*, XXI, 26 (Huns sous Justinien) ; JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 16 (phylarques saracènes sous Justinien) ; PAUL DIACRE, *Hist. Lang.* II, 1 (Lombards sous Justinien) ; MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 19, 1 (Turcs sous Justin II). Voir SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume III.

159 Les sources syriaques indiquent que l'empereur écrivit au Qaghan pour lui demander l'envoi de 40000 combattants afin de « faire la guerre contre Chosroès, roi des Perses », ce à quoi le Qaghan aurait répondu que les troupes partiraient des Portes de la Mer Caspienne et le rencontreraient là où l'empereur le demandait : BAR HEBRAEUS, cit., I, p. 121-122 ; MICHEL LE SYRIEN, *Chron.* XI, 3 (CHABOT, cit., p. 409) ; *CHRONIQUE DE 1234* (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74). AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74, 75), après avoir rapporté que l'empereur qui se préparait « à attaquer les Perses » s'adressa au Qaghan, « roi des Khazars, pour lui demander de lui fournir 40 000 cavaliers » ajoutait que l'empereur, lorsque les 40000 combattants turcs « arrivèrent en Azerbaïdjan » leur écrivit « pour leur ordonner de rester là jusqu'à ce qu'il les rejoigne ». Il peut s'agir d'une référence à la campagne menée en Atropatène (été 626) par Šat' ou bien d'une confusion avec l'Ibérie où effectivement troupes romaines et contingents turcs firent leur jonction à l'été 627. Šat' en campagne et son campement sur l'Araxe : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87-88).

160 Comme MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1 l'indique sous Justin II en présentant l'empereur, lors de la réception d'une ambassade turque, questionnant l'ambassadeur du Qaghan sur l'étendue du pouvoir de celui-ci. Voir HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 221.

161 Ambassades romaines sous Justin II : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 2-5 ; *Frg.* 19, 1-2. MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 notait que « la nation des Turcs était très nombreuse et indépendante ». Voir M. WITTHOW, « Byzantium's Eurasian policy in the Age of the Türk Empire » dans N. DI COSMO, M. MAAS (dir.), *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*. Cambridge, 2018, p. 271-286.

162 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87).

militairement et numériquement plus que conséquent.

Concernant les Avars – qui ne furent cependant jamais engagés – l’empereur devait espérer que le Qaghan fournisse des contingents qui pourraient peser numériquement peut-être dans des proportions similaires à celles que nous observons lors de l’envoi des contingents avars en 577 pour lesquels Ménandre parle de 6000 cavaliers<sup>163</sup>. Pour une *gens* capable de rassembler 80000 combattants lors du siège de Constantinople<sup>164</sup>, il était largement envisageable de lever un contingent de 6000 hommes d’autant que de chiffres similaires s’observent dans des armées étrangères engagées aux côtés des Romains contre les Perses<sup>165</sup> ou d’autres ennemis<sup>166</sup>.

Quoi qu’il en soit, avec l’apport massif des contingents turcs et celui des *foederati* caucasiens, l’empereur voyait le poids numérique des forces impériales – soldats romains et contingents étrangers – accru, réalité manifeste et d’autant plus essentielle que pour l’*expeditio* de 627, Héraclius avait fragmenté son corps expéditionnaire en trois armées, la sienne propre pour marcher sur la Perse, celle envoyée à Constantinople contre la coalition avaro-perse assiégeant la capitale et enfin celle confiée à son frère Théodore pour affronter Shaïn<sup>167</sup>. Il est donc probable que l’empereur attendait de l’apport numérique des différents contingents fédérés fournis par ses *gentes foederatae* un poids conséquent pour renforcer directement le corps expéditionnaire qui devait marcher au cœur de l’Empire perse. Mais cet apport numérique offrait un autre avantage pour l’empereur : celui de permettre une économie des forces romaines.

Plusieurs sources de diverse nature laissent entendre que gouvernants et offi-

163 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21.

164 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, cit., p. 219, 249.

165 6000 *foederati* lombards à Mélitène en 576 : JEAN D’ÉPHÈSE, cit., VI, 13 ; JEAN DE BICLAR, *Chron. ad ann.* 575 ; THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 13, 8 ; 5000 *foederati* saracènes du *phylarchos* jafnide Aréthas à Callinicum en 531 : JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 60 ; PROCOPE, cit., I, 18, 1-35. Pour Jean de Biclär : Th. MOMMSEN (éd.), *Chronica*, MGH. AA. XI, Berlin, 1894 et K. B. WOLF, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, Liverpool, 1990.

166 6000 *foederati* goths mésiens de Théodoric l’Amale contre les Goths thraces : MALCHUS, *Frg.* 20 ; 6000 Huns d’Aetius en 425 : PHILOSTORGE, *H.E.* XII, 14 ; 6000 guerriers de Ricimer : JEAN D’ANTIOCHE, *Frg.* 207 ; 5500 Lombards à *Busta Gallorum* en 552 : PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 26, 10-13.

167 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315) ; GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Bellum Avaricum*, 280-283. Pour Philostorge : B. BLECKMANN, D. MEYER, Ed. DES PLACES, J.-M. PRIEUR, J. BIDEZ, *Philostorge, Histoire ecclésiastique*, Paris, 2013.

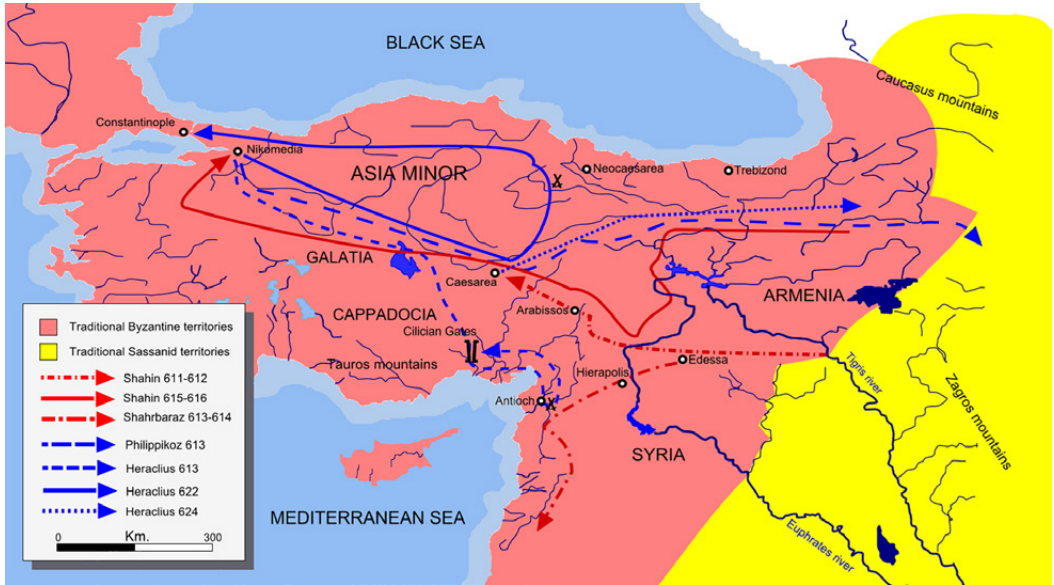


Fig. 4 Campagnes perso-byzantines de 611-624. Author: Mohammad Adil rais. Free documentation License. Wikimedia Commons.

ciers romains recommandaient de privilégier l'emploi des *foederati* aux troupes romaines afin d'économiser celles-ci à l'image de l'ordre que donna l'empereur Théodose lors de la Bataille du *Frigidus* (septembre 394) lorsqu'il privilégia l'envoi des « unités barbares (*tagmata barbarika*) à l'attaque de l'adversaire » pour « prendre d'abord les risques avec eux »<sup>168</sup>, ce que proclamait, à sa manière Claudien au sujet de l'engagement par le généralissime Stilicon des *foederati* alains contre les Goths : « il a recours aux alliés sans se soucier de leurs pertes », affaiblissant ainsi « l'*Hister* cruel grâce à des soldats de son sang » et tournant « les barbares contre eux », il avait un « double avantage à livrer la bataille » puisque les *gentes* tombaient pour l'Empire, exactement comme les *foederati* goths de Théodoric l'Amale, *magister utriusque militiae (stratègos)* et *foederatus (philos)*, s'épuisaient à combattre les Goths thraces de Théodoric *Triarius* tandis que les troupes romaines économisaient leurs forces<sup>169</sup>. Ces calculs que

<sup>168</sup> ZOSIME, cit., IV, 58, 2-3. Ces *tagmata* formaient des contingents ethniques venus des *gentes* danubiennes (Goths, Alains, Huns) mais aussi caucasiennes (Lazes, Ibères, Arméniens) ou encore saracènes. Voir SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume III et notre travail en cours de préparation.

<sup>169</sup> CLAUDIEN, VI. *Cons. Hon.* 218-222 ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 18, 2.

prête encore Agathias à Justinien pour qui, il « valait mieux par tous les moyens provoquer la brouille chez les barbares et les faire se battre entre eux » et pousser, au moyen d'« accords » (*synthékai*), « les ennemis les uns aux autres », « plutôt que de s'engager par lui-même et s'exposer à un danger »<sup>170</sup>, avaient encore cours dans l'esprit des élites romaines comme dans celui d'Héraclius d'autant que pour les contemporains, ainsi que nous l'enseigne le *Strategikon*, il était recommandé de faire porter aux contingents étrangers (*ethnikoi*) organisés selon leurs usages, assauts et embuscades<sup>171</sup>, ce qui permettait d'épargner aux troupes romaines ces tâches périlleuses qui plus est en territoire ennemi, tactique précisément pratiquée par l'empereur au printemps 624 puisque l'armée impériale, arrivant à Ganzak, disposait en avant-garde, de cavaliers des *Sarakênoi enspondoi/Saraceni foederati* afin de déjouer ou de tendre des embuscades<sup>172</sup> ou encore de s'informer sur la présence ennemie<sup>173</sup>.

Avec un apport numérique conséquent des contingents turcs, l'empereur pouvait donc à la fois réduire les risques de pertes sur les troupes romaines et envisager – comme nous le verrons – un affrontement direct en bataille rangée avec les troupes du Grand Roi<sup>174</sup>. À cet apport numérique, l'empereur espérait adjoindre les atouts tactiques qu'offraient les « peuples scythes » contre les Perses<sup>175</sup>.

170 AGATHIAS, cit., V, 24, 1-2 ; V, 14, 1 ; V, 25, 3-4.

171 MAURICE, cit., II, 6 avec F. R. TROMBLEY, « Military Cadres and Battle During the Reign of Heraclius » dans G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 241-259, 249-250.

172 ZOSIME, cit., IV, 22, 1-3 ; EUNAPE, *Fragment* 42 ; AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXXI, 16, 4-5 ; SOCRATE, cit., V, 1, 4 ; SOZOMÈNE, cit., VII, 1, 1.

173 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307-308). Même tactique de Chosroès : GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Expediatio Persica*, II, 57-59, 206-238 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (304). Sous Maurice, on retrouve un emploi tactique similaire des *foederati* saracènes des *phylarchoi* Ogyros/Hudjr et Zogomos en 586 : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., II, 2, 5-6. Pour Eunape : BLOCKLEY, *The Fragmentary*, cit., II, p. 2-151 ; A. BALDINI, *Ricerche sulla Storia di Eunapio di Sardi. Problemi di storiografia tardopagana*, Bologne, 1984.

174 Lors de l'*expeditio* de 624-624, l'armée impériale était parvenue à vaincre plusieurs armées perses au moyen de tactiques irrégulières propres à la « petite guerre » : SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 394-396.

175 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1-2 pour les modes de combat des Perses et des « peuples scythes ».

*Avars et Turcs : les meilleurs guerriers des « peuples scythes » pour affronter les Perses ?*

Comme les sources le révèlent, les Romains savaient employer spécifiquement les *gentes* selon les avantages techniques, tactiques de leurs modes de combat<sup>176</sup>, constat qui vaut également pour les « peuples scythes »<sup>177</sup> que l'empereur espérait engager contre les Perses. Au sujet de ces derniers, le *Strategikon* formulait des recommandations quant aux tactiques à suivre afin de les vaincre<sup>178</sup> car il était « impossible d'affronter l'ennemi avec un certain degré de sécurité » sans connaître les « tactiques et [...] caractéristiques de chaque race [...] car toutes les nations ne combatt[ai]ent pas dans une seule formation ni de la même manière »<sup>179</sup>.

L'appel lancé aux Avars et à leur Qaghan<sup>180</sup> afin qu'ils assistent militairement

176 Par exemple, face aux « peuples blonds » (Goths, Francs ...) qui privilégiaient les combats de cavalerie à l'aide de leurs charges de lanciers, les Romains recouraient fréquemment aux archers montés – notamment ceux des « peuples scythes » – qui combattaient de loin alors que les Goths ou les Vandales, dans les années 530-550, s'en remettaient fondamentalement à leurs cavaliers cuirassés contophores, faute de pouvoir équiper des archers montés : PROCOPE, cit., III, 11, 9-11 ; V, 27, 27-29 ; VI, 1, 4, 6-10 ; VIII, 32, 6-10 ; MAURICE, cit., XI, 2. À titre d'exemples : Ph. RANCE, « Narses and the Battle of *Taginae* (*Busta Gallorum*) 552 : Procopius and the Sixth-Century Warfare », *Historia* 54, (2005), pp. 424-472 ; G. SARTOR, « Défendre « l'Empire du Couchant » par « l'alliance avec les barbares ». *Foedera et foederati* au temps d'Aetius (425-454) : pour une relecture de la diplomatie et de la stratégie du patrice Aetius en Occident. Première partie : Les aspects diplomatiques », *Antiquité Tardive*, 30, (2022), pp. 225-245.

177 JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 4-5 a analysé les « modes de combat des peuples des steppes » en soulignant comment ils menaient « sur le champ de bataille [...] contre leurs adversaires des assauts répétés et coordonnés d'archers montés, que venaient parachever les charges décisives de leur cavalerie « lourde » quand l'objectif initial de désorganiser la ligne adverse était atteint. Cette complémentarité entre les armes laissait cependant un rôle essentiel aux archers montés dans l'obtention des victoires hunniques : il était difficile de s'opposer efficacement à leur technique d'assaut et de repli rapides ; il l'était tout autant d'anticiper les directions de leurs attaques, à plus forte raison quand une partie d'entre eux avait dissimulé sa présence sur le champ de bataille ; vitesse et surprise faisaient enfin courir à ceux qui les affrontaient le risque de l'encercllement » : Si les archers montés représentaient une force essentielle dans les tactiques des « peuples scythes », des Huns aux Turcs, il ne faut pas négliger la présence des cavaliers cuirassés équipés de lance (*contus*) qui accomplissaient « l'acte décisif sur le champ de bataille, une fois l'adversaire désorganisé par le harcèlement des archers montés » : JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 13.

178 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1.

179 MAURICE, cit., XI, Prol.

180 Historiquement, à l'exception de la fin du règne de Justinien et des premières années de ce-

l'Empire contre les Perses<sup>181</sup> répondait à un calcul tactique dépassant la seule mobilité tactique et opérationnelle de la cavalerie. Il s'agissait d'employer, face aux Perses et leurs alliés<sup>182</sup>, des cavaliers polyvalents capables de combattre de loin et de près<sup>183</sup> puisque selon le *Strategikon*, les Perses étaient souvent mis en difficulté par « la charge des lanciers, par le combat au corps à corps parce que les volées de flèches [étaient] inefficaces à courte distance, et parce qu'ils ne [faisaient] pas usage de lances et de boucliers. La charge contre eux [était] efficace parce qu'ils [étaient] poussés à la fuite rapide »<sup>184</sup>. Or les cavaliers avars avaient cette polyvalence conférée par le fait qu'ils portaient au combat lances et arcs (*ta kontaria anabastazontes kai ta toxa en tais chersi katechontes*)<sup>185</sup> et s'ils étaient experts comme archers montés (*pros tê ephippon toxoian*) et préféraient les combats à distance, leurs cavaliers utilisaient également des lances (*ta kontaria*) – un modèle particulier selon le *Strategikon*<sup>186</sup> – pour les charges : ainsi les guerriers avars, qui appartenaient à cette lignée du cavalier « composite » à

---

lui de Justin II et ce jusqu'en 577-578, voire 582, jamais les Avars ne furent des *gentes foederatae* pourvoyeuses de contingents pour l'Empire. Même si MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 notait que les « peuples scythes » divisés en de nombreuses tribus (*ek pollôn phylôn*) pouvaient être manipulés pour obtenir le ralliement de transfuges (*automoloi*) au profit de l'Empire, il est rare, à partir du début de la décennie 580, de trouver des combattants avars dans les rangs ou aux côtés de l'armée impériale à l'exception d'un fait décrit par THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VIII, 6, 1, au sujet de la campagne de l'été 602 conduite par le *magister utriusque militiae* Pierre contre les Slavènes alliés des Avars. Cette *expeditio* s'accompagna, de nombreuses défections (*tôn apostatousi tôn Abarôn plêthê, automolein*) au sein de l'armée (*dynamis*) avar envoyée pour écraser les Antes, une *gens foederata* impériale. Inquiet de l'ampleur des désertions, le Qaghan aurait tenté de rallier les forces passées à l'Empire. Les efforts prêtés au Qaghan pour récupérer ses troupes et les inquiétudes décrites par Théophylacte suggèrent des désertions d'une ampleur importante. Sur la faible présence d'Avars dans les armées impériales : POHL, cit., p. 586-587.

181 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 ; GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclias*, II, 90-96.

182 L'armée sassanide : J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « The Late Sasanian Army » dans T. BERHEIMER, A. SILVERSTEIN (dir.), *Late Antiquity : Eastern Perspectives*, Exeter, 2012, p. 87-127.

183 TROMBLEY, « Operational Methods », cit., p. 347.

184 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1.

185 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2. Documentation archéologique : DAIM, cit., p. 465-466, 527-529.

186 DAIM, cit., p. 468 pour l'emploi de la longue lance liée aux étriers pour lesquels, on peut voir MAURICE, cit., I, 2 avec Ph. RANCE, « Battle » dans Ph. SABIN, H. VAN WEES, M. WHITBY, (dir.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare. Volume II : Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 342-378, 357-358 et I. SYVÄNNE, *The Age of the Hippotaxotai. The Art of War in Roman Military Revival and Disaster (491-636)*, Tampere, 2004, p. 357.

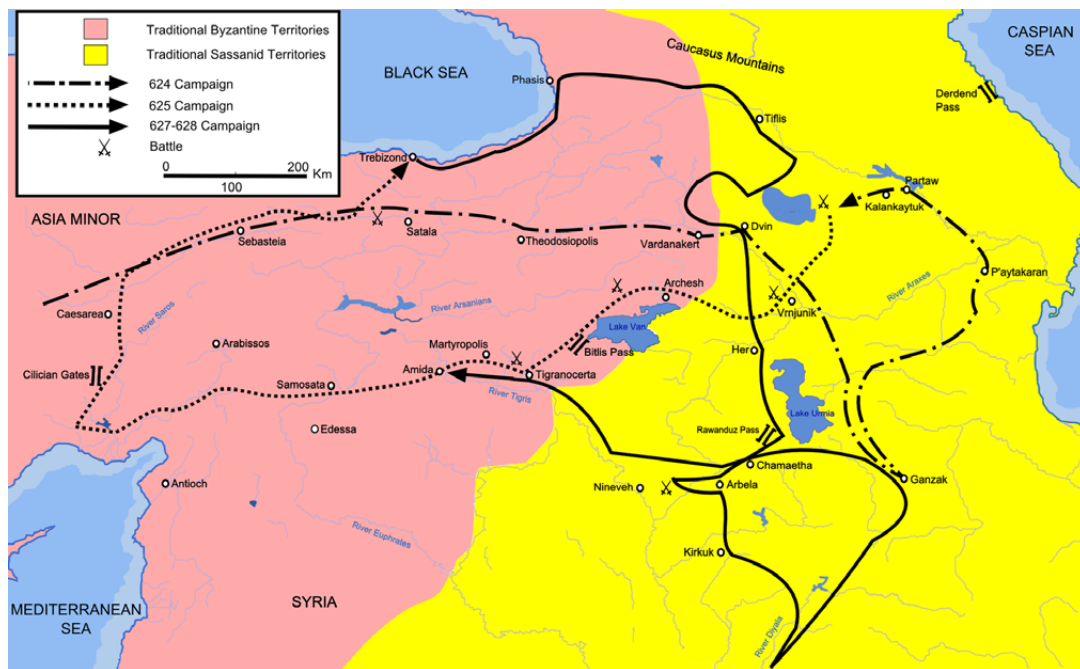


Fig. 5 Carte montrant la route suivie par Héraclius pendant ses campagnes de 624 à 628. Author: Mohammad Adil rais. Free documentation License. Wikimedia Commons.

la fois lancier et archer<sup>187</sup>, incarnaient la réponse tactique idéale face aux armées perses<sup>188</sup> : archers montés, ils pouvaient résister aux archers perses dont la ca-

187 RANCE, « Battle », cit., p. 355-358 pour la description de guerrier idéal qui apparaît chez Procope (I, 1, 12-14) et qui ne correspondrait véritablement à une certaine réalité qu'à la fin du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Voir les observations de l'auteur du *Strategikon*, I, 1-2 où un minimum de capacités à combattre à cheval est requis. L'auteur ne suggère pas la nécessité d'une maîtrise totale et infaillible. HALDON, *Warfare*, cit., p. 215-216 note que « the Byzantine composite lancer/horse archer is probably something of a myth ». F. CURTA, « Avar *Blitzkrieg*, Slavic and Bulgar Raiders, and Roman Special Ops : Mobile Warriors in the 6th-Century Balkans » dans I. ZIMONYI, O. KARATAY (dir.), *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden*, Wiesbaden, 2016, p. 69-89, 74 : « If we are to trust the *Strategikon*, on this point, in addition to high mobility, the Avar horsemen had a remarkable ability to switch quickly between different weapons – lance, bow, and sword – while in combat ».

188 Pour ces combattants décrits comme des « contingents iraniens dans l'armée byzantine », à savoir ces Turcs, Iraniens, Persarméniens, Arméniens, Caucasiens présents au sein du corps des officiers, des *hypaspistai* et des *doryphoroi*, maniant la lance et l'arc, et dont la forte présence était une réaction à l'importance tactique de l'archerie, des archers montés et des *clibanarii* : S. COSENTINO, « Iranian Contingents in Byzantine Army » dans *La Per-*

dence de tirs était redoutable<sup>189</sup> ; lanciers, ils pouvaient annihiler la puissance de feu ennemie en imposant, par leurs charges, le combat au corps à corps<sup>190</sup> comme le firent à plusieurs reprises les troupes romaines<sup>191</sup> à l'image de la bataille de Mélitène en 575/576<sup>192</sup> en mobilisant pour cela des contingents étrangers aptes à ce type de combat tout comme Héraclius espérait le faire avec les Avars. Ainsi, face à l'avancée des cataphractaires perses qui avaient allongé leur ligne pour déborder l'armée romaine, le *magister utriusque militiae* Fl. Justinien ordonna à ses deux lignes de cavalerie de former un bloc compact obligeant les Perses à opter pour les tirs d'archers afin de briser les lignes romaines<sup>193</sup>. En réponse, la cavalerie impériale chargea pour empêcher les tirs des archers perses en engageant le combat au plus près des lignes ennemies<sup>194</sup>, charge au cours de laquelle des contingents étrangers s'illustrèrent puisque les sources évoquent le rôle des *gentes fortissimae*, à savoir les contingents lombards<sup>195</sup> dont nous savons qu'ils

---

*sia e Bisanzio*, Rome, 2004, p. 245-362.

189 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1 ; PROCOPE, cit. I, 18, 31-34 ; I, 14, 35-37.

190 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 ; VII, ProL. A. À Viminacium, le *magister utriusque militiae* Priscus fit combattre les Romains au corps à corps avec leurs lances face aux Avars après avoir délaissé leurs arcs : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VIII, 2, 11. Voir RANCE, « Narses », cit., p. 467-468 ; RANCE, « Battle », cit., p. 356-357.

191 AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXIV, 6, 11 : « ... on brandit lances et épées, et le combat s'engagea de part et d'autre au corps à corps. Plus nos soldats s'empressaient de pénétrer au cœur des rangs ennemis, plus ils étaient à l'abri des flèches » ; XXV, 1, 17 : « Et pour éviter que la progression des archers en avant des lignes ne disloquât nos formations, il brisa leur tir en prenant l'initiative d'une attaque brusquée ... ». Toujours à propos des combats contre les archers perses lors de la campagne de 363 : AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXIV, 2, 5. Lors des guerres justiniennes : PROCOPE, cit., II, 18, 24-25 avec TROMBLEY, « Operational Methods », cit., p. 348 n. 278.

192 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 14, 6-8 rapporte un affrontement entre Perses et Romains au cours duquel les Perses commencèrent le combat par un tir soutenu de leurs archers sur les Romains (6) qui ripostèrent en engageant le combat au corps à corps (7).

193 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 14, 1-6 avec SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 444.

194 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 14, 6-8.

195 JEAN DE BICLAR, *Chron. ad ann. 575* mentionne les *gentes fortissimae* appelées en langue barbare *Herinam* ce qui renvoie, comme l'a souligné HALDON, *Recruitment*, cit., p. 22 n. 8 aux combattants lombards engagés avec leurs chefs (*tôn hégemonôn Longobardôn ethnous*) contre les Perses : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 22 et 24. On trouve aussi des preuves de la présence lombarde chez JEAN D'ÉPHÈSE, cit., VI, 13 (PAYNE SMITH, cit., p. 407-408) qui mentionnait comment les habitants de Tela/Constantina se vantaient auprès de Perses de pouvoir leur résister car le général Justinien venait à leur secours avec 6000 Lombards. Les contingents lombards étaient parmi les *symmachoi* : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 13, 8.

fournissaient une cavalerie cuirassée contophore<sup>196</sup>. Face aux armées perses, les Avars pouvaient donc offrir la même réponse que celle des Lombards à Méli-tène. Enfin, les cavaliers avars étaient eux-mêmes cuirassés (*hoplophorousin*) tout comme leurs chevaux<sup>197</sup>, ce qui garantissait une certaine protection face aux archers et clibanaires perses.

Mais si la polyvalence des cavaliers avars ne put jamais être expérimentée en raison de l'hostilité du Qaghan envers l'Empire, elle ne fut pas pleinement davantage utilisée par les contingents turcs<sup>198</sup>, tout au moins en batailles rangées puisque les conditions de la bataille Ninive (décembre 627)<sup>199</sup> les en empêchèrent. En effet, lorsque les armées perses parvinrent dans la plaine de Ninive où l'armée impériale était rangée en ordre de bataille, elles furent noyées dans le brouillard<sup>200</sup>. De ce fait, ni les archers perses, ni les archers de l'empereur – romains, caucasiens ou turcs – ne jouèrent un rôle important dans la bataille. Inversement, le choix fait par l'empereur d'amener les Perses à combattre dans une plaine ouverte, afin de permettre une charge en ordre dense et uniforme, confirme le rôle de la cavalerie<sup>201</sup> et par-là, des cavaliers des *gentes foederatae* caucasiennes et turques. Ainsi face à l'armée perse organisée en trois corps<sup>202</sup> avec en première

196 PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 31, 5 et 32, 1-8 avec RANCE, « Narses », cit., p. 459-462, 444 n. 71. Cavalerie de lanciers des « peuples blonds » : MAURICE, cit., XI, 3. On peut rapprocher ce cavalier cuirassé et contophore du cavalier représenté sur l'assiette en argent d'Isola Rizza figurant un cavalier équipé d'un casque, d'une cuirasse articulée descendant jusqu'aux genoux et de la longue lance-*contus* : SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 382-383.

197 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 ; MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21 mentionne 6000 cavaliers cuirassés (*hippeôn thō-rakophorôn*) avars. Voir SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 357.

198 Nous savons que les Turcs équipaient aussi des cavaliers cuirassés lanciers et des cavaliers polyvalents à la fois archers et lanciers. Mais les sources relatives aux campagnes de 626 et 627-628 manquent de précision à ce sujet. Par exemple AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74) mentionne 40000 cavaliers sans plus de précision. MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 décrit leur armement : « Ils sont armés de cottes de mailles, d'épées, d'arcs et de lances. Au combat, la plupart d'entre eux attaquent doublement armés ; la lance en bandoulière et tenant l'arc à la main, ils font usage des deux selon les besoins ».

199 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (318) avec KAEGI, cit., p. 160-161, 166-167.

200 PSEUDO-SEBÉOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 84) ; THOMAS ARTSRUNI, *Hist.* II, 3 (THOMSON, cit., p. 160). Pour Thomas Artsruni : R. W. THOMSON, *Thomas Artsruni : History of the House of the Artsrunik*, Detroit, 1985.

201 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (318) ; MAURICE, cit., XI, 1 ; VIII, 2, 85. Voir KAEGI, cit., p. 160-161, 166-167.

202 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (318) ; GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclias, fragment*, 36. *L'Héracliade* : PERTUSI, cit., p. 285-288, 303-305. Dispositif perse : MAURICE, cit., XI, 1. Shahrbaraz

ligne, les *kaballarioi Persai*<sup>203</sup>, lanciers cuirassés et archers suivis de l'infanterie<sup>204</sup>, se trouvait l'armée impériale<sup>205</sup> avec ses cavaliers rangés en deux ou trois lignes<sup>206</sup>, précédant les archers et les fantassins en retrait<sup>207</sup>. En indiquant que les Perses ne comprirent la volte-face de l'armée impériale dans la plaine qu'au moment où les Romains en étaient venus aux mains avec eux, le Pseudo-Sebēos et Thomas Artsruni, évoquent un combat au corps à corps après une charge de cavaliers cuirassés contophores<sup>208</sup> qui réduisit définitivement à l'impuissance les archers perses<sup>209</sup>. À cette charge participèrent les cavaliers contophores cuirassés des *foederati* caucasiens<sup>210</sup> mais aussi assurément les cavaliers lanciers cuirassés turcs<sup>211</sup>, en accord avec le *Strategikon* préconisant de confier les assauts aux contingents étrangers (*ethnikoi*)<sup>212</sup>.

Même s'il est impossible de détailler les opérations faute de sources ap-

---

contre Héraclius en 622 : THÉOPHANE, 6113 (305). Voir SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 334-350.

203 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (319) ; MAURICE, cit., XI, 1.

204 AL-TABARI, cit., I, 964 et 1004 : 12000 combattants, soit les meilleures troupes de cavalerie : THOMAS ARTSRUNI, cit., II, 3 (THOMSON, cit., p. 160). *Clibanarii/cataphractarii* perses : COSENTINO, cit., p. 257 ; RANCE, « Battle », cit., p. 354-357. Dispositif perse : SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 453-454.

205 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (305). Dispositifs tactiques similaires perse et romain : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 7, 17.

206 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (318) ; THOMAS ARTSRUNI, cit., II, 3 (THOMSON, cit., p. 159-160) ; MAURICE, cit., II, 1-3, 6, 8, 10 ; III, 1-5, 15. RANCE, « Battle », cit., p. 367-369.

207 JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 19. L'infanterie : MAURICE, cit., XII, A, 3, 7 ; XII, B, 13 et 23. HALDON, *Warfare*, cit., p. 191-197 ; S. JANNIARD, « Végèce et les transformations de l'art de la guerre aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles après J.-C. », *Antiquité Tardive* 16, (2008), pp. 19-36, 34-35.

208 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 84) ; THOMAS ARTSRUNI, cit., II, 3 (THOMSON, cit., p. 160) ; MAURICE, cit., VII, Prol., ; XI, 1. Voir aussi THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 14, 1-11.

209 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1 ; III, 5 ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XIV : Rahzadh/Razatès, excellent archer, toucha l'empereur.

210 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 52) ; PROCOPE, VIII, 8, 30-34 (Lazes). Relief du monastère de Saint Bartholomée d'Albeak montrant un cavalier arménien cuirassé lancier chargeant un archer monté : TROMBLEY, « Military Cadres », cit., p. 256-257 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 401-402.

211 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) mentionne une force de cavaliers d'élite qui correspondrait à cette cavalerie lourde de lanciers turcs. Leur équipement et armement : MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 avec SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 357 et GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 89-113, 121-122.

212 MAURICE, cit., II, 6.



Fig. 6 Miniature 42 de la Chronique de Constantin Manassé, XIVe siècle : L'empereur Héraclius attaque une forteresse perse, tandis que les Perses attaquent Constantinople. Public Domain, Wikipedia Commons.

propriées, la présence des *foederati* turcs en Perse dut se traduire par l'emploi des archers montés<sup>213</sup> pour contrer les archers perses et leurs auxiliaires étrangers<sup>214</sup> sans oublier le recours aux tactiques d'embuscades dont les « peuples

213 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 : importance des archers montés. MOVSĒS DASKURANC'Ī, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87) mentionne une « puissante force d'élite de cavalerie et d'archers habiles » et décrit les nuées de flèches turques (DOWSETT, cit., p. 83-84). Ailleurs, (II, 14 = DOWSETT, cit., p. 97), l'auteur décrit les « rapides destriers » avec lesquels les cavaliers turcs « galopèrent sur les sommets des montagnes » et poursuivaient le catholicos en déchargeant « sauvagement leurs arcs sur lui ». Sur la supériorité des archers montés – un trait dominant des modes de combat des « peuples scythes » –, supériorité qui tenait à la combinaison d'avance technologique (l'arc composite) et de qualité remarquable de leurs chevaux et de leur remonte : JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 10-12 ; GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 100-101, 109-111, 121-122 ; SYVĀNNE, cit., p. 354-355, 355 rappelle que les archers montés turcs étaient cuirassés et également équipés de lances et épées.

214 Archers montés turcs en opérations en Albanie : MOVSĒS DASKURANC'Ī, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 97). Les sources ne suggèrent pas la présence de Huns ou de Alains dans les rangs perses. Mais la mention de *xenoi* levés par le Grand Roi pour renforcer l'armée confiée au général Shaĭn pourrait renvoyer à la présence de contingents étrangers qui peuvent cependant avoir été des Persarméniens ou encore des Ibères : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315) et 6118 (317-320). Excellence des archers perses : PROCOPE, cit., I, 14, 35-37 ; MAURICE, cit., XI, 1. Les auxiliaires étrangers dans les armées du Grand Roi : PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 8, 34 (Alains) et I, 15, 1-2 ; AGATHIAS, cit., IV, 13, 7-9 (Huns Sabirs) ; AGATHIAS, cit., III, 17, 6-9 et THÉOPHANE DE BYZANCE, *Frg.* 4 in Photius, *Bibliothèque*, *Codex* 64 pour les

scythes » avaient la prédilection<sup>215</sup>. Aussi les contingents turcs durent-ils réaliser des manœuvres similaires à celles décrites par Movsēs Dasxuranc'ī en 629/630<sup>216</sup>. Apprenant l'arrivée d'une armée perse, les Turcs « tendirent une embuscade sur la route pour attendre son arrivée, et la moitié de leur armée était prête à les affronter<sup>217</sup>. Lorsque les deux armées se heurtèrent, les [Turcs] prirent immédiatement la fuite » et « ne réapparurent que plus tard sur les deux flancs pour » les encercler et les détruire non loin du Lac Sevan<sup>218</sup>, tactiques de fuites simulées<sup>219</sup> et d'embuscades particulièrement adaptée face aux Perses car leurs lignes de bataille étaient souvent fragilisées par l'absence de troupes stationnées sur les flancs et en arrière garde<sup>220</sup>.

Avars et Turcs offraient donc à Héraclius polyvalence et supériorité tactiques grâce à leurs redoutables cavaleries<sup>221</sup>, facteurs tactiques essentiels auxquels

---

Dilimnites. Pour Théophane de Byzance : R. HENRY, *Photius. Bibliothèque, Codices 1-83*, Tome I, Paris, 2003 p. 76-79.

215 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2.

216 La description chez MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 16 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 106) du pillage des dépouilles des soldats perses vaincus par des combattants turcs en 629/630 comporte un détail étonnant : « Lorsque les Khazars [Turcs] eurent pillé les cadavres et rassemblé les ornements de leurs chevaux, leurs lances et leurs épées plaquées d'or, ainsi que des robes précieuses savamment teintées et façonnées par les Grecs ». Cette évocation de vêtements « grecs » suggère une familiarité avec la culture matérielle de l'Empire que les Turcs ont pu connaître de différentes manières, grâce aux présents diplomatiques comme nous le verrons, mais aussi, peut-être, au contact des soldats romains de l'armée d'Héraclius avec lesquels ils faisaient campagne.

217 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, cit., p. 344-345.

218 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 16 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 105-106) avec GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 95-97.

219 Ainsi décrite par AGATHIAS, cit., I, 21, 1-8, 5-6 et I, 22, 1 au sujet d'un « stratagème barbare pratiqué surtout par les Huns » et utilisé par les soldats romains de Narsès à Rimini qui devaient « tourner le dos » aux ennemis, « repartir en arrière en désordre, comme s'ils avaient peur et s'enfuyaient » afin de pousser l'ennemi à rompre « l'ordre » de la ligne de bataille, pour ensuite préparer le « retour offensif des fuyards ». Voir également MAURICE, cit., II, 1 où cette tactique est attribuée aux « peuples scythes ». Voir aussi AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXXI, 2, 8-9. Les tactiques de fuite simulée étaient également maîtrisées par les troupes romaines d'Héraclius en 622 : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (306) = GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Expeditio Persica*, III, 186-219.

220 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1-2.

221 Les modes de combat des « peuples scythes » voir aussi : T. MAY, « The Training of an Inner Asian Nomad Army in the Pre-Modern Period », *The Journal of Military History*, 70, (2006), pp. 617-635 ; T. MAY, *The Mongol Art of War*, Barnsley, 2007 ; V. P. NIKONOROV, « « Like a Certain Tornado of Peoples » : Warfare of the European Huns in the Light

s'ajoutait l'atout de la mobilité opérationnelle<sup>222</sup>.

*Avars et Turcs : mobilité et « surprise au niveau opérationnel »*

Même si l'armée d'Héraclius pour les *expeditiones persicae* intégrait des fantassins<sup>223</sup>, la part des cavaliers était importante en raison de l'impératif de mobilité<sup>224</sup> puisque pour projeter l'armée impériale afin de frapper le cœur perse, depuis l'Arménie en 624 et la Lazique en 627, l'empereur avait besoin d'une armée mobile, ce qui imposait une cavalerie capable de parcourir entre 60 et 80 kilomètres par jour<sup>225</sup>. Cet impératif explique notamment l'emploi des cavaliers des *foederati lazoes*, abasges, ibères ou persarméniens<sup>226</sup>. Mais « les peuples scythes », Turcs et Avars, qui accordaient une place essentielle à la cavalerie<sup>227</sup>, offraient un autre avantage lié à la mobilité, avantage qui leur permettait de dépasser les forces montées romaines comme celles des autres *gentes*.

En espérant engager les *foederati* du Qaghan avar contre les Perses, Héraclius recherchait le gain tactique et opérationnel de la mobilité des cavaliers avars que Ménandre décrivait contre les Sclavènes en 577/578. Alors que les groupes sclavènes menaient des raids en Thrace et en Grèce, raids contre lesquels Tibère II ne pouvait opposer de résistance car les armées romaines étaient occupées à l'Est, il fut demandé au Qaghan d'intervenir contre les établissements sclavènes outre-Danube pour contraindre les Sclavènes à évacuer le territoire romain<sup>228</sup>. Pour cela, le Qaghan rassembla 6000 cavaliers qui devaient attaquer le territoire

---

of Graeco-Latin Literary Tradition », *Anabasis. Studia Classica et Orientalia*, 1, (2010), pp. 264-291.

222 La mobilité stratégique : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 229, 243, 285, 293, 363 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

223 Des fantassins romains lors du siège de Tiflis : MOVSES DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85). Les cavaliers pouvaient se muer en fantassins : MAURICE, cit., XI, 1 ; VII, B, 8 ; XII, A, 7. Voir HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 30-31.

224 SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 452 n. 1 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 219-220 pour la flexibilité tactique et la mobilité stratégique des armées de campagne héracliennes.

225 HALDON, *Warfare*, cit., p. 193-197 ; RANCE, « Battle », cit., p. 349-354 ; SYVÄNNE, cit., p. 101.

226 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 232 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 397-403.

227 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2.

228 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21.

sclavène en mettant à feu et à sang les villages esclavènes<sup>229</sup>. Il est évident que la mobilité des cavaliers avars – accrue par le fait qu'ils avaient été transportés par la flotte romaine du Danube pour débarquer discrètement non loin des établissements esclavènes – était essentielle dans les opérations<sup>230</sup>. La mobilité opérationnelle et la rapidité de déplacement des cavaliers avars étaient certainement ce que l'empereur espérait voir à l'œuvre contre les Perses qui auraient été confrontés à une cavalerie avare capable de conduire, comme le montrent leurs campagnes danubiennes, une véritable *Blitzkrieg* mobilisant des forces se déplaçant et frappant brusquement, rendant ainsi difficile toute réponse militaire appropriée de leurs adversaires<sup>231</sup>. Mais l'empereur attendait aussi des cavaliers avars qu'ils épuisent les Perses par leur maîtrise de la « surprise au niveau opérationnel »<sup>232</sup>.

Selon Sylvain Janniard, « la supériorité tactique » des « peuples des steppes » tenait aussi à leur suprématie « au niveau opérationnel de la guerre », dans la « capacité à déplacer et à dissimuler loin derrière leurs adversaires des forces susceptibles de créer la surprise au moment de la bataille », art de la « surprise au niveau opérationnel » qui impliquait « un système de remonte, d'éclairage et de communication particulièrement remarquable »<sup>233</sup>.

Avec des contingents largement constitués de cavaliers<sup>234</sup>, les Turcs représentaient une force mobile dont les mouvements devaient créer la surprise comme le révèle « l'Histoire de 682 » utilisée par Movsēs Dasxuranc'i qui restitue l'effet

229 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21. MAURICE, cit., XI, 4 : les Sclavènes souffraient des attaques surprises venant de différentes directions ce que permettait de faire l'emploi de cavaliers. Notons que les peuples scythiques opéraient de la sorte : MAURICE, cit., XI, 2.

230 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 21 avec F. CURTA, *The Making of the Slavs : History and Archeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700*, Cambridge, 2001, p. 83, 88.

231 CURTA, « Avar Blitzkrieg », cit., p. 70-75, 72.

232 JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 4-10 : les « méthodes opérationnelles » et tactiques des Huns annoncent « les pratiques militaires des nomades des steppes ayant déferlé sur l'Europe après eux ».

233 Comme AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXXI, 2, 8 le décrivait au sujet des Huns dans les années 370 : c'est de leur capacité à couvrir de vastes espaces (*discurrunt*), en groupes dispersés (*de industria dispersi, inconposita acie*), afin de frapper des adversaires qui ne s'y attendent pas (*cum caede uasta, nec [...] cernuntur*) que les Huns tiraient leur force. MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 précise que les armées avars ou turques étaient accompagnées d'un nombre important de chevaux pour la remonte ; XI, 2 recommande de faire la guerre aux peuples scythes lorsque le fourrage manque. Voir JANNIARD, « Adaptations », cit., p. 5-10.

234 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74) ; MOVSEŖS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 et 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87, 97).

Emperor Heraclius at the Battle of Nineveh, 627 AD.

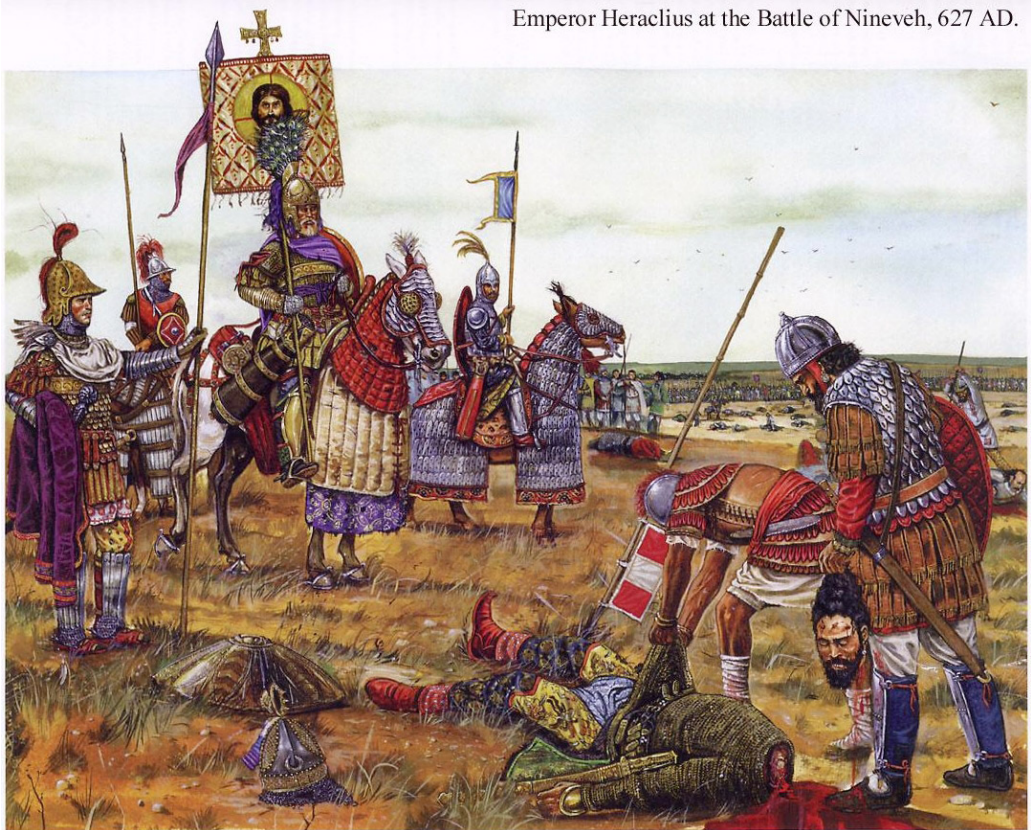


Fig. 7 L'empereur Héraclius à la bataille de Nineveh, 627 après J-Ch. Warhistory.org Educational resources.

de surprise des invasions turques<sup>235</sup>. Ainsi lors du retour du patrice André accompagné de son escorte et des ambassadeurs turcs pour confirmer le *foedus* auprès de l'empereur, celui-ci leur communiqua les « instructions concernant leur expédition que personne ne soupçonnait », expédition lancée au printemps/été 626 en Albanie et en Atropatène<sup>236</sup>. Ce sont encore d'importants contingents de cavaliers qui accompagnèrent l'empereur jusqu'en Perse<sup>237</sup> comme le rapporte l'auteur syriaque Agapius qui évoquait la présence de 40000 cavaliers turcs contre l'armée

235 GOLDEN, *Studies*, cit., p. 92, 97.

236 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 81-82, 88) cite les hordes turques et l'armée promise envoyée par le « roi du Nord ». Voir aussi THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316).

237 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317).

perse de Rahzadh/Razatès<sup>238</sup>. Cette force de cavalerie dut participer aux marches et contre-marches qui permirent à l'armée impériale d'échapper à Rahzadh/Razatès, en longeant les rives occidentales du Lac d'Ourmia pour menacer Ctésiphon<sup>239</sup>, tout en œuvrant à la stratégie de destruction et de prédation voulue par l'empereur puisque leurs cavaliers offraient cet atout de la mobilité pour conduire des raids violents et multiplier les attaques rapides.

Il est aussi possible que les cavaliers turcs aient joué un rôle dans les manœuvres visant à épuiser Rahzadh/Razatès et son armée à la poursuite des troupes impériales. En effet, selon le Pseudo-Sebēos, l'armée perse était persuadée que l'empereur et son armée fuyaient et qu'il fallut aux Perses d'attendre de voir l'empereur en Atropatène pour comprendre qu'il voulait marcher sur Ctésiphon<sup>240</sup>. Or le *Strategikon* rappelait que les Turcs étaient experts dans les mouvements de retraites simulées<sup>241</sup>. De même, les cavaliers turcs, par leur mobilité, ont pu attirer les troupes perses vers le site de la bataille où l'empereur avait disposé son armée prête à l'engagement<sup>242</sup>.

Enfin, les cavaliers turcs rendaient possible la conduite d'une *expeditio* dont la réussite reposait notamment sur l'arme de la vitesse qui permettait de créer la surprise comme le révèle Théophane lorsqu'il rapporte que l'empereur décida

238 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74-75) : « Héraclius se prépara à attaquer les Perses et écrivit au Khagan, roi des Khazars, pour lui demander de lui fournir 40000 cavaliers [...]. Avec ces renforts, Héraclius monta en Syrie et commença à s'emparer, ville par ville, de ce qui était aux mains des Perses ». Puis il ajoute : « Héraclius arriva donc avec environ 30000 soldats et 40000 hommes lui arrivèrent des Khazars. Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent en Azerbaïdjan, Héraclius leur écrivit pour leur ordonner de rester là jusqu'à ce qu'il les rejoigne. Lorsqu'Héraclius eut conquis l'Arménie, il marcha jusqu'à Ninive et campa près du Grand Zab. Rozbihan [Rahzadh/Razatès] vint à lui et les deux armées engagèrent la bataille ». Le récit est confus puisqu'il mêle des événements de 627-628 dans une seule et même campagne. Autre évocation de la présence turque en Perse : E. CHAVANNES, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, Saint-Pétersbourg, 1903, p. 52, 171. Voir ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 417.

239 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 83-84) et THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317-318) avec KÆGI, cit., p. 157-159.

240 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 83).

241 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2.

242 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 84) insiste sur le fait que les troupes perses poursuivaient l'empereur et que celui-ci « les entraîna jusqu'à la plaine de Ninive, puis il se retourna pour les attaquer avec une grande force. Il y avait du brouillard sur la plaine, et l'armée perse ne se rendit compte qu'Héraclius s'était retourné contre eux que lorsqu'ils se rencontrèrent ». Voir aussi THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (318).

d'envahir « la Perse [...] à partir du mois de septembre » ce qui constituait « une manœuvre inattendue, car c'était l'hiver », invasion qui se fit avec les Turcs<sup>243</sup>. Avec ces derniers et leurs cavaleries qui offraient une plus grande mobilité à l'armée impériale – gage de la réussite opérationnelle et stratégique de l'*expeditio* –, l'empereur espérait peut-être lancer une véritable *Blitzkrieg* contre le Grand Roi – tout comme il l'avait envisagé en janvier-février 625 – en cherchant à « jeter dans la confusion » le Grand Roi en « tombant sur lui à l'improviste »<sup>244</sup>, objectif confirmé par les mouvements des forces impériales avançant à marche forcée entre septembre et décembre 627 : « l'empereur prit son armée et marcha contre les terres perses, s'efforçant avec ardeur et détermination d'atteindre la cour du roi perse »<sup>245</sup>. Dans cette campagne, où la vitesse était essentielle, l'apport de cavaliers turcs était donc fondamental en donnant aux forces impériales un atout majeur en complément des *foederati* caucasiens<sup>246</sup>.

En conséquence, la mobilité et la « surprise au niveau opérationnel » étaient des atouts que l'empereur fit jouer à son avantage, les Turcs offrant, par leur « art de la guerre », des combattants particulièrement adaptés aux objectifs stratégiques des *expeditiones persicae* de l'empereur<sup>247</sup>.

### *Héraclius et les Turcs dans la stratégie impériale lors des expeditiones persicae*

Comme l'écrivait un auteur anonyme sous Justinien : « la stratégie nous enseigne comment défendre ce qui nous appartient et comment menacer ce qui appartient à l'ennemi », en protégeant par la défensive, sa population, ses biens et son territoire ou en portant la guerre chez l'ennemi par l'offensive<sup>248</sup>.

243 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317).

244 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309) et 6118 (317). THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (320) indique qu'après Ninive « l'empereur se dirigea vers Chosroès dans le but de l'effrayer ».

245 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88-89). Voir aussi THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317-319) et *VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 97/227 (THOMSON, cit., p. 234-235). Analyse : SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

246 Lors des *expeditiones* de l'hiver 624-625, l'empereur chercha à marcher à grande vitesse contre Chosroès, manœuvre opérationnelle qui reposait sur l'action conjointe de la cavalerie romaine et des cavaleries des *foederati* caucasiens : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309). Analyse : SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

247 Pour ces objectifs : SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

248 *Peri Strategias*, V. Pour ce traité : G. T. DENNIS, *Three Byzantine Military Treaties*, Washington D.C., 1985. La notion de stratégie : HALDON, *Warfare*, cit., p. 34-35, 39-42 ; A.

Avant même de partir pour l'*expeditio persica* de 622, l'empereur savait qu'il était dans la pire situation stratégique : d'une part, il devait conduire la guerre avec des ressources financières, fiscales et humaines réduites et aux capacités de renouvellement amputées par les destructions et l'occupation perse<sup>249</sup> ; d'autre part, il luttait contre les Perses à l'Est et contre les Avars à l'Ouest, bientôt renforcés des Sclavènes et des Perses lors du siège de Constantinople en 626<sup>250</sup>. En somme, il lui était difficile de défendre ce qui appartenait aux Romains et périlleux de porter la guerre en territoire ennemi. Pourtant, Héraclius se fixa dès l'*expeditio* de 624 l'objectif de pénétrer « dans les régions les plus profondes de la Perse sacrilège » afin d'y vaincre le Grand Roi<sup>251</sup>, objectif renouvelé en 627 lors de l'*expeditio* lancée depuis la Lazique<sup>252</sup>, alors que l'armée d'Héraclius évoluerait loin du territoire impérial avec des lignes de communication et de ravitaillement étendues<sup>253</sup> et se trouverait exposée aux risques inhérents (trahison, espionnage, connaissance du terrain et déplacements, guérilla, retraite difficile, bataille rangée décisive) à ce type d'*expeditio*.

Nous savons qu'Héraclius avait, dès 624, l'idée de conclure un *foedus* avec le Qaghan turc<sup>254</sup> et que l'engagement de celui-ci comme *foederatus* impérial ne visait pas à remplacer des *foederati* caucasiens<sup>255</sup>, mais à apporter un avantage

---

SARANTIS, « War in Late Antiquity : Secondary Works, Literary Sources : A Bibliographic Essay » dans A. SARANTIS, N. CHRISTIE (dir.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, 2 volumes, volume 1, Leiden, p. 1-101, 19-24.

249 HALDON, *Recruitment*, cit., p. 20-28 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 72-102, 153-173.

250 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316) ; GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Bellum Avaricum*, 280-285. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 1-4, 14-15, 19-22 ; KÆGLI, cit., p. 58-99 ; HURBANIĆ, *Avar Siege*, cit., ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 246-283.

251 GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Heraclias*, I, 157-158 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (306-308). Que l'objectif de l'*expeditio* ait été de vaincre le Grand Roi dans son Empire ressort encore du fait qu'en janvier 625, l'empereur chercha, depuis l'Albanie, à marcher contre lui : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309).

252 NICÉPHORE, XII, l. 13-15 ; THÉOPHANE, cit (315-316) ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 58 ; MOVSÈS DASXURANCI, cit., II, 10 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 78). Voir SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie » cit., et SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

253 MAURICE, cit., IX, 3.

254 L'œuvre de George de Pisidie ne conserve pas – peut-être simplement en raison de son caractère fragmentaire – d'éléments tangibles liés au *foedus* romano-turc à l'exception, peut-être, d'une allusion dans le *Eis Bonon patrikion*, 134 où il est question d'une alliance récente (*ek diallogês*) qui pourrait être, selon PERTUSI, cit., p. 172, le traité avec les Turcs.

255 SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., et SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.



Fig. 8 Cavalier d'apparence asiatique et son captif sur l'aiguière de Nagyszentmiklós. Photo Mpb eu, Public domain dedication 01. Wikipedia Commons.

stratégique supplémentaire, même si le déroulement de l'*expeditio* de 624-625 montre que l'empereur avait imaginé porter la guerre jusqu'au cœur de l'Empire perse en s'appuyant sur les seules forces romaines et les *foederati* caucasiens. Mais en 626-627, l'apport des *foederati* turcs était envisagé comme stratégiquement décisif.

Comme nous l'avons vu, les sources grecques, arméniennes et syriaques rapportent, avec plus ou moins de différences et de détails, les relations diplomatiques romano-turques ainsi que la conclusion d'un *foedus*. Mais la source utilisée par Movsēs Dasxuranc'i ajoute que lors de la conclusion définitive du *foedus* en présence de l'empereur et des ambassadeurs turcs, il fut question des « instructions concernant leur expédition que personne ne soupçonnait »<sup>256</sup>. Cette ré-

<sup>256</sup> MOVSEŒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) qui date les manœuvres diplomatiques de la sixième année du règne de Chosroès soit entre juin 625 et juin 626. Mais il est

férence démontre toute l'application du pouvoir impérial dans les préparatifs des *expeditiones* y compris celle de l'été 627 – même si le passage évoqué précédemment pourrait correspondre à l'*expeditio* turque visant l'Albanie et l'Atropatène au printemps/été 626<sup>257</sup> – puisque lorsque les Turcs « franchirent [...] les portes de la mer Caspienne et envahirent la Perse, c'est-à-dire le pays d'Adraïgan [Albanie], sous le commandement de Ziebel, qui était le second en importance après le Qaghan », l'empereur « lui aussi, quitta la Lazique et les rejoignit » devant Tiflis<sup>258</sup>, action concertée préparée en amont<sup>259</sup> en accord avec les capacités et pratiques romaines observables dans des situations similaires à d'autres époques qu'il s'agisse de Julien *Augustus* écrivant « à Arsace, souverain d'Arménie, allié des Romains » pour qu'il se joigne « à lui en pays ennemi », dévaste la Chiliocome et fasse jonction avec les troupes impériales en Assyrie<sup>260</sup>, de Valentinien I<sup>er</sup> faisant « souvent porter » aux rois burgondes « par des messagers discrets et sûrs, des lettres les pressant de surprendre les Alamans à un moment fixé d'avance » tandis que lui-même traverserait « le Rhin avec des colonnes romaines » pour se « porter au-devant de l'ennemi »<sup>261</sup>, de Théodoric l'Amale, alors *magister*

---

vraisemblable que les manœuvres avaient déjà commencé en 624 que le patrice André soit parti de Constantinople au printemps 624 – un voyage pendant l'été facilitait les déplacements par la voie maritime et terrestre jusqu'au territoire du Qaghan – ou depuis l'Albanie pendant l'hiver 624-625 : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 221, 239. Exemple d'itinéraire : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1-5 et *Frg.* 19.

257 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Heraclius », cit., p. 41.

258 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316).

259 Par une autre ambassade ou bien lors de la conclusion du *foedus* lorsqu'ils reçurent de l'empereur les instructions concernant l'expédition à venir : MOVSËS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88). Se peut-il que THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315) évoque cette ambassade envoyée en 626 depuis la Lazique pour préparer l'*expeditio* conjointe de 627 même si l'expression employée (« durant son séjour là-bas, il invita les Turcs de l'Est, appelés Khazars, à devenir ses alliés ») laisserait plutôt penser à la conclusion d'une alliance et moins à la mobilisation des contingents d'une *gens* déjà alliée de l'Empire. L'ambassade impériale rapportée par Théophane – et Nicéphore – pourrait ainsi être l'ordre de mission et de mobilisation en application du plan d'invasion élaboré courant 626 ou bien avoir permis l'élaboration du plan de campagne de l'été 627. Passage similaire dans la *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLÉ*, 58-59 avec mention des ambassades adressées par l'empereur au Qaghan : l'empereur, parvenu en Mingrèlie, « envoya des messagers avec de nombreux présents au roi des Turcs. Or le roi des Turcs reçut largement les envoyés d'Héraclius et lui fit un pacte d'alliance ».

260 SOZOMÈNE, cit., VI, 1, 2-3 ; AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXIII, 3, 5 et XXV, 7, 12.

261 AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXVIII, 5, 6-13.

*utriusque militiae praesentalis*, qui avait reçu de l'empereur l'ordre de marcher avec « ses propres forces » jusqu'aux Monts Haemus afin d'y faire jonction avec les troupes du *magister utriusque militiae per Thracias*<sup>262</sup>. Enfin, citons l'exarque d'Italie Romain dont la correspondance avec le roi franc Childebert montre de constants efforts de coordination entre les troupes romaines et les contingents francs pour vaincre les Lombards du roi Authari en Italie du Nord, entre Vérone et Milan<sup>263</sup>.

Au demeurant, les sources syriaques viendraient confirmer des échanges d'ambassades destinées à coordonner les opérations et à assurer la jonction des troupes impériales et des contingents turcs à l'été 627 puisque, par exemple, la demande d'envoi des contingents turcs par l'empereur se serait accompagné d'une réponse du Qaghan avec indication de l'itinéraire qu'emprunteraient ses « troupes [qui] partiraient des Portes de la Mer Caspienne » ainsi que sa proposition de rencontrer l'empereur là où il le demanderait<sup>264</sup>. Agapius rapporte, quant à lui, que les 40000 cavaliers turcs envoyés par le Qaghan « arrivèrent en Azerbaïdjan » où ils reçurent une lettre de l'empereur leur ordonnant « de rester là jusqu'à ce qu'il les rejoigne »<sup>265</sup>, la référence à l'Azerbaïdjan pouvant être écho à la campagne turque menée en Atropatène (été 626)<sup>266</sup> ou, semble-t-il, une confusion avec l'Ibérie où effectivement troupes romaines et contingents turcs firent leur jonction à l'été 627, vraisemblablement après l'envoi d'ambassadeurs pour tenir informer les partenaires de l'alliance de leurs mouvements ainsi que le suggère « l'Histoire de 682 » en rapportant que « le grand empereur, apprenant » que les Turcs assié-

262 MALCHUS, *Frg.* 15 ; *Frg.* 18, 2-3 ; *Frg.* 20.

263 *EPISTULAE AUSTRASICAE*, XL, 7 : « Voici quel fut l'objet de nos délibérations (*in tractatu*). Authari s'était enfermé dans Pavie. Tous les autres ducs et le reste de son armée s'étaient repliés dans les divers *castella*. Avec l'armée romaine, les *dromones* et Henus [le duc franc], qui, comme nous l'avons dit, s'était arrêté à vingt milles [de Vérone] nous décidons d'aller assiéger Authari. Lui capturé, la plus grande partie de la victoire sera assurée ». Lors de préparatifs de la campagne de 591, l'exarque demandait, dans la lettre XLI, au roi franc de lui « indiquer par quels chemins ou à quelle époque on pourra attendre l'armée des Francs » : *EPISTULAE AUSTRASICAE*, XLI, 6. Pour les *epistulae Austrasicae* : E. MALASPINA, *Il Liber epistolarum della Cancelleria austrasica (sec. V-VI)*, Rome, 2001.

264 BAR HEBRAEUS, cit., I, p. 121-122 ; MICHEL LE SYRIEN, *Chron.* XI, 3 (CHABOT, cit., p. 409) ; *CHRONIQUE DE 1234* (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74).

265 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74, 75).

266 Mais si c'est le cas, il s'agirait d'une erreur des sources syriaques puisqu'elles suggèrent que les opérations devaient être conjointes entre Turcs et Romains. Pour la campagne : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87-88).

geaient « la luxueuse, prospère, célèbre et grande ville commerciale de Tiflis » mobilisa « toutes ses forces » et « rejoignit son allié »<sup>267</sup>.

Même si aucune lettre impériale en bonne et due forme n'est mentionnée dans nos sources<sup>268</sup>, il est probable que c'est par des « lettres impériales » (*grammata basileia*) – lettres scellées transmettant des « commandements sacrés »<sup>269</sup> – qu'Héraclius informa le Qaghan des aspects opérationnels de l'*expeditio* de 627, à savoir les objectifs stratégiques et le lieu de rencontre des troupes romaines et des *foederati* turcs<sup>270</sup>, conformément ce que nous observons des pratiques impériales auprès d'autres *gentes* scythes notamment les Huns et les Coutrigours sous Justinien<sup>271</sup> et de la lettre qu'Héraclius adressa au Qaghan avar afin de l'encourager à assister l'Empire<sup>272</sup>.

Si stratégiquement, le Qaghan pouvait apporter d'importantes ressources combattantes à un Empire qui en manquait cruellement<sup>273</sup>, son appui stratégique pouvait militairement prendre trois formes : ouvrir un autre front afin d'obliger

267 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 83).

268 Si les Qaghans turcs adressaient, via leurs ambassadeurs, des lettres aux empereurs comme l'indiquent MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1-4 (Justin II) et THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VII, 7, 7-12 (Maurice), nous n'avons pas de trace de lettres impériales à destination des chefs turcs.

269 Probablement similaire à celle que JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 56 décrivait au sujet de la lettre que Justinien adressa au roi éthiopien (*basileus tôn Auxoumitôn*) Hellestheaeus/Elesboas (Ella Asbeha ou Kaleb Ella Asbeha) en 530/531 : la lettre comportait un sceau (*sphragis*) figurant le portrait de l'empereur et transmettait des (*ta grammata, tèn tou Basileôs Rhômaiôn sakran katephilêsen, kai aposteilai ton basilea Oulianon ton magistrianton meta sakras pros Arethan*) dont le roi put prendre connaissance par un interprète (*hermêneus*). MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 6, 1 mentionne également ces lettres impériales qualifiées de « sacrées ».

270 Par exemple JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 56 rapporte que le roi éthiopien, après réception de la lettre, embrassa le sceau (*sphragis*) qui portait le portrait de l'empereur et prit connaissance, grâce à un interprète (*ermêneus*), des instructions impériales : « prendre les armes contre le Roi des Perses » (*hoplizasthai auton kata Basileôs Persôn*), détruire les territoires perses voisins (*kai tèn plêsiazousan autô chôran, tôn Persôn*). Voir aussi THÉOPHANE, cit. 6094.

271 Huns : PROCOPE, cit., II, 1, 14-15 (*epistolê*) ; *Anecdota*, XXI, 26-27 (*Basileôs Ioustinianou grammata*). Coutrigours : PROCOPE, cit., VIII, 18, 17-24, 19-21 ; AGATHIAS, cit., V, 24, 2-7 ; MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 2,

272 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113 (303) : « Il écrivit également une exhortation au Qaghan des Avars pour que ce dernier puisse aider l'État romain dans la mesure où il avait conclu un traité d'amitié avec lui ».

273 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 213, 221.

Chosroès II à scinder ses forces ; ravager les territoires perses et détruire les ressources matérielles et humaines nécessaires aux guerres de Grand Roi ; fournir des contingents qui viendraient renforcer l'armée mobile d'intervention de l'empereur *in expeditione* en territoire ennemi<sup>274</sup>. *In fine*, l'aide turque déclinée sous ses trois formes stratégiques, devait permettre de vaincre Chosroès II et de le contraindre à traiter.

En premier lieu, en lançant au printemps 626 l'« expédition que personne ne soupçonnait » contre l'Albanie et l'Atropatène, le Qaghan turc, devenu *foederatus*, avait envoyé une armée importante sous commandement de son neveu afin d'ouvrir un nouveau front et de démontrer que l'Empire du Grand Roi avait à craindre une nouvelle campagne de la part de l'empereur après celle – partiellement infructueuse puisque l'objectif stratégique principal n'avait pas été atteint – de 624-625 mais aussi des attaques turques lancées depuis les Portes Caspiennes et capables d'avancer en territoire perse puisque le Šat' avait poussé son armée jusqu'en Atropatène sans que les forces perses et albaniennes n'aient pu l'arrêter, intervention renouvelée sans plus de difficultés au printemps/été 627<sup>275</sup>. En rapportant la réponse du Grand Roi au Šat' turc qui, depuis son camp sur l'Araxe (été 626), l'avait informé de l'alliance romano-turque et des exigences du Qaghan<sup>276</sup>, il est possible de mesurer le dilemme stratégique auquel Héraclius souhaitait contraindre Chosroès<sup>277</sup> : afin d'obliger les Turcs à cesser leurs raids, le Grand Roi menaçait de rappeler les troupes de Shahrbaraz et de Shaïñ<sup>278</sup> au risque de ne pouvoir mener à bien les opérations dans l'Ouest romain<sup>279</sup>. Au demeurant, lors de l'offensive impériale de l'automne 627 en Perse, le rappel de Shahrbaraz et de ses troupes par le Grand Roi<sup>280</sup> démontre la faiblesse stratégique de celui-ci et ré-

274 SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., et SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

275 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 81-85, 87-88) ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316). HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 288-289, 296-297. Il est vraisemblable que ce Šat' soit également celui qui participa à la campagne de l'été 627 en Ibérie.

276 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88).

277 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118, (319) : après la victoire de Ninive (décembre 627), l'empereur continuait de marcher contre Chosroès afin de l'obliger à rappeler Shahrbaraz qui participait aux opérations contre Constantinople et Chalcédoine.

278 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) avec HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 290. Mouvements de troupes envoyées en renfort à l'Ouest pour soutenir les opérations de Shahrbaraz et de Shaïñ : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315).

279 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 290.

280 Information rapportée par NICÉPHORE, cit., XII. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p.

vèle, en contre point, qu'avec une armée impériale désormais renforcée d'importants contingents turcs, l'empereur avait renversé à son avantage la situation : la force de pénétration de l'armée impériale accrue par les renforts turcs permettait d'atteindre l'objectif stratégique que s'était fixé l'empereur – chose impossible lors de l'*expeditio* de 625 quand les *foederati* caucasiens s'étaient opposés à une campagne d'hiver éclair pour frapper le cœur de l'Empire perse<sup>281</sup>.

La stratégie d'ouverture un nouveau front ou de maintien actif d'un front existant se vérifie aussi en 628-629 puisqu'une armée turque sous commandement du *Šat'* intervint en Albanie<sup>282</sup> – en concertation (?) avec

---

291-292, 308, 310 sur le possible rappel de Shahrbaraz et le menace qu'il faisait représenter pour Héraclius : à l'Ouest, en menaçant Constantinople ; à l'Est où, en cas de transfert de ces troupes en Perse, il pouvait prendre à revers l'armée impériale.

281 D'une certaine manière, l'empereur suivant les recommandations du *Strategikon* dont l'auteur préconisait d'utiliser des *symmachoi* provenant de différentes nations plutôt que de s'en remettre à une seule *gens* afin de réduire les risques pour l'armée romaine en cas de trahison de ses alliés.

282 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94-102). L'assaut difficile de Tiflis rapporté en II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86) et celui décrit en II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94-95) sont vraisemblablement un seul et même siège, celui de l'été 627 – et non deux sièges comme le propose HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 259, 298, 302-303 – car il est peu vraisemblable que l'empereur ait pu laisser sur ses arrières un point de résistance ibéro-perse alors qu'il marchait en direction du Sud contre Chosroès II. Néanmoins la longueur du siège de la cité – défendue par des Perses et par le prince ibère Step'anoz – siège dont la conduite avait été laissée par l'empereur aux *erist'avni* Adarnase et Jibġa/Jibġu/Jibla pourrait expliquer le fait que MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94) considère qu'il y eut un deuxième siège – d'une durée de deux mois – à l'issue d'une nouvelle invasion lancée depuis les Portes Caspiennes. En ce sens : D. SHAPIRA, « Armenian and Georgian Sources on the Khazars : A Re-evaluation » dans P. B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAL, A. RÓNA-TAS (dir.), *The World of the Khazars : New Perspectives*, Leiden, 2007, p. 291-352, 337 ; ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 414-415. L'évocation, toujours par MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94), de « la tempête venue du nord » qui « rugit soudain une seconde fois et frappa la grande mer orientale [la mer Caspienne] » pour venir frapper, telle une « bête sauvage et putride » « le royaume de Géorgie [Kartli] et la ville de Tiflis » ne désigne pas nécessairement un autre siège ultérieur à celui de l'été 627 ; il peut en effet s'agir d'un rappel par l'auteur anonyme de « l'Histoire de 682 » – ou de sa source – de la première invasion turque de l'Albanie, celle du printemps-été 626, partie des Portes Caspiennes : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 et 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 81-83, 86-88) pour invasion de l'Albanie à l'été 626. Survient au printemps 627 une autre invasion de l'Albanie par les armées turques avant la marche sur Tiflis : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 83-85 pour l'invasion de l'Albanie, 85-86 pour le siège de Tiflis). Pour le siège : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86) ; *VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 96-98/223-226 (THOMSON, cit., p. 233-235) rapporte que Tiflis fut prise rapidement par les chefs ibères alliés de l'empereur alors que celui-ci avait pris la

l'empereur<sup>283</sup> – pesant ainsi sur les négociations de paix à l'avantage des Romains<sup>284</sup>. De plus en maintenant l'Albanie sous contrôle turc, le Qaghan pouvait projeter ses forces vers l'Ibérie, l'Arménie, l'Atropatène ou la Médie<sup>285</sup>. Dans tous les cas, le choix de frapper l'Albanie puis de pénétrer en Atropatène relève, pour l'intervention de 626, d'une vision stratégique globale et d'un plan concertée comme l'indique la source de Movsēs Dasxuranc'ī au sujet de l'« expédition que personne ne soupçonnait » : le choix de l'Atropatène pour l'intervention turque suivait le plan initial de l'empereur lors de la campagne de l'été 624 pour laquelle l'Atropatène fut la voie d'invasion privilégiée par l'armée romaine et les *foederati* caucasiens et saracènes d'Héraclius à la poursuite de Chosroès (printemps-été 624) jusqu'en Médie<sup>286</sup>. L'apport des contingents turcs permettait enfin à l'empereur de mener des attaques conjointes, menace qui se concrétisa pour les Perses à l'été 627 lorsque les contingents turcs du Qaghan Ziebel/Sipi traversèrent l'Albanie pour venir, en remontant la vallée de la Koura par l'Est, faire leur

---

direction de la Perse. Mais il fait peu de doute que les Turcs participèrent aux opérations de la prise de la cité et la capture des officiers perses et princes ibères qui en avaient assuré la défense pour le compte du Grand Roi : MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 95) ; *VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 97/225 (THOMSON, cit., p. 234-235). MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 95) mentionne également les massacres et le pillage de la cité. Concernant le passage de MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 86) relatif aux arguments de l'empereur pour convaincre le Qaghan de se retirer malgré leur impuissance à prendre Tiflis, voir nos remarques ci-après. Pour les sources géorgiennes et arméniennes traitant du siège de Tiflis : D. SHAPIRA, « On the Relative Value of Armenian Sources for the Khazar Studies : The Case of the Siege of Tbilisi » dans U. BLÄSING, V. ARAKELOVA, M. WEINREICH (dir.), *Studies on Iran and The Caucasus : In Honour of Garnik Asatrian*, Leiden, 2015, p. 45-62. Sur le siège de la cité dans le cadre de l'*expeditio* de 627 : F. SCHLEICHER, *Iberia Caucasica : Ein Kleinkonigreich Im Spannungsfeld Grosser Imperien*, Stuttgart, 2021, p. 221-223, 222 ; N. Preud'homme, *À la porte des mondes. Histoire de l'Ibérie du Caucase – III<sup>e</sup> siècle a. C.-VII<sup>e</sup> siècle p. C.*, Bordeaux, 2024, p. 424-427.

283 Selon HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 342 ces interventions sont concertées. Mais il est possible que la présence turque en Albanie soit le produit du repli turc vers le nord après la fin de la campagne perse, les Turcs se démobilisant à partir de janvier 628 : ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 413, 416.

284 Il est significatif que Kavadh Shirōyé souhaitait négocier avec l'empereur et avec les Turcs : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (326). Pour les mouvements turcs et leurs conséquences dans les négociations à l'avantage des Romains : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 339-345.

285 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 341-342.

286 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (306-308) ; PSEUDO-SEBÉOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 81) ; MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 10 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 79). Voir SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 391-392 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie » à paraître.

jonction à Tiflis en Ibérie avec les troupes impériales venues de l'Ouest depuis la Lazique<sup>287</sup>.

Pour Héraclius, le fait de disposer des contingents turcs permettait aussi, stratégiquement, de frapper en territoire perse, les ressources du Grand Roi<sup>288</sup> puisque les *foederati* turcs apportaient le double avantage de la mobilité et de l'ouverture d'un nouveau front au sein d'une stratégie prédatrice que l'empereur semble avoir voulu globale<sup>289</sup> : ainsi, de l'*expeditio* de 624 d'Atropatène en Médie, en passant par l'Albanie, près de Kaľankatuk' et de Diwtakan, pendant l'hiver 624-625<sup>290</sup> à l'*expeditio* en Perse à l'automne et à l'hiver 627-628<sup>291</sup>, villes et villages perses furent pillés et brûlés, les populations massacrées ou capturées pour être emmenées en captivité, pratiques qui visaient à frapper d'une part territoires et ressources humaines, matérielles et militaires nécessaires aux guerres du Grand Roi et d'autre part le prestige de celui-ci impuissant à protéger les provinces et les populations de son Empire<sup>292</sup>. De fait, les sources attestent de l'implication des Turcs dans des raids prédateurs à grande échelle notamment à l'occasion de l'expédition lancée au printemps/été 626 en Albanie et en Atropatène<sup>293</sup> au cours de laquelle les « hordes » promises par le Qaghan multiplièrent raids et destructions jusqu'à l'automne avant de se retirer au nord des Portes Caspiennes<sup>294</sup>.

287 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85) ; THĒOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) ; *VIE DU KARTLI OU CHRONIQUE DU KARTLI (KARTLIS TSKHOVREBA) = VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 226 (THOMSON, cit., p. 235). Mouvement : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 295.

288 MAURICE, cit., VIII, 1, 30 préconisait de faire campagne contre l'ennemi quand le grain est mûr, afin que les troupes ne manquent pas de vivres et que l'expédition pèse sur l'ennemi.

289 PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. 84) : après la victoire de Ninive, l'empereur passa le pays perse au pillage.

290 THĒOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307-308) ; MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 10 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 79, 80-81) ; THOMAS ARTSRUNI, cit., II, 3 (THOMSON, cit., p. 159). THĒOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307-308) rapporte que l'empereur, arrivant en Albanie, ramenait des campagnes précédentes 50000 prisonniers qu'il fit libérer. Sur ce passage : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 230.

291 THĒOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317, 325) ; CONSTANTIN PORPHYROGÉNĒTE, cit., XLV, l. 19-29. Voir HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 306-307, 309 pour la campagne en Perse et les destructions commises par les troupes impériales.

292 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 226-228, 245, 305,

293 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 81-82, 88) ; THĒOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316).

294 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11-12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 81-82, 88). Voir HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 288-290.

Il n'y a aucune raison que les contingents turcs qui accompagnèrent Héraclius en Perse ne se soient pas comportés pareillement dans la mesure où l'empereur brûlait « les villes et les villages de Perse », passait « au fil de l'épée les Perses capturés » et que selon Nicéphore, Héraclius, lors de l'invasion de la Perse avec une importante armée turque (*plêthos Tourkôn*), détruisit les villes et les temples voués au culte du feu<sup>295</sup>. En Atropatène et plus au sud dans les terres centrales de l'Empire, les Turcs auraient donc pillé, massacré et saisi un important butin tout comme ils le firent en Albanie et en Ibérie ainsi que l'empereur l'avait promis au Qaghan lors des négociations du *foedus* en s'engageant à fournir aux Turcs trésors et butins<sup>296</sup>. C'est pourquoi il ne faut pas négliger un passage méconnu d'une chronique chinoise rapportant que le Qaghan des Turcs occidentaux avait châtié et ruiné l'Empire du Grand Roi<sup>297</sup>. Les contingents turcs auraient ainsi largement contribué au volet prédateur de la stratégie impériale qui devait permettre de frapper les ressources économiques de l'Empire sassanide<sup>298</sup>, de créer un climat de terreur et d'insécurité<sup>299</sup> accru par la mobilité des cavaliers turcs qui pouvaient – à la manière des cavaliers avars contre les Sclavènes – paraître insaisissables pour l'adversaire.

Enfin, sur le plan stratégique, l'alliance avec le Qaghan turc permettait à l'empereur de renforcer son armée mobile d'intervention à la tête de laquelle il allait conduire l'*expeditio persica* décisive en territoire ennemi<sup>300</sup>, même si le facteur turc ne représentait pas la condition *sine qua non* pour marcher contre le Grand Roi puisque lors de l'*expeditio* de 624-625, l'empereur avait d'abord entrepris – avec les seules troupes romaines et les *foederati* caucasiens – de poursuivre Chosroès jusqu'en Médie en plein été<sup>301</sup>, pour ensuite envisager, en janvier-février 625, de

295 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118, (317) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

296 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'Ï, cit., II, 11, 12, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 82-83, 88, 92-102, 94-99).

297 CHAVANNES, cit., p. 52, 171.

298 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 290, 295, 307

299 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 : « Ils préfèrent vaincre leurs ennemis non pas tant par la force que par la tromperie, les attaques surprises et la coupure des approvisionnements ».

300 SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

301 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (306-307) : le 20 avril, l'empereur entre Perse et « se dirigea aussitôt vers le cœur de la Perse, brûlant villes et villages ». À l'automne 624, avant la retraite vers l'Albanie, l'idée de marcher contre le Grand Roi était encore d'actualité au sein d'une partie de l'état-major : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (308).

marcher depuis l'Albanie contre le Roi en plein cœur de la Perse<sup>302</sup>. Toutefois, en plus de l'ouverture d'un nouveau front, l'appui turc était certainement conçu – ainsi que le confirme l'ampleur des avantages et honneurs – comme devant être déterminant pour ce qui était envisagé comme l'ultime et décisive campagne lancée au printemps/été 627. Dans ce cadre, les contingents turcs devaient accroître la force de frappe et de pénétration de l'armée impériale comme le proclamait le Qaghan au Grand Roi dans son *ultimatum* en le menaçant de foncer avec son armée sur ses terres à présent qu'il marchait au secours de l'empereur<sup>303</sup> : c'est avec les 40000 soldats choisis par le Qaghan Ziebel/Sipi que l'empereur entra en Perse et qu'il ravagea villes et territoires du Grand Roi<sup>304</sup>, les cavaliers turcs accroissant les capacités de projection de l'armée impériale en territoire ennemi<sup>305</sup> comme l'empereur l'avait espéré des cavaleries des *foederati* caucasiens au point de devoir renoncer en janvier 625 à l'offensive surprise qu'il voulait conduire contre le Grand Roi depuis l'Albanie lorsque les *foederati* lazès, abasges et ibères refusèrent de prendre part à la campagne<sup>306</sup>. Ainsi, les contingents

302 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309) : « Hâtons-nous contre Chosroès afin que, tombant sur lui à l'improviste, nous puissions le jeter dans la confusion ».

303 MOVSÈS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87). La crédibilité de cet *ultimatum* proviendrait d'une source proche du catholicos Viroy : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 120-123.

304 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118, (316-317) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

305 AGAPIUS, cit., (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74-75) restitue, dans un passage cependant confus, la mobilité acquise par l'armée impériale avec les *foederati* turcs : « Avec ces renforts [les 40000 cavaliers fournis par le Qaghan] Héraclius monta en Syrie et commença à s'emparer, ville par ville, de ce qui était aux mains des Perses » ; dans le même passage, il est écrit qu'avec les 40000 hommes qui « lui arrivèrent des Khazars », l'empereur, après avoir été rejoint par ceux-ci qui étaient restés en Azerbaïdjan à l'attendre [confusion probable avec la campagne turque de 626 qui toucha l'Albanie et la campagne de 627 où les Turcs firent leur jonction avec les troupes impériales à Tiflis], « marcha jusqu'à Ninive et campa près du Grand Zab. Rozbihan [Rahzadh/Razatès] vint à lui et les deux armées engagèrent la bataille ».

306 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309) : « Héraclius exhorta son armée en ces termes : « Soyons conscients, ô frères, que l'armée perse, qui s'élance dans un pays difficile, épuise et affaiblit ses chevaux. Quant à nous, avançons au plus vite contre Chosroès, afin que, tombant sur lui à l'improviste, nous puissions le mettre en déroute. » Mais les troupes s'opposèrent à cette démarche, surtout les alliés lazès, abasges et ibères. C'est pourquoi ils tombèrent dans le malheur ». Les soldats romains refusèrent également de prendre part à l'*expeditio*. On peut voir un autre signe de l'importance tactique et stratégique des *foederati* caucasiens dans les *expeditiones* héracliennes dans le soulagement des généraux perses à l'annonce du retrait des *foederati* lazès et abasges : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (310). Voir SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.



Fig. 9 Hemisphere orientale en 600 AD. Derivative works by Thonas Lassman, retouché. Wikimedia Commons.

de cavaliers des *foederati* turcs – tout comme leurs homologues caucasiens – dépassaient largement le rôle de troupes auxiliaires : s'ils participaient à une armée impériale *in expeditione* au même titre que des soldats romains *comitatenses* et/ou *praesentales*<sup>307</sup>, ils formaient cependant une partie des troupes d'accompagnement de l'empereur au sein d'une armée commandée personnellement par celui-ci en plein territoire ennemi – situation stratégique extraordinaire – lors d'une *expeditio* décisive qui devait permettre de vaincre le Grand Roi au cœur de son Empire<sup>308</sup>. Bénéficiant de l'appui des contingents turcs, l'empereur pouvait envisager un affrontement direct avec les troupes du Grand Roi, y compris en ba-

307 Les soldats romains des troupes d'accompagnement de l'empereur sont désignés du nom d'*aristeôn* – *optimates* en latin – par GEORGE DE PISIDIE, *Expeditio Persica*, III, 80-84, 216-219 ; HALDON, *Byzantine Praetorians*, cit., p. 96-100 ; J. HALDON, « More Questions about the Origins of the Imperial Opsikion » dans A. BEIHAMMER, B. KRÖNING, C. LUDWIG (dir.), *Prosopon Rhomaikon : Ergänzende Studien zur Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, Berlin, 2017, p. 31-42.

308 SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

taille rangée, ce qu'il avait jusque-là préféré éviter<sup>309</sup> même si ses troupes étaient parvenues au cours de l'*expeditio* de 624-625 à vaincre plusieurs armées perses au moyen des tactiques irrégulières de la « petite guerre »<sup>310</sup>.

Un dernier argument en faveur du poids stratégique décisif qu'incarnaient les Turcs peut résider dans l'*ultimatum* que le Šat' adressa au Grand Roi (été 626)<sup>311</sup>. En effet, les similitudes entre les exigences du Qaghan et les concessions perses lors de la paix de 628<sup>312</sup> – à savoir l'évacuation de territoires et cités romaines conquises, la libération des captifs et la restitution de la Vraie Croix<sup>313</sup> – pourrait laisser penser que la source de Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, en l'occurrence l'auteur anonyme de « l'Histoire de 682 », avait utilisé des documents de nature diplomatique<sup>314</sup> et qu'en conséquence, l'adresse de cet *ultimatum* au Grand Roi reflétait les espoirs romains<sup>315</sup> qui devenaient réalistes dans l'horizon d'attente impérial à présent que le Qaghan apportait son aide à l'empereur dans le cadre d'un *foedus* dont l'importance doit aussi être mesurée à l'aune des avantages et honneurs concédés au Qaghan, à ses chefs et à ses troupes.

C'est donc avec une armée impériale mêlant troupes romaines, *foederati* caucasiens et d'importants contingents de *foederati* turcs que l'empereur décida de marcher contre le Grand Roi lors d'une *expeditio* décisive destinée à remporter la victoire en jouant sur la surprise stratégique et opérationnelle puisque l'empereur avait choisi d'envahir « la Perse [...] à partir du mois de septembre – une manœuvre inattendue, car c'était l'hiver »<sup>316</sup>. Or – preuve que l'alliance turque était vue comme décisive – l'empereur avait, semble-t-il, préparé le Qaghan et ses troupes à participer à une *expeditio* d'automne-hiver, contrairement aux usages

309 ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 416-417. On ignore cependant ce qu'il serait advenu de l'emploi des troupes romaines et des *foederati* caucasiens si les *expeditiones* de 624-625 avaient permis d'atteindre Chosroès : l'empereur aurait-il pris le risque d'une bataille rangée ou aurait-il préféré la « petite guerre » ?

310 SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 194-196.

311 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88).

312 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 289-290.

313 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88). La paix : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 322-328, 336-359.

314 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 121-122, 289-290, 409.

315 Peut-être transmis au Qaghan par l'ambassade d'André en 624 : MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87).

316 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317).

traditionnels de la guerre<sup>317</sup>.

En effet, en fixant Tiflis comme lieu de concentration des troupes impériales et des contingents turcs, concentration qui ne pouvait s'opérer qu'après leur jonction pendant l'été 627<sup>318</sup>, l'empereur ne devait raisonnablement pas espérer pouvoir atteindre le Grand Roi avant l'automne. Alors, à moins de supposer que l'empereur avait souhaité mener une *expeditio* en Perse à la fin de l'été<sup>319</sup> et qu'il en aurait été empêché par les difficultés du siège de Tiflis<sup>320</sup>, il faut supposer que la décision d'une *expeditio* contre le Grand Roi pendant l'automne-hiver 627 avait été décidée en amont<sup>321</sup>.

Cette décision est d'autant plus plausible que le choix de conduire une *expeditio* en automne-hiver contre le Grand Roi avait déjà été conçue à l'automne 624<sup>322</sup> avant le repli sur l'Albanie puis en quittant celle-ci en janvier 625<sup>323</sup>. Au demeurant, plusieurs indices – en apparence contradictoires – viennent conforter

317 Refus des soldats de faire campagne en hiver dans les Balkans sous Maurice : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VI, 10, 1-3 ; VIII, 6, 2-10. Rythme saisonnier des campagnes avec ouverture de la saison guerrière au printemps et retour dans les quartiers d'hiver : THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 4, 6 ; III, 15, 1 ; IV, 2, 1.

318 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117-6118 (317) après avoir évoqué le siège de Tiflis et la rencontre entre l'empereur et le Qaghan, indique que l'empereur décida d'envahir « la Perse [...] à partir du mois de septembre ».

319 Malgré les difficultés d'une telle campagne, l'empereur avait conduit une offensive contre le Grand Roi à l'été 624 en le poursuivant même jusqu'en Atropatène et Médie : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (305-308). Notons au passage que les conditions climatiques étaient redoutées puisque selon THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307) avant d'avoir atteint Ganzak, l'armée impériale fut soulagée des chaleurs étouffantes lorsqu'au « moment du solstice d'été l'air devint frais et rafraîchit l'armée romaine » ce qui « remplit d'espoirs » les troupes.

320 MOVSES DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 et 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86, 94). Ce retard l'aurait obligé à laisser les *erist'avni* Adarnase et Jibġa/Jibġu/Jibla prendre la cité : *VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 97/225 (THOMSON, cit., p. 234-235). Les princes ibères : SCHLEICHER, cit., p. 220-223 ; PREUD'HOMME, cit., p. 425-426 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., p. 299-296, 305-309 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 390, 398, 403-404 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

321 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317) en notant qu'envahir « la Perse [...] à partir du mois de septembre » était « une manœuvre inattendue, car c'était l'hiver » pourrait signifier qu'une telle opération était contraire aux pratiques habituelles de la guerre ou bien que l'empereur, en agissant ainsi, faisait preuve d'une audace stratégique remarquable.

322 À l'automne 624, avant la retraite vers l'Albanie, l'idée de marcher contre le Grand Roi séduisait une partie de l'état-major : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (308).

323 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6115 (309). Les opérations de 625 : SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit. et SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

l'impression que l'*expeditio* de 627 devait mobiliser troupes romaines, *foederati* caucasiens et *foederati* turcs pendant l'automne-hiver. En effet, selon la source de Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, sous les murs de Tiflis, l'empereur aurait invité le Qaghan à se retirer avec son armée car ils étaient habitués à « un climat frais » et qu'ils ne pourraient « supporter l'arrivée de l'été dans la terre étouffante d'Asorestan où se trouve la capitale du roi de Perse »<sup>324</sup>. Cet argument n'a aucun sens si le siège de Tiflis, commencé au mois de juin, dura deux mois car à son terme le Qaghan aurait pu engager ses forces en Perse alors que l'automne et l'hiver auguraient des températures moins étouffantes. Or Théophane indique sans ambiguïté que l'*expeditio* commença en septembre et que les Turcs l'accompagnèrent avant de désertir entre février et mars 628<sup>325</sup>. Par conséquent, il est assez vraisemblable que le passage transmis par l'auteur de « l'Histoire de 682 » a été mal compris<sup>326</sup> ou détourné<sup>327</sup> et qu'il comporte des données crédibles, notamment le fait qu'une

324 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 86).

325 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317) ; ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 415-416.

326 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 302-303.

327 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) indique que le Qaghan se retira laissant ses contingents à l'empereur pour marcher sur la Perse. Une autre source rapporte le retrait du Qaghan tel que l'indique MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85-86, 86) : sous les murs de Tiflis assiégée, l'empereur aurait invité le Qaghan à se retirer avec son armée car, habitués à « un climat frais », ils ne pourraient « pas supporter l'arrivée de l'été dans la terre étouffante d'Asorestan où se trouve la capitale du roi de Perse ». Comment peut-on interpréter ce passage alors que le siège de Tiflis, commencé en juin, dura deux mois (MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 14 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 94)) et qu'au terme de ceux-ci le Qaghan aurait pu engager ses forces en Perse, l'automne et l'hiver augurant des températures moins étouffantes. L'invitation adressée par l'empereur au Qaghan à revenir « l'année prochaine » quand « les mois chauds seront passés » afin que les deux souverains puissent exécuter leurs plans est toute aussi étrange puisqu'elle proposait au Qaghan de faire campagne en automne ou en hiver. Or THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317) indique sans ambiguïté que l'ultime campagne commença en septembre et que les Turcs l'accompagnèrent avant de désertir à cause de l'hiver 628, entre février et mars, et non 627 comme l'a montré ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 415-416. De plus nous savons que les Turcs menèrent leur campagne de 626 en Albanie et jusqu'en Atropatène entre le printemps et l'été (MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) avec HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, p. 286-290 ce qui démontre leur capacité à conduire ce type de campagne même s'ils ne s'avancèrent pas au cœur de la Perse. Comment résoudre les contradictions entre nos sources ? Il faut probablement y voir une construction historiographique sur la base d'une pluralité de sources à disposition de l'auteur anonyme de « l'Histoire de 682 » qui puisait notamment dans des sources locales : SHAPIRA, « Re-evaluation », cit., p. 335-345, 345 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, p. 105-108, 108-113. Le recours à une source locale bien renseignée est confirmé, notamment, par les descriptions que l'auteur anonyme de « l'Histoire de 682 » fait :

- du siège de Tiflis (II, 11, p. 85-86 et II, 14, p. 94-95) par les Romains et par les Turcs (été 627) ;
  - des destructions turques en Albanie au printemps-été 626 après que les hordes turques se soient déversées « sur notre pays » au commandement de l'empereur Héraclius (II, 11, p. 82-83) ;
  - des violences et pillages opérés par l'armée romaine et les *foederati* caucasiens en Albanie, dans la province d'Uti, près de Kalankatuk' et de Diwtakan, durant l'hiver 624-625 sur les populations locales (chrétiens, monophysites et nestoriens, Juifs, Zoroastriens) et le rôle salvateur du futur catholicos d'Albanie Zacharie (II, 10, p. 80-81).
- Les faits rapportés, en plus d'une origine probablement commune, partagent un point de vue centré sur l'Albanie (HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 121-124) et une certaine hostilité envers les forces d'Héraclius qu'elles soient romaines ou fédérées en raison des destructions et des violences ou encore des pressions exercées sur les dynastes albanais dont l'auteur rapporte qu'ils résistèrent aux menaces proférées par l'empereur contre les chefs locaux qui refuseraient de le servir et préférèrent s'enfermer dans leurs places fortes (MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 10 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 80-81). Mais cette hostilité est plus vigoureuse lorsqu'il est question des Turcs et de leurs destructions en Albanie (II, 11, p. 82-85 ; II, 12, p. 88 ; II, 14, p. 96-102). Or ces derniers intervenaient sur ordre d'Héraclius (II, 11, p. 82-83 ; II, 12, p. 86-87) ce que l'auteur anonyme de « l'Histoire de 682 » entendait montrer dans l'agencement de son récit : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 121-122. Or cette hostilité envers l'empereur – et surtout ses alliés turcs – se manifeste également dans le récit du siège de Tiflis que ce soit à travers la description des violences, massacres et pillages de la cité (II, 14, p. 94-95), de la résistance des défenseurs de la cité (II, 11 p. 83 et II, 14, p. 94-95) ou encore dans la mise en scène parodique et insultante organisée par les défenseurs de la cité pour moquer l'impuissance des souverains romain et turc à prendre celle-ci (II, 11, p. 86), ce qui montre au passage l'utilisation d'une source reprenant une tradition hostile aux Romains et aux Turcs dont on trouve également trace, avec quelques variantes, dans les sources géorgiennes comme la « Chronique du Kartli » (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*) et la « Conversion du Kartli » (*Mokcevai Kartlisai*) = *VIE DE VAXTANG GORGASALI*, 96-97/224-226 (THOMSON, cit., p. 233-234) avec les remarques de SHAPIRA, « Value », cit., p. 56-62 66 et de SHAPIRA, « Re-evaluation », cit., p. 331-332, 335-340. Or le récit délivré par la source de Movsēs Dasxuranc'i dans lequel l'empereur invitait le Qaghan à se retirer avec son armée car une campagne estivale en Perse aurait été insupportable pourrait s'inscrire dans la même logique : en faisant d'Héraclius le responsable du renvoi du Qaghan et de ses troupes – au prétexte qu'ils ne supporteraient pas l'été persan, ce qui peut aussi être une erreur de perception de l'auteur anonyme : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 303 –, l'auteur anonyme, sa source ou le compilateur Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, le rendait responsable du retour des Turcs pour la prise de Tiflis (II, 14, p. 94-95) puis de leur présence en Albanie (II, 14, p. 95-101) puisque dans sa reconstruction factuelle la ville avait fait l'objet de deux assauts (II, 14, p. 94). Toutefois, l'empereur n'était pas présenté comme responsable des outrages et malheurs de Tiflis et de l'Albanie puisqu'en tant qu'empereur chrétien il ne pouvait en être ainsi tout comme d'ailleurs il n'est pas désigné nommément comme responsable des violences contre les populations locales dans la province d'Uti, près de Kalankatuk' et de Diwtakan, durant l'hiver 624-625 (II, 10, p. 80-81) : c'est le Qaghan qui venait venger l'insulte qui lui avait été faite (II, 14, p. 94) et non l'empereur dont l'image reste assez positive puisqu'il est désigné comme

*expeditio* en plein cœur de la Perse pendant l'été était une opération redoutée et risquée<sup>328</sup>. De plus, recommander aux Turcs, habitués « un climat frais » de faire campagne après l'été car ils ne pourraient « supporter l'arrivée de l'été dans la terre étouffante d'Asorestan »<sup>329</sup> allait dans le sens des recommandations du *Strategikon* quand il fallait faire campagne contre les Perses. Ceux-ci, « quand il s'agi[ssai]t de se battre, surtout en été » attaquaient « à l'heure la plus chaude de

---

« grand », « zélé », « vaillant » et décrit comme rassembleur des troupes et des soldats, meneur d'hommes, général en chef, ordonnateur de la contre-offensive romaine en territoire perse, habile diplomate et vainqueur sur les champs de bataille : MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 10, 11, 12, 22 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 78-79, 80-81, 85-86, 86-87, 88-89, 118-119). Cette image résulte vraisemblablement d'une source officielle romaine qui avait une large diffusion en Arménie – ou d'une source arménienne pro-romaine ou d'une source officielle romaine composée en Arménie – et que le Pseudo-Sebēos aurait peut-être utilisé : THOMSON *ET ALII*, cit., p. lxxviii, 160 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Armenian historians », cit., p. 52-53, 60-62. Mais signe que l'auteur de « l'Histoire de 682 » disposait de sources variées, il rapporte comment les défenseurs de Tiflis à l'été 627 insultèrent le Qaghan et l'empereur, traitant ce dernier « d'immonde sodomite » : MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 86). Pour les sources utilisées et éditées par MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī : ZUCKERMAN, « Khazars », cit., p. 404-409 (pour les sources utilisées : chapitres 9-11 et 12-16 soit deux sources de nature différente – Source A pour les chapitres 9-11 et Source B pour les chapitres 12-16 –, la Source B étant proche des faits et le fruit d'un témoin ou d'un contemporain tandis que la Source A, plus tardive, serait liée au *Panegyrique de Javanshir* composé dans les années 670, et aux sources utilisées par l'auteur anonyme de ce dernier) ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « Armenian historians », cit., p. 53-60 voit, pour les chapitres 10-14, « l'Histoire de 682 » ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 121-122.

328 Malgré les difficultés d'une telle campagne, l'empereur avait conduit une offensive contre le Grand Roi à l'été 624 en le poursuivant même jusqu'en Atropatène et Médie : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (305-308). Notons au passage que les conditions climatiques étaient redoutées puisque selon THÉOPHANE, cit., 6114 (307) avant d'avoir atteint Ganzak, l'armée impériale fut soulagée des chaleurs étouffantes puisqu'au « moment du solstice d'été l'air devint frais et rafraîchit l'armée romaine » ce qui « remplit d'espairs » les troupes. Quant aux Turcs, ils firent campagne en Albanie et Atropatène entre le printemps et l'été, mais ne s'avancèrent pas au cœur de la Perse : MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) avec HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 286-290. Le caractère périlleux des opérations militaires dans le désert comme le montre CORIPPE, *Johannide*, VI, 238-325, 753-757 au sujet de l'*expeditio* entreprise par le *magister utriusque militiae* Jean Troglita à la tête de troupes romaines et de *foederati* maures en 547 contre Carcasan « au sud de la ligne des Chotts », pourrait aussi expliquer pourquoi Justin et Justinien furent réticents à envoyer de troupes régulières contre Himyar et la Perse via le Yémen et la Mer Rouge (TABARI, cit., V, 927 ; PROCOPE, cit., I, 20, 9-13) et à privilégier l'emploi des *foederati* noubadés et blemmyes (*MARTYRE DE SAINT ARÉTHAS*, XXIX (DETORAKI, cit., p. 262-263) et du roi éthiopien : JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 56. Pour le « Martyre de Saint Aréthas » : M. DETORAKI, J. BEAUCAMP, A. BINGELLI, *Le Martyre de Saint Aréthas et de ses compagnons*, Paris, 2007.

329 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'Ī, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 86).

la journée » pour « que la chaleur du soleil et le retard à commencer l'action » affaiblissent « le courage et l'esprit de leurs adversaires »<sup>330</sup>. À l'inverse, ils étaient « vraiment gênés par le froid, la pluie et le vent du sud »<sup>331</sup>. Il est possible que ces facteurs aient été pris en compte dans la décision d'une mener *expeditio* décisive en hiver<sup>332</sup>, décision confortée par l'apport des contingents turcs : avec ces derniers, l'empereur pouvait envahir « la Perse [...] à partir du mois de septembre » ce qui constituait « une manœuvre inattendue, car c'était l'hiver »<sup>333</sup>.

Ainsi, l'empereur, fort de l'expérience opérationnelle des *expeditiones* de l'automne-hiver 624 et de l'hiver 625 entre Atropatène, Albanie, Souanie et Per-sarménie, avait décidé de conduire sa campagne décisive jusqu'au cœur de la Perse à l'automne-hiver 627, emmenant avec lui des troupes romaines et des *foederati* caucasiens ayant fait l'expérience victorieuse de ces *expeditiones* d'hiver<sup>334</sup>, auxquels étaient venus s'ajouter d'importants contingents de *foederati* turcs fournis par le Qaghan, disposés à faire campagne pendant l'automne-hiver et assurément considérés comme une aide décisive dans cette « dernière grande guerre de l'Antiquité » comme Nicéphore le résumait : « Aussitôt, [le Qaghan] livra à l'empereur une armée de Turcs sous la conduite d'un général. Avec eux, [l'empereur] envahit la Perse », obligeant le Grand Roi qui avaient eu connaissance « que les Turcs combattaient aux côtés d'Héraclius » à rappeler d'urgence de troupes de l'Ouest<sup>335</sup>.

330 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1.

331 MAURICE, cit., XI, 1.

332 Par exemple, il était recommandé combattre les Sclavènes en hiver « lorsqu'ils ne peuvent pas se cacher facilement parmi les arbres nus, lorsque les traces des fuyitifs peuvent être discernées dans la neige, lorsque leur foyer est misérable à cause de l'exposition, et lorsqu'il est facile de traverser les rivières sur la glace » : MAURICE, cit., XI, 4.

333 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (317).

334 Si les *foederati* abasges et lazes se retirèrent de l'*expeditio* en février-mars 625, les autres contingents caucasiens participèrent aux succès romains. Malgré ce retrait, les *foederati* abasges et lazes furent encore engagés dans l'*expeditio* de 627 : SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., p. 298-299. Pour les succès romains : SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., p. 391-403.

335 NICÉPHORE, XII, l. 35-53.

*Heraclius, les Turcs et les Perses dans la « dernière grande guerre de l'Antiquité »*<sup>336</sup>

Impuissant à mener les Avars dans ses *expeditiones persicae* – malgré les concessions et honneurs accordés au Qaghan<sup>337</sup> – Héraclius se tourna donc vers la puissance impériale transcontinentale eurasiatique qu'incarnaient les Turcs occidentaux. Si ce choix fut guidé par différentes considérations de nature militaire, les facteurs politiques et géopolitiques furent également d'importance, ce qui en dit long sur les capacités diplomatiques de l'Empire et sur la vision stratégique et géostratégique globale dont l'empereur et ses conseillers étaient capables en s'appuyant notamment sur les expériences passées.

La recherche romaine de l'alliance turque s'inscrit dans la continuité de l'innovation diplomatique survenue sous Justin II avec le premier *foedus* entre l'Empire et le Qaghan turc occidental Isthami que Ménandre nomme Sizabul/Silzibul<sup>338</sup>, innovation diplomatique car l'Empire avait noué une alliance offensive et défensive avec les Turcs contre un ennemi commun, les Perses<sup>339</sup>, alliance interprétée par ces derniers comme un moyen destiné à affaiblir ou à détruire leur Empire<sup>340</sup> puisque depuis l'élimination des Huns Hephtalites, les Perses étaient voisins d'une puissance turque aux ambitions impériales<sup>341</sup> contre laquelle ils

336 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit.

337 Le projet impérial de rechercher l'appui militaire des Avars pourrait être conforté par l'ampleur des concessions faites au Qaghan qu'Héraclius avait désigné comme « gardien de son fils » après lui avoir confié « la ville [de Constantinople], ses enfants et le palais » en plus de la « donation de tant de trésors », au point que le Qaghan, à la suite du traité, considérait l'empereur comme son « bienfaiteur et son père » : THÉODORE LE SYNCHELLE, cit., X-XI ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6113. Rappelons que la pratique de l'*adoptio per arma* dont il est ici question – puisque l'empereur paraît avoir adopté le Qaghan comme son fils tout comme Justin II l'avait fait avec le Qaghan Baïan auparavant (MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 6) – visait à renforcer les liens entre alliés et créer loyauté et entraide militaire entre *filius* et *pater*, pratique observable au V<sup>e</sup> siècle entre les empereurs et d'autres chefs fédérés comme nous le verrons.

338 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1-3.

339 La Qaghan pousse l'empereur à entrer en guerre contre les Perses face auxquels les Turcs mènent déjà des combats : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 13, 5.

340 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 10, 1-5, *Frg.* 19 pour les ambassades, la conclusion du *foedus* et les raisons du conflit entre Perses et Turcs. L'alliance romano-turque et ses conséquences diplomatiques et stratégiques : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 40, 119.

341 Sur l'élimination des Huns Hephtalites et le défi qu'ils représentaient pour les Sassanides : J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, « 'The Sasanians' Strategic Dilemma' » dans H. BÖRM, J. WIESEHÖFER

avaient combattu du règne de Chosroès I<sup>er</sup> à celui de Chosroès II en 615 en passant par Vahram VI (590)<sup>342</sup>. Si la pression turque accrue sur les marges orientales de l'Empire sassanide a pu décider Chosroès II à se libérer de la question romaine – par la conquête des provinces romaines les plus riches, en prenant Constantinople et en éliminant l'empereur – pour dégager forces et ressources en vue d'une confrontation avec les Turcs<sup>343</sup>, on peut supposer que l'empereur et ses conseillers étaient capables d'analyser comment les tensions turco-perses pouvaient bénéficier à l'Empire comme le montra Justin II qui fit « tout ce qui était en son pouvoir pour maintenir son amitié avec les Turcs aussi solide que possible » car il pensait qu'avec une attaque concertée « les Romains attaquant d'un côté et les Turcs de l'autre » « la puissance des Perses serait facilement renversée et anéantie »<sup>344</sup>. Ajoutons que malgré les tensions de 576 et la rupture de l'alliance romano-turque<sup>345</sup>, les relations diplomatiques entre Romains et Turcs ne furent jamais totalement rompues<sup>346</sup>.

La centralité du conflit turco-perses et la place fondamentale des Turcs comme ennemi majeur de l'Empire sassanide dans l'idéologie impériale sassanide et dans la cosmologie iranienne<sup>347</sup> pourraient ne pas avoir été étrangères aux élites romaines ainsi que le suggère le récit que fait Théophylacte Simocatta des origines

---

(éd.), *Commutatio et contentio : Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian and Early Islamic Near East—In Memory of Zeev Rubin*, Düsseldorf, 2010, p. 37-70, 57-61. Sur les relations entre Turcs et Empire perse et leurs conséquences stratégiques pour ce dernier : R. PAYNE, « The reinvention of Iran : The Sasanian Empire and the Huns » dans M. MAAS (éd.), *The Cambridge companion to the age of Attila*, Cambridge, 2014, p. 282-299 ; K. REZAKHANI, « The End of Sasanian Rule : The Center and Periphery of Ērānšahr in the Seventh Century » dans T. DARYAEE, M. COMPARETI (éd.), *Studi sulla Persia sassanide e suoi rapporti con le civiltà attigue*, Bologne, 2019, p. 229-231 ; S. STARK, *Die Alttürkenzeit in Mittel- und Zentralasien : Archäologische und historische Studien*, Wiesbaden, 2008, p. 287-314.

342 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 118-119.

343 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 118-120.

344 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 13, 5.

345 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 19, 1-2 entre le Qaghan Turxanthus et Tibère II.

346 MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 25, 2 sous Tibère II vers 579 ; THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VII, 7, 7-12 sous Maurice vers 595. Sur ce passage : E. DE LA VAISSIÈRE, « Maurice et le qaghan : à propos de la digression de Théophylacte Simocatta sur les Turcs », *REB*, 68, (2010), pp. 219-224.

347 R. PAYNE, « Cosmology and the Expansion of Iranian Empire, 502-628 CE », *Past and Present*, (2013), pp. 1-31.

de la guerre civile entre Chosroès II et Vahram VI<sup>348</sup>. En effet, il est à plusieurs reprises question de la soumission militaire et tributaire des Turcs aux Grands Rois, soumission qui s'intègre étroitement à l'apocalypse zoroastrienne, à la cosmologie et à l'idéologie politique iranienne<sup>349</sup>. Or les Romains qui pourraient s'être familiarisés avec ces traditions et croyances lorsqu'ils apportèrent, sous Maurice, leur appui à Chosroès II contre Vahram VI<sup>350</sup>, pouvaient en conserver la connaissance du temps d'Héraclius sous le règne duquel Théophylacte Simocatta composa ses « Histoires »<sup>351</sup>. En plus d'informations relatives au conflit de 614-615 dans la région de l'Oxus entre Turcs et Perses<sup>352</sup> – signe d'un regain de tensions entre les deux puissances – auxquelles les Romains auraient eu accès à l'occasion de l'ambassade romaine envoyée auprès de Chosroès II en 615 afin d'obtenir la paix<sup>353</sup>, dans l'entourage d'Héraclius et de ses conseillers, l'idée que le Qaghan turc et le Grand Roi étaient des ennemis politiques a pu être largement répandue. En effet, la lettre que le Šat' turc envoya au Grand Roi alors que les Turcs campaient sur l'Araxe après avoir dévasté l'Albanie au printemps-été 626 annonçait à celui-ci l'alliance entre Turcs et Romains et faisait du Qaghan « le roi du Nord », le « roi de toute la terre », le « roi des rois » et ramenait Chosroès au rang de roi client du Qaghan avec le titre de « seigneur de l'Asorestan »<sup>354</sup>. Le contenu de cette lettre paraît d'autant plus crédible – et par là les titres et prétentions du Qaghan<sup>355</sup> –

348 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., IV, 1-10.

349 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 6, 6-15 ; IV, 4, 16-17 ; IV, 5, 9 ; IV, 18, 6-13. Pour cette soumission des Turcs aux Grands Rois et son expression idéologique dans la tradition de l'apocalypse zoroastrienne et dans la cosmologie iranienne : PAYNE, « Cosmology », cit., p. 22-26.

350 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., IV, 12-16 ; V, 1-15.

351 THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., III, 18, 6 fait référence à une source orale en la personne d'un Perse – vraisemblablement un ambassadeur sous Héraclius – qui l'informa des origines de Vahram. On peut, pareillement, supposer que Théophylacte s'informa sur d'autres aspects de l'Empire du Grand Roi. Pour l'œuvre de Théophylacte Simocatta et son contexte : M. WHITBY, *The Emperor Maurice and his historian : Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan warfare*, Oxford, 1988 ; Ph. BOOTH, « The Ghost of Maurice at the court of Heraclius », *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 112, 3, (2019), pp. 781-826.

352 THOMSON ET ALII, cit., p. 183-189 ; HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 117-118.

353 *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 706-710 ; PSEUDO-SEBĒOS, cit., XXXVIII (THOMSON ET ALII, cit., p. 78-80) et p. 210-213 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6109.

354 MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88).

355 Selon HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 120-123 il est probable que l'auteur de « l'Histoire de 682 » utilisée par Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, puisait dans les archives du catholicos-

que la cérémonie mêlant politique, diplomatie et symbolique, tenue à Tiflis (été 627), lors de la rencontre de l'empereur et du Qaghan turc Ziebel/Sipi<sup>356</sup> montrait que les prétentions impériales du Qaghan étaient connues des Romains au moins depuis Justin II<sup>357</sup>. Mais d'autres concessions faites au Qaghan et à ses troupes confortent l'idée que l'empereur voyait dans les Turcs un atout stratégique décisif pour les forces impériales mêlant troupes romaines et *foederati* caucasiens rassemblés en Ibérie pour marcher contre le Grand Roi au cœur de la Perse pour l'*expeditio* décisive<sup>358</sup>.

En premier lieu, les sources rapportent la promesse d'un mariage entre Eudocie, la fille de l'empereur et le Qaghan. Selon Nicéphore, « pour assurer son concours afin que le roi des Turcs ne s'éclipse par la ruse, [l'empereur] lui montra l'image de sa fille et la lui promit comme femme. Quand il la vit, il s'en éprit et promit sur sa propre tête de l'aider, et lui offrit en soutien la masse énorme de ses troupes »<sup>359</sup>. Comme le notent J. Howard-Johnston et C. Zuckerman, le mariage

---

sat : l'auteur anonyme aurait été un proche du catholicos Viroy qui avait participé aux négociations avec les Turcs lors de la deuxième invasion de l'Albanie (628-629). Voir aussi HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 289.

356 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316) ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59.

357 Cela ne pouvait échapper aux Romains depuis que l'Empire avait noué des contacts diplomatiques avec le Qaghanat turc. Ainsi, Ménandre, en rapportant l'ambassade de Zemarchos, montre que le Qaghan Silzibil se faisait nommer « chef de nombreux peuples » (ὁ *tosoutôn ethnôn hégemôn*) (*Frg.* 10, 3). Sur ce passage : S. KOLDITZ, « Barbarian Emperors ? Aspects of the Byzantine Perception of the qaghan (*chaganos*) in the Earlier Middle Ages » dans Ch. SCHOLL, T. R. GEBHARDT, J. CLAUSS (éd.), *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages*, Francfort, 2017, p. 41-76, 48-54. Plus révélateur est le « salut » d'une lettre envoyée par le Qaghan turc à l'empereur Maurice et dont THÉOPHYLACTE SIMOCATTA, cit., VII, 7, 7 garde la trace : « le Qaghan, le grand seigneur des sept races et le maître des sept régions du monde ». Les titres dont se pare le Qaghan peuvent être rapprochés des titres que MOVSÈS DASXURANC'1, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) prête au Qaghan. KOLDITZ, cit., p. 58-61 montre les prétentions impériales du Qaghan turc au sein d'une monarchie sacralisée.

358 SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

359 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII. Selon Nicéphore (l. 38-4), le Qaghan serait tombé littéralement amoureux à la vue du portrait de l'*Augusta*. Nicéphore indique, au chapitre XVIII, l. 4-8 que l'empereur ordonna, à l'annonce de la mort du Qaghan, le retour de sa fille. Voir aussi la *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59. La promesse de mariage se retrouve également chez Théophile d'Édesse que la *CHRONIQUE DE 1234* (HOYLAND, cit., p. 74) et MICHEL LE SYRIEN, *Chron.* XI, 3 (CHABOT, cit., p. 409) utilisent dans des passages brefs mais similaires qui présentent le mariage en retour de l'alliance militaire et de l'envoi des

entre Eudocie et le Qaghan représentait « la première union dynastique [...] exogame » dans l'histoire de l'Empire puisque jamais avant Héraclius un empereur n'avait « donné la main de sa fille à un potentat étranger ni recherché une princesse étrangère en mariage pour lui-même ou pour son fils »<sup>360</sup> qui plus est un souverain étranger extérieur à l'Empire<sup>361</sup>. Ainsi, l'empereur, en construisant ses propres connexions, cherchait à briser les liens issus des alliances matrimoniales entre le Grand Roi et le Qaghan<sup>362</sup>. Surtout, selon Nicéphore, l'empereur aurait redouté une trahison du Qaghan<sup>363</sup> – comme il l'avait expérimenté avec le Qaghan avar à Héraclée<sup>364</sup> – puisque les « peuples scythes » étaient « traîtres, vils, infidèles », plein de mépris pour les serments et prêts à violer tous les accords<sup>365</sup>. Il lui fallait fermement sceller le *foedus* avec le Qaghan turc car la trahison de celui-ci et la défection de ses troupes pouvaient menacer les plans de campagne romains en Perse : l'offre de mariage devait garantir le respect de l'alliance militaire (*symmachia*) et la fourniture de troupes contre les ennemis (*kai boêtheis*

---

contingents demandés : ainsi, Michel le Syrien indique qu'Héraclius « manda à Qaghan roi des Khazars de lui envoyer 40000 hommes de troupes pour aller faire la guerre contre Chosroès, roi des Perses. Qaghan répondit : « Voici que l'armée part par les Portes Caspiennes et te rencontrera où tu voudras ». En échange, Héraclius promet de donner sa fille, Eudocie, pour femme à Qaghan ». Pour l'auteur de la *CHRONIQUE DE 1234*, le texte dit ceci : « Héraclius envoya dire au roi des Khazars de lui envoyer 40 000 soldats depuis la mer Caspienne pour l'aider. Le Qaghan lui fit dire : « Je vous les envoie et ils vous rencontreront à l'endroit que vous voudrez. » Héraclius promet de donner sa fille, Eudoxie, comme épouse au Qaghan ».

360 C. ZUCKERMAN, « La petite Augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Héraclius », *Revue numismatique*, 150, (1995), pp. 113-126, 121.

361 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 301-302. Citons l'union exceptionnelle entre Eudocie, la fille de l'empereur Valentinien III et Hunéric, fils du roi vandale Genséric à la suite du *foedus* de 442 : FL. MEROBAUDES, *Pan.* II, 27-29. Pour Flavius Merobaudes : A. BRUZONNE, *F. Merobaudes, Panegerico in versi: introduzione e commento*, Rome, 1999.

362 L'évocation des liens matrimoniaux entre les familles des souverains turcs et perses se trouve dans la lettre que le Grand Roi adressa au Šat' en réponse à son ultimatum (été 626) : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88). Politiquement, le Qaghan entrait dans la famille impériale et il pouvait espérer jouer un rôle dans la succession impériale, voire placer un de ses fils sur le trône impérial. Cette stratégie doit être associée au mariage que la Qaghan prévoyait avec une princesse chinoise, ce qui aurait permis à la puissance turque transcontinentale d'étendre son influence à l'Est et à l'Ouest : ZUCKERMAN, « petite Augusta », cit., p. 122.

363 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

364 NICÉPHORE, cit., X ; *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 712-713. Voir KÆGI, cit., p. 118-121.

365 MAURICE, cit., XI, 2 notamment les Avars.

*kata tôn echthrôn*) de l'empereur<sup>366</sup>.

À la promesse de mariage et aux présents (*dôra*) considérables remis au Qaghan et à ses chefs (vaisselles d'or et d'argent, bijoux) lors de la rencontre devant Tiflis<sup>367</sup>, d'autres honneurs politique et symbolique, démontrent l'importance stratégique de l'alliance. En effet, le Qaghan turc adopté par l'empereur comme son fils<sup>368</sup>, selon une pratique courante au V<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>369</sup> afin de lier les chefs et princes étrangers à la personne impériale pour s'assurer de leur loyauté<sup>370</sup>, ce qui impliquait pour l'empereur d'être généreux, comme un père se doit de l'être envers son fils<sup>371</sup> et pour le fils d'accomplir les obligations d'entraide militaire

366 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII.

367 Remise de présents lors de la rencontre des deux souverains : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85) ; NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLÉ*, 58-59. Remise de présents lors des ambassades : NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLÉ*, 58-59. Promesses de présents lors de l'ambassade d'André : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 87).

368 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 23-27, 35-36 où le Qaghan est appelé par l'empereur (l. 22-23) son fils (*kai ama teknon idion apokalôn*) (l. 23-25). Mais il pourrait s'agir d'une confusion de Nicéphore avec sa source puisque Théophane ne mentionne pas cette adoption mais fait référence au jeune fils du Qaghan : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316). Selon HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 301, Nicéphore pourrait avoir transformé la présence du fils du Qaghan en adoption.

369 Entre l'empereur et les chefs fédérés comme lorsque Zénon fit de Théodoric l'Amale son *filiius* : JORDANÈS, *Get.*, 289 ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 18, 4 ; *Frg.* 20. Mais ce type de relations s'établissait aussi entre généraux et chefs fédérés à l'image du patrice Aetius qui fit d'un jeune prince franc son fils adoptif, adoption doublée d'un *foedus*, le prince devenant un « ami et allié » (*epi philia te kai homaichmia*) : PRISCUS, *Frg.* 20, 3.

370 Par exemple, dans le cas de Théodoric l'Amale, chef fédéré (*sociatus foedere*) et « ami » (*amicus/philos*) de l'empereur, consul, patrice et *magister utriusque militiae praesentalis* et adopté, par Zénon, comme son « fils d'armes » (*in arma eum filium adoptavit*) : JORDANÈS, *Get.*, 289 ; MALCHUS, *Frg.* 15 ; *Frg.* 18, 4 ; *Frg.* 20 ; MARCELLINUS COMES, *Chron. ad ann.* 483. Pour cette œuvre : B. CROKE, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus*, Sidney, 1995. Théodoric, comme chef fédéré : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume II (traité) et volume III (chefs fédérés). On peut citer l'*adoptio* du roi Athalaric par Justin I<sup>er</sup> : CASSIODORE, *Variae*, VIII, 1, 1-5. Pour Cassiodore : Th. MOMMSEN, *Cassiodorus, Chronica*, MGH AA, XI, Berlin, 1894 ; G. CECONI, A. GIARDINA, I. TANTILLO, *Cassiodoro, Varie*, volume 1 : Introduzione generale, Libri I e II, Rome, 2017 et *Cassiodoro, Varie*, volume 2 : Libri III, IV e V, Rome, 2014.

371 Comme d'ailleurs devait le faire Héraclius envers le Qaghan, ce que suggère aussi un passage de Ménandre sous Justin II : le Qaghan avar, lié à l'Empire par un traité, prétendait être fils (*ta tou paidos*) de l'empereur et son ami (*philos*) ce qui légitimait, à ses yeux, ses prétentions territoriales sur Sirmium ainsi que des subsides annuels (*chrêmata*) ; l'empereur, tel un père (*pater*) envers son fils (*paidos*), devait témoigner de son amour paternel

du *filius* envers le *pater*<sup>372</sup>. Mais la cérémonie lors de la rencontre des deux souverains à Tiflis révèle aussi deux faits en apparence contradictoire dont il faut considérer la portée<sup>373</sup>.

Selon Nicéphore et Théophane, lorsque l'empereur et le Qaghan (*ton Tourkôn kyrios*) Ziebel/Sipi, se rencontrèrent, les troupes turques (*plêthei Tourkôn pollô*), leurs chefs (*archontes*) et le Qaghan lui-même descendirent de cheval et se prosternèrent devant l'empereur (*tô Basilei kata gês proskynei, kai prosekynêsen auton*) lors d'une proskynèse collective<sup>374</sup>, lui témoignant ainsi d'un profond respect<sup>375</sup>. Mais Nicéphore ajoute que l'empereur, après avoir invité le Qaghan « à remonter en selle », enleva sa couronne (*stephanos*) et la déposa sur la tête du chef turc<sup>376</sup>, ce dont Théophane ne parle pas, en insistant surtout sur l'obéissance dont le Qaghan et ses troupes témoignèrent envers l'empereur<sup>377</sup>. Movsēs Dasxuranc'i offre, quant à lui, une description de la rencontre suggérant une certaine égalité entre les deux souverains<sup>378</sup>, s'éloignant ainsi de l'impression de supé-

---

(*storgê*). Réponse impériale : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 12, 6. Sur cette conception idéologique des rapports entre souverains fondés sur l'existence d'une parenté fictive : W. BRANDES, « Die "Familie der Könige" im Mittelalter. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Kritik eines vermeintlichen Erkenntnismodells », *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History* 21, (2013), pp. 262–284.

372 Les obligations du *filius* envers son *pater* en vertu de l'*adoptio per arma* : CASSIODORE, cit., IV, 1-4.

373 Les sources utilisées par Théophane et Nicéphore sont issues de rapports officiels pour le premier et de la seconde continuation de la *Chronica* de Jean d'Antioche : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses*, cit., p. 276-277.

374 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (315-316). La *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59 rapporte que « le roi des Turcs avec tout son peuple offrit à Héraclius les honneurs les plus grands : lui et tout son peuple descendirent de cheval ... ».

375 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII : ... *o de Basileus to hyperballon tês timês ...* ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) : ... *ton basilea etimôn timên tèn para ethnêsîn xenên ...* ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59 : « le roi des Turcs avec tout son peuple offrit à Héraclius les honneurs les plus grands [...] ils l'adorèrent ».

376 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII ; *CHRONIQUE SUR LES SIÈGES DE CONSTANTINOPLE*, 59.

377 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316) s'il n'évoque ni le couronnement, ni le banquet – mais rapporte la présence du fils de Ziebel et des discussions avec l'empereur (l. 14-17) – insiste sur la soumission du Qaghan et des Turcs (l. 5-11, 8-10) : ... *Ziebêl touton idôn kai prodramiôn kataspatetai autou ton trachelon, kai prosekynesên auton ...*

378 MOVSEŒS DASKURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85) : « ... les eaux montèrent et se déversèrent sur le pays de Géorgie, encerclèrent et assiégèrent la ville de Tiflis, riche, prospère, célèbre et grande, commerçante. Le grand empereur, ayant entendu cela et mobilisant toutes ses forces, rejoignit son allié, et échangeant des cadeaux royaux et des présents, ils se réjouirent grandement de se revoir [...] la rencontre des deux grands rois dans la ville

riorité impériale du récit de Théophane. De plus, ce même Movsēs Dasxuranc'i donne, en citant le contenu d'une lettre adressée par le Qaghan au Roi des Rois, l'image du Qaghan comme d'un souverain aux prétentions impériales<sup>379</sup>.

Peut-on concilier ces contradictions ? Plusieurs données doivent être prises en compte. Tout d'abord, comme l'a montré S. Kolditz, il n'est pas douteux que le Qaghan turc ait eu des prétentions impériales<sup>380</sup>. De plus, il est probable que la rencontre de Tiflis avait été préparée et que politiquement et symboliquement, le protocole décrit par Théophane et Nicéphore devait refléter cette préparation. Enfin, comme l'indique le projet de mariage, l'empereur, étant donné le contexte stratégique et militaire, n'avait pas d'autre choix<sup>381</sup> que d'accorder des honneurs considérables au chef turc devenu son *foederatus*.

Toutefois et bien que conscient des prétentions impériales du Qaghan, l'empereur refusa de renoncer à son pouvoir œcuménique<sup>382</sup> et imposa au Qaghan et à ses troupes une proskynèse collective dont Théophane, Nicéphore et l'auteur de la « Chronique sur les sièges de Constantinople » gardent mémoire<sup>383</sup>. En même

---

avant le début du siège ».

379 MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 12 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 88) : dans cette lettre adressée au Grand Roi perse, le Qaghan – Qaghan Yabghu T'ong ou plus probablement Ziebel/Sipi – est décrit comme « roi du Nord », « seigneur du monde entier », « Roi des Rois », « Roi » du Roi des Rois.

380 KOLDITZ, cit., p. 48-49, 56, 58-59, 60-61 montre les prétentions impériales du Qaghan turc dans la logique d'une monarchie sacralisée.

381 DE LA VAISSIÈRE, « Ziebel », cit., p. 748.

382 Le fait que THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316), l. 3-4 (*Chazareis*) identifie, anachroniquement, les Turcs d'Héraclius avec des Khazars n'est pas anodin et peut expliquer pourquoi Théophane a décidé d'éliminer de son texte le couronnement du Qaghan par l'empereur : dans la mesure où, dans les représentations byzantines, les Khazars ne prétendaient pas à un pouvoir impérial – à la différence du Qaghanat turc – il aurait été incohérent de conserver le passage suggérant une pleine égalité entre l'empereur et le Qaghan Ziebel. Sur les représentations du chef khazar dans les sources byzantines : KOLDITZ, cit., p. 60-64, 65-67. En même temps, Théophane pourrait ne pas avoir parfaitement retravaillé sa source en oubliant d'éliminer un geste qui impliquait une égalité des deux souverains puisqu'il fait référence à l'embrassade que se donnèrent les deux monarques : HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 301.

383 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 301 pour la différence entre les versions de Théophane et celle de Nicéphore qui ne sont pas si éloignées : chez Théophane, à l'arrivée des Turcs, le Qaghan embrasse l'empereur, lui fait obéissance et son armée, accompagnée des autres chefs turcs, font la proskynèse, tandis que le Qaghan, en présence de son fils, s'entretient avec l'empereur ; chez Nicéphore, le Qaghan descend de cheval et, comme ses hommes, fait le proskynèse, avant d'être autorisé à remonter à cheval par l'empereur, puis

temps, pour des raisons militaires, diplomatiques et stratégiques immédiates, l'empereur ne pouvait ignorer la nature impériale du pouvoir du Qaghan et pour éviter une déconvenue similaire à celle qu'il avait connue avec le Qaghan avar<sup>384</sup>, l'empereur adopta la solution de compromis qui consistait à élever le Qaghan au même rang que lui en le couronnant de son diadème (*stephanos*) et à l'invitant à remonter en selle<sup>385</sup>, admettant ainsi les prétentions impériales de son allié. La reconnaissance de cette quasi-parité entre l'empereur et le Qaghan s'adressait aussi aux Perses et à leurs alliés ibères assiégés dans Tiflis : l'alliance romano-turque était plus solide que jamais<sup>386</sup>.

Le cérémonial et le protocole de Tiflis intègrent une « commune culture diplomatique eurasiennne » (J. Skaff) impliquant échange de présents inestimables, ritualisation de la subordination politique, royauté fictive et mariage politique<sup>387</sup>. Ainsi, la proskynèse collective imposée aux Turcs et au Qaghan exprimait la subordination politique de ces derniers envers l'empereur<sup>388</sup> qui en couronnant le Qaghan, reconnaissait la position politique du chef turc ainsi que sa souveraineté, tout en affirmant la suzeraineté de l'empereur qui investissait de son pouvoir, par les symboles (*symbola*) afférents, le chef étranger devenu son *foederatus*<sup>389</sup>, comme le montrent le cas des rois lazès<sup>390</sup>, des chefs maures<sup>391</sup>, du phylarque

---

intervient le couronnement. Si l'idée de soumission est présente chez Nicéphore, le couronnement renvoie à la reconnaissance d'une certaine parité effacée chez Théophane.

384 Crainte de l'empereur : NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 31-35.

385 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII. Mais cette version ne correspond pas à ce que décrit THÉOPHANE, cit., 6117 (316). Autre version : MOVSÈS DASXURANC'I, cit., II, 11 (DOWSETT, cit., p. 85). Les peuples « scythes » avaient l'habitude de négocier à cheval : PRISCUS, *Frg. 2*.

386 HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 300-302.

387 WITTHOW, « Byzantium's Eurasian policy », cit., p. 285-286 ; J. K. SKAFF, « Ideological interweaving in Eastern Eurasia : simultaneous kingship and dynastic competition, 580-755 » dans N. DI COSMO, M. MAAS (dir.), *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity : Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*, Cambridge, 2018, p. 386-399.

388 Proskynèses : AMMIEN MARCELLIN, cit., XXIII, 3, 8 (« roitelets saracènes » envers Julien) ; THÉMISTIOS, *Or. XVI*, 210B-C (chefs goths envers Théodose) ; CLAUDIEN, *IV. Cons. Hon.* 445-449 et *I. Cons. Stil.* I, 210-214 (chefs francs et alamans envers Stilicon). Pour Thémistios : R. MAISANO, *Discorsi di Temistio*, Turin, 1995.

389 Ces investitures : SARTOR, *Recherches*, cit., volume III.

390 Tzath I<sup>er</sup> couronné par Justin : JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVII, 9 ; THÉOPHANE, cit., 6015 ; *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 614-615. Tzath II couronné par Justinien : AGATHIAS, cit., III, 15, 2-4.

391 Les chefs maures fédérés dans l'Afrique byzantine : PROCOPE, cit., III, 25, 3-8 ; JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVIII, 145.

jafnide al-Mundhir sous Tibère II<sup>392</sup> ou encore de Théodoric l'Amale, chef fédéré goth envoyé « défendre l'Italie pour » l'empereur et honoré des *ornamenta palatii*<sup>393</sup>. Mais en couronnant le Qaghan de son propre diadème (*stephanos*)<sup>394</sup>, l'empereur marquait son intention de faire du chef turc son égal, ce qui s'explique par le contexte politique, géopolitique et stratégique des opérations de 624-627 : ce faisant, l'empereur intégrait – au moins symboliquement – dans ses rapports avec le Qaghan les prétentions impériales du souverain turc et lui proposait d'intégrer la famille impériale en recevant comme épouse Eudocie, « la petite Augusta ». Mais cette parité entre les deux souverains aux prétentions impériales était – du point de vue romain – fictive comme l'éclaire le cas des rois lazès.

Selon Jean Malalas et Agathias, les rois lazès recevaient leur « pouvoir ancestral et les insignes afférents » des mains de « l'empereur des Romains », en particulier « la couronne (*stephanos*) des Romains », « une couronne d'or ornée de pierres précieuses » ainsi qu'une « tunique dorée descendant jusqu'aux pieds, des chaussures écarlates, une ceinture également dorée et ornée de pierres précieuses » et une « chlamyde de soie blanche » puisqu'il leur était interdit de porter la « chlamyde pourpre »<sup>395</sup>. Si la couronne était « celle des Romains », le roi laze, pour marquer son infériorité par rapport à l'empereur, ne pas pouvait se vêtir de la « chlamyde pourpre ». Tout en étant un serviteur de l'empereur avec un rang royal, le roi laze était honoré d'*insignia* et bénéficiait d'une position privilégiée dans le système hiérarchique impérial d'autant qu'il était, semble-t-il, officiellement désigné comme *basileus*<sup>396</sup>.

Si les privilèges et honneurs reconnus au roi laze tenaient à l'importance stratégique et militaire de sa *gens foederata* qui en protégeant la « terre de Colchide » préservait l'Empire des incursions hunniques venues du Caucase et empêchait

392 Le Jafnide al-Mundhir aurait reçu de l'empereur une couronne royale (*tāgā d'malkūthā*) : JEAN D'ÉPHÈSE, cit., IV, 42. Le Jafnide Aréthas/al-Hārith, placé par Justinien « à la tête du plus grand nombre de clans possibles » et investi de « la dignité de roi (*Basileus*) » dut recevoir les insignes « royaux » : PROCOPE, cit., I, 17, 45-46.

393 ANONYMUS VALESIANUS. *PARS POSTERIOR*, XI, 57 et XII, 64. Pour cette source : I. KÖNIG, *Aus der Ziet Theodorichs des Grossen* : Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle, Darmstadt, 1997.

394 NICÉPHORE, cit., XII, l. 24-28.

395 PROCOPE, cit., II, 15, 1-2 ; JEAN MALALAS, cit., XVII, 9 ; AGATHIAS, cit., III, 15, 2. Voir E. NECHAEVA, *Embassies – Negotiations – Gifts. Systems of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity*, Stuttgart, 2014, p. 208-220.

396 NECHAEVA, cit., p. 208-219, 220. Le roi laze comme *basileus* : MÉNANDRE, *Frg.* 6, 1.

les Perses de « naviguer dans le Pont-Euxin pour aller prospecter jusqu'au cœur de l'Empire romain »<sup>397</sup>, l'infériorité du roi était néanmoins rappelée par le fait qu'il ne pouvait porter la « chlamyde pourpre » sans pour autant se voir interdit la « couronne romaine », privilège révélant l'importance du roi laze aux yeux de l'empereur. D'une certaine manière le cas du Qaghan était proche puisque ce dernier se voyait reconnaître des honneurs exceptionnels – il avait reçu « la couronne (*stephanos*) des Romains » – à la mesure de l'importance stratégique et militaire que représentaient son appui et la fourniture de contingents de *foederati* turcs.

Ce parallèle entre l'investiture des souverains lazes et la cérémonie de Tiflis suggère que tout avait été pensé pour ménager les prétentions de deux souverains sans risquer de froisser le Qaghan dont l'aide militaire était décisive, ni sans porter atteinte à la dignité impériale puisque l'empereur conservait sa supériorité et la dimension universelle de son pouvoir en portant exclusivement la pourpre tandis que le Qaghan était couronné temporairement du seul diadème impérial – et non investi de la pourpre – et soumis à la proskynèse à l'image d'autres chefs étrangers clients de l'empereur : parité et soumission étaient symboliques et fictives. Au-delà de cette cérémonie complexe et délicatement préparée, l'ensemble des faveurs faites au Qaghan, à ses chefs et aux combattants turcs montre que l'empereur considérait leur alliance (*symmachia*) comme indispensable et décisive pour l'ultime *expeditio persica*.

## Conclusion

Au terme de cette étude, nous espérons avoir montré que les tentatives d'Héraclius pour engager les « peuples scythes » dans les guerres contre les Perses, se soldèrent par un succès total puisque les Turcs contribuèrent manière décisive à la victoire de 627-628, victoire qui permit de passer sous silence l'échec romain à mobiliser les Avars pour la « cause du Nom romain » (*causa Romani nominis*)<sup>398</sup>.

Si les Avars ne purent jamais être engagés par l'Empire, le fait que l'empereur et les gouvernants romains aient tenté de se tourner vers ces « peuples scythes »

<sup>397</sup> PROCOPE, cit., II, 15, 2-5 et II, 28, 22-24 et II, 29, 1-2 ; AGATHIAS, cit., II, 18, 6-8. Voir aussi JORDANÈS, *Get. cit.*, 49-50. Analyse : G. SARTOR, « Les Lazes, des fédérés de l'Empire dans l'œuvre de Procope » dans G. GREATREX, S. JANNIARD (éd.), *Le monde de Procope/The world of Procopius*, Paris, 2018, p. 263-282.

<sup>398</sup> HYDACE, cit., 55 (417) au sujet de *Vallia rex Gothorum*.



Fig. 10 Relief de Taq-e Bostan (province de Kermanshah en Iran) de l'époque de l'Empire sassanide : l'une des plus anciennes représentations d'un cataphracte. Le personnage en haut au milieu est censé être Khosro II. Le personnage à droite est Ahura Mazda et à gauche est la déesse perse Anahita. Le cataphracte n'est pas connu, bien que diverses théories existent sur son identité, mais il est certainement de la noblesse royale.

Photo Zereschk, licensed in public domain to Wikimedia Commons.

démontre qu'ils avaient une parfaite connaissance et expérience de « l'art de la guerre scythe » pour juger des atouts de leur alliance contre les Perses. Toutefois, le Qaghan avar n'avait pas les intérêts du Qaghan turc pour s'engager dans des *expeditiones* au cœur du Caucase et en Perse<sup>399</sup>.

À l'inverse, les Turcs, mobilisés comme *gens foederata*, contribuèrent significativement à la victoire impériale de 627 et à la restauration de l'ordre impérial romano-chrétien en Orient en 628, au point d'être, semble-t-il, un acteur des négociations de paix avec lequel le Grand Roi dut également traiter<sup>400</sup>, démontrant de la sorte que les Turcs occidentaux, puissance transcontinentale à vocation impériale, constituaient le troisième acteur majeur de l'espace eurasiatique avec les Empires romain et perse.

Même si le Qaghan et les Turcs intervenaient – aussi – dans les affaires romano-perses au nom de leurs intérêts propres, les Romains surent tirer avantage des réalités diplomatiques et stratégiques régionales pour obtenir l'alliance de cette *gens* contre les Perses, témoignant à la fois de leurs connaissances des enjeux diplomatiques et géostratégiques régionaux, des relations perso-turques et de leurs problématiques et des avantages d'ordre militaire, tactique et stratégique que les Turcs du Qaghan pouvaient fournir à l'Empire tenu de combattre sur plusieurs fronts simultanées avec des moyens humains et financiers réduits pour conduire ses *expeditiones*.

Dans un tel contexte, Héraclius – comme ses prédécesseurs – eut recours aux *foedera* pour mobiliser des ressources non romaines au service de la cause impériale, ces traités devenant des instruments de régulations des relations internationales, mais aussi de remarquables et pragmatiques outils pour lever, contractuellement, des troupes, sans oublier leur fonction de canal de redistribution des ressources, honneurs et faveurs impériales à destination des troupes et de leurs

---

399 Les Avars et leurs ambitions impériales dans les Balkans et en Europe orientale : POHL, cit. ; HURBANIČ, *Avar Siege*, cit. ; G. KARDARAS, *Byzantium and the Avars, 6th-9th Century Ad: Political, Diplomatic and Cultural Relations*, Leiden, 2018.

400 THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (326) une référence aux ambitions de Kavadh Shirôyé désireux de négocier avec l'empereur et avec les Turcs. Du poids militaire et du rôle stratégique des Turcs dans la victoire finale, la *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 735-736 rend compte en reproduisant la lettre du Roi des Rois Kavadh Shirôyé à l'empereur en 628 pour conclure la paix avec les Romains ainsi qu'avec les peuples et princes voisins (*kai tòn loipôn ethnôn kai eterôn basiliskôn*) de son Empire, Turcs, *Sarakênoi* et *gentes* caucasiennes. Voir KÆGI, cit., p. 178 et HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Last Great War*, cit., p. 322-323.

chefs, en l'occurrence ici les contingents turcs, leurs chefs et le Qaghan, de la même manière que l'empereur avait usé des *foedera* envers les *gentes* caucasiennes (Abasges, Ibères, Lazes, Albaniens, Arméniens, Persarméniens) et saraçènes. Ce faisant, ces *foedera*, dans leur conclusion, dans leur contenu et dans leur exécution, étaient tributaires de rapports de force avec lesquels Héraclius dut compter : les présents délivrés, les immenses honneurs reconnus au Qaghan turc – comme l'empereur l'envisageait avec son homologue avar – témoignent de l'importance militaire, tactique, stratégique et diplomatique des Turcs et révèlent la dépendance dans laquelle se trouvait l'empereur envers ces derniers – tout comme il l'avait été dans une mesure moindre avec les *gentes* caucasiennes – pour la réussite de ses *expeditiones*.

Si nos principales sources romaines – George de Pisidie, Théophane – donnent l'impression d'un rôle secondaire pour les contingents étrangers – qu'il s'agisse des *foederati* caucasiens comme des *foederati* turcs – en raison de choix historiographiques (Théophane) ou des aléas de la transmission textuelle (George de Pisidie)<sup>401</sup>, la combinaison de ces dernières avec les documentations arménienne, syriaque, géorgienne (Pseudo-Sebēos, Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, Théophile d'Édesse, « Chronique du Kartli », « Conversion du Kartli ») et avec des sources plus tardives (Nicéphore, « Chronique sur les sièges de Constantinople ») a permis de démontrer le rôle décisif des Turcs dans la victoire finale de l'Empire – un rôle décisif mais non exclusif de celui des contingents fournis par les *gentes* caucasiennes même si les Turcs apportèrent un appui qui renversa définitivement le rapport de force en faveur des Romains en donnant à ces derniers une puissance de frappe stratégique majeure.

Héraclius – comme ces prédécesseurs mais avec une urgence plus absolue encore<sup>402</sup> – avait compris l'impérieuse nécessité de recourir aux ressources des

401 A. SIROTENKO, « Constructing Memory : The Chronicle of Theophanes on the Reign of Heraclius » dans Ch. MESSIS, M. MULLET, I. NILSSON, (dir.), *Telling stories in Byzantium : Narratological Approaches and Byzantine Narration*, Uppsala, 2018, p. 223-242 ; A. SIROTENKO, *Erinnern an Herakleios : zur Darstellung des Kaisers Herakleios in mittelalterlichen Quellen*, Dissertation, Munich, 2020 ; SARTOR, « fédérés 1<sup>ère</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 2<sup>e</sup> partie », cit., ; SARTOR, « fédérés 3<sup>e</sup> partie », à paraître.

402 Mais replacé dans le long terme, le recours aux *gentes foederatae* apparaît comme un moyen indispensable pour l'Empire confronté à des difficultés multiples et synchrones qu'il s'agisse des empereurs occidentaux du V<sup>e</sup> siècle ou encore de Justinien dans ses guerres de reconquête sans parler du rôle majeur des *foederati* maures des chefs alliés du généralissime Jean Troglita en Afrique dans les années 540-550.



« tribuns courageux » (*fortesque tribuni*), participaient aux « armes » (*arma*) de l'Empire<sup>407</sup>. Aussi n'est-ce pas un hasard de voir associés dans la paix de 628, les peuples et princes voisins (*kai tōn loipōn ethnōn kai eterōn basiliskōn*) des deux Empires, à savoir *gentes* saracènes, *gentes* caucasiennes et l'autre *gens* victorieuse de la « Dernière Grande Guerre de l'Antiquité » : les Turcs<sup>408</sup>.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- ABGARYAN, Gevorg, V., *Sebēos, Patmut'iw'n Sebēosi*, *Matenagirk' Hayoc' 4*, Ant'iliās, 2005, p. 449-565.
- ARAK'ELYAN, Varag, *Movsēs Dasxuranc'i/Kalankatuac'i, Patmut'iw'n Aluanic' Ašxarhi*, Erevan, 1983.
- ANTÈS, Serge, *Corippe, Éloge de l'empereur Justin II*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1981.
- ARNAUD LINDET, Marie-Pierre, *Orose. Histoires contre les païens*, Paris, 1991-2003.
- BALDINI, Antonio, *Ricerche sulla Storia di Eunapio di Sardi. Problemi di storiografia tardopagana*, Bologne, 1984.
- BETHMAN, Ludwig, K., WAITZ, Georg, (éd.), *Paulus Diaconus, Historia Langobardorum*, MGH, SRLI, Hanovre, 1871.
- BLECKMANN, Bruno, MEYER, Doris, DES PLACES, Édouard, PRIEUR, Jean-Marc, BIDEZ, Joseph, *Philostorge, Histoire ecclésiastique*, Paris, 2013.
- BLOCKLEY, Roger, C., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of The Later Roman Empire*, 2 volumes, Liverpool, Francis Cairns, 1983 (Priscus, Malchus, Olympiodore).
- BLOCKLEY, Roger, C., *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, Liverpool, Francis Cairns, 1985.
- BOOTH, Philipp, « The Ghost of Maurice at the court of Heraclius », *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 112, 3, (2019), pp. 781-826.
- BOSWORTH, Clifford, E., *History of al-Tabari, volume 5 : The Sassanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids and Yemen*, New York, 1999.
- BRANDES, Wolfram, Haldon, John, « Towns, Taxes and Transformation. State, cities and their hinterlands in the East Roman World, ca. 500-800 » in G. P. BROGIOLO, N. GAUTHIER, N. CHRISTIE (dir.), *Towns and Their Territories. Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden, 2000, p. 141-172.
- BRANDES, Wolfram, « Die "Familie der Könige" im Mittelalter. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur Kritik eines vermeintlichen Erkenntnismodells », *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History* 21, (2013), pp. 262–284.

407 CORIPPE, Éloge, cit., III, 355-358.

408 *CHRONIQUE PASCHALE*, p. 735-736. Mention des Turcs avec lesquels le Grand Roi voulait traiter : THÉOPHANE, cit., 6118 (326).

- BRUZZONE, Antonella, *F. Merobaudes, Panegerico in versi : introduzione e commento*, Rome, 1999.
- BURGESS, Richard W., *The Chronicle of Hydatius and The Consularia Constantinopolitana : Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of The Roman Empire*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993.
- BURGESS, Richard W., « The Gallic Chronicle of 452 : A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction » in R. W. MATHISEN, D. SHANZER (éd.), *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources*, Asghate, 2001, p. 52-84.
- CARILE, Antonio, « I nomadi nelle fonti bizantine » in *Popoli delle steppe : Unni, Avari, Ungari*, Spolète, 1988, p. 55-99.
- CARRA DE VAUX, Bernard, *Maçoudi, Livre de l'avertissement et de la révision*, Paris, 1896.
- CECCONI, Giovanni Alberto, GIARDINA, Andrea, TANTILLO, Ignazio, *Cassiodoro, Varie, volume 1 : Introduzione generale, Libri I e II*, Rome, 2017 et *Cassiodoro, Varie, volume 2 : Libri III, IV e V*, Rome, 2014.
- CESA, Maria, *Ennodius, Vita del beatissimo Epifanio vescovo della chiesa pavese*, Côme, 1988.
- CHABOT, Jean-Baptiste, *Michel Le Syrien, Chronique*, Paris, 1899-1924.
- CHARLET, Jean-Louis, *Claudien. Œuvres. Poèmes politiques (395-398)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2000.
- CHARLET, Jean-Louis, *Claudien. Œuvres. Poèmes politiques (399-404)*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2017.
- CHAUVOT, Alain, *Procopé de Gaza, Priscien de Césarée, Panégyriques de l'empereur Anastase I<sup>er</sup>, Textes traduits et commentés*, Bonn, 1986.
- COLLART, Jean, *Varron, De lingua Latina V*, Paris, 1954.
- COSENTINO, Salvatore, « Iranian Contingents in Byzantine Army » dans *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Rome, 2004, p. 245-362.
- CRESCI, Rafaela, *Malco di Filadelfia : frammenti. Testo critico, introduzione, traduzione e commentario*, Naples, 1982.
- CROKE, Brian, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus*, Sidney, 1995.
- CURTA, Florin, *The Making of the Slavs : History and Archeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500-700*, Cambridge, 2001.
- CURTA, Florin, « Avar Blitzkrieg, Slavic and Bulgar Raiders, and Roman Special Ops : Mobile Warriors in the 6th-Century Balkans » in I. ZIMONYI, O. KARATAY (dir.), *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden*, Wiesbaden, 2016, p. 69-89.
- DAIM, Falko, « Avars and Avar Archaeology. An introduction » in H. W. GOETZ, J. JARNUT, W. POHL (dir.), *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, Leiden, 2003, p. 464-570.

- DE BOOR, Carl, *Theophanis Chronographia*, Leipzig 1885.
- DE BOOR, Carl, *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, Stuttgart, 1972.
- DE LA VAISSIÈRE, Emmanuel, « Maurice et le qaghan : à propos de la digression de Théophylacte Simocatta sur les Turcs », *REB*, 68, (2010), pp. 219–224.
- DE LA VAISSIÈRE, Emmanuel, « Zibel Qaghan identified » in C. Zuckerman (dir.), *Constructing the seventh century*, Paris, 2013, p. 741–748.
- DENNIS, George, T., Gamillsheg, Ernst, *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, Vienne, 1981.
- DENNIS, George, T., *The Strategikon of Maurice*, Philadelphie, 1984.
- DENNIS, George, T., *Three Byzantine Military Treaties*, Washington D.C., 1985.
- DETORAKI, Marina, BEAUCAMP, Joëlle, BINGELLI, André, *Le Martyre de Saint Aréthas et de ses compagnons*, Paris, 2007.
- DEWING, Henry, B., *Procopius, History of the Wars*, 7 volumes, Londres-Cambridge Mass., Loeb Classical Library, 1914-1940.
- DEWING, Henry, B., *Procopius, Anecdota*, Londres-Cambridge, Mass., 1935.
- DINDORF, Ludwig, *Chronicon Paschale*, Berlin, 1832.
- DIETEN, Jan-Louis van, « Zum “Bellum Avaricum” des Giorgios Pisides. Bemerkungen zu einer Studie von Paul Speck », *Byzantinischen Forschungen*, IX, (1985), pp. 149-178.
- DIGGLE, James, GOODYEAR, Francis, David, R., *Flavii Cresconii Corippi Iohannidos libri VIII*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- DOWSETT, Charles, J. F. *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, Londres, Oxford, University of Oxford Press, 1961.
- DRIJVERS, Jan, W., « Heraclius and the «Restitutio Crucis»: Notes on Symbolism and Ideology » in G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE, (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 175-190.
- GALLETIER Édouard, SABBAH, Guy, FONTAINE, Jacques, MARIÉ, Anne-Marie et ANGLIVIEL DE LA BEAUMELLE, Laurent, *Ammien Marcellin, Histoires, Livres XVII-XXXI*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1968-1999.
- GIUNTA, Francesco, GRILLONE, Antonino (cur.), *Iordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, Rome, 1991.
- GOLDEN, Peter, G., « The Peoples of the South Russian Steppes » in D. SINOR (dir.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 256-284.
- GOLDEN, Peter, G., *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middel East*, Wiesbaden, 1992.
- GOLDEN, Peter, G., *Studies on the Peoples and Cultures of the Eurasian Steppes*, Bucarest, 2011, p. 136-163.
- GREATREX, Geoffrey, « Les Jafnides et la défense de l'Empire au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle » in D. GENEQUAND, Ch. J. ROBIN (dir.), *Les Jafnides. Des rois arabes au service de Byzance*, Paris, p. 121-154.

- HALDON, John, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550-950*, Vienne, 1979.
- HALDON, John, *Byzantine Praetorians*, Bonn, 1984.
- HALDON, John, « Military Service, Military Land, and the Status of Soldiers : Current Problems and Interpretations », *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47, (1993), pp. 1-67.
- HALDON, John, « Seventh-Century Continuities : the *Ajnād* and the “Thematic Myth” » in AV. CAMERON (éd.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, III : States, Resources and Armies*, Princeton, 1995, p. 379-423.
- HALDON, John, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1206*, Oxford, 1999.
- HALDON, John, « The Reign of Heraclius. A Context for Change ? » in G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE, (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 1-16.
- HALDON, John, « More Questions about the Origins of the Imperial Opsikion » in A. BEIHAMMER, B. KRÖNUNG, C. LUDWIG (dir.), *Prosopon Rhomaïkon : Ergänzende Studien zur Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, Berlin, 2017, p. 31-42.
- HAURY, Jacob, *Procopius, De Aedificiis*, Leipzig, 1964
- HENRY, René, *Photius. Bibliothèque, Codices 1-83*, Tome I, Paris, 2003.
- HENDY, Michael, F., « East and West : the Transformation of Late Financial Structures » in *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente*, Spolète, 2002.
- HOYLAND, Robert, G., *Theophilus of Edessa’s Chronicle and the circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, Liverpool, 2011.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, « Heraclius’ Persian Campaigns and the Revival of the East Roman Empire 622-630 », *War in History*, 1, (1999), pp. 1-44.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, « Armenian historians of Heraclius. An examination of the aims, sources and working-methods of Sebeos and Movses Daskhurantsi » in G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE (dir.), *The reign of Heraclius (610-641) : Crisis and Confrontation. Groningen studies in cultural change*, Louvain, 2002, p. 41-62.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, « ‘The Sasanians’ Strategic Dilemma’ » in H. BÖRM, J. WIESEHÖFER (éd.), *Commutatio et contentio : Studies in the Late Roman, Sasanian and Early Islamic Near East—In Memory of Zeev Rubin*, Düsseldorf, 2010, p. 37-70.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, « The Late Sasanian Army » in T. BERHEIMER, A. SILVERSTEIN (dir.), *Late Antiquity : Eastern Perspectives*, Exeter, 2012, p. 87-127.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, *Witnesses to a world crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the seventh century*, Oxford, 2010.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, *The Last Great War of Antiquity*, Oxford, 2021.
- HURBANIČ, Martin, « The Eastern Roman Empire and the Avar Khaganate in the Years 622-624 AD », *Acta Ant. Hung.* 51, (2011), pp. 315-328.
- HURBANIČ, Martin, *The Avar Siege of Constantinople in 626 : History and Legend*, Sprin-

ger, 2019.

- JANNIARD, Sylvain, « Végèce et les transformations de l'art de la guerre aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles après J.-C. », *Antiquité Tardive* 16, (2008), pp. 19-36.
- JANNIARD, Sylvain « Les adaptations de l'armée romaine aux modes de combat des peuples des steppes (fin IV<sup>e</sup>-début VI<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C.) » in U. ROBERTO, L. MACELLA (cur.), *Governare e riformare l'impero al momento della sua divisione : Oriente, Occidente, Illirico*, Rome, Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2015 : <http://books.openedition.org/efr/2793>.
- JANNIARD, Sylvain, « Procope, les Huns et les transformations tactiques de la cavalerie romaine au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle » in G. GREATREX, S. JANNIARD (éd.), *Le monde de Procope/The world of Procopius*, Paris, 2018, p. 205-214.
- KAEGI, Walter, E. *Heraclius, emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003.
- KARDARAS, Georgios, « The Avars : foederati of Byzantium ? » in V. TURČAN (éd.), *Byzantská Kultúra a Slovensko. Zborní štúdií*, Bratislava, 2007, p. 131-137.
- KARDARAS, Georgios, *Byzantium and the Avars, 6th-9th Century Ad: Political, Diplomatic and Cultural Relations*, Leiden, 2018.
- KEYDELL, Rudolf, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum libri quinque*, volume II, CFHB, Berlin, 1967.
- KOLDITZ, Sebastian, « Barbarian Emperors ? Aspects of the Byzantine Perception of the qaghan (*chaganos*) in the Earlier Middle Ages » in Ch. SCHOLL, T. R. GEBHARDT, J. CLAUSS (éd.), *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages*, Francfort, 2017, p. 41-76.
- KÖNIG, Ingemar, *Aus der Ziet Theodorichs des Grossen : Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle*, Darmstadt, 1997.
- KRUSCH, Bruno, LEVISON, WILHELM, *Gregorius Turonensis, Decem Libri Historiarum*, MGH. SRM. II, Berlin, 1951.
- JEFFREYS, Elizabeth, JEFFREYS, Michael, SCOTT, Roger, *The Chronicle of John Malalas. A Translation*, Melbourne, 1986.
- JIN KIM, Huyn, *The Huns, Rome, and the birth of Europe*, Cambridge, 2013.
- LABARRE, Sylvie, *Paulin de Périgueux. Vie de Saint Martin*, Paris, 2016.
- LAGARRIGUE, George, *Salvien de Marseille : Du Gouvernement de Dieu*, Paris, 1975.
- LANIADO, Avshalom, *Ethnos et droit dans le monde protobyzantin, V<sup>e</sup>-VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 2015.
- LINDSAY, Wallace, M. *Festus, De verborum significatu quae supersunt*, Stuttgart, 1913
- LOYEN, André, *Sidoine Apollinaire : Poèmes, I*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1960.
- MACMAHON, Lucas, *The Foederati, the Phoideratoi, and the Symmachoi of the Late Antique East (ca. A.D. 400-650)*, Ottawa, 2014.
- MAISANO, Ricardo, *Olimpiodoro Tebano. Frammenti storici*, Naples, 1979.
- MAKK, Ferenc, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théo-*

- dore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626, Szeged, 1975.
- MALASPINA, Elena, *Il Liber epistolarum della Cancelleria austrasica (sec. V-VI)*, Rome, 2001.
- MANGO, Cyril, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, Short history*, Washington D. C., 1990.
- MANGO, Cyril, SCOTT, Roger, GREATREX, Geoffrey, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor : Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284813*, Oxford, 1997.
- MARAVAL, Pierre, *Agathias, Histoires*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2007.
- MARTIN-HISARD, Bernadette, « Constantinople et les archontes caucasiens dans le Livre des cérémonies, II, 48 », *Travaux et Mémoires*, 13, Paris, (2000), pp. 359-530.
- MAY, Timothy, « *The Training of an Inner Asian Nomad Army in the Pre-Modern Period* », *The Journal of Military History*, 70, (2006), pp. 617-635.
- MAY, Timothy, *The Mongol Art of War*, Barnsley, 2007.
- MECELLA, Laura, *Dexippo di Atene. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Rome, 2013.
- MEYER, Paul, *Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 2, Berlin, 1905.
- MILNER, Nicholas, P., *Vegetius : Epitome of Military Science*, Liverpool, 1996.
- MODÉLAN, Yves, *Les Vandales et l'Empire romain*, Paris, 2014.
- MOMMSEN, Theodor, *Prosper Tiro, Epitoma Chronicon*, MGH. AA. IX, Berlin, 1892.
- MOMMSEN, Theodor, *Cassiodorus, Chronica*, MGH AA, XI, Berlin, 1894.
- MOMMSEN, Theodor, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Simondianis*, Berlin, 1905.
- MORAND, Anna Livia, Édition critique, traduction et commentaire des *Romana de Jordanès*, Université de Lorraine, 2020, <https://hal.univ-lorraine.fr/tel-02904523>.
- MORAVCSIK, Gyula, Y., JENKINS, Romilly, J., H., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De Administrando Imperio*, Washington D.C. 1967.
- MÜLLER, Carl, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris, 1841-1873 (<https://www.dfhg-project.org/>).
- NECHAEVA, Ekaterina, *Embassies – Negotiations – Gifts. Systems of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity*, Stuttgart, 2014.
- NIKONOROV, Valerii, P. « « Like a Certain Tornado of Peoples » : Warfare of the European Huns in the Light of Graeco-Latin Literary Tradition », *Anabasis. Studia Classica et Orientalia*, 1, (2010), pp. 264-291.
- NIXON, Charles, C., V., *Pacatus : Panegyric to the Emperor Theodosius*, Liverpool, 1987.
- PAYNE SMITH, Robert, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus, now first translated from the original Syriac*, Oxford, 1860.
- PAYNE, Richard, « Cosmology and the Expansion of Iranian Empire, 502-628 CE », *Past and Present*, (2013), pp. 1-31.
- PAYNE, Richard, « The reinvention of Iran : The Sasanian Empire and the Huns » in

- M. MAAS (éd.), *The Cambridge companion to the age of Attila*, Cambridge, 2014, p. 282–299.
- PASCHOUD, François, *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle. Livre IV*, Tome II, 2<sup>e</sup> partie, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1979 et *Zosime. Histoire nouvelle. Livre V*, Tome III, 1<sup>ère</sup> partie, Paris, 1986.
- PÉRICHON, Pierre, MARAVAL, Pierre, *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres IV-VI*, Paris, 2006.
- PÉRICHON, Pierre, MARAVAL, Pierre, *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres VII*, Paris, 2007.
- PERTUSI, Agostino, *Giorgio di Pisidia, Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*, Ettal, 1959.
- PETSCHENIG, Michael, *Paulinus Petricordus, De vita S. Martini*, CSEL 16, 1888.
- PLACANICA, Antonio, *Vittore da Tunnuna : Chronica. Chiesa e impero nell'età di Giustiano*, Florence, 1997.
- POLÁČEK, Juraj, « Heraclius and the Persians in 622 », *Bizantinistica*, 10, (2008), pp. 105-124.
- POHL, Walter, *The Avars : A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822*, Cornell, 2018.
- PREUD'HOMME, Nicolas, *À la porte des mondes. Histoire de l'Ibérie du Caucase – III<sup>e</sup> siècle a. C.-VII<sup>e</sup> siècle p. C.*, Bordeaux, 2024.
- RANCE, Philip, « Narses and the Battle of Taginae (Busta Gallorum) 552 : Procopius and the Sixth-Century Warfare », *Historia* 54, (2005), pp. 424-472.
- RANCE, Philip, « Battle » in Ph. SABIN, H. VAN WEES, M. WHITBY, (dir.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare. Volume II : Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 342-378.
- RANCE, Philip, *The Roman Art of War in Late Antiquity : the Strategikon of the Emperor Maurice. A Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 2 volumes, Birmingham, Routledge, à paraître en 2026.
- REEVE, Michael, D., *Vegetius. Epitoma Rei Militaris. Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2004.
- REZAKHANI, Khodadad, « The End of Sasanian Rule : The Center and Periphery of Ērānšahr in the Seventh Century » in T. DARYAEE, M. COMPARETI (éd.), *Studi sulla Persia sasanide e suoi rapporti con le civiltà attigue*, Bologne, 2019, p. 229-231.
- ROBERTO, Umberto, *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta ex Historia Chronica*, Texte und Untersuchungen zu Geschichte der altchrislichen Literatur, Berlin-New York, 2005.
- ROTA, Simona, *Magno Felice Ennodio. Panegyrico del clementissimo re Teodorico (opusc. I), Introduzione, traduzione e commento*, Rome, 2002.
- SABBAH, Guy, ANGLIEVIEL DE LA BEAUMELLE, Laurent, FESTUGIÈRE, André-Jean, GRILLET, Bernard, *Sozomène. Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres VII-IX*, Paris, 2008.
- SARANTIS, Alexander, « The Justinianic Herules : From Allied Barbarians to Roman Provincials » in F. CURTA (éd.), *Neglected Barbarians*, Leiden, 2010, p. 361-402.

- SARANTIS, Alexander, *Justinian's Balkan Wars. Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thrace and the Northern World A.D. 527-65*, ARCA, Leeds, Francis Cairns, 2016.
- SARANTIS, Alexander, CHRISTIE Neil (ed.), *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, 2 volumes, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2013.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, « Les Lazes, des fédérés de l'Empire dans l'œuvre de Procope » in G. GREATREX, S. JANNIARD (éd.), *Le monde de Procope/The world of Procopius*, Paris, 2018, p. 263-282.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, *Recherches sur les fédérés et l'armée romaine (de la fin du II<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C. au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.)*, thèse de doctorat inédite sous la direction de Jean-Michel CARRIÉ, 3 volumes, EHESS, Paris, 2018.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). 1<sup>ère</sup> partie : La diplomatie impériale », *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire ancienne*, 10, (2021), pp. 289-318.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). 2<sup>e</sup> partie : Combattre pour l'Empire », *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire ancienne*, 11, (2022), pp. 385-416.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, « Défendre « l'Empire du Couchant » par « l'alliance avec les barbares ». *Foedera et foederati* au temps d'Aetius (425-454) : pour une relecture de la diplomatie et de la stratégie du patrice Aetius en Occident. Première partie : Les aspects diplomatiques », *Antiquité Tardive*, 30, (2022), pp. 225-245.
- SARTOR, Guillaume, « Le rôle des fédérés transcaucasiens dans les guerres persiques d'Héraclius (622-628). Troisième partie : Considérations stratégiques », *HiMA*, 13, (2024), à paraître.
- SCHLEICHER, Frank, *Iberia Caucasica : Ein Kleinkonigreich Im Spannungsfeld Grosser Imperien*, Stuttgart, 2021.
- SCHOELL, Rudolf, KROLL, Wilhelm, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, III, Berlin, 1895.
- SHAPIRA, Dan, « Armenian and Georgian Sources on the Khazars : A Re-evaluation » dans P. B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS (dir.), *The World of the Khazars : New Perspectives*, Leiden, 2007, p. 291-352.
- SHAPIRA, Dan « On the Relative Value of Armenian Sources for the Khazar Studies : The Case of the Siege of Tbilisi » in U. BLÄSING, V. ARAKELOVA, M. WEINREICH (dir.), *Studies on Iran and The Caucasus : In Honour of Garnik Asatrian*, Leiden, 2015, p. 45-62.
- SHOEMAKER, Stephen, J., *The Apocalypse of Empire. Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.
- SIROTENKO, Anastasia, « Constructing Memory : The Chronicle of Theophanes on the Reign of Heraclius » in Ch. MESSIS, M. MULLET, I. NILSSON, (dir.), *Telling stories in Byzantium : Narratological Approaches and Byzantine Narration*, Uppsala, 2018, p. 223-242.

- SIROTENKO, Anastasia, *Erinnern an Herakleios : zur Darstellung des Kaisers Herakleios in mittelalterlichen Quellen*, Dissertation, Munich, 2020.
- SKAFF, Janathan Karam, « Ideological interweaving in Eastern Eurasia : simultaneous kingship and dynastic competition, 580-755 » in N. DI COSMO, M. MAAS (dir.), *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity : Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*, Cambridge, 2018, p. 386-399.
- STARK, S, *Die Alttürkenzeit in Mittel- und Zentralasien : Archäologische und historische Studien*, Wiesbaden, 2008.
- SYRBE, Daniel, « Reiternomaden des Schwarzmeerraums (Kutriguren und Utiguren) und byzantinische Diplomatie im 6. Jahrhundert », *ActaOrHung.* 65, (2012), pp. 291-316.
- SYVÄNNE, Ilkka, *The Age of the Hippoxotai. The Art of War in Roman Military Revival and Disaster (491–636)*, Tampere, 2004.
- TALON, Philippe, *La Chronographie de Bar Hebraeus*, 3 volumes, Fernelmont, 2013.
- TARTAGLIA, Luigi, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Carmi*, Turin, 1998.
- THOMSON, Robert, W., *Thomas Artsruni : History of the House of the Artsrunik*, Detroit, 1985.
- THOMSON, Robert, W., *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation. Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford, 1996.
- THOMSON, Robert, W., HOWARD-JOHNSTON, James, GREENWOOD, Tim, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, Liverpool, 1999.
- THURN, Ioannes, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, Berlin, 2000.
- TROMBLEY, Frank, R., « Military Cadres and Battle During the Reign of Heraclius » in G. J. REININK, B. H. STOLTE (éd.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610-641). Crisis and Confrontation*, Louvain, 2002, p. 241-259.
- TROMBLEY, Frank, R. « The Operational Methods of the Late Roman Army in the Persian War of 572-591 » in A. S. LEWIN, P. PELLEGRINI, Z. T. FIEMA, S. JANNIARD, (dir.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest*, Oxford, 2007, p. 321-356.
- VAN ESBROECK, Michel, « Une Chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople », *Bedi Kartlisa*, 34, (1976), pp. 74-96.
- VOGT, Albert, *Constantin Porphyrogénète. Le Livre des Cérémonies. Tome I : Livres I et II. Tome II : Commentaire*, Paris, 1935-1967.
- WHITBY, Mary, WHITBY, Michael, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta : an English translation with introduction and notes*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986.
- WHITBY, Michael, *The Emperor Maurice and his historian : Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan warfare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988.
- WHITBY, Mary, WHITBY, Michael, *Chronicon Pascale 284-628 A. D.*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1989.

- WHITBY, Mary, « Defender of the Cross : George de Pisidie on the Emperor Heraclius and his Deputies » in Ma. WHITBY (dir.), *The Propaganda of Power : The Role of Panegyrics in Late Antiquity*, Leiden, 1998, p. 247-273.
- WITTHOW, Mark, « Byzantium's Eurasian policy in the Age of the Türk Empire » in N. DI COSMO, M. MAAS (dir.), *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity: Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250-750*. Cambridge, 2018, p. 271-286.
- WOLF, Kenneth, B., *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, Liverpool, 1990.
- ZIEMANN, Daniel, *Vom Wandervolk zur Großmacht - Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.-9. Jh.)*, Cologne, 2007, p. 32-103.
- ZUCKERMAN, Constantin, « La petite Augusta et le Turc. Epiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Héraclius », *Revue numismatique*, 150, (1995), pp. 113-126.
- ZUCKERMAN, Constantin, « The Khazars and Byzantium – The First Encounter » in P. B. GOLDEN, H. SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS (dir.), *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives. Selected Papers from The Jerusalem 1999 International Khazar Colloquium*, Leiden, 2007, p. 399-432.

# Magyar ‘raids’ and Frankish invasions: A new perspective

by CHRISTOPHER SZABÓ

**ABSTRACT.** This article aims to refute the centuries-old claim that the Magyar incursions into Western Europe and the Balkans in the tenth century were merely for plunder, a view based on outdated ideas of poor nomads whose societies were held together by chiefs handing out prestige goods to their followers; thus, being forced to constantly raid their richer, settled neighbours. Recent scientific discoveries put these offensive operations in a broader context of invasions by the East Franks and threats from Bulgars and Byzantines, showing Magyar actions to be planned and prepared military campaigns and introducing background information from recent scientific discoveries that show the Magyar Principality was a state and not a mere collection of nomadic tribes living off plunder and tribute.

**KEYWORDS:** MAGYARS, PLUNDERING, CAMPAIGNING, BATTLES, STATE-FOUNDING

## *Introduction*

**A**rchaeological finds and new techniques of applied science have revealed that earlier models of a tribal nomadic Magyar society in the ninth and tenth centuries are erroneous. The Magyars had agriculture, viticulture and a diet which contained much more than only milk and meat, as has been claimed for nomads. Iron smelting and smithing, using processes advanced for the time, were widespread, as well as a level of gold-and-silver work that was world class has shown that the old idea of a nomadic group of ‘wild tribesmen’ going on raids to make ends meet is outdated and needs revision.<sup>1</sup> In addition, discoveries of fortresses, permanent villages and defensive dyke-type structures, which would be impossible for a people constantly on the move, have undermined the ‘nomadic’ model further. Evidence of materials obtained by trade added to the picture of a complex society, which had a pastoral nomadic element, but

<sup>1</sup> Zsolt PETKES, Balázs SUDÁR, B. *Hétköznapiak a honfoglalás korában: Magyar Őstörténet* 5. Helikon Kiadó, Budapest, 2017, pp. 90-97.

was not as a whole nomadic. Researchers have found evidence of a steppe state which remained united under the same family for over four centuries.<sup>2</sup>

This steppe-type state had internal, but also external policy goals and it is in this context that the Magyar campaigns should be understood. Furthermore, the periodisation of these actions is usually taken from the end of the ninth century to either 955 or 970. It will be argued here that the correct periodisation of the campaigns is from 862 to 1054. These dates reveal a new people establishing a steppe-type state in Europe and the attempts by the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) to destroy it, as it had the Avar Khaganate a century before. The idea that the Magyar campaigns had only plunder as their aim is no longer seen as viable among scholars within Hungary, and this article aims to inform a wider audience and hopefully bring about a revision in line with the new information.<sup>3</sup>

### *Magyars or Hungarians?*

The Magyars became a steppe tribal confederation sometime in the ninth century, and later native sources refer to them as *Hetumoger* or Seven Magyars.<sup>4</sup> They became a steppe-type state around 850, electing Álmos to be their ruler.<sup>5</sup> They migrated to the Carpathian Basin in the 890s, and took political power, but remained a minority in comparison to the earlier Avars, according to archaeological and archaeogenetic analysis.<sup>6</sup> The Avars were called Uungar, Venger and various forms of the word *Onogur*.<sup>7</sup> By the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom

- 
- 2 György SZABADOS. 'Egy Steppe-állam Európa közepén: Magyar Nagyfejedelemség.' *Dolgozatok az erdélyi érem-és regiségtárából*. Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Kolozsvár, 2013, pp. 128-129.; Ervin GÁLL. 'A periférikus 10. századi erdélyi medence.' 25/8 *Korunk*. Komp-Press, Kolozsvár/Cluj 2014, pp. 87-93.; Charles BOWLUS. 'The Early Hungarians as Mercenaries.' In J. France (ed), *Mercenaries and Paid Men. The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*. Cit., p. 195.
  - 3 Ervin GÁLL, *A hatalom forrása és a magyar honfoglalás – Hódítás és integráció. A korai magyar történelem egy régész szempontjából*. Magyarságtudományi Intézet. Budapest. 2019.
  - 4 György SZABADOS. 'Egy Steppe-állam Európa közepén: Magyar Nagyfejedelemség.', cit., p.125.
  - 5 See SZABADOS, cit., p. 126.
  - 6 MARÓTI K, MAÁR K, NEPARÁCZKI E, KOVÁCS B et al, 'The genetic origin of Huns, Avars, and conquering Hungarians,' *Current Biology* 32, Elsevier, Inc. 2022, online.
  - 7 Terézia OLAJOS, 'A Kárpát-medencei onogurok történetéhez.' *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis* (75).Szeged, 2013, pp. 521-532.

(1000 A.D.) the Magyar element had probably mingled with the *Onogur* people so much that the Magyars (in Latin sources) referred to themselves as *Hungari* but continued to call their language Magyar. This paper will refer to them as Magyars.

### *Society*

The society of the Magyars had as its most basic unit the *nemzetség*; or clan. Debate continues on whether there were confederations of clans forming tribes, or only clans. The *De Administrando Imperio* (DAI) of Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus speaks of the Magyars having seven clans (or tribes), adding that 'Kabars' joined them.<sup>8</sup> He states these are – in the Hungarian spelling – *Nyék, Megyer, Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Kéri* and *Keszi*. Twelfth and 13<sup>th</sup> Century Hungarian chronicles know nothing of tribes but speak of seven 'captains' and 108 clans.<sup>9 10</sup> Descent from a real or fictive ancestor was important, as were blood treaties.<sup>11</sup> State organisation is considered further below, but some type of levy or tax, whether in kind or in labour, likely existed. There are dozens of place names that agree with Constantine VII's list. Thus, in the Carpathian Basin, there are for example 33 *-nyék*; 45 *-megyer*; 25 *-kürt*, 25 *-gyarmat* and so on.<sup>12</sup> Some examples could include, Kürtfalva, Balassagyarmat and Nemeskér.

Because the DAI is considered a reliable source, plus the toponyms, most scholars consider the Magyars to have comprised seven tribes (as their old name – *Hetumoger* – shows). In addition, breakaway groups of Khazars, known as Kabars, joined. The word is likely Hungarian for 'stir' (*kavar*), as they rebelled against the Khazar Kingdom, and were formed into one tribe. Their later fate is unknown, except for toponyms ending with '*-kozár*'). Precisely how the 108

---

8 Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. *De Administrando Imperio*, (DAI) ,Ed. Gy Moravcsik. Trans. R.J.H. Jenkins. Harvard University, Washington D.C., 1985, pp. 171-179.

9 Anonymus. *Gesta Hungarorum*. Hungarian translation by Dezső Pais. (Magyar Helikon, Budapest, 1977), p.24.

10 Simon de Kéza. *Kézai Simon Mester Magyar Krónikája*. Trans. Károly Szabó. Mór, Pest, 1862, p.5.

11 Gyula LÁSZLÓ, *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. 1944.Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó, 1988, pp. 190-192.

12 János GÖMÖRI. "'Lovasnépek' kohászata Pannóniában'. IN: *Az Őshazától A Kárpátokig*. Ed: Viktor SZOMBATHELYI. Panoráma, Budapest, 1985, pp. 329-330.

clans divide into the seven tribes is unknown (if the number is even correct, there being no corroborative material).

In the decades following the migration, centres of power developed, with most of the (known) centres initially in the Eastern part of the Hungarian Great Plain, while in the 950s and 970s, one developed in the East and one in the West.<sup>13</sup> These centres were built around a fortification. Most scholars accept that the decimal system was widely used, in both civil and military matters.<sup>14</sup>

This society, not surprisingly, had a very advanced horse culture and had mastered horse management. Kálmán Nagy, a former Hungarian Hussar officer studied the Magyar breeding and riding techniques and concluded that small herds of 20-40 horses were kept (except by those of the highest rank) and these were free ranged and only placed in protection in the harshest weather.<sup>15</sup> It is a mistake, however, to think that these horses were not fed hay or grains, as these were widely used. This bred a very tough horse, which could stand the rigours of campaigning, as would be proved in the great distances covered in subsequent military campaigns.<sup>16</sup> Horses were used for herding, hunting and war. Cattle were an important part of the diet, also not common among steppe nomads, who herded horses, sheep and goats rather than cattle. Sheep were also very important for their meat, skins and wool. At least one sheep breed, the *Racka*, survives, as do Hungarian Grey longhorn cattle. Other animals included goats and pigs, which László said proved that the Magyars were not typical nomads, as pigs are not able to roam the steppe with sheep and goats. Finally, both hens and eggs have been found in 10th Century graves, again underlining the settled character of much of the Magyar culture.<sup>17</sup>

While most Western historians regard the Magyars as nomads, contemporary Arab-language sources, including Ibn Rusta and Marwazi both state of the Magyars: 'They have (a lot of) sown fields.'<sup>18</sup> Besides these written sources, archaeol-

---

13 György SZABADOS, cit., pp. 134.5.

14 Cit., pp. 32-41.

15 Kálmán NAGY. *A honfoglalás korának hadtörténete*. Heraldika Kiadó, Budapest, 2007, p.56.

16 Cit., pp. 55-60.

17 Gyula LÁSZLÓ, *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*, cit., pp. 328-334; Petkes and Sudár. *Hét-köznapok a honfoglalás korában*, pp. 59, 60.

18 István ZIMONYI. 'Muslim Sources on the Magyars in the Second Half of the 9th Century:

ogy has proven them to have had both scythes and sickles, as well as ploughs. Archaeobotany has given an insight into what was grown, and this includes millet, wheat, rye and barley, as well as peas. A later Medieval staple, known as *abajdóc* (rye mixed with wheat) has also been found, as have food remains burned into pottery during a 10th century fire.<sup>19</sup> Along with grains and cereals, many kinds of fruits, notably apple and cherry seeds have been found together with pruning knives, indicating the existence of viticulture. Some kinds of minor agriculture were also practiced by pastoralists, especially using fast growing grains like millet.<sup>20</sup>

The idea of a purely nomadic society is not viable in light of these discoveries. Muslim sources mention the Magyar custom of fishing, although they give no details.<sup>21</sup> Regino of Prüm says they hunted and fished.<sup>22</sup> Hunting was used for military training as László has explained. He mentions that even priests took part in medieval hunting and falconry, and were chastised for it by the Catholic Church, who saw these activities as not conforming to the 'poverty of Christ'. (This indicates how common bows and falcons were in the country.)<sup>23</sup> Archaeology has revealed a wealth of different trades and skills, including pottery, leather work of various kinds (to make the horse leathers, straps, men's and women's belts and boots.<sup>24</sup>) These trades can be done by nomads along with minor crafts like bone and woodwork. However, the work of blacksmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths, saddle makers and carters, have also been discovered.<sup>25</sup> Clothing appears to have been primarily homemade, but there was also an export market. They used alum tanning and also some forms of vegetable tanning. Magyar leather was particularly fine and was a major export.<sup>26</sup> Flax and hemp, linen and cotton

---

'The Magyar Chapter of the Jayhani Tradition,' In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, Ed: Florin CURTA. Brill, Leiden, 2016, pp. 306-308.

19 Zsolt PETKES and BALÁZS SUDÁR. *Hétköznapiak a honfoglalás korában: M. Ó. 5*, pp.87-97.

20 Zsolt PETKES and Balázs SUDÁR. *M. Ó. 5*. Cit., pp.18-19.

21 István ZIMONYI, 'The Magyar Chapter of the Jayhani Tradition', cit., p.8.

22 Regino. *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe: The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*. Trans. S. Maclean. Manchester University Press. 2009, p. 205.

23 Cit., Gyula LÁSZLÓ, p 314.

24 PETKES and SUDÁR. *Hétköznapiak a honfoglalás korában: cit.*, pp. 152-161.

25 Cit., pp. 189-194.

26 Balázs SUDÁR, and Zsolt PETKES, *A honfoglalók viselete: Magyar Őstörténet 1*. Helikon,

were also worn, as was leather, furs and felt.<sup>27</sup> Felt for clothing items was very common, as this material was waterproof and was used to cover yurts as well as for personal clothing, which is still used in Hungary.<sup>28</sup> Silk was much sought after, and some 20 silk remains have been found in archaeological digs. These are mainly Byzantine samite, but there are also some finds from Persia.<sup>29</sup> Written sources also mention wealthy Magyars wearing silk: Al Gardezi, for example, writes: “The Magyars are handsome and pleasant-looking, and their bodies are bulky. Their clothes are brocade, and their weapons are plated with silver and embedded with pearl.” (Other translations have ‘gold’.)<sup>30</sup> Contemporary sources talk of Magyar *vehicules* which they used not only for carrying equipment, supplies or plunder, but also as wagon laagers, according to Ekkehard IV in his history of Saint Gallen. This meant cartwrights and other specialists existed among them and in later times these wagons were known to be lightweight and efficient. (The English word ‘coach’ comes from the toponym *Kócs*) and according to László, Magyar wainwrights already knew how to make spoked wheels at this time.<sup>31</sup> They had excellent saddlers, the tradition of which lasted into the 1930s. László found sufficient wood remains to state that the saddle boards were made of aspen, a softwood, the pommel and cantle were of linden, a hardwood. The seat was of leather.<sup>32</sup>

### *Iron Smelting and Smithing*

The Magyars used much the same techniques as other peoples of the time to smelt bog iron in bloomeries, the forerunners of the blast furnace. The above-mentioned town of Nemeskér was the site of a number of bloomeries, and one of the bloomery types is called the ‘Nemeskér Type’ by archaeologists.<sup>33</sup> One of the

---

Budapest, 2015, pp. 112-118.

27 Zsolt PETKES and Balázs SUDÁR. *A honfoglalók viselete.*; cit., pp.104-108.

28 Cit., 119-125.

29 Cit., pp. 106-107.

30 István ZIMONYI. *Muslim Sources on the Magyars in the Second Half of the 9th Century*, IN: East and Central Europe in the Middle Ages. Brill, Leiden, 2016, p.43.

31 Zsolt PETKES and Balázs SUDÁR., *Hétköznapiak M.Ö. 5*, cit., pp. 50, 51 .and László, p. 360.

32 LÁSZLÓ, A *Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. Cit., pp. 346-7.

33 János GÖMÖRI. ‘The bloomery museum at Somogyfajsz (Hungary) and some archaeometallurgical sites in Pannonia from the Avar - and early Hungarian period.’ *MJoM, Metal-*

largest sites was found at Somogyfajsz next to Lake Balaton. Gömöri in 1984 estimated the total production in the 10th Century at 20 tons. Since then, very large numbers of finds have been made, so 20 tons should be considered a minimum.<sup>34</sup> A near-contemporary source, the *Antapodosis* of Liudprand of Cremona, confirms the Magyars' weapon-making ability. Following a reconnaissance of northern Italy in 898, he writes: 'They returned to their own lands and passed the whole bitter period of winter making weapons, sharpening swords, teaching war manoeuvres to the young.'<sup>35</sup> It can be stated that the Magyar Grand Duchy was self-sufficient in iron production, and this further weakens the 'wandering nomad' hypothesis.

Smithing took place in villages, reflected in toponyms such as *Kovácsi*, 'Smith' *Csatár*, 'Armourer' or *Vasas* 'Smelter', many of which go back to the Avar era.<sup>36</sup>



Fig.1. 10<sup>th</sup> Century gilded silver sabretache cover from Galgóc. Hungarian National Museum. Online.

*lurgija – Journal of Metallurgy. Volume 12, 2006, Special Issue: Archaeometallurgy, p. 186.*

34 János GÖMÖRI, 'Lovasnépek' vaskohászata Pannoniában.' In: *Az őshazától a Kárpátokig.* Ed. V.Szombathy. Panoráma, Budapest, 1985, p. 315.

35 Liudprand of Cremona. *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona.* Trans.P. Squatriti. Medieval Texts in Translation. Catholic University of America Press. 2007, p.80.

36 István FODOR In: *The Ancient Hungarians. Exhibition Catalogue. Ironworking.* Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 1996, p.63.

There is even a 'Vas Castle County' (Iron County) since the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Magyar smiths produced everything from sickles, scythes and ploughshares, through to fire-strikers, axes, sabres and a vast number of arrowheads.<sup>37</sup> The old Hungarian word *ötvös* is a reference to alloys and is said to come from the verb *önt* 'pour'.<sup>38</sup> The term means both goldsmith and silversmith and gilded silver was widely used in 10th Century Magyar art. Magyar gold-and-silversmiths made artefacts 'out of sheet metal with embossed decoration, as well as in cast, openwork versions'.<sup>39</sup>

Clearly, as archery was key to Magyar warfare, skilled bowyers were needed and indeed, some 300 bow fragments (mainly bone or antler bow stiffeners) have been found.<sup>40</sup> Once the antler and bone parts had been identified as bow stiffeners, it became clear that the Magyar bow was part of the Asiatic composite bow 'family', with an average draw weight of 100 pounds that could cast an arrow up to 300 meters.<sup>41</sup> The bowyers needed great skill to combine horn, wood, sinew, and antler or bone into a powerful bow that was weatherproof by the standards of the time. Composite bow making is well-known so will not be described here suffice to say that it took about a year to complete one, thus many bowyers probably made many parts of the bow at one time, working with assistants, to complete a large number of these weapons at the end of the process.<sup>42</sup> Researchers suggest a workshop in the region of Szeged in Hungary's Great Plain, due to certain markings on antler grips and 'horns'.<sup>43</sup>

Magyar-type arrowheads have been found by the thousands and numerous types have been isolated, with six main types and dozens of others. The most common type is a flat, diamond shape, but some have square or triangular cross-sections designed to penetrate armour.<sup>44</sup> Toponyms referring to archers (and presumably bowyers and arrow smiths) are found in Medieval Hungary's Western and

---

37 PETKES and SUDÁR. *Hétköznapiok*: Cit., pp. 171-174.

38 G. ZAICZ. (Ed). *Etimológiai Szótár. Magyar szavak és toldalékok eredete*. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2006, ö.ö.

39 Hungarian National Museum. Permanent Exhibition. *Between East and West/Hungarian Conquest Period*. 2023. Online.

40 Péter BENCsik and László BORBÉLY. *A IX-XI századi magyar íj*. Liter-Godolló, 2014, p.3.

41 Zsolt PETKES and Balázs SUDÁR. *Honfoglalók fegyverben. M.Ó.* 3.Helikon Kiadó Budapest, 2015, pp. 61- 94.

42 Cit., pp. 80-99.

43 Cit.

44 Cit., pp. 116-118.

Northern border regions and to a lesser extent, Transylvania. These names reflect forms of the word *lövő* 'shooter' in Hungarian and are referred to as *sagittarius* in Latin-language documents.<sup>45</sup>

### *Essentials of a Steppe State*

Research over two centuries in Central Europe, Russia, China, Mongolia and more recently in Inner Asia has shown that steppe states had three main elements that held them together. Peoples who did not have these, tended to create tribal alliances only, and failed to stand the test of time, such as the Pechenegs. These essentials were:

1. A divinely chosen ruler and subsequent dynasty.
2. The use of blood treaties to cement both the formation of the state and relationships within and with foreign entities.
3. A ruling council made up of the most powerful in the state.

The Kazakh scholar Kazymzhanov wrote: 'Participation in the will and instruction of *Tengri* (the Sky) ... is the first attribute of political power.'<sup>46</sup> This element was key in the foundation and maintenance of steppe polities and is too often overlooked. As Sanping Chen has pointed out, the Xiongnu title for God was Cheng-Li, which sounds suspiciously similar to the later Turkic *Teng-ri*, described by Chen as 'the universal sky-god'. He adds that the Chinese concept, originating on the steppe, of the 'Son of Heaven' was also widespread among the Türks.<sup>47</sup> This concept of a 'divinely chosen ruler' was very strong among the Magyars, and is well attested in Medieval Hungarian works as well as in folklore.

Blood treaties between groups or individuals in steppe culture are recorded as early as the fifth century B.C. by Herodotus and early Chinese sources including Chin and Tang Dynasty China.<sup>48</sup>

---

45 Helga KOVÁCS. "Határvédelemre utaló helynevek az Árpád-korban." Unpublished MS. Faculty of Humanities, Department of Linguistics, Debrecen University, 2010, pp. 15-17.

46 Agyn Khairulloevich KAZYMZHANOV and Keith Owen TRIBBLE. 'The Political Tradition of the Steppe.' *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. 26:3 Cambridge University Press, 1998.

47 Sanping CHEN. "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Cultures regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Vol. 12, No.3. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.307-308,

48 Herodotus. *The Histories*. Trans. A. De Séincourt. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, p.293.

There are also many examples of these treaties being used as state-founding instruments, according to Dr. Borbála Obrusánszky, who made a study of these treaties.<sup>49</sup> Hungarian chronicles from the twelfth century onwards refer to the founding of the Seven Magyars as the ‘Blood Treaty’ in which seven senior leaders chose Álmos to be their overall leader and nicked themselves, dripping the blood into a vessel of wine, and then all partaking of it.<sup>50</sup> The Blood Treaty has long been seen as the first element in Hungarian constitutional law.<sup>51</sup>

The last Grand Prince, Vajk, (r.997-1000) whose Christian name was Stephen, was also the country’s first Christian king (r.1000-1038). In his *Admonitions*, Stephen wrote: ‘The council appoints kings, decides the fate of kings, defends the homeland, quietens down contentions, wins victories, defeats invading armies, calls in friends, builds cities, destroys the fortresses of enemies.’<sup>52</sup> The council was the forerunner of the medieval Hungarian parliament as well as its modern descendant. Walter Pohl states that there existed in Europe ‘Non-Roman’-type states. He writes: ‘These included: first, the kingdom of the Huns in the first half of the fifth century; then, the Avar khaganate; and finally, the Magyars/Hungarians in the tenth century.’<sup>53</sup> Rogers says: ‘A growing number of archaeologists, historians, and cultural anthropologists ...provide convincing evidence that the resource base, trade connections, and native social systems for the steppe pastoralists are diverse and self-sustaining.’<sup>54</sup> In summary and considering the elements of a steppe state listed above, the Magyars, contrary to the widely held view in the West, were not a ‘loose confederation’, nor were their armies ‘war bands’, but constituted a ‘Non-Roman’ state.<sup>55</sup>

---

49 Borbála OBRUSÁNSZKY. *Andaság és komaság. ‘Századok.’* Magyar Történelmi Társulat, Budapest, 2004, pp. 12-56.

50 Attila HORVÁTH, (Ed.) *Magyar Állam-és Jogtörténet.* University of Public Service, Budapest, 2014, p.35.

51 Cit., p.25.

52 Saint Stephen. *István király Intelmei. Gondolkodó Magyarok.* Ed. G. Szigethy. Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, 1982, p.9. (Author’s translation.)

53 Walter POHL, “A non-Roman empire in Central Europe,” in *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, (Ed.) by Hans-Werner GOETZ, Jorg JARNUT, Walter POHL, Leiden – Boston, 2003, p. 572.

54 John Daniel ROGERS. ‘Inner Asian States and Empires: Theories and Synthesis.’ *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 20, No. 3. Springer, 2012, pp. 216-17.

55 Charles BOWLUS. *Franks, Moravians, and Magyars: The Struggle for the Middle Danube,*

## *Diplomacy*

The Magyar occupation of the Carpathian Basin was prepared by alliances with the Great Powers of the time, the HRE and Byzantium. While the year 895 is generally accepted as the time of arrival of the Magyars, most Hungarian scholars now consider their occupation to have been a decades-long migration, supported by alliances. Two Hungarian scholars living in exile, Tamás Bogyay and Szabolcs de Vajay first put forward the idea that the Magyar incursions were preventative in nature or showed they were part of alliances. Both considered the Magyar military actions to have been carefully planned.<sup>56</sup> The idea of 'wild nomad raids' is no longer tenable among scholars in Hungary. The Magyars had all-cavalry armies and were organised on a decimal system (see 'Society'). In the past, it was assumed that they were all light horse-archers, but recent research suggests there were heavy cavalry, the retinues of the high-ranking nobles.<sup>57</sup> Magyar warriors used bows, lances, sabres and a cavalry axe called a *fokos*, a weapon similar to a tomahawk. The retinues were armoured and wore helmets and either lamellar or mail armour. The rest of the cavalry were light horse-archers, many of whom were pastoral herders and were well practiced with horse and bow. Military ranks, even today, reflect the commander of ten, *tizedes*, of a hundred, *százados*, a thousand, *ezredes* and the word for 'uncountable' is 'töméntelen' or 'without *tömén*', which is likely the old name for 10,000 men. Names of senior ranks included *bátor* and *alap*, reflected in place names like Nyírbátor and Tiszaalpár.<sup>58</sup>



Fig.2. Ninth-10th Century Magyar sabre with gilded silver fittings from Tarcal. Hungarian National Museum. Online.

---

788-907. Middle Ages Series, Eds: E. Peters and H. C. Lea. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1995, p.240

56 Tamás BOGYAY. *Magyarország Története Távlatból*. Mérleg, Budapest, 1993, p. 13.

57 Digitális Legendárium. "In the Saddle, on Horseback - The art of war of the conquest-era Magyars." 1 February 2023, YouTube video, 15:33-18:30. Online.

58 Cit. Digitális Legendárium: 17:16-17:24 minutes. Online.

Because of the configuration of their ready bow cases and quivers, they could switch between bows and hand-to-hand weapons. The Magyars used a closed, 'hourglass-type' quiver.<sup>59</sup> It is likely that armies took spare arrows as did other military forces of the day, especially considering the bow to be their main weapon. Emperor Leo VI wrote that the Magyars fought in a more organised and disciplined way than other steppe peoples. He added: 'In combat most of them bear double arms, carrying the lances high on their shoulders and holding the bows in their hands. They make use of both as need requires.'<sup>60</sup> Arab sources state that the Magyar leader 'rode out at the head of 20,000 horsemen'.<sup>61</sup> Magyar armies were self-sufficient in food, using preserved food and spare horse herds for milk and meat.<sup>62</sup> Water was plentiful in rivers and lakes in Europe.<sup>63</sup>

The Magyars are well-documented as using long-range reconnaissance, not common in Western European armies of the day. They also used terrain to advantage, (details below). The essence of Magyar tactics was manoeuvre, as is clear from their long withdrawal in 899 from Pavia to the Brenta River (c.260 kilometres), where they used a surprise morning attack to defeat Berengar I's much larger army. Like other steppe people, they worked to find an advantageous position from which to launch an attack, while weakening their opponents, as they did against the East Frankish levy in 910, where they used a feigned flight and ambush. They relied on ruses as well as outflanking and surrounding their enemies, using the bow to weaken the opposing line and only going to close combat when they already had the upper hand.<sup>64</sup> The Magyar's archery is best known through the Modena Prayer, *ab ungerorum nos defendas iaculis*, 'From the arrows of the Hungarians defend us', recorded before the year 900.<sup>65</sup> Contemporary sources, like the Byzantine emperor, Leo VI, wrote about their skill in mounted archery. 'When pursued they use their bows to great advantage', and: 'They devote a

---

59 Zsolt PETKES and Balázs SUDÁR. *Honfoglalók fegyverben*. Cit., pp. 105-115.

60 Leo VI. *The Taktika of Leo VI. Leo VI. Trans: G. Dennis. Harvard University, 2010, Constitution XVIII: p. 453.*

61 Mihály KMOŠKÓ. *Mohamedán Írók A Steppe Népeiről: Földrajzi Irodalom I/1* (Ed.) Zimonyi, I. Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 1997, p. 207.

62 Kálmán NAGY. *A honfoglalás korának hadtörténete*, p.85.

63 Cit.

64 Cit., pp. 221-223.

65 Cit., p. 210.

great deal of attention and training to archery on horseback.<sup>66</sup> Regino of Prüm in his Chronicle says of their fighting style: 'Killing a very few with the sword and many thousands with arrows, which they fire from their bows made of horn with such skill that it is almost impossible to avoid being hit by them.'<sup>67</sup>



Fig. 3. Reconstructed ninth-11th Century Magyar bow.  
Collection of Hungarikums. Online.

As an equestrian people, the horse and its accoutrements were as vital to the Magyars as their ships were to the Vikings. It is not surprising therefore, that their saddles formed a 'perfectly balanced structure', according to the archaeologist who reconstructed them from grave finds in the 1930s, Professor Gyula László.<sup>68</sup> The saddle needed to be comfortable for the horse and the rider. This allowed the Magyars to achieve their remarkable cavalry campaigns covering distances of up to 1,500 kilometres each way, an equine achievement not equalled until the 19th Century in Europe. A well-fitted saddle was key to any cavalry campaign. Edwards states of European cavalries outside Hungary: 'Enormous wastage resulted from ill-fitting saddles'.<sup>69</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that all modern military saddles are variations on the Hungarian saddle, such as the British Universal Pattern saddle or the U.S. McClellan saddle.<sup>70</sup>

66 Leo VI. *The Taktika of Leo VI.* Cit., p. 453.

67 Regino. Trans.S. Maclean. *The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg.* Cit., p.205.

68 Gyula LÁSZLÓ. *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép,* Cit. p.347.

69 Elwyn Hartley EDWARDS. *The Saddle. In Theory and Practice.* J.A. Allen, London, 1990, p.17.

70 Cit., p.25.

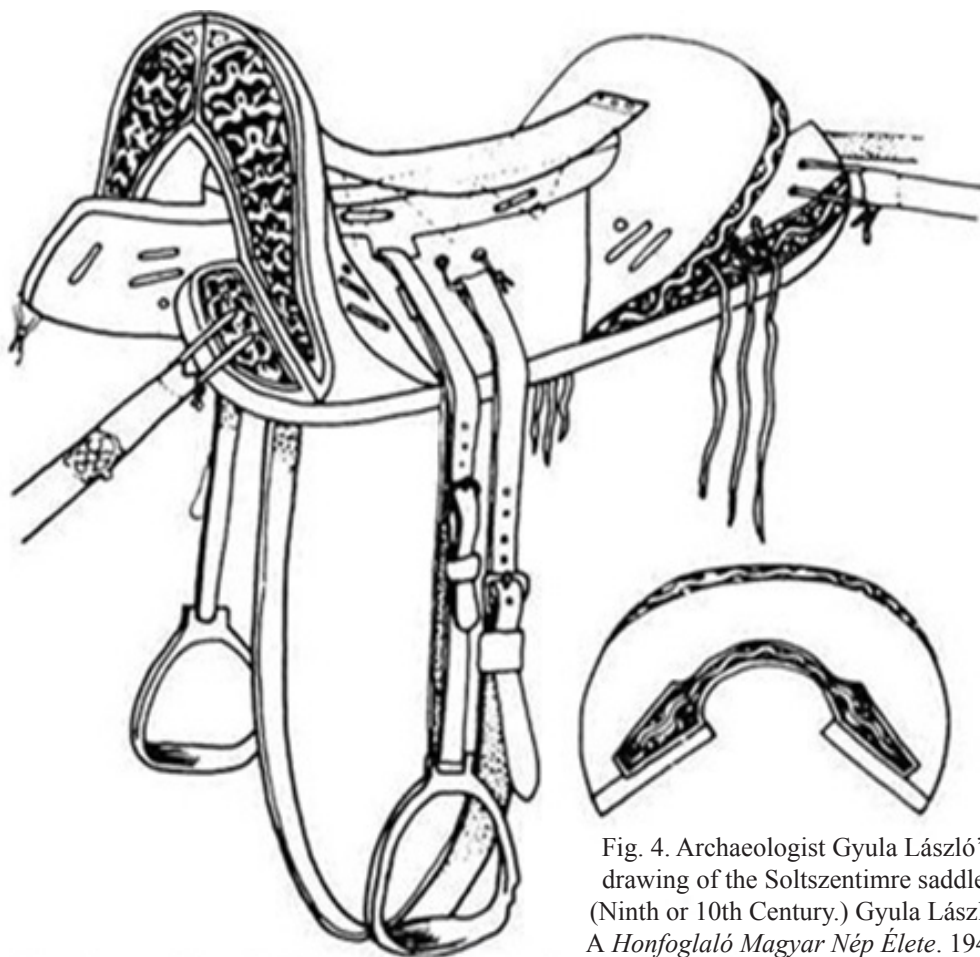


Fig. 4. Archaeologist Gyula László's drawing of the Soltszentimre saddle. (Ninth or 10th Century.) Gyula László, *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. 1944. Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó, 1988.

The Magyar campaigns, either in alliance with one of the great powers of the time (as described above) or as punitive and preventative actions, have been downgraded by most Western historians to 'predatory raids'.<sup>71</sup> German authors use the terms '*raubzüge*' or '*plünderungszüge*' ('plundering campaigns') which remain standard terminology.<sup>72</sup> These terms are misleading because the actions of a state aimed at holding and defending its newly won territory cannot be summed

71 Charles BOWLUS. 'The Early Hungarians as Mercenaries.' In J. France (Ed.), *Mercenaries and Paid Men.*, Cit., p. 198.

72 Rudolf HIESTAND. *Pressburg 907. Eine Wende in der Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches?* In: *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 57, 1994, Bayerischer Akademie, München, 1994, p.5.

up as 'predatory raids' or 'robber campaigns' because then all early medieval wars could be summarised as such. Charlemagne, often held up as a great military man, invaded the Avar Khaganate and his biographer wrote:

All the nobles of the Huns were killed in this war, all their glory passed away; their money and all their treasures that they had collected for so long were carried away. Nor can the memory of man recall any war waged against the Franks by which they were so much enriched and their wealth so increased.<sup>73</sup>

Does this mean Charlemagne's campaign against the Avars were a series of predatory raids? Charlemagne had a military concept (conquest) in mind, as did the Magyar state – survival. Therefore, even if Charlemagne's Franks were greatly enriched by plundering the Avar capital, their goal was a military one. In the same way, the goal of the Magyar campaigns was initially to help their allies (East Franks and Byzantines) and once these had turned on them, to destroy their armies (907-955) and stay on the defensive until 1030, and then repeatedly destroying invading armies of the HRE until 1054.

Unlike bandits and pirates, military actions need a state to provide an operational goal, in this case, the destruction of the enemy's ability to invade Hungary.<sup>74</sup> Another difference between, for example, Viking raids, and Magyar military campaigns, was that the Magyar central power (two princes and the Grand Prince) organised them, prepared them diplomatically, and led them, with the exception of the Grand Prince, who did not leave the Carpathian Basin.<sup>75</sup>

On the Vikings, Abels says:

'According to the Annals of St-Bertin, these ... Vikings had established themselves the previous year near the River Somme. There they had come to an agreement with King Charles the Bald to drive off or kill a different band of Vikings, who had built a fortress on the island of Oissel in the Seine, from which they had conducted raids deep into the countryside.'<sup>76</sup>

The annals referred to add that Charles the Bald supported these Vikings against those on the island:

---

73 Eginhard. *The Life of Charlemagne*. Trans. A.J. Grant. In Parentheses Publications, Cambridge, Ontario, 1999, p.13.

74 Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. US. Joint Publication 1-02, JP.3-0.

75 Kálmán NAGY. *A honfoglalás korának hadtörténete*, pp. 133-135.

76 Richard, ABELS. *Alfred the Great. War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*. (Routledge, Oxford and New York, 2013). p.106.

To support the besiegers, Charles ordered a levy to be raised from his realm to bring in 5,000 lb of silver and a large amount of livestock and corn, so that the realm should not be looted.<sup>77</sup>

Danish historian Johannes Brøndsted wrote: ‘This kind of offer was by no means rare among the Vikings, who were frequently willing to fight as mercenaries against their own countrymen.’<sup>78</sup>

This never happened with the Magyars, but instead, those wishing Magyar military aid had to approach the Grand Prince, that is, the central authority. While many Vikings acted as mercenaries, the Magyars did not.

### *Causes of Long-Range Magyar Campaigns*

The reason for the change of policy within the Magyar Grand Duchy can be found in the about-face of the East Franks after the death of Arnulf of Carinthia on December 8, 899. His son, Louis IV (The Child), was a minor and came under the influence of the Church which disapproved of the ‘heathen alliance’. Thus, when the Magyars sent emissaries in 900 to renew the alliance, these were arrested under the excuse of ‘spying’.<sup>79</sup> The Magyars responded by overrunning the Bavarian Ostmark (modern Western Hungary) and attacking Bavaria. There were some clashes with Margrave Liutpold’s army, in which Liutpold had some success. But there were two further events that, without doubt, turned the allied Magyars into enemies. The first was the murder of the second man in the polity, Prince Kurszán (or Kusál) who attended a ‘peace feast’ on the boundary River Fischa in 902 (some sources say 904), ‘in evil deceit’ as the German chronicler put it.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps the East Franks hoped that Kurszán was the king and his death would cause confusion among the Magyars. It did the opposite. After moves and counter-moves, most of them local, King Louis and Margrave Liutpold raised the entire Bavarian force (*Heerbann*) and a royal Frankish army and invaded the outer frontier of the Magyar realm, aiming to capture the key fortress of Breza-

77 *The Annals of St-Bertin*. (Manchester University Press, Manchester.) 1991, p. 95.

78 Johannes, BRÖNSTED. *The Vikings. The Background to a Fierce and Fascinating Civilisation*. (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK), p.49.

79 Szabolcs DE VAJAY. S. De Vajay. *Der Eintritt Des Ungarischen Stammes in Die Europäische Geschichte*. (862-933). v. Hase & Kochlir Verlag, Mainz., 1968, pp. 31-2.

80 DE VAJAY. *Der Eintritt Des Ungarischen Stammes*, Cit., pp. 33-5.

lauspurc, or Pressburg, in 907. (Modern Bratislava.) The Magyars won a decisive victory, utterly destroying the invading Bavarian army, killing Liutpold and most of the Bavarian nobility and high clergy.<sup>81</sup> These three events, doubtless seen as atrocities by the Magyars, clearly led to a change in their plans, and they, realising they could not live in peace beside a power like East Francia, went onto the offensive.

### *Overlooked battles*

Many authors downplay or ignore Magyar battlefield victories, concentrating on one partial and one complete defeat they suffered in 933 and 955. However, neither of these was anywhere near Hungary and following their complete defensive victory in 907, it is necessary to consider their offensive victories and later, their successful defence of their land for a balanced view of what are misleadingly called 'Magyar raids'. In 908, for instance, a Magyar army crossed Bavaria to support the Elbe Slav Dalamintz tribe, who had called on them in 906. Striking from the south at Swabia and Thuringia, they were met by Thuringia's Duke Burchard, Count Egino and the Bishop of Würzburg, Rudolf I, leading an army of Franconians, Saxons and Thuringians near Eisenach. Again, the East Franks suffering a total defeat, with all three commanders killed.<sup>82</sup>

The Magyars won possibly their greatest victory in 910 near Augsburg, better known for their defeat in the area in 955. King Louis the Child, now a teenager, raised the 'general levy of the Franks', comprising forces from Swabia and the royal army.<sup>83</sup> The goal of this army was, in Liudprand's words, that King Louis was 'about to launch a war against the Hungarians.'<sup>84</sup> That this constituted a serious threat to the Magyar state was clear, as more troops were being raised than had invaded Magyar-Land in 907. Then, the Bavarians were the main force, while in this case, the Royal Levy, plus that of Swabia, Franconia and Lorraine were raised. The Magyars, as can be seen from the events, defeated them in detail, engaging first one gathered force, then the other. This can hardly be shrugged off as 'raiding'!

---

81 Cit., pp. 41-43.

82 Cit., p.41.

83 John KEEGAN, *J. A History of Warfare*. Pimlico, London, 1994, p. 287.

84 *The Complete Works of Liudprand*. Cit., p.75.

Liudprand describes the battle, stating the Magyars' appearance on the Lech River plain on June 12 was unexpected, indicating they had good intelligence.<sup>85</sup> The chronicler records a long battle, with the Franks holding the upper hand, until the Magyars combined a feigned retreat with ambushes, and in Liudprand's words: 'The king himself marvelled that after being the victor he was now vanquished, and it was all the more burdensome for him because unexpected.'<sup>86</sup> While King Louis survived the battle, the military commander, Count Gausbert of Swabia, was killed. The other force, of Franconians and Lotharingians, was crushed on the Rednitz River, inside the Duchy of Franconia. Gebhard, Duke of Lorraine was also killed.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the Magyars defeated the East Frankish Royal army and that of Swabia, then the combined forces of Franconia and Lorraine in a matter of ten days: all this in the middle of Frankish territory. The *Continuator* of Regino's Chronicle wrote: 'The Franks fought the Hungarians on the frontier between Bavaria and Francia, and pitiably they either fled or were defeated.'<sup>88</sup>

Hardly any English-language histories discuss these truly important battles, which pitted Magyar armies against the most powerful military force in Catholic Western Europe. Their complete victories at Pressburg; the Eisenach; the Lech River and the Rednitz deserve to be closely studied, instead of ignored.<sup>89</sup>

The first decade of this East Frank-Magyar war can be seen as a complete success on the part of the Magyars, who simultaneously avoided the fate of the Avars and counterattacked the Franks. The military aspect of the next four decades can be summarised as the Magyars strategically taking the offensive, with their enemies, the East and West Franks, the Byzantines and Italians suffering attacks, but also on the home front, a stronger control of Hungary, definition of borders and gradual acceptance by their neighbours and former opponents.<sup>90</sup> The decade 900-910 saw independent Magyar military actions and victories, while the next decade 910-920, saw alliances, such as with Arnulf 'the Bad' of Bavaria and Berengar I of Italy. One example of these allied campaigns would be that of

---

85 Cit., p.77.

86 Cit.

87 DE VAJAY. *Der Eintritt Des Ungarischen Stammebundes*, p. 49.

88 Regino. Trans. Simon Maclean. *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe: The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*. Cit., p.232.

89 Charles BOWLUS. 'The Early Hungarians as Mercenaries.' Cit.,p. The entire article is dedicated to this outdated idea. Also see Keegan, Keen, etc.

90 Kálmán NAGY. *A honfoglalás*, pp. 136-173.

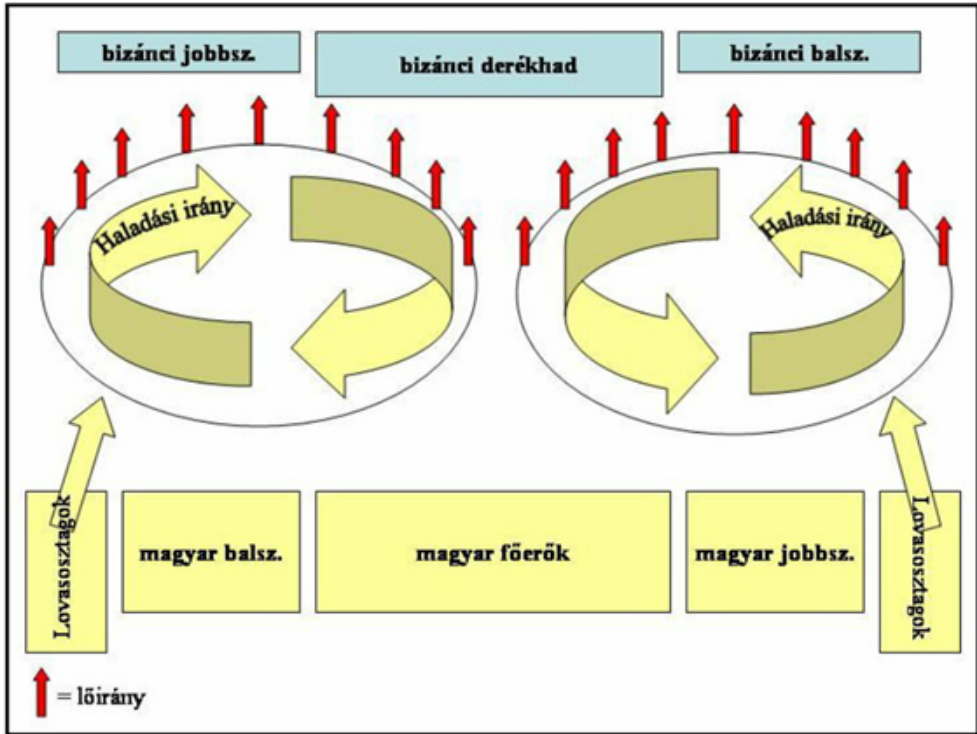


Fig. 5. Zs. Zólyomi. Hadmérnök. VI/1.  
(Ludovika Military Academy, Budapest, 2011), p.335.

Berengar I, who called on his Magyar allies against rebel dukes in 919.<sup>91</sup>

Magyar/steppe tactics are described by contemporary Arab author Al Masudi, in the battle of W.l.n.d.r, in 934 (a year after the much-touted defeat of a Magyar force in Saxony). In this clash, a joint Magyar-Pecheneg force defeated a Bulgarian-Byzantine army. The battle site is thought to be either Belgrade or Bulgarophyon (today's Babaeski, about 160 kilometres from Constantinople). After a day's inconclusive fighting, the Pechenegs attacked the Byzantine centre with non-stop archery by forming continuous circles on the left and right of the main force. The losses sustained were physically and psychologically unbearable for the Byzantines and they charged the centre of the joint steppe army. The Magyar main force fired one barrage of arrows and went to close combat.

Masudi reports the Magyars attacking from both flanks using swords, destroy-

91 DE VAJAY. *Der Eintritt*, pp. 38-9 and 62-5.

ing the Byzantine-Bulgarian army.<sup>92</sup> (Of course, this does not mean the Magyars' defeat at Riade in 933 should be ignored, but neither should it be the only example of open battles in the 930s.) This was followed immediately by a Magyar invasion of Byzantium's Balkan provinces, reaching the walls of Constantinople. The Patrician Theophanes then made a five-year peace with them.<sup>93</sup>

Magyar relations with Byzantium differed from those with the West. While Western envoys visited the Magyars, no high-ranking Magyar held discussions with the kings of East or West Francia or those of Italy. Such treaties as were made were done through intermediaries, with some exceptions, such as when Arnulf 'The Bad' fled to Hungary in 914.<sup>94</sup> Arnulf, as Duke of Bavaria, returned to his throne in 917 with Magyar military assistance. In this case a high-ranking Western European leader made a treaty with the highest-ranking Magyars (renewed in 926), but he is the exception rather than the rule.

By way of contrast, Magyar leaders of the highest (Grand Princely) rank visited the Byzantine court in 948.<sup>95</sup> These men were among the highest dignitaries of the land. Bulcsú, as Constantine Porphyrogenitos tells us, in the DAI, was the *karchas* (*horka* in Hungarian) and a prince of the Árpád House, the great-grandson of Árpád *Termtzous* in Constantine's rendering, *Tormás* in Hungarian. No officials of such high rank ever visited a Western court.<sup>96</sup>

Warfare also continued on and off between the Magyars and the Byzantines, initially because the latter attempted to use them for their own purposes, and later because both saw an enemy in the Bulgars.<sup>97</sup> Relations were peaceful, as the second-highest ranking leader of the Magyars, the *gyula* led a force to Constantinople in 953 and was, like Bulcsú, baptised, but returned with a bishop, Hierotheos,

---

92 János B. SZABÓ. *A középkor magyarországi könnyűlovassága. X-XVI század*. Attraktor, Gödöllő, 2017, pp. 110-112.

93 Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *De Administrando Imperio, (DAI)* ,Ed. Gy Moravcsik. Trans. R.J.H. Jenkins. (Harvard University, Washington D.C.,1985), p.56.

94 Tibor JOÓ. 'Árpád-kori emlékek Regensburgban és Passauban', In: A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. XXVII. (Herman Ottó Múzeum. Miskolc, 1989), p. 326.

95 KRISTÓ Gyula-MAKK Ferenc. *A kilencedik és tizedik század története*. (Pannonica, Budapest, 2001), p.128

96 *De Administrando Imperio, (DAI)*, p. 179.

97 Jonathan SHEPARD. 'Byzantine Writers on the Hungarians in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', In: *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*. (Routledge, Oxford-New York, 2016), pp. 100-114.

to convert 'Turkia' to Christianity.<sup>98</sup> Relations varied between Hungary and Byzantium, in the next few centuries, but were generally peaceful. Hungary's first Christian king, Stephen I, assisted Emperor Basil II in ending the First Bulgarian Empire in 1018.<sup>99</sup>

In the next decade, in alliance with Hugh of Provence, a Magyar army defeated a Moorish force from the fortress of Fraxinetum in southern Provence in 942.<sup>100</sup> They then crossed the Pyrenees, and laid siege to Lerida in the Caliphate of Cordoba.<sup>101</sup> The siege failed, but they captured an important commander and forced the Caliphate to pay ransom.<sup>102</sup> Here they crossed both the Alps and the Pyrenees, covering some 1,500 kilometres each way, a feat likely not equalled in European cavalry warfare until the Napoleonic Wars. As can be seen from the foregoing, the list of key Magyar victories in open battle is long and the study of these long-range cavalry campaigns is unhappily missing from medieval histories, diminishing the understanding of cavalry warfare in Europe, not to mention the activities of the Magyar Grand Duchy.

In total, there were at least 45 major campaigns sent out of the Grand Duchy between 898 and 970, of these 24 were aimed at the main threat, the German lands; seven against Italy; another seven against West Francia; two against Iberia and five against Byzantine territories, including Italian lands.<sup>103</sup> Some five were unsuccessful, while some 40 campaigns achieved their goal.<sup>104</sup> In the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, Hungary also successfully defended itself against invasions from the HRE.<sup>105</sup> They won six large-scale open battles, partially lost one and totally lost another. Open battles, both defensive and offensive, of which ten are victories, against Europe's most powerful armies cannot be described simply as 'raids'.

---

98 KRISTÓ-MAKK. *A kilencedik és a tizedik század*. Cit. pp. 129-130.

99 Gyula MORAVCSIK. *Byzantium and the Magyars*. (Adolf Hakkert Publishers, Amsterdam, 1970), p.62.

100 Ferenc MAKK: 'a fraxinetumi csata'. In: *Bölcsészettudományok* 6. pp. 237-246. 2014.

101 Cit.

102 Károly CZEGLÉDY. "Új arab forrás a magyarok 942. évi spanyolországi kalandozásáról". *Magyar Őstörténeti Tanulmányok*. Körösi Csorna Társaság, MTA. Budapest, 1985, pp. 130-131.

103 Kálman NAGY. *A honfoglalás*, p. 168.

104 Cit.

105 László VESZPRÉMY. 'A II századi magyar-német háborúk.' *Korunk*. III Folyam, 2019 március. Korunk Akadémia Komp Press, p. 6-14.

### *Defensive battles*

Following the well-known Magyar defeat at the Second Battle of the Lechfeld near Augsburg in 955, they adopted a defensive posture towards the West but carried on their attacks against Byzantium until 970. That King Otto I, later Emperor Otto the Great, did not defeat ‘the Magyars’ in 955 but only an expeditionary force is underlined by the fact that he never tried to invade Hungary, despite following an expansionist policy which involved invading many other lands, including West Francia, the Elbe Slav lands; Bohemia and Italy.<sup>106</sup> While Otto did not attempt an invasion of Hungary, his brother, Duke Henry I of Bavaria, carried out a minor invasion of the border region, which appears to have made very little impact on either side.<sup>107</sup> It is thought-provoking to note that Pope John XII, in his feud with Otto in 962, sent letters to Byzantium and Hungary asking for military aid.<sup>108</sup> Why would the pope turn to a people who were utterly defeated, lacking the ability to reach Italy and fight for him? Further, it was Otto who first sought peace with the Hungarians in 973, sending Bishop Bruno of Verden to Hungary.<sup>109</sup> Following this mission, 12 Magyar nobles arrived at the German court in Quedlinburg, but no-one of the highest rank.<sup>110</sup>

The first serious invasion of Hungary since 907 took place under the Salian Emperor Conrad II in 1030. His army, which included contingents from Luxembourg, Lorraine and Moravia was repulsed by Hungarian King Stephen I due to strong border defences and Hungarian cavalry manoeuvre.<sup>111</sup> The Niederaltaich

<sup>106</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg. *Chronicon*. Ottonian Germany. Book Two. Trans. David A. Warner. (Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 89, 123.

<sup>107</sup> Widukind of Corvey. *Deeds of the Saxons*, Trans with notes. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 2014, Book Two, 93 briefly mentions “two victories” over the Magyars by Henry in 950, but nothing of the invasion. The other source is the Hildesheim Annals. Bethany Hope ALLEN, *The Annals of Hildesheim*, master’s Thesis, University of New Hampshire, Durham, 2007, p.64. The Annals say: for the year 950: “In 950, a great war was waged between the Bavarians and the Hungarians.”

<sup>108</sup> Liudprand of Cremona. *Chronicle of Otto’s Reign*. Trans. F.A. Wright. Routledge, London, 1930, pp.219-220.

<sup>109</sup> István ZOMBORY, Pál CSÉFALVY and Maria Antoinietta DI ANGELIS. *A Thousand Years of Christianity in Hungary*. Hungarian Catholic Bishops Conference, Budapest, 2001, p. 29.

<sup>110</sup> István NEMESKÜRTY. *Magyar Századok. Gondolatforgácsok a nemzet életrajzához*. Szabad Tér Kiadó, Budapest 2009, Ch 1 paragraph 1.

<sup>111</sup> László VESZPRÉMY. ‘A II századi magyar-német háborúk’, p.6.



Fig. 6. Illustration on page 61 of the *Chronicon Pictum* showing the sinking of Emperor Henry III's ships at Pressburg. (Public Domain.Wikimedia Commons)

Annals say: 'Emperor Conrad...however, returned from Hungary without an army, without having achieved anything, as his army was pressed by starvation and was captured at Vienna.'<sup>112</sup> Following a violent interregnum, Saint Stephen's cousin King Andrew I, was soon subject to an attack by Gebhard, Bishop of Regensburg in 1050. Andrew replied with a raid of his own, and the emperor, Henry III, prepared for a major invasion of the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Cit.

<sup>113</sup> Cit., p.10.

For his 1051 invasion, Emperor Henry III – considered by many as one of the most powerful HRE emperors -- assembled a great army at Regensburg, bringing troops from all his realms, including the German duchies, Bohemians, Poles and men of Lombardy.<sup>114</sup>

This mighty force invaded Hungary in three columns: North of the River Danube under Dukes Welf III of Carinthia and Bretislav I of Bohemia; a fleet under Bishop Gebhard on the river carrying supplies and additional troops; and the main force under the emperor invaded from Carinthia, entering Hungary in northern Transdanubia.<sup>115</sup> However, King Andrew ordered a scorched earth policy, so the emperor's army arrived near the capital, Székesfehérvár, almost starving. Meanwhile, Hungarian and Pecheneg light cavalry harrassed the columns with night-and-day mounted archery, and wore the imperial army down.<sup>116</sup> Gebhard's supplies never reached Henry due to a ruse which tricked the bishop into withdrawing to Bavaria.

Prince Béla came behind the main force with Hungarian knights and eventually the imperial army threw away its shields and armour as it fled north from Székesfehérvár through hills, known as Vértes, (armoured) because of all the shields and other items thrown away by the knights.<sup>117</sup> Subsequent, smaller invasions were repulsed. This invasion was a key moment in the history of the Hungarian Kingdom and an important test for its defences. Unlike neighbouring Bohemia and Poland, which were subjected to repeated incursions and partial or complete conquests from the empire, Hungary confirmed its independence in these defensive campaigns.

This author believes that separating the long-range external campaigns of the Magyars/Hungarians from the earlier and later attacks of the East Franks/HRE is myopic and causes a type of optical illusion in terms of cause and effect.

---

114 József BÁNLAKY. 2. 'III. Henrik negyedik hadjárata Magyarország ellen 1051-ben.' In: *A Magyar Nemzet Hadtörténelme*. (Grill, Budapest, 1942), Hungarian Electronic Library. Online.

115 József BÁNLAKY, Cit.

116 József BÁNLAKY, Cit.

117 László VESZPRÉMY. 'A II századi magyar-német háborúk', Cit., pp. 10-13 and BÁNLAKY, Cit.

### *Magyar Plunder and Looting*

Contemporary sources are full of Magyar plunder and tribute, and archaeologists have found some 15 tons of silver, both from these sources and from trade.<sup>118</sup> Liudprand's work is typical: 'The nation of the Hungarians, greedy, rash, ignorant of almighty God but well versed in every crime, avid only for murder and plunder.'<sup>119</sup> Regino of Prüm, while condemning the pagan Magyars' plundering, took a softer line while commenting on the "Babenberg Feud". He wrote of Adalbert of Babenberg: 'He .... destroying everything with slaughter and pillage... returned to the fortress of Babenberg with his men loaded down with booty and prodigious plunder.'<sup>120</sup>

Hungarian coin finds from Western Europe underline the small part played by plunder in the Magyar expeditions. Despite the largest number of campaigns being led against Germany, only 7 percent of coins originated from there. Of the rest, 21 percent were from West Francia, and as many as 67 percent from Italy.<sup>121</sup> If the Magyars' estimated 15 tons of loot were their sole object, then they failed miserably. Comparing the Vikings' plunder and tribute, estimates vary, but a Swedish source puts it at 100 tons (admittedly over a longer time).<sup>122</sup> According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in 1007 alone, some 36,000 pounds, or 13,4 tons, were paid to them by King Aethelred II to buy peace.<sup>123</sup> Halsall points out that levying tribute on a defeated foe, as well as plunder, laying waste the land and other brutal practices were commonplace in the Carolingian realms. Halsall describes another reason that could explain why the Magyars, as part of a given military campaign, burned and looted: 'Harrying territory, burning houses and crops, killing or dispersing livestock, ripping up vines ... struck at the political legitimacy of the opposing realm. A king or lord was, after all, supposed to

---

118 László VESZPRÉMY. 'A honfoglalás és kalandozás kora.' In: *Magyarország hadtörténete I. A kezdetektől 1536-ig*. Ed. László VESZPRÉMY. (Zrínyi Kiadó, Budapest 2017), p.19.

119 Liudprand of Cremona. *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*. Trans. P. Squatriti. (Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 2007), p. 56.

120 Regino. S. Maclean. *The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*. Cit, pp.229-30

121 László VESZPRÉMY. 'A honfoglalás és kalandozás kora', p.19.

122 Rune EDBERG. *Runriket Täby-Vallentuna – en handledning*. Stockholms läns museum, Stockholm, 2007, p. 11.

123 Robert COHEN. "The Land Tax in England, 991-1162." Ph. D thesis, University of Oxford, 2018, p.20.

defend his subjects, followers or clients and their property from these sorts of depredations.<sup>124</sup> Comparing near-contemporary Frankish attitudes to those of the Magyars, the Grand Duke, or any other high-ranking leader, would derive great honour from imposing tribute on the German or Byzantine emperors.

Another argument against the idea that these long-range expeditions were solely for plunder was raised decades ago by Bálint Csanád, and this has been followed up by Erwin Gáll. He points out that looking from the Carpathian Basin, the campaigns did not go where the real wealth was, in the north and east:

If they were only for the intent of looting, the campaigns would also have been conducted in other directions (for economic considerations). From the 8th century on, the transcontinental trade system has developed significantly (along the northern part of the Silk Road, as well as the north-south waterway of the Volga River). As illustrated by the amount of Arab coins coming to the northern parts of “Eastern Europe” and Scandinavia, trade with Scandinavia, the northern Slavs, the Volga Bulgarians and the Arab world intensified.<sup>125</sup>

### *Summary*

The question therefore is not ‘did the Magyars plunder and demand tribute’, but rather, ‘were their attacks exclusively done for this purpose’? The scientific discoveries mentioned above show clearly that the Magyars were not tribes of wandering nomads and therefore, had no need to live off plunder only.

The Magyar tribal/clan confederation formed a state on the steppe and resolved to move to the Carpathian Basin in the mid-to-late ninth century. This society changed drastically in the tenth century, with most Magyars mixing with the majority population in the basin, the Avars. The widespread use of agriculture in ninth and tenth century Hungary, the existence of large-scale iron smelting and smithing, tanneries and other trades, shows even more clearly the complexity of their society. Their contribution to transportation has gone unremarked, but they had outstanding saddlers, wainwrights and cartwrights as well as excellent bowyers, arrowsmiths and swordsmiths and all the trades needed to live a mixed agricultural-pastoral lifeway. It has been shown that they traded as far away as

---

<sup>124</sup> Cit., p.18.

<sup>125</sup> Ervin GÁLL. *The Source of power and the Hungarian conquest – subjugation and Integration* (English summary. Magyarságkutató Intézet, Budapest, 2019) p.323.

Crimea and Persia, again indicating that they had no need to 'raid' from the relatively poor West. The Magyar military campaigns, both defensive and offensive, showed a very high standard of horsemanship which remained part of the country's culture, and their battle tactics were highly complex and gave them the upper hand in most of their encounters with Western European armies, both offensively and defensively. The most important aspect of the long-range Magyar campaigns to the West and south is not that they plundered or laid waste the land, but that the Magyars were able to keep their enemies outside their new home in the 123 years between 907 and 1030. By keeping the expansionist powers, like the HRE, outside their lands, the Magyars were able to convert to Christianity in peace and establish a Christian Hungarian kingdom that incorporated both Roman and steppe ideas of statehood and that was strong, independent, and stable for six hundred years.

#### PRIMARY SOURCES:

- Annals of Hildesheim*, Bethany Hope Allen, master's Thesis, University of New Hampshire, Durham, 2007.
- The Annals of St-Bertin*. Translated by Janet L. Nelson. (Ninth Century Histories, Volume I, Manchester University Press, Manchester.) 1991.
- Anonymus, *Gesta Hungarorum*. Hungarian translation by Dezső Pais. Magyar Helikon, Budapest, 1977.
- Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, (DAI) ,Ed. Gy Moravcsik. Trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, Harvard University, Washington D.C., 1985.
- Eginhard. *The Life of Charlemagne*. Trans. A.J. Grant. In Parentheses Publications, Cambridge, Ontario, 1999.
- Herodotus, *The Histories*. Trans. A. De Sélincourt. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977.
- Leo VI. *The Taktika of Leo VI. Leo VI. Trans: G. Dennis. Harvard University, 2010, Constitution XVIII.*
- Liudprand of Cremona, *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*. Trans.P. Squatriti. Medieval Texts in Translation. Catholic University of America Press. 2007.
- Liudprand of Cremona. *Chronicle of Otto's Reign*. Trans. F.A. Wright. Routledge, London, 1930. R.J.H. Jenkins. Harvard University, Washington D.C., 1985.
- Regino, *The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg. History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe*: Trans. S. Maclean. (Manchester University Press. 2009).
- Saint Stephen of Hungary. *István király Intelmei. Gondolkodó Magyarok*. Ed. G. Szigethy. Magvető Kiadó, 1982.

- Simon de Kéza, *Kézai Simon Mester Magyar Krónikája*. Trans. Károly Szabó. (Mór Kiadó Pest, 1862).
- Thietmar of Merseburg. *Chronicon*. Ottonian Germany. Book Two. Trans. David A. Warner. Manchester University Press, 2001.
- Widukind of Corvey. *Deeds of the Saxons*, Trans with notes. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 2014.

#### SECONDARY SOURCES:

- ABELS Richard. *Alfred the Great. War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*. Routledge, Oxford and New York, 2013.
- BÁNLAJKY József. 'III. Henrik negyedik hadjárata Magyarország ellen 1051-ben.' In: *A Magyar Nemzet Hadtörténelme*. Grill, Budapest, 1942, Hungarian Electronic Library. Online. <https://mek.oszk.hu/09400/09477/html/0003/165.html#ref3>
- BENCSEK Péter and László BORBÉLY. *A IX-XI századi magyar íj*. Liter-Godolló, 2014.
- BOGYAY Tamás. *Magyarország Története Távatból*. Mérleg, Budapest, 1993.
- BOWLUS Charles. *Franks, Moravians, and Magyars: The Struggle for the Middle Danube, 788-907*. Middle Ages Series, Eds: E. Peters and H. C. Lea. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1995.
- BOWLUS, Charles, 'The Early Hungarians as Mercenaries.' In J. France (ed), *Mercenaries and Paid Men. The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages, Proceedings of a Conference Held at University of Wales, Swansea, 7th-9th July, 2005*.
- BRØNDSTED, Johannes. *The Vikings. The Background to a Fierce and Fascinating Civilisation*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK. 1986.
- CHEN Sanping. "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Cultures regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Vol. 12, No.3. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- COHEN Robert. "The Land Tax in England, 991-1162." Ph. D thesis, University of Oxford, 2018.
- COLLECTION OF HUNGARICUMS Hungarian bow of the 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Centuries. <https://www.hungarikum.hu/en/content/hungarian-bow-9th-11th-century>
- CZEGLÉDY Károly. "Új arab forrás a magyarok 942. évi spanyolországi kalandozásáról". *Magyar Őstörténeti Tanulmányok*. Körösi Csorna Társaság, MTA. Budapest, 1985.
- DIGITÁLIS LEGENDÁRIUM. "In the Saddle, on Horseback - The art of war of the conquest-era Magyars." 33-18:30. Online. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZj5L-GJr\\_Iw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZj5L-GJr_Iw)
- EDBERG Rune. *Runriket Täby-Vallentuna – en handledning*. Stockholms läns museum, Stockholm, 2007.
- EDWARDS Elwyn Hartley. *The Saddle. In Theory and Practice*. J.A. Allen, London, 1990

- FODOR István In: *The Ancient Hungarians. Exhibition Catalogue. Ironworking.* Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 1996.
- GÁLL, Ervin, 'A periférikus 10. századi erdélyi medence.' 25/8 Korunk. Komp-Press, Kolozsvár/Cluj 2014.
- GÁLL, Ervin, *A hatalom forrása és a magyar honfoglalás – Hódítás és integráció. A korai magyar történelem egy régész szempontjából [The source of power and the Hungarian conquest - Conquest and integration. Early Hungarian history from the point of view of an archaeologist]* (Magyarságkutató Intézet, Budapest, 2019).
- GÖMÖRI János, '„Lovasnépek” kohászata Pannoniában'. IN: *Az Őshazától A Kárpátokig.* Ed: Viktor Szombathelyi. Panoráma, Budapest, 1985.
- GÖMÖRI János. 'The bloomery museum at Somogyfajsz (Hungary) and some archaeometallurgical sites in Pannonia from the Avar - and early Hungarian period.' *MJoM, Metallurgija – Journal of Metallurgy. Volume 12, 2006, Special Issue: Archaeometallurgy.*
- GÖMÖRI János. 'Lovasnépek' vaskohászata Pannoniában. 'In: *Az őshazától a Kárpátokig.* Ed. V. Szombathy. Panoráma, Budapest, 1985.
- HIESTAND Rudolf. *Pressburg 907. Eine Wende in der Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches?* In: *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 57, 1994, Bayerischer Akademie, München, 1994.
- HUNGARIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM. Permanent Exhibition. *Between East and West. Hungarian Conquest Period.* 2023. Online <https://mnm.hu/hu/gyujtemenyek/department-archaeology/honfoglalaskori-gyujtemeny>
- KEEGAN John. J. *A History of Warfare.* Pimlico, London, 1994.
- KMOSKÓ Mihály. *Mohamedán Írók A Steppe Népeiről: Földrajzi Irodalom I/1* (Ed.) Zimonyi, I. Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 1997.
- LÁSZLÓ Gyula, *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete.* 1944.Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó, 1988.
- MAKK Ferenc: *A fraxinetumi csata.* In: *Bölcsészettudományok* 6. 2014.
- MARÓTI K, MAÁR K, NEPARÁCZKI E, KOVÁCS B et al, 'The genetic origin of Huns, Avars, and conquering Hungarians,' *Current Biology* 32, Elsevier, Inc. 2022, online. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960982222007321>
- MORAVCSIK. Gyula, *Byzantium and the Magyars.* Adolf Hakkert Publishers, Amsterdam, 1970.
- NAGY Kálmán. *A honfoglalás korának hadtörténete.* Heraldika Kiadó, Budapest, 2007.
- NEMESKÜRTY István. *Magyar Századok. Gondolatforgácsok a nemzet életrajzához.* Szabad Tér Kiadó, Budapest 2009.
- OBRUSÁNSZKY Borbála. *Andaság és komaság. 'Századok.'* Magyar Történelmi Társulat, Budapest, 2004.
- OLAJOS Terézia. 'A Kárpát-medencei onogurok történetéhez.' *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis* (75).Szeged, 2013.

- POHL, Walter. "A non-Roman empire in Central Europe," in *Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, (Ed.) by Hans-Werner Goetz, Jorg Jarnut, Walter Pohl, Leiden – Boston, 2003.
- ROGERS John Daniel. 'Inner Asian States and Empires: Theories and Synthesis.' *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Vol. 20, No. 3. Springer, 2012.
- SUDÁR Balázs and Zsolt PETKES, *A honfoglalók viselete: Magyar Őstörténet 1*. Helikon, Budapest, 2015.
- SUDÁR Balázs and Zsolt PETKES. *Hétköznepok a honfoglalás korában: Magyar Őstörténet 5*. Helikon Kiadó, Budapest, 2017.
- SUDÁR Balázs and Zsolt Petkes. *Honfoglalók fegyverben. Magyar Őstörténet 3*. Helikon Kiadó. Budapest, Helikon, 2015.
- SZABADOS, György, 'Egy Steppe-állam Európa közepén: Magyar Nagyfejedelemség.' *Dolgozatok az erdélyi érem-és regiségtárából*. Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, Kolozsvár, 2013.
- SZABÓ, János B., *A középkor magyarországi könnyűlovassága. X-XVI század*. Attraktor, Gödöllő, 2017.
- VAJAY Szabolcs. *Der Eintritt Des Ungarischen Stammebundes in Die Europäische Geschichte*. (862-933). v. Hase & Kochltr Verlag, Mainz., 1968.
- VESZPRÉMY László. 'A honfoglalás és kalandozás kora.' In: *Magyarország hadtörténete I. A kezdetektől 1536-ig*. Ed. László VESZPRÉMY. Zrínyi Kiadó, Budapest 2017.
- VESZPRÉMY László. 'A II századi magyar-német háborúk.' *Korunk*. III Folyam, 2019 március. Korunk Akadémia Komp Press, 2019.
- ZIMONYI István. 'Muslim Sources on the Magyars in the Second Half of the 9th Century: 'The Magyar Chapter of the Jayhani Tradition,' In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, Ed: Florin Curta. Brill, Leiden, 2016.
- ZOMBORY István, Pál CSÉFALVY and Maria Antoinietta DI ANGELIS. *A Thousand Years of Christianity in Hungary*. Hungarian Catholic Bishops Conference, Budapest, 2001.

# The *Enseignements* of Theodore Palaiologos

*A Speculum* in the Style of a Byzantine Military Treatise<sup>1</sup>

by JÜRIG GASSMANN

ABSTRACT. The *Enseignements* of Theodore Palaiologos, Marquis of Monferrat, are an example of an original, military-related text from the first half of the fourteenth century. The *Enseignements* have not had a lucky publication history; both originals were lost, they survive only in one French translation. They are currently accessible only in a transcription of 1983, long out of print. The tract has received attention from Italian and Byzantinist historians, but anglophone academic treatments are not evident. Unusually for a military treatise of the time, it does not rely on Vegetius, but integrates the author's personal experience of warfare in Italy and (presumably) the military literary tradition of his native Byzantine Empire. The result is a handbook combining integrated strategic thinking to produce a manual on leadership. The purpose of this brief article is to provide an introduction to this exceptional text and especially its military-related content, and thereby make it and the secondary literature related to it more generally accessible.

KEYWORD. MEDIEVAL WARFARE; MILITARY HISTORY; MEDIEVAL ITALY; ENSEIGNEMENTS; BYZANTINE MILITARY HISTORY; VEGETIUS

## *The Author*

**T**heodore Palaiologos (1291-1338) was born in the purple to the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II (1259-1328, emperor since 1282), the second son from his second marriage. Theodore's mother was Yolanda of Monferrat (c.1274-1317), who assumed the name Irene on becoming Empress. Of special interest here is his mother's family; Irene's brother John I the Just, Marquis of Monferrat (1277-1305, marquis since 1292), died suddenly and un-

<sup>1</sup> The subtitle is taken from Marco MERLO, « Le armi del marchese. Gli armamenti negli *enseignements* di Teodoro Paleologo tra teoria e pratica della Guerra », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 499-568, at pp. 515-16.

expectedly without issue. John had been the last of the Aleramic line, which had ruled the marquisate since it was established in about 950 by Berengar II to protect the western boundaries of the Kingdom of Italy.

Monferrat gained in prominence in the twelfth century; Conrad I was King of Jerusalem in 1192, his brother Boniface led the Fourth Crusade, which resulted in the Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204. The Aleramic involvement with Byzantine politics remained strong and explains Andronicus' choice of Yolanda of Monferrat for his second marriage. John had appointed his sister and her sons as his heirs,<sup>2</sup> so on his death in 1305, a delegation of Monferrat worthies travelled to Constantinople, seeking their future prince.

Theodore, then fourteen, was tapped to assume the marquisate.<sup>3</sup> His mother had intended a dynastic marriage for Theodore in furtherance of her own schemes in the complicated politics of the Byzantine court, but on his designation as the future marquis, that plan was scrapped in favour of a match with Argentina, the daughter of Opizzino Spinola, then one of the two *capitani del popolo* of Genoa.<sup>4</sup>

The Genoese connection – with its geographical proximity to Monferrat –

- 
- 2 On the complexity of John's will Riccardo RAO, « La continuità aleramica: il governo del marchesato e i poteri locali durante la successione paleologa (1305-1310) », in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 23-44, on pp. 23-4; Gian Savino PENE VIDARI, « Teodoro I e il parlamento del Monferrato », in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 119-29, on pp. 120-21.
  - 3 Not without complications: Angeliki E. LAIOU, « A Byzantine Prince Latinized: Theodore Palaeologus, Marquis of Montferrat », *Byzantion* 38 (1968), pp. 386-410, at pp. 394-96; Walter HABERSTUMPF, « Teodoro I Paleologo e il Monferrato fra Oriente e Occidente », in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 15-22, at pp. 15-17.
  - 4 On the early personal history of Theodore see Lutz RICKELT, « Im Westen Grieche, im Osten Lateiner: Theodoros Palaiologos von Monferrat », in Falko DAIM, Dominik HEHER, Christian GASTGEBER, Claudia RAPP (eds.), *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge: Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*, Vol. 2, Heidelberg, Propylaeum, 2019, pp. 269-76, at pp. 269-71; Christine KNOWLES, *Les Enseignements de Théodore Paléologue*, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 1983, pp. 1-3, 26-39; Nikolaos KANELLOPOULOS, « The Byzantine Influence on the Military Writings of Theodore I Palaiologos, Marquis of Monferrat », in Georgios THEOTOKIS and Aysel YILDIZ (eds.), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea*, Leiden / Boston MA, Brill, 2018, pp. 287-98, at pp. 287-88.

would be valuable to Theodore, but it was also of direct relevance to the Empire. Byzantium at the time was wholly dependent on mercenaries and had engaged the Catalan Company. When the Empire was unable to pay them, the Company took Imperial towns and began to carve out a fiefdom for itself. Andronicus had to scramble to find an alternative mercenary force to bring the Catalans under control. Only the Genoese were willing to take on the job, mainly because the Catalans were jeopardising Genoa's lucrative grain trading monopoly.<sup>5</sup>

Once in Monferrat in August 1306, Theodore's first task was to ward off other pretenders to the title.<sup>6</sup> It cannot have been easy for him, being parachuted into an alien environment at a young age and lacking the personal network a locally grown heir would have been able to forge. But he was successful, thanks to nobility and councillors loyal to his uncle and the military and financial support provided by his father-in-law.<sup>7</sup> About half the marquisate pledged allegiance to him and he was able to muster the levies of his loyal fiefs, but he had to reverse encroachments by neighbouring Provence, under Angevin control. What exactly this entailed is unfortunately not elaborated in the sources. He made rapid progress in the months following his arrival, and by early 1307 had recaptured several towns. The re-assertion of control can be considered accomplished by 1310, when Theodore was confirmed in his marquisate by Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII.<sup>8</sup>

Theodore returned to Constantinople twice, once 1317-1319, and a second and last time 1326-1328. The first trip was probably motivated by a further scheme

5 A thumbnail sketch of a convoluted story: LAIOU, pp. 397-401; also HABERSTUMPF, pp. 16-17; Fabio BARGIGIA, « Gli aspetti militari della "riconquista" del marchesato: Teodoro I di Monferrato nel biennio 1306-1307 », in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *"Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati" L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 195-209, on p. 197.

6 On the arrangements and developments between John's death and Theodore's arrival in Monferrato RAO. The Ghibelline-Guelf controversy affected but did not dominate alignments; having said that, HABERSTUMPF complains that while Theodore's Byzantium-related diplomacy has received much academic attention, his diplomacy targeted at the Holy See, Savoy, the HRE, or his other neighbours, remains little examined: *ibid.*, p. 17.

7 BARGIGIA, pp. 198-99.

8 BARGIGIA, pp. 195-6; RAO, pp. 35-37; Paolo GRILLO, « Il governo del marchesato », in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *"Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati" L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 103-18, on pp. 104-07; in the process, Theodore had to make some concessions to nobles and to towns that stayed loyal to him: RAO, p. 41.

of his mother's, but the prospect she had in mind for him – the throne of Serbia – on inspection proved unattractive, and his mother's death put an end to the plans anyway. Theodore loitered in Constantinople in the hopes of being able to make himself relevant in Imperial politics, but he failed to gain traction. His internal and external enemies in Monferrat were exploiting his absence, so Theodore returned to his marquisate and again re-established his authority.

The second trip was precipitated by the possibility of contesting the succession to the Byzantine throne; Andronicus II's son from his first marriage and heir-designate, Michael IX, had died in 1320, and Theodore's elder brother had in the meantime died as well. Heir-designate was now Michael's young son Andronicus III, much to the disgust of a large faction at the Byzantine court. Theodore tried to win backing for his own candidature, but again found no support. Hoping to make himself useful in other respects, Theodore penned his *Enseignements* during this sojourn.

Renewed trouble in Monferrat and the pointlessness of his continued stay in Constantinople again moved Theodore to return to Italy. Again he had to fight militarily and diplomatically to secure his marquisate, this time with easier success. Though he kept track of the political developments in Constantinople and in his will reiterated some hereditary though unrealistic dynastic claims, his focus for the rest of his life remained on Italy.

For most of his contemporaries, Theodore was it seems a man not of two worlds, but between worlds; to the conservative Byzantine courtiers, he was irretrievably westernised, from marrying a commoner and a Catholic to following the western fashion and shaving his beard.<sup>9</sup> But for his western contemporaries, he was the *marchio Graecus*, in itself an insult as the Byzantines saw themselves as *'Ρωμαῖοι*, Romans. How he saw himself is hard to tell; a passage in his *Enseignements* affirms his enduring loyalty to Byzantium and its Emperor his father,<sup>10</sup> but since he wrote the text during his stay in Constantinople while he was hoping to be accepted by the court's inimical officials, the sincerity of the statement can be questioned.

---

9 For the Byzantine view of Theodore LAIOU; HABERSTUMPF, pp. 17-20, 22. Theodore's mother had of course been raised Catholic.

10 KNOWLES, p. 110.

### *The History of the Text*

Theodore originally wrote his work in Greek, during his second stay in Constantinople 1326-28. According to the postscript, he soon commissioned and personally supervised a translation into Latin. Both of the originals are lost, only a part of the Latin introduction was preserved in a quotation by another medieval author.<sup>11</sup> The sole integral version that survives is a translation into French made by Jean de Vignay in the late fourteenth century, which is why the title is commonly given in French (this applies to the quotations in this article as well). De Vignay has an unfortunate reputation for taking liberties with his material, a factor that needs to be borne in mind throughout.<sup>12</sup>

De Vignay's translation itself has been transmitted to us in only two exemplars, both kept in the Royal Library of Belgium. The texts do not differ much, and it is likely that the younger one is a copy of the older one.<sup>13</sup> A transcription of this manuscript was edited by Christine Knowles and published in 1983; it is currently out of print, and there is no prospect of a re-print.

The Royal Library holds a further, short work by Theodore, also translated by Jean de Vignay, containing personal reflections of the marquis.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Enseignements as a Military Text*

The *Enseignements* are predominantly a military text – the typical *speculum* as a rule includes guidelines to general conduct.<sup>15</sup> These elements are to a limited

11 KNOWLES, p. 4; we do not even know the original titles of the work.

12 KNOWLES, pp. 10-12.

13 KNOWLES, pp. 17-19.

14 Recently published as an *editio princeps* with an Italian translation: Marco DI BRANCO and Angelo IZZO (eds.), *L'elogio della sconfitta*, Rome, Viella, 2015 (not reviewed for this article).

15 See e.g. the wide-ranging subject-matters of Giles of Rome's *speculum*: AEGIDIUS ROMANUS, *De regimine principum – Über die Fürsteherrschaft*, Volker HARTMANN (ed. and trans.), Heidelberg, heiBOOKS, 2019; Aldo SETTIA, « L'esperienza e il «senno accidentale» negli «Insegnamenti» di Teodoro di Monferrato », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 479-98, on p. 485, 494-5. On the Byzantine *speculum* tradition Günter PRINZING, « Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview », in Noëlle-Laetitia PÉRET and Stéphane PÉQUINOT (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the 'Mirrors for Princes' Literature*, Leiden/Boston MA, Brill, 2023, pp. 108-35; Id., « Beobachtungen zu „integrierten“ Fürstenspiegeln der Byzantiner », *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988), pp. 1-31, where he includes the *Enseignements* as an untypical Byzantine *speculum* (p. 5).

extent present in the *Enseignements* as well, but where they are, they nearly always have an express link to the matter's relevance to military affairs.

Though he does not expressly say so, Theodore's strategic aim appears to have been to preserve the independence and core – not necessarily territorial – integrity of the marquisate. Expansion of the domains was in principle desirable, but was confined to opportunistic situations, it was not a strategic goal.<sup>16</sup>

One can classify Theodore's recommendations for achieving this strategic objective into three general categories: Firstly, readiness, i.e. measures to shape the strategic environment. This category encompasses a wide range of measures, both domestic and external. Domestically (or politically), it includes bolstering the ruler's legitimacy, ensuring the loyalty of his feudatories, and fostering a sense of national identity, as it were. External measures might include diplomacy and the judicious employment of spies. Secondly, organisation: military organisation, mobilisation procedures, training, equipment, supplies, etc. Finally, tactics, i.e. the organisation of troops for action and the conduct of campaigns and battles. This article will be structured around these categories, and within a category follow a logical timeline, even though this will entail jumping around in the source.

Theodore's text is not well organised – quite unlike the very methodical structure of *De regimine principum* by Giles of Rome (Aegidius Romanus, Aegidius Colonna). For example, one of the longest chapters, with 10 pages, is the twelfth, titled “Comment le prince doit oïr sa messe” [how the prince should hear mass].<sup>17</sup> The chapter begins with the remark that the prince must in his conduct follow four principles, the first of which is to faithfully observe mass. The next four and a half pages then deal with advice on a situation where one of the ladies in the prince's entourage is unjustly accused.<sup>18</sup> Theodore then reverts to the remaining four principles, and states that curiosity is the second, and gets side-tracked into recommending that the prince should always take care to maintain a good table for himself and his entourage, with ample but simple food.<sup>19</sup>

---

16 KNOWLES, p. 88 – there also the remark that a prince must be prepared to lose territory if necessary, just as one would let go of merchandise by its sell-by date, rather than futilely want to hang on to everything.

17 KNOWLES, pp. 64-74.

18 In fairness, it is very likely that this story was inserted by Vignay – KNOWLES, p. 123 fn. 150 and p. 65.

19 Theodore picks up the subject of food again in a later chapter, where he recommends a close guard on the supplies of meat, bread, and wine, to forestall treachery – KNOWLES, p. 87.

He then resumes his four principles disquisition with the third one, one paragraph long, that the prince should be “debonair” in public and in private. As the fourth principle – and by now we are at the seventh page of the chapter – Theodore stresses that the prince should not announce a project unless he can and will follow through vigorously and forcefully. Expanding on this principle, the remaining three pages contain an explanation of two battle stratagems.

Where appropriate, comparisons will be made to roughly contemporary military texts dealing with warfare in Europe which Theodore could have known. Giles’ *de regimine principum* was already mentioned; it is *a*, maybe *the* type for the *speculum* genre, highly popular and recopied throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Another is the anonymous Italian tract *Pulcher tractatus de materia belli*. Like the military passages in the *De regimine principum*, but unlike the *Enseignements*, it is based on Vegetius; on the other hand, it is the work of a practitioner, like the *Enseignements* – and unlike Giles’ contribution.<sup>20</sup> A further one is the Templar Rule, one of the few cavalry-centred texts from the Central Middle Ages.<sup>21</sup>

Another source to be considered for comparison and for possible influences on Theodore are the *Siete Partidas*, a law code commissioned by the Castilian king Alfonso X (*el Sabio*) and completed in around 1265.<sup>22</sup> Theodore’s mother Yolanda was a daughter Beatrice of Castile, in turn a daughter of King Alfonso X and married to Marquis William VII the Great (1240-1292, marquis from 1253). Yolanda evidently inculcated much feudal law and tradition in her son.<sup>23</sup> Theodore’s text reveals several parallels with the *Siete Partidas*; he could have had a copy, but that is not the only possible avenue of transmission. A Castilian courtier might have joined Theodore’s entourage, or the content was part of the family lore.

The question of Byzantine influences on Theodore have preoccupied scholars.

20 SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 495-96; *Der pulcher tractatus de materia belli: Ein Beitrag zur Kriegs- und Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, Alfred PICHLER (ed.), Graz-Vienna-Leipzig, Leuschner und Lubensky, 1927; Jürg GASSMANN, « The *Pulcher tractatus de materia belli*: A Military Practitioner’s Manual from c. 1300 », *Nuova Antologia Militare* 5.17 (2024), pp. 105-138.

21 SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 497-98.

22 SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 496-97; Jürg GASSMANN, «The *Siete Partidas*: A Repository of Medieval Military and Tactical Instruction», *Acta Periodica Duellatorum* 9.1 (2021), pp. 1-27, at pp. 2-3.

23 HABERSTUMPF, pp. 19-20; RAO, p. 23.

Based on his personal background and given the wealth of Byzantine military literature, it would be surprising if Theodore had not been familiar with e.g. Leo's *Tactica*, the *Strategikon* of Maurice or Kekaumenos, or the anonymous *De velitatione bellica*. He would at the same time have had access to the Byzantine *specula*.<sup>24</sup> Also, the first version of his treatise was written in Greek. But apart from the Bible, Theodore does not explicitly cite any works, Byzantine or Western, Greek or Latin. Some of his precepts echo passages found in Byzantine literature, but researchers are divided whether the knowledge is specifically Byzantine or represents a military commonplace – or may even be derived from the High Antiquity Roman canon, e.g. Vegetius or Frontinus.<sup>25</sup>

### *Theodore's Fighting Experience*

Pretty much from the moment he left Constantinople for Monferrat in July 1306 in the company of his future father-in-law, Theodore was personally involved in warfare and fighting.<sup>26</sup> Arrived in his marquisate, he first had to win back fiefs that had taken advantage of the turmoil to reject allegiance to the marquisate. He was frequently at war with Charles II of Anjou, King of Naples and Count of Provence, and his allegiance to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII involved him in Holy Roman Empire campaigns and campaigns in alliance with the Milanese Visconti in northern Italy. In the process, he experienced sieges and field battles, as well as victory and (it seems mostly) defeat.<sup>27</sup>

The judgement on his military capabilities too was mixed; there was no dearth of critics who thought him weak and ineffectual. Given his interloper status, the criticism may be more politically motivated than based in fact. Contemporaries who fought with him, such as Werner von Homberg, the *vicarius* in Lombardy of

24 Regarding the Byzantine *specula* PRINZING, « Byzantine Mirrors », and ID., « Beobachtungen »; the *Enseignements* expressly intend to provide recommendations to the Byzantine Emperors (KNOWLES, pp. 4-5), and the title "enseignements" (if it reflects the original title) evokes παραίνεσις, occurring in some Byzantine titles.

25 SETTIA, « Esperienza »; MERLO, pp. 515-16; KANELLOPOULOS, pp. 291-4; KNOWLES, pp. 7-8.

26 KANELLOPOULOS, pp. 288-9.

27 BARGIGIA, pp. 206-08; Aldo SETTIA, *De re militari. Pratica e teoria nella guerra medievale*, Rome, Viella, 2008, pp. 104-07. For Visconti military activities 1329-1339 see Paolo GRILLO, « Azzone Visconti e la guerra. 1329-1339 », in Paolo GRILLO (ed.), *Connestabili. Eserciti e guerra nell'Italia del primo Trecento*, Soveria Manelli, Rubbettino, 2018, pp. 119-34; Milan hired a high number of German mounted mercenaries.



Fig. 1 – Count Werner of Homberg in Italy, early fourteenth century  
Cod. Pal. Germ. 848 (Codex Manesse), fol. 043<sup>v</sup> (cropped)  
Courtesy UB Heidelberg, CC-BY-SA 4.0

Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII, praised his courage and fighting spirit.<sup>28</sup> Either way, there can be no doubt that he was personally involved in both the military and diplomatic issues that feature in his work, that he speaks from hard-won personal experience.

### *Theodore Comparing the Monferrine and Byzantine Military Constitutions*

In the final pages of his *Enseignements*, Theodore compares the Byzantine military constitution unfavourably with the feudal constitution of his own marquisate.<sup>29</sup> The Byzantine military constitution at the time relied on a largely demilitarised population generating tax income, and the central government using the revenue to hire mercenaries. The effect was that an attacker would find a completely unresistant population and could murder, pillage and plunder unhindered until the army arrived. It also offered opportunities for corruption in the process of collecting and spending the taxes, by profiteering parasites who had no interest in the wellbeing of the Empire. As Byzantium's experience with the Catalan Company showed, Byzantium's reliance on mercenaries was so great that the Empire had no means to confront the Company when it went rogue and turned to self-help for its delayed pay.<sup>30</sup> Theodore particularly marked out one individual who, so Theodore, gained the trust of his father and proceeded to abuse it to the benefit of himself and his family, and to the detriment of the Empire's defence.<sup>31</sup>

His description of the marquisate's feudal military constitution can therefore be seen as a study in contrast, comparing it favourably to the Byzantine situation<sup>32</sup>

28 Aldo SETTIA, « Premessa. Teodoro I: un "Greco" in Monferrato » in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), *"Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati" Lavvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 11-15, at p. 13.

29 The term "feudal" has become controversial in modern, especially anglophone historiography, but there is no better term available. As used here, the term implies that a vassal (whether a collective like a town or borough, or an individual) is bound to a lord by virtue of a contractual arrangement with reciprocal rights and obligations, and that a vassal has a legally protected autonomy of organisation and agency.

30 MERLO, pp. 509-10.

31 It is not clear whether Theodore's vitriol against Theodore Metochites was justified – KNOWLES, p. 108 and fn. 261 p. 127.

32 Speculatively also BARGIGIA, p. 209. This would also explain why Theodore does not engage with the Byzantine military literature, though he must have been familiar with it; on the inability to clearly identify Byzantine sources in the *Enseignements*; SETTIA, « Esperienza », p. 485. In narrating his personal history, Theodore emphasises his maternal lineage and her

– which incidentally leads one to query whether Theodore might have deliberately applied a rosy gloss to his descriptions. Unlike the Empire, which was a state with an army, Monferrat was a society organised for war. The entire population was involved in defence and bore responsibility for arming themselves and being ready to fight. The prince’s job was not primarily to motivate his feudatories to fight, that they were largely prepared to do anyway; his challenge was to motivate them to fight *for him*.

Theodore may have learnt about feudal organisation before he assumed the marquisate; his mother was manoeuvring to secure for her sons essentially fiefdoms within the Byzantine Empire, a feature that was alien to the Byzantine Empire’s constitution and brought her into conflict with courtiers.<sup>33</sup> It was on these schemes, ineffective and of dubious legality though they were, that Theodore in his will asserted his “hereditary claims” to Byzantine lands.<sup>34</sup>

Fortunately, Theodore’s *Enseignements* are not the only text available to us to describe the military constitution of the marquisate; records of the parliaments of Monferrat, though incomplete, elucidate the picture.<sup>35</sup>

The term “parliament” here requires some cautionary and explanatory remarks, especially that the references are to “a parliament” in the indefinite and “parliaments” in the plural. At this point in time, the assemblies described by that term were *ad hoc* affairs, convoked by the marquis or those acting in his name for a specific purpose. Though they typically united representatives of the nobility, the towns and boroughs, and the crown, their membership was not fixed, nor was their scope of authority, nor any frequency of their meeting. Nevertheless, as will be shown, they played a key role in the Monferrine commonwealth.<sup>36</sup> Already

---

descent from the King of Spain: KNOWLES, pp. 26-8; SETTIA, « Esperienza », p. 486.

33 HABERSTUMPF, pp. 19-20.

34 Theodore’s successor John II based claims on the Byzantine throne on these constructs: LAIOU, pp. 402-03.

35 Referenced in Aldo SETTIA (ed.), “*Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati*” *Lavento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008.

36 PENE VIDARI; GRILLO, « Governo », p. 116; SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 115. Only temporal estates attended the parliaments, no spiritual ones: PENE VIDARI, p. 126; Theodore (KNOWLES, p. 51) defines a *parlement* as a council with only secular participants, one with church functionaries would be a *concille*. On different types of parliaments in the Holy Roman Empire generally Duncan HARDY, « Vom Schiedstag zum Reichstag », in Angela HUANG and Christina LINK (eds.), *Kollektive Willensbildung in der Vormoderne*, Wismar,

Theodore being called to the throne testifies to the institution; though John's will was unambiguous in designating his sister Yolanda (i.e. Empress Irene) as heir, a parliament was involved in forming and instructing the delegation to Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> Theodore himself refers to parliaments, and defines them as his council of barons.<sup>38</sup>

Settia writes that according to the *Enseignements*, the prince was obliged to secure the authorisation of parliament to declare war.<sup>39</sup> To the modern constitutional scholar, this evokes the principle enshrined in modern democratic constitutions that the power to declare war is a prerogative of the legislature, not the executive. I do not believe that is either the intent or the import of Theodore's remark. Rather, I believe Theodore is seeking to buttress the prince's decision on a practical, an ethical, and a legal level. At the practical level, a decision calmly debated over time by a number of individuals who are both expert in the subject and stakeholders in the commonwealth is more likely to end in success than a decision made on the whim of the monarch. At an ethical level, God favours humility; He disapproves of decisions made in the heat of pride or passion and with hidden motivations, so a decision debated openly dispels these concerns. And on a legal level, a vassal's obligation to follow his lord to war was always premised on the war being just; involving the leading vassals in the decision binds them into the venture.<sup>40</sup> We see Theodore implicitly or explicitly apply this triad in many of his recommendations.

### *The Prince, His Nobility, His People, and God*

Theodore stressed the need for the prince to conduct himself worthy of the loyalty of his noble vassals, of the respect of his people, and of the grace of God.

---

Callidus, 2024, pp. 3-37.

37 PENE VIDARI, pp. 120-21; RAO, pp. 28-29; GRILLO, « Governo », p. 106.

38 KNOWLES, pp. 50-53, reference to *parlement* on p. 51; references to councils also e.g. on pp. 89, 99.

39 “[Gli] *Insegnamenti* ... insistentemente ritornano sul dovere del principe di agire dopo aver ottenuto l'autorizzazione del proprio ‘parlamento.’” SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 95-96, pointing to the witnesses referenced in the previous footnote.

40 Theodore generally does not confront feudal law limitations on the prince's decision-making – like his contemporary rulers, he was probably actively engaged in subverting them in favour of more absolutist rule. However, they occasionally shine through.

To that end, he set out guidelines for the prince's personal conduct in the initial chapters of the *Enseignements*, which will not be discussed here in any detail.<sup>41</sup> These early chapters are closest to the subject-matter of the *speculum* literature; Giles of Rome's *de regimine principum* was mentioned, and the first half of Book II of the *Siete Partidas* includes provisions to this effect as well.<sup>42</sup>

The *Enseignements* harp on the importance of maintaining good personal relations with the nobility, the marquis' direct vassals. They have the greatest personal interest in preserving the independence of the marquisate (and so ensuring the continuing preservation of their own fiefs).<sup>43</sup>

His precepts incidentally highlight one of the limitations, so far as the lord is concerned, of a feudal military constitution. The enfeoffment is after all a contract; the vassal has obligations toward the lord, but the lord also has obligations toward the vassal. One of the vassal's key concerns is to be assured of the lord fulfilling his obligations toward the vassal, first and foremost to confirm the vassal in the possession and quiet enjoyment of his fief. For that reason, Theodore strongly advises to keep the frontier fortresses well stocked and supplied, so that the vassal to whom the castle is enfeoffed does not have any excuse for surrendering his castle to a foreign prince threatening a siege (and transfer his allegiance to the foreign prince). The vassal should not be able to argue that his lord had failed in his obligation to put the vassal into a position to withstand a siege, at least for long enough for Theodore to assemble a relief force.<sup>44</sup>

41 KNOWLES, pp. 42-74, though the text here contains references of military import.

42 E.g., Theodore urges the prince to practice seven virtues, i.e. compassion, faith, charity, fortitude (or determination), wisdom of God (by which all matters are judged pursuant to law and science), legality (*droiture*), and chastity; as an afterthought, he adds on truth (KNOWLES, pp. 59-64). The *Siete Partidas* in 2:2-2:5 cover injunctions on royal conduct, but both content and structure are different (*Las Siete Partidas*, Gregorio LÓPEZ (ed.), Salamanca, Domingo de Portonaris y Ursino, 1576, pp. 8<sup>r</sup>-16<sup>v</sup>; *Siete Partidas: Volume Two: Medieval Government: The World of Kings and Warriors*, Robert I. BURNS (ed.) and Samuel Parsons SCOTT (trans.), Philadelphia PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, pp. 277-97). Giles of Rome dedicates the second part of Book I to a discussion of royal virtues, but again very different in content and structure (AEGIDIUS ROMANUS, pp. 83-288).

43 KNOWLES, p. 87.

44 KNOWLES, pp. 87-88; a castellan had enormous power and nuisance value, obliging a prince to negotiate a narrow path between trust and verification: Manuel ROJAS, « Some Problems in the Study of the Conduct of Warfare in the Eleventh Century », in Susan B. EDGINGTON and Luis GARCÍA-GUIJARRO (eds.), *Jerusalem the Golden: The Origins and Impact of the First Crusade*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, pp. 51-74, at p. 69. The *Siete Partidas* devote Tit-

Theodore was no doubt very pious. He refers again and again to Christian and Biblical injunctions, and after a passage exhorting his reader to act boldly or to use a clever ruse or stratagem, he hastens to add that success is ultimately the work of God. His piety is also practical – his references to Scripture are often in a context where Theodore emphasises that the Biblical advice has relevant and tactically appropriate application in the specific situation.

In a curious passage toward the end of his text (justifying his aversion to fighting by night), Theodore contends that Aristotle had provided his pupil, the eventual Alexander the Great of Macedon, with a scrap of parchment on which was written (in Latin) “*ordo*.” This simple word encapsulated all the wisdom of rulership. The word itself obviously has meaning, but it is also an acronym for the foundations of wise rule. Of these there are four, as there are four humours, four seasons, and the four corners of a building. The initial “O” stood for “honourably”, the “R” for “reasonably”, and the “D” for “devoutly”. The final “O” then represented the invocation of the Father of Light, the omnipotent Father, on whose grace all depends.<sup>45</sup>

While God and Jesus are invoked repeatedly, there is no reference to the Church. Theodore of course was a Ghibelline and fought in the Holy Roman Emperor’s campaigns. Still, one might have expected at least a reference to the marquis’ relationship to bishops and abbots in the area.<sup>46</sup>

Advice focused on these aspects of the prince’s conduct is designed to shape the domestic strategic environment in his favour – his subjects and feudatories are rewarded in their loyalty, their personal sacrifices for the benefit of the marquisate appreciated. There is also an effort to cast the marquisate as a commonwealth, and tone down the notion that it is the personal property of the prince

---

le 2:18 with 32 Laws to castles and castellans (*Siete Partidas*, pp. 54<sup>r</sup>-64<sup>v</sup>, trans. SCOTT, pp. 379-401). In a similar vein, the town of Lu – traditionally Monferrine, but in June 1307 still held by Charles II of Anjou – agreed with Theodore that if his besieging forces could not be dislodged by Charles within fifteen days, then the town would surrender to Theodore: BARGIGIA, p. 202.

45 KNOWLES, p. 97 – though the story, which is otherwise not associated with Alexander, was probably interpolated by Jean de Vignay, *ibid.*, fn. 229 / p. 126.

46 SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 122 points out that Theodore had a contretemps about non-compliance with feudatories who also had feudal obligations to the Bishop of Vercelli; the bishop was of course Guelph, though the reason for their refusal could also have been that the feudatories’ forces were tired out from repeated call-ups.

– though Theodore can be somewhat cynical about the notion, as when he says that the prince must be able to write off territorial losses with the equanimity of a merchant writing off goods past their sell-by date.<sup>47</sup>

### *Mercenaries v. Own Troops*

Theodore does not favour mercenaries – they are expensive and unreliable. If you do hire mercenaries, he says, make sure they are from different places and speak different languages.<sup>48</sup> It seems Theodore himself employed mercenaries only once, during the siege of Pontestura shortly after assuming the marquisate in late 1306, though in this case, the mercenaries were provided by Genoa, through the connections with Theodore’s father-in-law.<sup>49</sup>

But Theodore shows an appreciation for mercenaries’ strengths and utility. As professionals, mercenaries typically equip themselves with the lightest arms and armour, which makes them highly mobile. They are the ideal units to deploy along the borders as flying columns and rapid reaction force, to act as tripwires as far ahead as possible to give early warning of an approaching enemy, and to prevent enemy raids aimed at kidnapping labourers in the fields. Once an enemy has attacked and is returning to his base laden with spoils, these fast units are well placed to chase down the enemy’s columns and relieve them of their ill-gotten gains.

He is also not above exploiting mercenaries’ lack of “flag”. One stratagem he elaborates on is to use a force of mercenaries without banners or insignia to attack an enemy. If the *coup de main* is successful, it can be exploited and consolidated with own troops. The objective is to use plausible deniability regarding the guiding hand behind the attack while the outcome is still undecided – using the mercenaries as privateers, so to say.<sup>50</sup>

---

47 KNOWLES, p. 88; see here fn. 16.

48 KNOWLES, pp. 54-55; SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 487-8; ID., *De re militari*, pp. 106-07, 113-14; the advice on different languages is likely again based on Byzantium’s experience with the Catalan Company.

49 BARGIGIA, p. 198-200; MERLO, p. 517; HABERSTUMPF, p. 16.

50 KNOWLES, pp. 84-85.

### *Three Types of Enemies and of Disputes*

Theodore places a high value on diplomacy – pursuing a strategy of economy of enemies is essential to being able to secure the marquisate, and it is in conformity with the verse in the Sermon on the Mount “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God”.<sup>51</sup> If you have three neighbours, he advises, make peace with one, secure a truce with the other, and pursue war with the third.<sup>52</sup>

How you proceed with whom depends on the type of the dispute:

If the dispute is with your traditional enemy, then on no account compromise with them or trust them – they will invariably take advantage of you.<sup>53</sup>

If it is one that has arisen from a specific issue with a party who is otherwise a longstanding friend, then focus on resolving the matter diplomatically, using the good offices of trusted mediators. If the other party proves intransigent, ensure that you are seen to be the reasonable one, show a willingness to compromise. Allowing such a situation to escalate into war is folly, an unnecessary risk. It is also a sin and contrary to Scripture since it cannot justify the destruction, misery and loss of life caused by a war.<sup>54</sup>

If the dispute is with a neighbour who covets part of your territory, especially if the neighbour is stronger than you, true peace is unrealistic. Conclude a truce and use the time to prepare for war. Visit your border regions, reassure your nobles there, make your presence felt, and ensure the fortresses are prepared and well stocked. Send good, courageous and reliable commanders to the region. Deal swiftly and harshly with traitors.<sup>55</sup>

In general, make an effort during times of peace to ready yourself. Ordered and deliberate preparation is more productive and less stressful. Procure good horses and different kinds of tack, for any eventuality, and also many different types of good and light weapons. Confer with your men, so they understand your intentions, and cultivate friends and allies.<sup>56</sup>

---

51 KNOWLES, p. 81; Matthew 5:9.

52 This statement is made out of context, in its own one-paragraph chapter: KNOWLES, p. 98. On the possible historical precedent SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 104-05.

53 KNOWLES, p. 81.

54 KNOWLES, pp. 81-82; i.e. it risks not being a just war.

55 KNOWLES, pp. 82-84; when in 1310 Vignale, beholden to Theodore, refused to accept him, Theodore unhesitatingly punished the town – BARGIGIA, p. 204.

56 KNOWLES, pp. 79-84; BARGIGIA, p. 203; SETTIA, Aldo, *Rapine, assedi, battaglie: La guerra*

In your border regions, ensure intensive defensive preparations. Mercenaries are typically professional and highly mobile units, and useful for interdicting enemy raids and acting as forward observation. Spies too can provide information and forewarning. If an enemy does attack, and captures spoils, by all means try to pursue him and relieve him of his booty. But be circumspect; if your enemy is much stronger than you, any pursuit motivated by revenge or a false sense of honour will only fail and will compound your losses. It is better to absorb the loss, and carefully plan a retaliatory action.<sup>57</sup>

Theodore emphasises the importance of keeping well informed about the enemy's preparations and intentions; a key tool in this context is the use of spies. Having good information on the enemy will allow preparation, and to ambush an enemy attack. Of necessity, spies may not be the most ethical people, so he advises retaining several spies, but to ensure that they do not know of each other. If they did, they are liable to collude and deliver sexed-up but dodgy dossiers. However, he goes on to say, be aware that just as you will seek to keep informed about your enemy, so the enemy will do in respect of your actions, so do not expect that your own attack preparations would remain hidden. The clever surreptitious raid you may be planning could well end up a fiasco.<sup>58</sup>

### *Three Types of War*

Theodore divides the types of war into three: Firstly, war by rapine, destruction, and the kidnapping of labourers in the fields; it is directed at weakening the enemy economically. Secondly war by treachery, bribery, and deceit, seeking to take without fighting.<sup>59</sup> And finally, all-out war entailing a supreme effort by infantry and cavalry, directed at the total destruction of the enemy and his environment. It means field battles with heavy casualties, and costly sieges with all manner of engines.<sup>60</sup>

Theodore elaborates on this third type of war again in a later chapter. While he acknowledges the dictum that war favours the bold attacker, he cautions that

---

*nel Medioevo*, Rome, Laterza, 2003, p. 221.

57 KNOWLES, pp. 84-86.

58 KNOWLES, pp. 84-85; SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 479-80.

59 Treachery and guarding against it is again mentioned later, KNOWLES, pp. 86-87.

60 KNOWLES, p. 80.

a prince must have just cause on his side to win divine favour.<sup>61</sup> People generally prefer peace and the ability to go about one's business, and do not view haughty troublemakers kindly. Nobles who may now benefit from being on the winning side with such an avaricious and lawless prince will soon realise that their leader's caprice might soon have *them* in his cross-hairs – a sentiment that can be exploited.<sup>62</sup>

### *Organisation: Arms and the Marquisate's Military Constitution*

Unlike the Byzantine Empire, Monferrat did not have a system of Imperial arms factories and arsenals that would equip the troops with a standardised complement of arms and kit. In the feudal military constitution, the equipment was the responsibility of the estate called up; high command, as it were, technically had no direct influence on which arms, defensive or offensive, the individuals brought along, or their quality. In reality, by the later Middle Ages, authorities in all polities worked hard to gain a level of influence over equipment.<sup>63</sup>

Whether or not the cavalry was centred around the nobility is hard to say; the text refers to *hommes d'armes a cheval*.<sup>64</sup> The *Enseignements* enjoin those mounted on destriers to have heavy and sufficient arms.<sup>65</sup> The requirements for those mounted on lighter horses are more specific: They must have cuirass,<sup>66</sup>

61 And, incidentally, to ensure that vassals are bound by their obligation of *sequela*.

62 KNOWLES, pp. 88-89.

63 On arms generally MERLO, where he discusses the mentioned arms and compares them to arms listed in records from neighbouring polities, to iconography, and to museum artefacts from the time.

64 KNOWLES, p. 58; further down in the same paragraph, Theodore refers to "vassals," "honourable men," and "barons," but only regarding how many horses each should have, not what type of horse or what kinds of arms. Cortese found that the feudal categories of mounted service had mostly vanished by the mid-thirteenth century but continued for some time into the fourteenth century in the domains of reigning nobility, though the matter is not well documented or explored: Maria Elena CORTESE, « Le frange inferiori della cavalleria nelle campagne toscane: scutiferi e masnadieri tra inquadramento signorile e mobilità sociale (secc. XII-XIII) », *Archivio Storico Italiano* 667.1 (2021), pp. 3-41, esp. pp. 34-38. Under Azzo Visconti in the 1330s, awarding knighthoods for military prowess and valour was still common: GRILLO, « Azzo Visconti », pp. 123-24 and *passim*.

65 KNOWLES, p. 58; MERLO, p. 537.

66 The text here says "*cuirree*" – KNOWLES (glossary, p. 130) reads this as "*cuirasse*", which in modern terminology refers to a steel plate upper torso armour. Etymologically it is derived



Fig. 2 – Fresco of riders from Vezzolano Abbey, late twelfth century  
 Courtesy Wikimedia Commons / Misasar CC-BY-SA 4.0

gambeson, hauberk, gorget, cuisses, poleyns, greaves, helmet and shield. Over his armour, the horseman was to wear a surcoat displaying his heraldic devices.<sup>67</sup>

The offensive arms of the cavalry are sword and lance.<sup>68</sup> In the section on horsemen's arms, Theodore does not mention maces, though his cavalry formation section includes riders relying on the mace.<sup>69</sup> Unlike Byzantine cavalry,

---

from *cuir [bouilli]*, i.e. boiled leather. Full steel plate armour was not yet common in Theodore's or even Jean de Vignay's days, so Theodore may here be referring to a leather armour; so MERLO, pp. 537-38.

67 KNOWLES, p. 58; MERLO, p. 542.

68 KNOWLES, p. 58; MERLO, p. 546-48. Theodore's text (via Jean de Vignay) says *espee ou glaive*, worn at the side; KNOWLES (fn. 116, p. 121) speculates that *glaive*, commonly meaning a short sword in the style of a Roman *gladius*, may refer to a poignard or dagger.

69 KNOWLES, p. 93; MERLO, pp. 550-53, finds maces rarely mentioned in contemporary records for the region, though there is good evidence for their existence. One such mention, along with other arms, is in the 1326 city of Gubbio contract for mercenary cavalry, see Alberto LUONGO, « Nobiltà cittadina e *stipendiarii*: l'organizzazione militare eugubina nella prima metà del XIV secolo », in Paolo GRILLO (ed.), *Connestabili. Eserciti e guerra nell'Italia del primo Trecento*, Soveria Manelli, Rubbettino, 2018, pp. 135-58, at p. 145.

where the bow was an important weapon, there is no reference to horse archers.<sup>70</sup> Theodore makes particular point of calling on the cavalry to ensure that the arms and accoutrements are resplendent, to impress the enemy.<sup>71</sup>

Unusually, Theodore elaborates on horses as well. For the lighter cavalry, he says to have two small horses in the manner of the Greeks, or geldings or mares. If the rider wants a heavier horse in the manner of the Latins, he should have a (and here unfortunately there is a lacuna in the text) as well as a rouncey. Vassals and honourable men (*les vassaulz et les honnorables hommes*) should have three horses, i.e. a destrier, a large palfrey, and a good and strong rouncey capable of carrying loads. A baron or lord then should have five horses, with one for a squire.<sup>72</sup>

Theodore repeats in several places the importance of light arms. By this he evidently means arms and armour that are not unnecessarily heavy, but are fit-for-purpose and of good quality. Such arms allow for rapid movement, and they will not tire out the wearer.<sup>73</sup>

The infantry was organised differently than the cavalry. Each town and borough was obliged to provide a certain number of men and was responsible for their kitting out; the *Enseignements* consequently speak to the local lord or governor to ensure that his men have the proper equipment. At the simplest level, those liable for military service, the *hommes de deffense* (males between 15 and 70 years of age), should have a helmet, a gambeson, and a shield. For offensive arms, Theodore calls for a sword, a spear or lance, a self bow, or a similar common arm. Those who could and were adept in it should bring a crossbow, an arm that impressed Theodore.<sup>74</sup>

70 MERLO, p. 549.

71 KNOWLES, p. 58; MERLO, p. 550; the *Pulcher tractatus* pp. 55-56 has the same provision; GASSMANN, « Pulcher tractatus », p. 126.

72 KNOWLES, p. 58-59; SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 118; MERLO, pp. 564-67 (though Merlo's remarks about the "limited manoeuvrability" of the destrier is not born out by the current state of research). The *Templar Rule* allocates to the top charges four horses as well as squires and lieutenants with their own horse allocations, for lesser officers three and two, and for regular brothers and sergeants a destrier – *Règle du Temple*, Henri DE CURZON (ed.), Paris, Renouard, 1886, *passim*. The *Siete Partidas* emphasise that the knight not only needs a good horse, he must also be expert in understanding horses: *Siete Partidas*, 2:21:10 / pp. 72<sup>r-v</sup>; trans. SCOTT pp. 421-22.

73 KNOWLES, pp. 84 and 87; similarly in the *Siete Partidas*, 2:21:10 / p. 72<sup>v</sup>, trans. SCOTT p. 422.

74 KNOWLES, p. 57; MERLO, pp. 529-37, 553-61; SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 97-98, 102-03, 166. Crossbow training is recorded, see e.g. LUONGO, pp. 147-48. The mid-to-late thirteenth

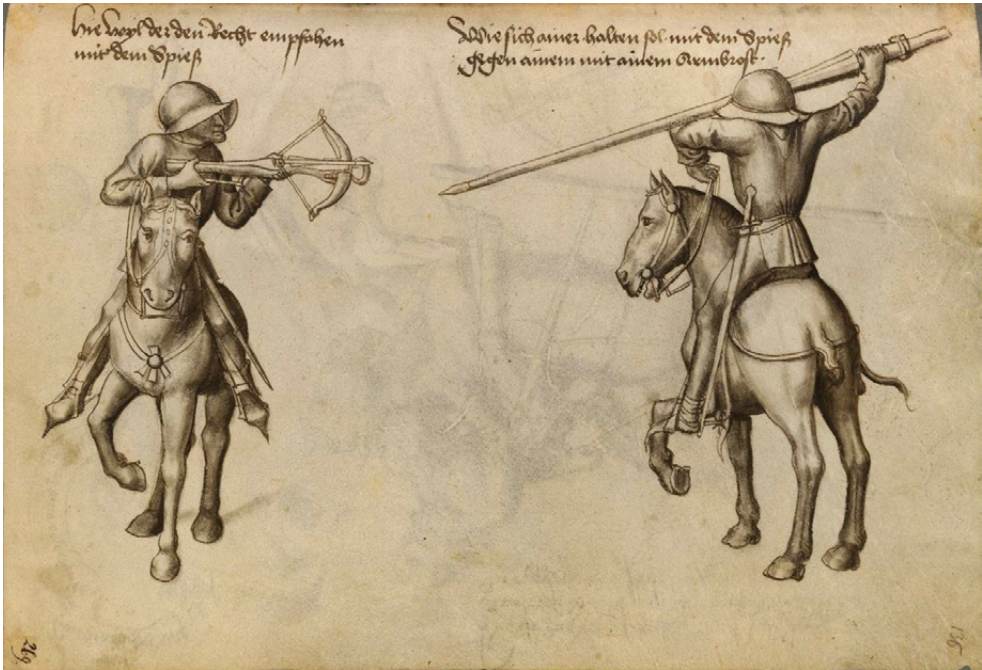


Fig. 3 – Mounted Crossbowman Confronting Lancer, 1467

Hans Talhoffer, Cod. icon. 394a, Fol. 136<sup>r</sup> (Codex Württemberg)

Courtesy Bayerische Staatsbibliothek / Münchner Digitalisierungszentrum and Wiktenauer, CC-PDM 1.0

But if for defence all effectives were required, everybody should turn out with what agricultural implements could serve as weapons. There were some exceptions, notably clerics, but Theodore does not explain in more detail who fell into the category outside the *hommes de deffense* but were included in those subject to a general levy. Theodore recognises that this general levy could not remain in the field for much longer than a day, so if their service should be required for longer,

---

century bye-laws of the Bolognese *societates armatae* required their members to have a helmet, a shield, and a form of upper body protection, but did not specify offensive arms: JÜRIG GASSMANN, « The Bolognese *Societates Armatae* of the Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century », *Acta Periodica Duellatorum* 2 (2014), pp. 195-231, at pp. 212-13. The *Siete Partidas* do not mandate specific arms, but encourage a soldier to bring better equipment by granting greater participation in the spoils distribution: *Siete Partidas*, 2:26:28 / p. 102<sup>r</sup>, trans. SCOTT, p. 493 (though Scott's translation is questionable); GASSMANN, « *Siete Partidas* », pp. 13-18. The practice of allocating a greater share of booty to the better equipped is also attested to early thirteenth century Monferrat: SETTIA, *Rapine*, p. 70.

the lord should restrict the levy to half the number.<sup>75</sup> For this general levy, Theodore says that a population of 1,000 *hommes* should for static defence be able to muster and support 100 to 150 good (*nobles*) and well-equipped men for a month; for a mobile force, 50 would be appropriate.<sup>76</sup>

With the parliament Theodore called in 1319, after his return from Constantinople, Theodore sought to leverage the institution by moving the infantry service obligation away from the historically grown one-on-one feudal arrangements, and in the process standardising the terms. The result was a better coordinated, more efficient organisation for raising infantry, and a stronger feeling of shared responsibility for the protection of the commonwealth. The greater publicity of the various towns' and boroughs' obligations also promoted a greater fairness in the spread of the burden, and hence a better acceptance. Enforcement of the obligations buttressed the fairness of the system and manifested public buy-in to the punishment of the recalcitrant.<sup>77</sup>

The passage bears reflection. Certainly, there was no Byzantine tradition of the Emperor obtaining buy-in from anyone. In Western Europe, there was no – or not yet a – well-established parliamentary tradition that Theodore would have seen necessary to defer to. Following his arrival in Monferrat in 1307, Theodore built on the parliament of 1305 that had authorised his being called in order to declare a general levy in preparation for the reconquest of the fiefs that had fallen away. But Theodore himself did not convoke any further parliaments until his return from Constantinople twelve years later.<sup>78</sup> Then, he faced the necessity of raising troops and cash urgently, and to that purpose called two parliaments, in late 1319 and early 1320. They did not have the quite the salutary effect Theodore

---

75 KNOWLES, pp. 57-58; MERLO, pp. 562-64. Theodore frames this as a practical consideration, not a limitation imposed by feudal law; generally in feudal law, the service obligation of the general levy was limited to defensive war, and in extent by time or distance.

76 KNOWLES, p. 59. For calculations of Monferrat's mobilisation potential SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 115-41.

77 GRILLO, « Governo », pp. 106-07; PENE VIDARI, pp. 127-28; MERLO, pp. 519-20; SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 118-19. In this, Theodore was part of a trend observable also in the neighbouring, much larger principalities like Savoy, where more intrusive crown control over the infantry was implemented via parliaments, and over the cavalry via the creation of orders of chivalry and prince-sponsored tournaments – MERLO, p. 517-19. Tournaments as training for the cavalry in *Pulcher tractatus*, p. 42; GASSMANN, « Pulcher tractatus », pp. 119-21.

78 MERLO, p. 519.

hoped for, but they did apparently allow him to stabilise the situation.<sup>79</sup>

Maybe what Theodore meant to emphasise to his intended Byzantine audience was that the Byzantine military constitution did not allow for a “Plan B” – once the troops were used up, there was no fall-back. In a society organised for war, as a feudal polity was, it was always possible, albeit progressively difficult, to go back to the well for more.

Theodore does not seem to have instituted assemblies where citizens would have been obliged to show the required arms, but he recommended keeping records of the various arms they owned.<sup>80</sup>

But Theodore went beyond these organisational and tactical concerns; he enjoined his fellow princes to ensure a functioning arms manufacturing base by attracting the relevant craftsmen, which the prince could do by issuing commissions.<sup>81</sup>

Though firearms begin to make their appearance on Italian battlefields around the time Theodore wrote, he makes no mention of them.<sup>82</sup>

### *Preparing for Campaign and Battle*

Faced with an enemy determined to attack, Theodore gives the following advice:

Make your preparations; assemble your council, formulate a plan, and put it into action forthwith. Call up your men and the nobles beholden to you. Especially the cavalry need to have generous advance notice of their assembly points and the period for which they will be required. Make a point of acknowledging your nobles' appearing at your side, especially those who are under no obligation to support you. Reassure them of their position and the gains they are set to make in your service. All units called up – cavalry and infantry – must assemble with their wagons and supplies at the place of assembly and on the appointed date. Siege engines similarly need to be taken to their assembly points.

---

79 PENE VIDARI.

80 KNOWLES, p. 57; MERLO, p. 524-25.

81 KNOWLES, p. 56; MERLO, pp. 525.

82 Giorgio DONDI, « Le armi da fuoco all'epoca di Teodoro I di Monferrato », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 569-588; SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 170-72.

You yourself and those assisting you in command (one might say “your staff”) should be there days ahead of the date and monitor the arrivals.<sup>83</sup>

Spare no expenses in obtaining information on your enemy’s preparations, strength and movements; begrudging expenditure in these respects is a false economy.<sup>84</sup>

Have clear orders for your troops. Continuously countermanding orders and leaving troops in uncertainty about their jobs wastes time and is damaging to your efforts. But do not be so specific that your game plan is revealed to all.<sup>85</sup>

If you are invading your enemy’s territory, send out emissaries to declare to the enemy’s civilian populace and town councils that you come in friendship and have no desire to harm them. If that is successful and they surrender to you, do not take advantage of them. Confirm them in their possessions and take only what is essential to garrison your newly acquired territory. Make sure that your own troops do not engage in looting or show disrespect to them; punish violators promptly. Otherwise, the population may regret having submitted to you, and rebel or revert to their previous ruler. Also ensure that castles in your newly acquired possessions are under loyal commanders and well stocked.<sup>86</sup>

If none of the enemy’s castles or towns surrender to you, do not be discouraged and proceed with your plans. Go for a quick, easy win by attacking a weakly defended point. An early enemy set-back will encourage your troops and discourage the enemy; his feudatories will question whether he can protect them. If on the other hand you attack his strong points, you will get bogged down, which is not conducive to your troops’ morale.<sup>87</sup>

As you advance into enemy territory, have your troops march in their units, under their banners. Keep moving. Your order of march should be your household in the van, followed by a portion of your men. You should follow next with your personal cavalry squadron, followed by another cavalry squadron and then the remainder of the infantry. Have two or three good and trusted men who know the country well recon-

---

83 KNOWLES, pp. 88-89, 98-99; BARGIGIA, pp. 200-01; GRILLO, « Governo », pp. 106-07.

84 KNOWLES, pp. 88-89, 99.

85 KNOWLES, p. 99.

86 KNOWLES, pp. 99-100.

87 KNOWLES, p. 100.

noitre ahead and determine the next night's camp location, preferably well supplied with water.<sup>88</sup>

Make quickly for your objective, do not give the enemy time to prepare. As you besiege a city, place your siege engines so that the sun shines in the enemy's eyes, they will not be able to tell where the projectiles come from. Be prepared for sallies, so that you may ambush them and defeat them. During the night, especially the small hours, maintain attentive sentries so that your troops may have good rest. Organise your own troops in two relays, so that always one is active and one is resting, but continuously press your enemy so that he has no rest. Maintain mounted patrols, without banners or insignia, to locate and provide you warning of an approaching relief column.<sup>89</sup>

When besieging a town, encircle it completely, so that the town cannot obtain supplies. Train your siege engines not on the walls, they are liable to be strong enough to resist your projectiles. Instead, target the sentries and the weak points.<sup>90</sup> Also target the buildings inside the town to demoralise the population, and do that during day and night so that they are unable to rest. And if God should grant you victory and you are able to capture the town, spare the population and show it no cruelty. Already the fact of your victory will enhance your prestige.<sup>91</sup>

If your invasion falters, your troops are weakened and at risk of being defeated, do not delay a decision to break off the venture and retreat in good order, preserving all your equipment. Live to fight another day.<sup>92</sup>

---

88 KNOWLES, pp. 102-103; so also the *Pulcher Tractatus*, p. 49; GASSMANN, « Pulcher tractatus », p. 123.

89 KNOWLES, pp. 103-104. BARGIGIA, p. 197: the injunction to have one half rest while the other fights may be a lesson from his experience with the Genoese fighting the Catalans on the trip from Constantinople to Monferrat. Sentries and patrols during the night also in the *Pulcher tractatus*, pp. 49-50; GASSMANN, « Pulcher tractatus », pp. 123-24.

90 "Weak points" is my interpretation. The text here does not make sense. Knowles suspects that Jean de Vignay did not understand the terminology and substituted words he was familiar with even though those were tactically wrong: KNOWLES, p. 105 and fn. 252 / p. 127; also SETTIA, *Rapine*, p. 132, where he surmises the timber superstructures to the walls are meant.

91 KNOWLES, pp. 104-106.

92 KNOWLES, p. 107.

### *The Enemy Attacks*

Theodore discusses various scenarios in which an enemy attacks. The gist of his advice is to be economical with the demands made on your own men:

Demobilise some of them if they are not immediately needed. On the march, go in easy stages so as not to tire them out. Especially if your enemy is more powerful, focus on harassing him in his camp and generally seek to impede his progress, keep him away from his objective. And while he is in your territory, raid his lands and lay waste to them, so that his troops resent being on a risky campaign in foreign lands instead of defending their homes.<sup>93</sup>

If your enemy manages to besiege one of your towns, you must seek to relieve it; better to die trying than to live with the shame of not having tried. It is best to attack his camp. If your forces allow it, use only your cavalry, since the infantry slows you down and they get in the way of the horses. Ideally advance under the cover of night and attack at dawn, while the enemy are still sleeping. If they are too far away to approach in one night, take a day to move to a position closer to them, then attack the following night.<sup>94</sup>

In a different chapter, Theodore decidedly counsels against actually fighting at night:<sup>95</sup>

If you do have to move at night, keep your units close together and united with their equipment. Agree a password. Secure the services of guides who know the area well and place them both in the van and in the rear. Fighting at night is disorientating, even in familiar country.<sup>96</sup> If you encounter the enemy and put him to flight, do not pursue him. If you do, you will not be sure whether whom you are pursuing actually is

---

93 KNOWLES, pp. 90-91, 98-100; devastation of the countryside was a common feature of warfare at the time. Such actions are not attested for Theodore's re-conquests, which after all related to areas he considered his own, but are in evidence for HRE campaigns he participated in: BARGIGIA, p. 203.

94 KNOWLES, pp. 91-92; also discussed, somewhat differently, *ibid.* p. 97.

95 The text – in a passage probably interpolated by Jean de Vignay – here dragoons both Aristotle and divine preferences (God as the Father of Light would object to fighting in the dark) to justify this aversion, see the reference to *ordo*, fn. 44. However, Theodore's warnings are probably based on the simple fact that manoeuvring at night is highly complex and very difficult to pull off.

96 Then as now; SETTIA, *Rapine*, pp. 245-53; ID., *De re militari*, pp. 100-02, pointing to an unfortunate experience Theodore made.

the enemy. Your forces will be dispersed and they will not know where they are. Come dawn, they will be spread out in such small units that they cannot properly defend themselves, and they will be at risk of being annihilated by inimical locals.<sup>97</sup>

The only practical situation for a fight at night is when attacking the enemy camp. In this case, form two detachments with your forces. One detachment, on foot, attacks the camp guards, preferably in the middle of night. Its objective is to cause the camp guards to flee back to the camp and cause confusion there; your attacking infantry detachment does not pursue them. At that point, your second detachment will descend into the camp and exploit the confusion. This second detachment should be mainly cavalry, but with a small contingent of archers or crossbowmen, who should focus on killing the horses.<sup>98</sup>

If it comes to a field battle, ensure that your men – including the infantry – are at peace in their souls, by confession, contrition, and the making of amends. In assembling your host do not focus simply on maximum number but on experience and quality.<sup>99</sup>

Unusually by comparison with contemporary authors, Theodore is specific about the arrangement of the cavalry: He recommends that the cavalry be assembled in three squadrons, where the first squadron comprises the best and best equipped riders, armed with lances. The overall commander of the host follows with the second squadron, separated in distance by a crossbow range. Its weapons are swords and maces, and its role is to follow up the initial attack by the first squadron. Offset to the left follows the third squadron, whose job it is to attack the enemy's right flank. Assuming a total complement of 1,000 horse, the first squadron should comprise 300, the second 500, and the third the remaining 200.<sup>100</sup>

Theodore is specific that the cavalry must coordinate with the infantry, which is ideally placed behind the cavalry and on the left flank, to threaten the enemy's right flank with ranged fire from bows and crossbows.<sup>101</sup>

97 KNOWLES, pp. 96-97; injunction on passwords also *ibid.*, p. 72.

98 KNOWLES, pp. 97-98.

99 KNOWLES, p. 92; SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 99.

100 KNOWLES, pp. 92-93.

101 KNOWLES, pp. 58-59; SETTIA, *Rapine*, p. 193; KANELLOPOULOS, « Byzantine Influence », pp. 290-91. The infantry is usually given short shrift in military histories for the time. For a more balanced assessment see William CAFERRO, « Toward an Understanding of Florentine Infantry in the Age of the Companies of Adventure », *Nuova Antologia Militare* 4.13 (Feb-

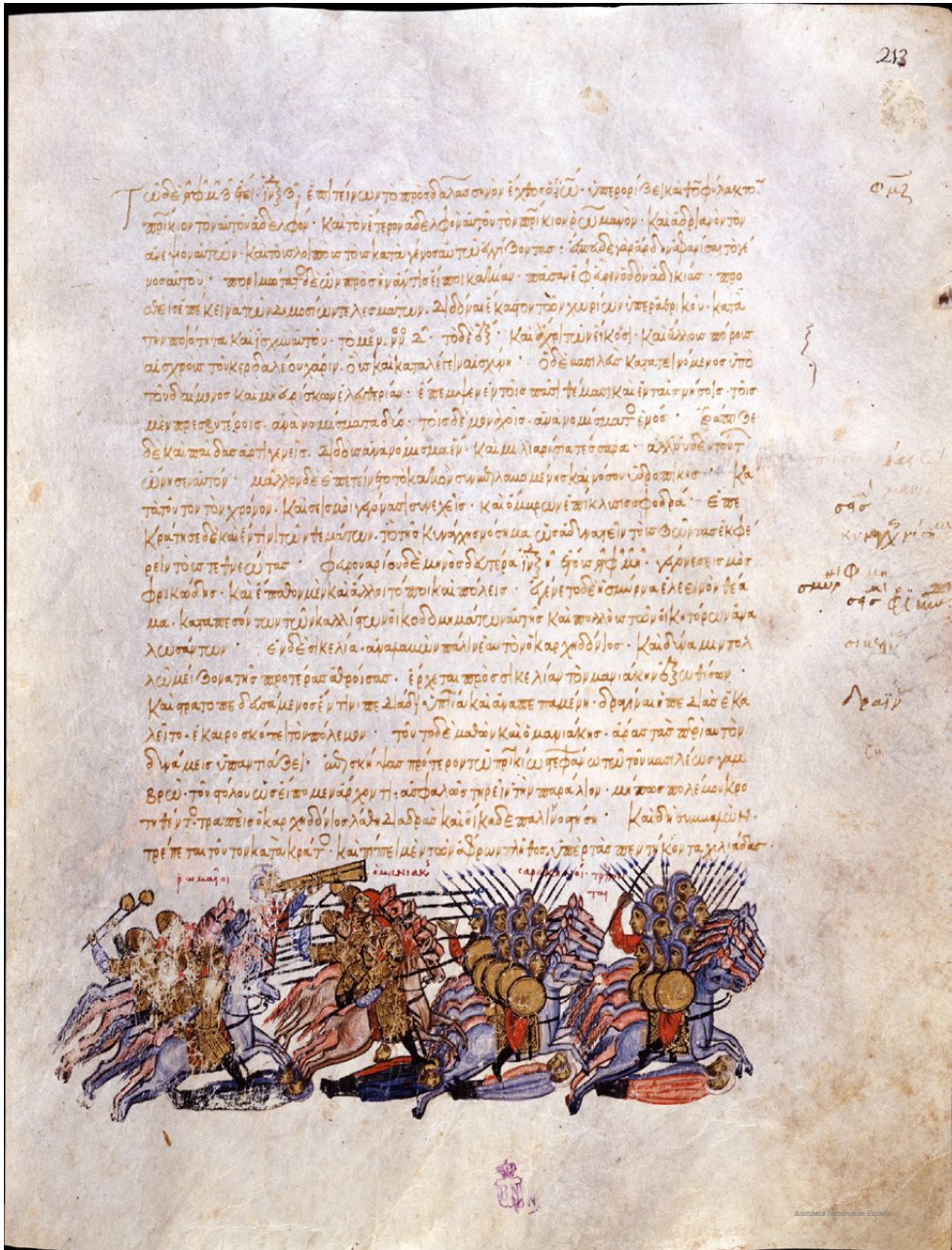


Fig. 4 – Skirmish between Byzantines and Saracens, late eleventh century  
 Ioannis Skylitzes, Codex Graecus Matritensis, VITR/26/2, p. 442  
 Image courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, CC-BY 4.0

He is not a great fan of lances for the cavalry, they are unwieldy in the press of battle. Still, the front ranks of the advance formation should bear lances, since they present impressively. The rear ranks and following squadrons should not have lances, but shorter weapons like maces.<sup>102</sup>

In a different passage, Theodore offers various considerations about the composition of individual formations – e.g. when it is better to form one battle instead of several. He advises to not mix the squires on their rounceys in with the knights and their destriers since they will merely get in the knights' way, but to have them as a separate formation following the knights, to pick up the fallen and gather any horses and arms. And he says to place the experienced horsemen in the front, the sides, and the rear, and the less experienced ones inside the formation, so that they might be steadied by their more experienced comrades.<sup>103</sup>

The standard must be entrusted to a reliable fighter and well guarded. He advises that every unit commander should carry two standards, one flying, one furled.<sup>104</sup>

Theodore's stratagems and pointers for exploiting the physical environment too are spread throughout the text. For example, he says, if your force is smaller than the enemy's, choose a defile for your defence. However, do not occupy the defile itself, since the enemy can utilise the space before the defile to deploy, and look for ways to circumvent you. Instead, occupy the exit of the defile; then the enemy will not be able to unfold his full strength, and can only advance on a front you can defend.<sup>105</sup>

### *Battle and the Aftermath*

Unlike most instructional military texts, Theodore also deals with the aftermath of combat:

If by divine grace you triumph in battle, do not act with cruelty or vengeance, which are sinful in the eyes of God. Show humility and act

---

ruary 2023), pp. 119-138; though mainly based on Florence, the article is useful for a general overview.

102 KNOWLES, p. 93.

103 KNOWLES, p. 72.

104 KNOWLES, pp. 72-73; so also the Templar Rule: *Règle du Temple*, Cap. 165 / pp. 125-26; SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 98; also in Maurice's *Strategicon*: SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 490, 497-8.

105 KNOWLES, pp. 72-73.

with grace toward your enemies, you might be in their position next time. It is much better to take prisoners and have their money than to fall into sin by killing them, and so incur the hatred and enmity of their families.<sup>106</sup>

See immediately to your mounted fighters. If they have lost horses and equipment, compensate the losses forthwith. And if there is among these a particularly valiant fighter, especially if he was under no obligation to join your cause, then ride up to him, descend from your horse, give him yours, and continue on foot. Generously reward those who have shown courage and proved themselves. By the same token, just as swiftly and publicly punish those who have proven themselves cowards or worse, or have absconded with spoils, especially if they did so before the battle was won; particularly harshly punish any officer to whom this applies.<sup>107</sup>

Establish order on the battlefield, and ensure that all dead, including those of the enemy, are buried with due Christian respect, and not left to be scavenged by wild beasts. Not only is such conduct Christian duty and pleasing to God, but it will also give less grounds for enduring hatred by the vanquished.<sup>108</sup>

If perchance the enemy prince or general is delivered into your hands, place him under close guard, but treat him honourably in accordance with his rank. Immediately assemble your council and seek to establish an advantageous and lasting peace with him. He can then return to his lands quickly and ensure the terms of the peace are kept. Such a result will be pleasing to God and enhance your standing as a wise ruler. If you delay, his own subjects will be distracted and look for guidance. They will be tempted to submit to a different lord, who will not feel bound by any commitments the prince in your captivity might have made; then you will have wasted an opportunity.<sup>109</sup>

Spoils are a matter of great importance, both tactical and as it relates to leadership. Troops should focus on winning the action, and not be side-tracked by the quest for booty, and so become vulnerable to a rallying enemy or their reserves.<sup>110</sup>

---

106 KNOWLES, pp. 93-94.

107 KNOWLES, pp. 94-95.

108 KNOWLES, p. 95; SETTIA, *Rapine*, p. 288.

109 KNOWLES, pp. 95-96.

110 An experience Theodore personally made as part of the HRE forces in the 1313 battle of

Also, disputes about the fairness of the distribution of booty can severely undermine the leader's authority, as the troops in the heat of combat have little opportunity to gather loot, while the reserves, not having been needed in action, can comb the battlefield at leisure. There are more than a few references to spoils-related procedures or disputes in contemporary sources, so this is not a subject unique to the *Enseignements*.<sup>111</sup>

Theodore strongly recommends that the distribution scheme for spoils should be laid down in writing before the battle, to avoid disputes with commanders and to prevent soldiers from breaking discipline in order to pillage and thus imperiling a victory. Any booty collected in a raid, though, should belong exclusively to the raiders, except for high value prisoners captured, which are reserved for the marquis. Particularly trusted men should value the horses before battle to determine the *restor* due if they are killed or injured. All the booty should be collected in one place, and then auctioned off to ensure transparency and fairness. From the proceeds, the losses need to be compensated first, and promptly. If the booty needs to be moved, e.g. out of enemy territory or transferred beyond a choke point, then a detachment of knights on the best horses should form a protective rearguard.<sup>112</sup>

The related passages most strongly evoke the provisions laid down in the *Siete Partidas*, though the language there is far more detailed and extensive.<sup>113</sup> My personal view is he was not familiar with the source itself, he is more likely to have learnt of the provisions by word of mouth, maybe through a Castilian diplomat or mercenary.<sup>114</sup> Some of Theodore's specific instructions parallel the *Siete Partidas*, but he omits other detailed mechanics that feature prominently there, especially the system of *cauallerias* that is used to calculate a fighter's entitlement.

Theodore also strongly enjoins the quick ransoming of any captives held by

---

Quattordio against Robert of Anjou, Charles II's successor – BARGIGIA, p. 206; SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 102-04; ID., *Rapine*, p. 59.

111 SETTIA, *Rapine*, pp. 56-75, reference to the *Enseignements* on p. 67.

112 KNOWLES, pp. 74-77; SETTIA, *De re militari*, pp. 99-100. Detailed regulations for *restor* for a detachment of mercenary cavalry hired by the city of Gubbio in 1326 LUONGO, pp. 144-45.

113 Byzantine laws also regulated the distribution of spoils, but in a different manner than set out by Theodore: SETTIA, « Esperienza », pp. 482-3, 489-90, 497-98; *Siete Partidas*, 2:25-2:30 / pp. 93<sup>r</sup>-113<sup>r</sup>, trans. SCOTT, pp. 470-526; GASSMANN, « Siete Partidas », pp. 12-21.

114 There were extensive Castilian relations on Theodore's mother's side – RAO, p. 23.

the enemy. The *Siete Partidas* deal with this as well, and also argue that doing so is called for by principles of charity etc. But Theodore's language here is more personal and impassioned than the administrative tone of the *Siete Partidas*. His anguish at the affected individuals' predicament is palpable, and that at its root lies the fact that these trusted officers from his personal entourage risked their lives for Theodore's benefit. To them, it matters not whether the war was won or lost, and the prince owes it to them to do his utmost – pledge castles to raise the cash if necessary – to obtain their release.<sup>115</sup>

Quite apart from the interpersonal aspect, such a policy solidifies the prince's leadership; failing in this respect would diminish the individuals' risk appetite in the next war. For the same reasons, he reminds his governors and lords to offer sincere condolences to the relatives of men killed.<sup>116</sup>

### *Summary, Conclusions, and Outlook*

The subtitle to this article, paraphrasing Marco Merlo, described the *Enseignements* as a *speculum* in the style of a Byzantine military treatise. The *speculum* elements are readily apparent from the summary here presented. The *Enseignements* have in common with the Byzantine military literature that they are not dedicated to a specific individual, as Giles' *speculum* was, but intended as a didactic text for general usage – though Byzantine military treatises are generally better structured than Theodore's stream-of-consciousness. He would have had access to the palace library during his enforced inactivity in Constantinople, but concrete templates or sources for the *Enseignements* are hard to pin down.<sup>117</sup> Another stylistic commonality might be the broad sweep of Theodore's attention, from the strategic environment to detailed tactical advice.<sup>118</sup>

---

115 In this specific respect, the *Siete Partidas* oblige the relevant lord only to spend what he can afford (*Siete Partidas* 2:29:3, trans. SCOTT pp. 517-18), as opposed to Theodore's advice to go a step further. Bear in mind, though, that the *Siete Partidas* are a legal code, and *lex cogit, non suadet*. GRILLO, « Governo », p. 109, refers to debts incurred by Theodore, including castles pledged, but makes no connection to paying ransoms. Mercenary contracts might specify that the client was obliged to pay up to a certain amount in ransom if a member of the force was captured – contract with Gubbio for mercenary cavalry in 1326 see LUNGO, p. 145.

116 KNOWLES, p. 77.

117 SETTIA, « Esperienza »; MERLO, pp. 515-16.

118 Less evident in the ninth century *Τακτικά* attributed to Leo VI the Wise or Maurice's sixth

The *Enseignements* are clearly a military text, and they do also include advice on tactics and stratagems. But Theodore's main focus is on shaping the strategic environment, i.e. on readiness and preparation in the widest sense.<sup>119</sup> The marquis should procure intelligence on his neighbours and engage in active diplomacy; he should ensure that ample supplies of arms, armour, horses, and victuals are stocked, and that the marquissate retains an autochthone arms industry; and, crucially, the marquis must conduct himself and his relations with his people and especially his immediate reports, the nobility and governors, in such a way to earn their trust and loyalty. Realistically, Theodore complements this worthy injunction with the warning to ruthlessly punish disloyalty.

On the basic, practical level, Theodore emphasises the simple things that make war so difficult: Keep it simple, make your presence felt, avoid confusion, ensure everyone knows what is going on, that friend can recognise friend.<sup>120</sup> Getting these matters right does not ensure victory, but getting them wrong is a certain route to defeat. They are far more important for the craft of soldiering than gimmicky stratagems or erudite quotations. The contrast to a work like Giles of Rome's could not be greater.

As an individual, Theodore vividly comes across as compassionately sensitive to the sacrifices the prince demands of his subjects – of all levels, not just his nobility or entourage. It is true that his guidance in this respect has a practical side; the prince *can* order all effectives to turn out, but keeping them in the field for even more than a day will tire them out physically, sap their morale, and undermine the economic substrate.<sup>121</sup> The ultimate result will not be strength but

---

century *Στρατηγικόν*, but a feature of e.g. Kekaumenos' *Στρατηγικόν τοῦ Κεκαυμένου* from around 1075 or the anonymous c.970 *Περὶ παραδρομῆς* ("On Skirmishing," usually known by its Latin title *De velitatione bellica*). Kekaumenos' work also includes a chapter representing an "integrated" *speculum*: PRINZING, « Byzantine Mirrors », pp. 115-16; ID., « Beobachtungen », pp. 19-22.

119 Comparable in this sense to the works of Gerald of Wales, see John D. HOSLER, « Reframing the Conversation on Medieval Military Strategy », *Journal of Medieval Military History* 16 (2018), pp. 189-206, at pp. 195-97. Gerald wrote in the twelfth century so it is possible though unlikely that Theodore could have known about him.

120 KNOWLES, p. 6.

121 As outlined in the opening paragraphs, the guidance also has an ethical and a legal side: On an ethical level, the prince is limiting the sacrifice he is demanding of his subject's blood and treasure only to the extent absolutely necessary, and since it is for the purposes of defence, the demand is justified. On a legal level, general levy service obligations were ge-

weakness. To use a buzz-phrase, less is more, or to put it differently, skill, quality, and thought trump raw numbers. His advice integrates practical, ethical, and legal considerations into the prince's decision-making. In doing so, he is showing an understanding that to be a successful ruler and commander, he must first of all be a good leader.

As a source the text is intriguing. Unlike so many medieval relations, it is openly a personal text, written by a prince dealing with contemporary problems facing a feudal prince at the time of his writing. Beyond general ethics, it does not purport to transmit eternal tactical verities, couched in confident authoritative statements buttressed by quotations from Scripture and the Ancients – that is, always assuming that Vignay has stayed reasonably close to his source. So the *Enseignements* provide us with a snapshot. But is it a snapshot of what was, or of what ought to have been? And is it a snapshot of stability, or is it a snapshot of a situation in full motion?

Regarding the first question, it seems that Theodore focused on what was, though a politically motivated colouration in the direction of what ought to have been cannot be discounted. Regarding the second question, I personally believe that we are seeing a polity in the midst of transition. Theodore was able to assert his inheritance to the marquisate because his uncle and predecessor John I as well as John's father William VII had cultivated strong bonds of loyalty with their feudatories. They also created a Monferrine identity that provided an ideological bulwark against foreign-allied pretenders. Theodore built on this identity. In doing so, he worked toward the further centralisation and bureaucratisation of his marquisate, a development mirrored in other princely polities, but also one that inevitably encroached on feudal structures.

Which leads us to another aspect of the *Enseignements* that sets them apart: they relate to a mainly rural polity organised under feudal lines more typical of lands north of the Alps. Historiography, both in Italy and anglophone, typically focuses on the organisation of the various city-states, whether under republican or monarchical government.<sup>122</sup> A common theme here is the social and societal

---

nerally limited to defensive war and by time or distance – Theodore, like other rulers of the time, probably fought these limitations and would not have wanted to acknowledge them, but they no doubt existed in Monferrat.

<sup>122</sup> GRILLO, « Governo », p. 103.

distinctions and conflicts between on the one side a ruling *popolo grasso* focused on finance, trade, and peace and order, and on the other side a broadly defined nobility with their violence-prone chivalric ethos and an identity rooted in mounted warfare. The source and anchor for this nobility's ethos is generally seen as lying outside (and being inimical to) the republican polities in which this nobility lived and transacted. In this context, surely it would be rewarding to compare the situation of the nobility in the republican city-states with their situation in a monarchical rural polity such as Monferrat.<sup>123</sup>

As variously stated, the *Enseignements* are in structure and content wholly original; even if Theodore drew on Roman, Byzantine, or Western authors, his own text is not obviously a reworking of any single precedent. One must also assume that his personal history informed his choice of emphasis, regardless of his motivations for writing his treatise. It stands to reason that he had an eye for issues which someone growing up in the Western military tradition would have regarded as so matter of course that it was not worth mentioning.

The preceding argument works both ways. It would have been extremely interesting to understand better the relationship between Monferrat's feudal military organisation, its nobility, and its cavalry organisation. Theodore drops tantalising clues but leaves the matter even more opaque than the infantry organisation.<sup>124</sup> Were the issues that interest us today simply irrelevant in Theodore's time and place, or so self-evident that it was not worth spilling ink over? Or was it an issue that Theodore understood but did not want to mention, either because it would have confused his intended Byzantine audience, or because it would have shown weaknesses of the feudal organisation which would have undermined the argument he was trying to make in its favour? Or was it Jean de Vignay who edited the information out?

As set out in the opening sections of this article, the *Enseignements* address the military challenge faced by the prince at three levels: Firstly, measures to shape

---

<sup>123</sup> For a recent anglophone monograph on this subject e.g. Peter SPOSATO, *Forged in the Shadow of Mars: Chivalry and Violence in Late Medieval Florence*, Ithaca, Cornell UP, 2022. A major theme around nobility and knights in republican polities is their feuding and violence; Byzantium, with a very different social structure, was not an environment in which feuds were common, so if this had been a phenomenon in Monferrat, Theodore would surely have addressed it. This is a question that cannot be explored here.

<sup>124</sup> SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 115.

the strategic environment; secondly, preparedness; and finally, tactics. Theodore does not conceptually or organisationally separate these three spheres, which would have helped the understanding of his text from a didactical perspective. On the other hand, it is very clear that Theodore understood these three elements as an integrated, organic whole. To be successful, a prince has to be on top of all three, neglecting any one would weaken his position.

It becomes apparent from Theodore's text that the marquis was not an absolute sovereign – unlike the Byzantine Emperor. The marquis needed the cooperation and support of the feudal estates comprising his domains. Doing so required long-term thinking, a mix of assertive leadership, diplomatic tact (not least *vis-à-vis* his own nobility), guarded trust, and if necessary forceful intervention. Institutions such as parliaments could be exploited to socialise buy-in to the prince's ambitions. Getting the balance right leveraged the combined might of the marquisate's estates; getting it wrong could lead to its dissolution.

Theodore was not crowned with many spectacular victories; if the record is to be believed, most of the battles he participated in were draws or losses. Still, he managed to preserve to a large extent the integrity of his marquisate. Arguably, then, Theodore was successful in achieving his strategic goal. His efforts to consolidate and rationalise the military constitution of the marquisate and to build on his uncle's and grandfather's policies aimed at creating a common identity allowed him to weather the near-incessant warfare he was engaged in. At the same time, though, the costs of this warfare forced him to resort to governance tools of the feudal order which undermined his efforts at the modernisation of his polity. It was left to his son and successor John II to unify both efforts and reap the benefits of internal consolidation – and achieve impressive military success.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> SETTIA, *De re militari*, p. 92; GRILLO, « Governo », p. 117; MERLO, pp. 517-19; apparently, Theodore's successors saw no need to call parliaments, with the next one not attested until 1379, though subsequently they seem to have become better institutionalised: PENE VIDARI, p. 128.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES

AEGIDIUS ROMANUS, *De regimine principum – Über die Fürstenherrschaft*, HARTMANN, Volker (ed. and trans.), Heidelberg, heiBOOKS, 2019.

*Der pulcher tractatus de materia belli: Ein Beitrag zur Kriegs- und Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, PICHLER, Alfred (ed.), Graz-Vienna-Leipzig, Leuschner und Lubensky, 1927.

KNOWLES, Christine, *Les Enseignements de Théodore Paléologue*, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 1983.

*Las Siete Partidas*, LÓPEZ, Gregorio (ed.), Salamanca, Domingo de Portonaris y Ursino, 1576.

*Règle du Temple*, HENRI DE CURZON (ed.), Paris, Renouard, 1886.

*Siete Partidas: Volume Two: Medieval Government: The World of Kings and Warriors*, BURNS, Robert I. (ed.) and SCOTT, Samuel Parsons (trans.), Philadelphia PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

## SECONDARY LITERATURE

BARGIGIA, Fabio, « Gli aspetti militari della “riconquista” del marchesato: Teodoro I di Monferrato nel biennio 1306-1307 », in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), “*Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L’avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 195-209.

CAFERRO, William, « Toward an Understanding of Florentine Infantry in the Age of the Companies of Adventure », *Nuova Antologia Militare* 4.13 (February 2023), pp. 119-138.

CORTESE, Maria Elena, « Le frange inferiori della cavalleria nelle campagne toscane: scutiferi e masnadieri tra inquadramento signorile e mobilità sociale (secc. XII-XIII) », *Archivio Storico Italiano* 667.1 (2021), pp. 3-41.

DI BRANCO, Marco, and IZZO, Angelo, *L’elogio della sconfitta*, Rome, Viella, 2015.

DONDI, Giorgio, « Le armi da fuoco all’epoca di Teodoro I di Monferrato », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 569-588.

GASSMANN, Jürg, « The *Pulcher tractatus de materia belli*: A Military Practitioner’s Manual from c. 1300 », *Nuova Antologia Militare* 5.17 (2024), pp. 105-138.

GASSMANN, Jürg, « The *Siete Partidas*: A Repository of Medieval Military and Tactical Instruction », *Acta Periodica Duellatorum* 9.1 (2021), pp. 1-27.

GASSMANN, Jürg, « The Bolognese *Societates Armatae* of the Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century », *Acta Periodica Duellatorum* 2 (2014), pp. 195-231.

GRILLO, Paolo, « Azzone Visconti e la guerra. 1329-1339 », in GRILLO, Paolo (ed.), *Conestabili. Eserciti e guerra nell’Italia del primo Trecento*, Soveria Manelli, Rubbetti-

- no, 2018, pp. 119-34.
- GRILLO, Paolo, « Il governo del marchesato », in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L’avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 103-18.
- HABERSTUMPF, Walter, « Teodoro I Paleologo e il Monferrato fra Oriente e Occidente », in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L’avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 15-22.
- HARDY, Duncan, « Vom Schiedstag zum Reichstag: Versuch einer Typologie des „Tagungsspektrums“ aus konzeptioneller und funktioneller Sicht im Heiligen Römischen Reich ca. 1350-1550 », in HUANG, Angela and LINK, Christina (eds.), *Kollektive Wilzensbildung in der Vormoderne: Hansetage im Vergleich*, Wismar, Callidus, 2024, pp. 3-37.
- HOSLER, John D., « Reframing the Conversation on Medieval Military Strategy », *Journal of Medieval Military History* 16 (2018), pp. 189-206.
- KANELLOPOULOS, Nikolaos, « The Byzantine Influence on the Military Writings of Theodore I Palaiologos, Marquis of Monferrat », in THEOTOKIS, Georgios and YILDIZ, Aysel (eds.), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea*, Leiden / Boston MA, Brill, 2018, pp. 287-98.
- LAIYOU, Angeliki E., « A Byzantine Prince Latinized: Theodore Palaeologus, Marquis of Montferrat », *Byzantion* 38 (1968), pp. 386-410.
- LUONGO, Alberto, « Nobilità cittadina e *stipendiarii*: l’organizzazione militare eugubina nella prima metà del XIV secolo », in GRILLO, Paolo (ed.), *Connestabili. Eserciti e guerra nell’Italia del primo Trecento*, Soverio Manelli, Rubbettino, 2018, pp. 135-58.
- MERLO, Marco, « Le armi del marchese. Gli armamenti negli *enseignements* di Teodoro Paleologo tra teoria e pratica della Guerra », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 499-568.
- PENE VIDARI, Gian Savino, « Teodoro I e il parlamento del Monferrato », in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L’avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 119-29.
- PRINZING, Günter, « Byzantine Mirrors for Princes: An Overview », in PERRET, Noëlle-Latitia and PÉQUINOT, Stéphane (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the ‘Mirrors for Princes’ Literature*, Leiden/Boston MA, Brill, 2023, pp. 108-35.
- PRINZING, Günter, « Beobachtungen zu „integrierten“ Fürstenspiegeln der Byzantiner », *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988), pp. 1-31.
- RAO, Riccardo, « La continuità aleramica: il governo del marchesato e i poteri locali durante la successione paleologa (1305-1310) », in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L’avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 23-44.
- RICKELT, Lutz, « Im Westen Grieche, im Osten Lateiner: Theodoros Palaiologos von Mon-

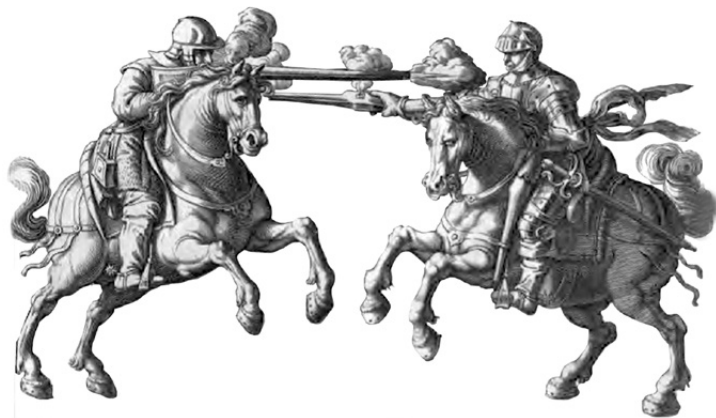
- ferrat », in DAIM, Falko, HEHER, Dominik, GASTGEBER, Christian, RAPP, Claudia (eds.), *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge: Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*, Vol. 2, Heidelberg, Propylaeum, 2019, pp. 269-76.
- ROJAS, Manuel, « Some Problems in the Study of the Conduct of Warfare in the Eleventh Century », in EDINGTON, Susan B. and GARCÍA-GUIJARRO, Luis (eds.), *Jerusalem the Golden: The Origins and Impact of the First Crusade*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, pp. 51–74.
- SETTIA, Aldo, « L'esperienza e il « senno accidentale » negli « Insegnamenti » di Teodoro di Monferrato », *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino* 110.2 (2012), pp. 479-98.
- SETTIA, Aldo, *De re militari. Pratica e teoria nella guerra medievale*, Rome, Viella, 2008.
- SETTIA, Aldo, « Premessa. Teodoro I: un “Greco” in Monferrato » in SETTIA, Aldo (ed.), *“Quando venit marchio Grecus in terra Montisferrati” L'avvento di Teodoro I Paleologo nel VII Centenario (1306-2006)*, Casale Monferrato, n.pub., 2008, pp. 11-15
- SETTIA, Aldo, *Rapine, assedi, battaglie: La guerra nel Medioevo*, Rome, Laterza, 2003.
- SPOSATO, Peter, *Forged in the Shadow of Mars: Chivalry and Violence in Late Medieval Florence*, Ithaca, Cornell UP, 2022.



Fig. 5. Ο Αλέξανδρος τη νύχτα στήνει ενέδρα στους Σκύθες. Ο Αλέξανδρος σκοτώνει και αιχμαλωτίζει Σκύθες (Alexander ambushes the Scythians at night. Alexander kills and captures Scythians.). From *The Alexander Romance*, Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini di Venezia, Museo delle Icone, MS 05, Fol. 28r.

*Insight*

*Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina*





## 'La giornata di Zama'.

### *Note in margine alla recente edizione di un saggio militare di Algarotti*

di DENISE ARICÒ

ABSTRACT. Starting from the examination of a recent edition of the essay *Sopra la giornata di Zama* by Francesco Algarotti, unconvincing due to the lack of commentary notes and a more complete introduction, this contribution places the 1749 text in the middle of a network of the author's reflections on the history of ideas regarding ancient and modern military thought. The famous battle of 202 BC is not only examined by Algarotti in light of the information derived from the Greek Polybius on the strategy of Scipio and Hannibal, but dialogues with the erroneous beliefs of Jean-Charles de Folard, who found the "column system" applied to it. This contribution also becomes the pretext for outlining the characteristics of modern military commentary, where philology and erudition repudiate the temptations of fictionalized history in the name of a scientific and rational approach advocated by Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Jean Le Clerc and André Dacier.

KEYWORDS. TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY, MILITARY STRATEGY, THEORY, PRACTICE, PHILOLOGY, CRITICISM, LANGUAGE, NOVEL, JUDGEMENT, FANTASY.

*1. «De' migliori modi di ordinarsi e di combattere si fece parola,  
e della colonna si ragionò»*

**N**elle *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, parlando di un personaggio minore, si dice che «aveva scroccato la fama di *savant* come l'Algarotti». Agli occhi del capitano Ugo Foscolo, interessato a pubblicare gli scritti del generale Montecuccoli, protagonista diretto delle campagne militari condotte nell'Europa del Seicento<sup>1</sup>, non serviva il titolo di 'Consigliere Intimo' di Augusto III, re di Polonia ed Elettore di Sassonia, né quello di 'Ciambellano e Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito' conferito ad Algarotti da Federico II di Prussia,

<sup>1</sup> Vd. le osservazioni di Ezio RAIMONDI, *Per le Opere di un guerriero*, in *Anatomie secentesche*, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1966, pp. 119-138.

né i contatti epistolari con i nomi più prestigiosi della cultura internazionale erano sufficienti per accreditargli l'autorevolezza di «parlare di cose di guerra», poiché sui campi di battaglia il veneziano non era mai stato. E così Foscolo concludeva che «le *operette* del conte non hanno bisogno di studio né di dottrina e che, trattando un po' di tutto, insegnavano a' nobili il modo di addottorarsi in un po' di tutto». E, paragonandolo al più solitario Alfieri, decretava: «Sommo applauso [...] si può ricavare per queste vie, e lo vediamo dalle lodi che l'Algarotti ebbe al suo tempo; ma quanto poca gloria, il fatto lo mostra; poiché, mancatigli fautori, gli va mancando il nome; e fra non molto chi parlerà più delle opere d'Algarotti?»<sup>2</sup>.

Non è forse il modo migliore per avviare la presentazione di un'iniziativa editoriale su un autore noto ai contemporanei del Settecento quanto Giacomo Casanova, ma che nel volgere di qualche decennio aveva visto offuscare la sua fama così pazientemente costruita. L'edizione del *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama* pubblicato in e-book da Aurora Boreale per le cure di Nicola Bizzi, smentisce il destino che immaginava il poeta di Zante, perché, si legge dalla homepage del sito, vuole raggiungere chi, per colpa di un'informazione «addomesticata», tende «a dimenticare le proprie radici, le proprie origini culturali, perdendo così la propria identità ed i propri valori»<sup>3</sup>.

Di Algarotti, dunque, si è continuato a parlare e si continua a farlo anche oggi, come testimoniano la ricca bibliografia critica raccolta nel *Briefdatenbank* dal gruppo di ricerca dell'Università di Treviri, il progetto di pubblicare il suo ampio carteggio, coordinato da Corrado Viola, e lo spazio sempre più ampio guadagnato dalla pubblicazione dei suoi saggi da parte di studiosi di diverse discipline<sup>4</sup>.

Bisogna però subito aggiungere con Andrea Battistini che Algarotti, intellettuale cordiale e attento ai problemi di divulgazione del sapere scientifico tra strati

---

2 Ugo FOSCOLO, *Opere edite e postume*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1850, vol. I, *Prose letterarie, Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, p. 47; *Lezioni di eloquenza*, IV, p. 145.

3 Al *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, che viene assegnato, con una svista, al 1949, nella prefazione *Francesco Algarotti, un cosmopolita 'Aristotele veneziano'* pp. 3-15, sono dedicate poche osservazioni, pp. 13-14. Dello scrittore sono usciti per la stessa casa editrice, ispirati ad uguali criteri e dalla penna del medesimo prefatore, il *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua*, in formato e-book, quello *Sopra la lingua francese* e *Sopra l'imperio degl'Incas*, l'unico in edizione cartacea, nel 2022.

4 Vd., per es., *Saggio sopra la pittura*, allestito da William SPAGGIARI, Roma, G. Izzi, 2000, il *Saggio sopra Orazio*, commentato da Bartolo ANGLANI, Osanna, Venosa (PZ), 1990 e, sul versante storico, il *Saggio sopra il Gentilesimo*, a nostra cura, Roma, Nadir Media, 2025.

EXTRAIT  
DE LA  
PREMIERE PARTIE  
DU TRAITÉ  
DE L'ART  
DE  
LA GUERRE

DE MR. LE MARECHAL  
DE PUYSEGUR,

Avec des Observations & des Réflexions traitées en abrégé,

P A R

MR. LE BARON DE TRAVERSE,  
*Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal & Militaire de  
Saint Louis, Capitaine au Régiment  
des Gardes-Suisses, & Brigadier  
des Armées du Roi.*

---

PREMIERE PARTIE.

---

A B A S L E,

---

Chez EMANUEL THOURNEISEN. 1755.

più ampi di pubblico, aveva contribuito forse più di ogni altro scrittore nel Settecento italiano a rinnovare gli statuti retorici dei generi tradizionali, preferendo ai manuali e ai trattati, irti di formule e figure sibilline, uno stile depurato dalle secchezze denotative e il commento a piede di pagina. In veste di cronista aveva dunque realizzato *reportages* su ciò che avveniva nei campi di battaglia e nelle stanze dei governi in Europa, che, sebbene indirizzati ad una persona precisa, raccolti in *Discorsi e Lettere militari* ambivano a informare l'opinione pubblica italiana<sup>5</sup>.

I moderni editori dei saggi algarottiani che desiderano proporre titoli poco noti e a prezzo contenuto, si trovano di fronte ad un testo già realizzato con questi intenti da uno spirito curioso di tutte le manifestazioni letterarie e artistiche che si offrivano all'osservazione nelle varie contrade in cui lo avevano portato i suoi viaggi, dopo le lezioni di astronomia, medicina e belle lettere ascoltate nello Studio bolognese. Questo non vuol dire, osservava già Carlo Calcaterra, che Algarotti fosse uno scaltro e raffinato *diseur de rien*, ma piuttosto il moderno portavoce dei nuovi compiti affidati all'intellettuale, desideroso d'intervenire nelle cose del mondo con una cultura alimentata da studi severi e geniali<sup>6</sup>.

L'edizione curata da Bizzi si accontenta invece di una generica premessa biografica, corredata da dodici note, con rapidi cenni ai molteplici interessi dell'«Aristotele veneziano», compreso il lungo soggiorno a Potsdam tra il 1747 e il '53, dove conobbe molti tra i letterati, gli artisti e i filosofi che arricchirono di voci la sua breve ma intensa esistenza.

Per non rischiare di farlo assomigliare però a quegli enciclopedici «ingegnini che non condensano le idee altrui, ma le coagulano», come sentenziava Niccolò Tommaseo<sup>7</sup>, dovremo subito ricordare che gli scritti di Algarotti ricevono la giusta prospettiva sin dalle parole scelte dal loro autore come motto collocato nel frontespizio. In questo caso è Cicerone a introdurci nel testo su Zama con una formula tratta dalle *Academicae quaestiones*: «Quam multa vident pictores in

5 Andrea BATTISTINI, *I 'Discorsi militari di Francesco Algarotti tra dialogo, lettera e biografia*, in *Svelare e rigenerare. Studi sulla cultura del Settecento*, Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2019, pp. 77-85.

6 Carlo CALCATERRA, *Il Barocco in Arcadia, e altri scritti sul Settecento*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1950, pp. 157-168; ID., *Il nostro imminente Risorgimento. Gli studi e la letteratura in Piemonte nel periodo della Sanpaolina e della Filopatria*, Torino, SEI, 1935, pp. 424-425.

7 Niccolò TOMMASEO, *Storia civile nella letteraria*, Torino, Loescher, 1872, p. 345.

umbris et eminentia, quæ nos non videmus!»<sup>8</sup>. Essa risulta tutt'altro che opaca se la si collega a quanto si è detto; i pittori sanno discernere tra le ombre e il rilievo particolari che sfuggono agli occhi degli imperiti, come uno scrittore addestrato dall'esercizio nella riflessione critica potrà offrire di quel memorabile fatto militare un esame «ragionato» e veritiero. Ne era esempio Machiavelli, che aveva dissertato di *Arte della guerra* con una profondità di giudizio inutilmente cercata da Algarotti nei suoi censori, primo tra tutti quel Jean-Charles de Folard che si era appropriato di molte idee del Segretario fiorentino<sup>9</sup>.

Il saggio *Sopra la giornata di Zama* era già pronto nel 1749, e come altri scritti storico-militari, era stato ideato e composto a Berlino, dove Algarotti aveva avuto occasione di discorrere di *ars militaris* e di storia romana con gli intellettuali e gli ufficiali raccolti alla corte del «Salomone del Nord»<sup>10</sup>. Ecco con quali accenti, colmi di risonanze letterarie e autobiografiche, descriveva al conte Bernieri la visita fatta dal maresciallo di Sassonia al re di Prussia:

«Pareva veramente che Scipione ed Annibale fossero bramosi di venire insieme a colloquio. Parecchi giorni stette il Sassonia a Posdammo in quella scuola di Marte. Quivi egli vide per la prima volta quella cavalleria, di cui tanto avea inteso ragionare. [...] Di guerra ho udito ragionare moltissimo in que' simposj, dacché era stato dato anche a me 'epulis accumbere divum'. Pareami in certo modo assistere al trionfo della Fama del Petrarca: passavano in mostra dinanzi a que' due tutti i più famosi capitani: e ben le so dire, che i meriti loro si pesavano col bilancino dell'orafa. De' migliori

8 Cic., *Acad. Quaest.*, II, 20.

9 Francesco ALGAROTTI, *Scienza militare del Segretario fiorentino, Opere. Edizione novissima [Opere]*, Venezia, Presso Carlo Palese, 1791, t. V, pp. 3-180. Le venti *Lettere militari* erano dedicate al principe Enrico di Prussia, vd. Virgilio ILARI, *Imitatio, restitutio, utopia': la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno*, in *Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco e romano*, a cura di Marta SORDI, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2002, p. 359, nota 230; Giuseppe Andrea LIBERTI, *La difesa del Segretario. Algarotti lettore dell' 'Arte della guerra'*, in *L'arte del dialogo, il mestiere della guerra. Studi per il quinto centenario dell' 'Arte della guerra' di Niccolò Machiavelli*, Milano, F. Angeli, 2022, pp. 149-162.

10 Il saggio, uscito per la prima volta tra i *Discorsi sopra differenti soggetti*, a Venezia, G. Pa-squali, 1755 e ristampato con altro materiale nel 1757, non ebbe mai una circolazione autonoma e fu presentato solo tra le *Opere*, Livorno, M. Coltellini, 1764, t. III, pp. 149-168; Cremona, L. Manini, 1778, t. III, pp. 139-156 e *Opere. Edizione novissima*, Venezia, C. Palese, 1791, t. V, pp. 431-452. Con il titolo di *Essai sur la bataille de Zama* tra le *Œuvres du Comte Algarotti*, III, Berlin, Decker, 1772, pp. 159-180 e in tedesco da SCHUMACHER, Hans W., *Der Versuch über das Heidentum*, in *Francesco Algarotti Philosophische, philologische und historische Versuche, herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert*, 2011, pp. 227-241 <https://www.algarotti.de/downloads-auswahlausgabe-francesco-algarotti/>

modi di ordinarsi e di combattere si fece parola, e della colonna si ragionò altresì»<sup>11</sup>.

Né mancavano, all'inizio dell'estate, i «campi del re», durante i quali si completava l'addestramento dei reggimenti all'uso pratico e tecnico delle armi combinate. Il ricordo di queste esercitazioni a partiti contrapposti sugli spianati attorno a Potsdam dettava ad Algarotti proclami di questo tenore:

«Del rimanente non è mestieri, come io le diceva, che vengano qua i Sassonia e i Levendal, perché si abbiano degli spettacoli militari. Senza che vengano ad assistervi di così fatti personaggi, di quanti simili giuochi non si veggono qui tutto giorno, co' quali in tempo di pace si addestrano i Prussiani a quel fiero gioco, in cui la posta è assai volte di una provincia o di un regno; passaggi di fiume, attacchi di villaggi; un sito montuoso come vada difeso; come si debba cogliere il vantaggio del terreno, sicché le poche genti resistere possano alle più; ritirate ordinatissime, ogni pratica, ogni fazione di guerra»<sup>12</sup>.

«Ragionare di guerra», avverte Jean-Pierre Bois, non era però un tratto esclusivo di quel sodalizio, né di quel momento storico<sup>13</sup>. Nel Rinascimento, nonostante le edizioni degli autori antichi si fossero moltiplicate e i trattati militari vi facessero ampio riferimento, gli ufficiali generali vi cercavano insegnamenti organici e non tattici. Tucidide, commentato da Machiavelli, tradotto da Claude de Seyssel, poi dall'umanista Lorenzo Valla, raccontava la prima battaglia di Mantinea nel 418 a. C., offrendo l'esempio di come potesse realizzarsi lo scontro tra gli opliti e la formazione a falange. Senofonte, ricostruendo la manovra di Epaminonda a Leuttra, nella seconda battaglia di Mantinea nel 362 a. C. desume

---

11 FRANCESCO ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, III, *Sopra la colonna del cav. Folard. Al conte Aurelio Bernieri*, in *Opere*, t. V, pp. 203-209: 205-206. Cita VERG., *Aen.*, I, 79 e Petrarca, *Triumphus Famae*.

12 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, VIII, *Sopra gli esercizj militari de' Prussiani in tempo di pace. Al Sig. Co. di Perron*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 275-283: 280-281. Da queste esperienze nacque le «istruzioni» dettate da Federico II per i suoi generali e fu creato il metodo addestrativo alla tattica imitato poi in tutta Europa. Vd. Carlo BAUDINO, *Eserciti e guerre nel mondo. Lineamenti di storia militare*, Milano-Varese, Istituto editoriale Cisalpino, 1962, pp. 272-273.

13 Lo dimostrano i doviziosi repertori bibliografici sull'argomento messi a punto da Virgilio ILARI, liberalmente offerti alla consultazione di chi scrive prima di essere pubblicati in questo numero della rivista, vd. «A Bibliographical Survey. 1. Present and Past Approaches to the Ancient Military History. A Short Bibliographical Survey of the Current Studies», *NAM*, 6 (2025), 22, pp. 9-110.

dalla storia una lezione teorica per il comandante della cavalleria e gli suggerisce i consigli tattici. Cesare aveva riscosso notevole successo nella ricezione della letteratura antica del XVI secolo, scrivendo quello che per Algarotti era, parafrasando Montaigne, «il breviario degli uomini di guerra»<sup>14</sup>. Tra i teorici dell'arte della guerra spiccavano Polibio, letto in greco, prima della traduzione latina di Isaac Casaubon, e Vegezio, ristampato in latino a Leida nel 1607 con gli estratti di altri autori il cui nome costituisce un canone del pensiero militare antico: Marco Porcio Catone, Aulo Gellio, Igino, Polieno, Enea il Tattico. Frontino, in particolare, nella sua *Teoria della tattica* aveva proposto schemi e modelli diversi per disporre le truppe di combattimento e negli *Stratagemmi* offrì espedienti, modellando la nuova concezione dell'arte della guerra rinascimentale, ormai opposta al codice d'onore di quella medievale<sup>15</sup>.

Come molti suoi contemporanei, Algarotti aveva cercato nell'*Arte della guerra* e nei *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* di Machiavelli le ragioni della superiorità della guerra antica, principalmente romana, su quella moderna, e lo aveva trovato soprattutto nel principio di reclutamento e nell'organizzazione dell'esercito. Machiavelli riteneva che, come a Roma, la fanteria dovesse essere valutata più della cavalleria e proponeva l'istituzione di una milizia nazionale, interrogandosi così più che sulla qualità morale e la natura civica del combattente, sul rapporto che la guerra ha con le armi moderne.

Tra Sei e Settecento il modello romano aveva infatti iniziato a subire adattamenti e lente metamorfosi. Montecuccoli, per citare un nome che s'incontra spesso nelle riflessioni di Algarotti, cita Cesare, Frontino, Vegezio e conosce bene Machiavelli e Giusto Lipsio; nelle sue fortunate *Memorie*, note anche come *Aforismi dell'arte bellica*, comprendendo che il battaglione stava diventando un elemento della linea sottile, avvertì l'urgenza di limitarne lo spiegamento in uno spazio troppo ampio<sup>16</sup>. Dopo di lui Maurizio di Sassonia e Antoine de Feuquières

14 ALGAROTTI, *Pensieri diversi*, in *Opere*, t. VII, p. 216 e, per uno studio puntuale e istruttivo, Luigi LORETO, *Pensare la guerra in Cesare. Teoria e prassi*, in *La cultura in Cesare*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Macerata-Matelica, 30 aprile-4 maggio 1990, Diego POLI (cur.), Roma, Il Calamo, 1993, I, pp. 239-343.

15 Jean-Pierre BOIS, *Guerre antique, guerre moderne: un dialogue nécessaire*, in *Dialogue militaire entre Anciens et Modernes*, Jean-Pierre Bois (éd.), Rennes, P. U. Rennes, 2004, pp. 117-129.

16 *Mémoires de Montecuccoli, généralissime des troupes de l'empereur, divisés en trois livres*, Strasbourg, J.-R. Doulssecker le père, 1735, oggi consultabile nell'ed. *Le Opere*, vol.

offrirono i risultati migliori alle analisi rigorose di situazioni reali, che divennero il viatico privilegiato dagli ufficiali per riflettere sulla guerra<sup>17</sup>.

Jean-Charles de Folard, aiutante di campo del Vendôme, era stato l'autore più letto e discusso fra gli scrittori militari della prima metà del Settecento, quando, con l'affermarsi di Stati moderni forti e centralizzati, in Inghilterra erano state aperte la Woolwich School per ufficiali del genio, nel 1751 la Military School e l'anno dopo l'Accademia di Wiener-Neustadt, inaugurata da Maria Teresa d'Austria. La sua attenta riflessione sulla battaglia di Cinoscefale raccontata da Polibio lo aveva fatto propendere piuttosto che per la legione romana, per la falange, massa compatta e irta di sarisse disposta in sedici file, che costituiva la formazione ideale per resistere alla potenza d'urto<sup>18</sup>. Le sue proposte avevano avuto il merito di suscitare, nell'assenso o nella distanza critica, una discussione sull'ordine di battaglia che andava oltre il suo schema iniziale, finendo per coinvolgere tutti gli aspetti dell'arte militare, dall'organizzazione dell'esercito e dell'equipaggiamento all'armamento, alla disciplina e al comando. Folard si era guadagnato anche in Italia l'approvazione di letterati come Gaetano Emanuele Bava di san Paolo, fondatore della Società Sanpaolina che riuniva a Torino nomi della statura di Carlo Denina, Gian Francesco Galeani Napione e Alfieri, ma pure l'attenzione di Federico di Prussia, che gli aveva dedicato l'*Esprit du chevalier Folard*<sup>19</sup>.

Maurizio di Sassonia, che nella lettera di Algarotti abbiamo visto intervenire come ospite di riguardo a una delle riunioni del re, era stato un interlocutore attento dello scrittore francese, ma rispetto ai teorici di arte militare poteva vantare di aver riportato numerose vittorie al fianco di tutti i grandi guerrieri del suo tem-

---

I-II Raimondo LURAGHI (cur.), Roma, Ufficio Storico Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, rist. 2000, vol. III, Armando TESTA (cur.), con la collaborazione di Luigi VILLA FREDDI.

17 Antoine DE PAS, Marquis DE FEUQUIÈRES, *Mémoires*, A Londres, Chez Pierre Dunoyer, A Paris, Chez Rollin Fils, 1740.

18 Simon GUINEBAUD, *Polybe et la guerre de siège*, in *Figures et expressions du pouvoir dans l'Antiquité, Hommage à Jean-René Jannot*, Thierry PIEL (dir.), Rennes, P. U. de Rennes, 2009, pp. 49-60.

19 Carlo CALCATERRA, *Il nostro imminente Risorgimento. Gli studi e la letteratura in Piemonte nel periodo della Sanpaolina e della Filopatria*, Torino, SEI, 1935, p. 442. Federico di Prussia pubblicò un estratto come guida di tattica e fortificazioni militari basata sul saggio di Folard su Polibio. Sulle intenzioni di questo lavoro riflettono ILARI, *'Imitatio, restitutio, utopia': la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno*, cit., pp. 357-359 e Piero DEL NEGRO, «Strategia e tattica nelle riflessioni di Federico II di Prussia», *Rivista di Studi Militari*, 6 (2017), pp. 97-110.

# I COMMENTARI DI C. GIULIO

CESARE,

CON LE FIGURE IN RAME DE GLI  
*alloggiamenti, de' fatti d'arme, delle circonvallationi delle cit-  
tà, & di molte altre cose notabili descritte in essi.*

Fatte da ANDREA PALLADIO per facilitare  
a chi legge, la cognition dell' historia.

CON PRIVILEGI.

DVCIBVS HIS



PROSPERA QVAEQVE.



IN VENETIA,

APPRESSO PIETRO DE' FRANCESCHI.

M. D. LXXV.

po. Algarotti ne cita spesso le *Rêveries*, dove vengono narrati episodi delle campagne di Cesare, ma pure della guerra di Successione di Spagna cui aveva preso parte<sup>20</sup>. Nella biblioteca del veneziano godeva di un posto speciale il «valoroso» conte di Beausobre, traduttore scrupoloso che aveva messo a disposizione degli ufficiali testi di autori meno conosciuti come il già citato Enea il Tattico, Eliano e Arriano<sup>21</sup>; apprezzava anche Karl Théophil Guischart, rigoroso nell'esame dei testi originali cui accedeva direttamente, evitando le ormai numerose traduzioni disponibili, e consigliava di non modellare le tattiche moderne su quelle degli antichi, come voleva Folard, ma ad usare il loro esempio come oggetto di riflessione e analisi<sup>22</sup>. Di lui dovremo riparlare, ma per il momento conviene far ritorno all'alveo del nostro discorso.

Il *ductus* della scrittura di Algarotti sembra restituirci l'eco delle conversazioni avute a Potsdam, dove ci riporta anche James Francis Edward Keith, maresciallo di campo di Federico di Prussia, «Cavaliere dell'Aquila Nera, e Governatore di Berlino» dedicatario del *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, che aveva studiato la guerra «con ispirito inglese» e che Algarotti aveva spesso consultato su questi problemi.

## 2. Un «sistema fieramente combattuto»

Una delle carenze a nostro parere più vistose dell'iniziativa editoriale curata da Bizzi è proprio quella di svincolare il saggio sulla giornata di Zama dalla costellazione di riferimenti che lo collega a numerose lettere militari dedicate a questi temi; un errore evitato da Francesco Aglietti, curatore dell'edizione veneziana delle *Opere*, che spostò il lavoro di Algarotti tra gli scritti militari del quinto tomo.

Per non rischiare, a volta nostra, di omettere i dettagli importanti di cui Bizzi non discorre, dovremo subito riconoscere con Piero Pieri che la profonda evolu-

20 Maurice DE SAXE, *Mes Rêveries. Ouvrage posthume*, A Amsterdam et a Leipzig, chez Arkstee et Merkus, et se trouve a Paris chez Desaint et Saillant, [Chez] Durand, 1757; ALGAROTTI, *Pensieri diversi*, cit., pp. 122-123.

21 Jean-Jacques BEAUSOBRE de, *Commentaires sur la défense des places d'Aeneas le Tacicien, le plus ancien des auteurs militaires, avec un tableau militaire des Grecs du même temps et les écoles militaires de l'antiquité*, Amsterdam-Paris, Pissot, 1756.

22 Sull'autore dei *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains*, La Haye, Chez Pierre de Hondt, 1758; Lyon, Bruyset, 1760, vd. ILARI, 'Imitatio, restitutio, utopia': la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno, cit., pp. 291-292.

zione delle armi e degli ordini nel Settecento non significava di per sé una tattica più spedita e una strategia più rigorosa. L'esercito appariva un insieme quanto mai delicato e imperfetto: con l'uso del fucile godeva di una maggiore efficienza di fuoco, ma pativa l'inconveniente di far procedere per tre o quattro chilometri una linea lunga e sottile di armati facile a rompersi o a presentare congestioni e lacune. Nella marcia finiva spesso con l'assumere una forma convessa che ne indeboliva i fianchi e anche la presenza laterale della cavalleria aumentava le difficoltà di un andamento euritmico, tanto più quando si dovesse avanzare facendo fuoco. Le conseguenze più evidenti, aggiunge Pieri, erano il prevalere della difensiva sull'offensiva e dunque di una strategia mal servita dalla tattica, guerre lunghe e lente in cui il fattore politico aveva la preminenza su quello militare<sup>23</sup>.

Nelle *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre* e del *Commentaire sur Polybe* continuazione del *Traité de la Colonne*, del 1715, il Folard aveva da tempo caldeggiato con appassionata convinzione il potenziamento dei corpi di fanteria e la sostituzione del tradizionale schieramento lineare delle truppe romane sul campo con l'attacco in colonne a formazione chiusa, affermando di averla rinvenuta nelle pagine di Polibio di cui aveva completato un *Commentaire* nel 1727<sup>24</sup>. Era una sorta di compromesso fra la tattica greca, la romana e la formazione di reparti con otto, dieci, dodici righe di profondità, ma in grado sia di attaccare con la baionetta, sia di spiegarsi in linea al momento di fare fuoco, a patto però di lasciare grandi spazi tra colonna e colonna<sup>25</sup>. Algarotti non esagerava dunque nelle sue dichiarazioni trasmesse al conte Bernieri. Il tema era di grande attualità nei

23 Piero PIERI, *L'evoluzione dell'arte militare nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII e la guerra del secolo XVIII*, in *Nuove questioni di storia moderna*, Milano, Marzorati, 1968, II, pp. 1123-1180: 1166-1169.

24 Vd. Jean-Pierre BOIS, «Polybe et le chevalier de Folard», in *La Grèce et la guerre. Actes du 25e colloque de la Villa Kérylos à Beaulieu-sur-Mer les 3 et 4 octobre 2014*, Philippe CONDRAMINE, Jacques JOUANNA, Michel ZINK (éds.), Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 26 (2015), pp. 215-244; Jean CHAGNIOT, *Le chevalier de Folard: la stratégie de l'incertitude*, Monaco, Éd. du Rocher, 1997; Michel DUBUISSON, *Polybe et la 'militia Romana', Pensée stratégique et humanisme. De la tactique des Anciens à l'éthique de la stratégie*, Bruno COLSON et Hervé COUTAU-BÉGARIE (éds.), Paris, Economica, 2000, pp. 1-23; Jean CHAGNIOT, «L'apport des Anciens dans l'oeuvre de Folard», *ivi*, pp. 111-124; Bruno COLSON, «Le prince de Ligne et le chevalier de Folard», *Combattre, Gouverner, Écrire: études réunies en l'honneur de Jean Chagniot*, Paris, Économica, 2003, pp. 267-279.

25 Rispettivamente usciti nel 1724 e in sei volumi, tra il 1727 e il '30.

circoli culturali e militari del tempo. In molti protagonisti della vita intellettuale, da Antoine de Feuquières e Santa Cruz de Marcenado, a Paolo Doria, lettore di Machiavelli a Medinacoeli, fino a Maurizio di Sassonia e all'economista Giuseppe Palmieri, il dibattito fra teoria e pratica si arricchiva con l'esame delle diverse posizioni sul tema della colonna.

L'*Introduzione* di Bizzi fa solo qualche cenno scarnamente commentato, confidando sulla chiarezza dei rimandi apposti da Algarotti a piede di pagina, cui nulla aggiunge di suo in nota<sup>26</sup>. Pur essendo citazioni corrette e filologicamente impeccabili, non a tutti i lettori potrebbero risultare esaurienti: Algarotti fa infatti dialogare Polibio, di cui cita ampi brani in lingua originale, e il Folard, assumendosi il compito di riferire al lettore i rispettivi ragionamenti. L'andamento cordiale di affabili chiacchierate non rinuncia infatti a una precisione lessicale e analitica tutta settecentesca, rispecchiando la vocazione dialogica di chi, sapendo di non possedere la verità, è disposto a ricredersi e dà spesso spazio al punto di vista del vero bersaglio polemico, il Folard<sup>27</sup>.

Scipione e Annibale, che il 19 ottobre del 202 a. C. si erano trovati per la prima volta faccia a faccia a Zama, dopo la disfatta romana di Canne, non vengono mai opposti come avviene nelle biografie di Plutarco, dove lo scrittore greco, sostiene Algarotti, si attiene «alla tradizione vaga e incerta; la quale, somigliante alla favola, attribuisce ad uno ciò che appartiene ad un altro, ciò ch'egli non fece e non si avvisò di fare giammai; la quale di un semplice uomo fa molte volte un eroe, di un eroe ne fa un dio» e alla lealtà senza compromessi del romano oppone quella «scaltra prudenza» che si riassume nel termine greco di «*métis*» del cartaginese. Algarotti si sottrae a questa tentazione, mostrando due antagonisti similmente valorosi e desiderosi di condividere esperienze e valutazioni<sup>28</sup>.

---

26 Accenna invece più volte all'appartenenza massonica, pp. 7-10. Nicola Bizzi è anche autore di un profilo biografico di Algarotti, pubblicato in e-book nel 2023.

27 Lo metteva in rilievo anche la recensione del saggio apparsa nel «The Critic Review, or Annals of Literature», London, Printed for A. Hamilton, 1774, vol. 37, pp. 145-149; 145; 227-231; 304-305.

28 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, *Sopra la impresa disegnata da Giulio Cesare contro a' Parti. Al Sig. D. Giuseppe Pecis*, in *Opere*, t. V, pp. 218-233: 232. Vd. Frédérique VERRIER, *Les armes de Minerve. L'Humanisme militaire dans l'Italie du XVIe siècle*, Christian BEC (préf.), Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997, pp. 92-104; 233-237; Giovanni BRIZZI, *Scipione e Annibale. La guerra per salvare Roma*, Bari, Laterza, 2007, spec. pp. 185-216.

Il «sistema» della colonna di Folard, presentato dallo scrittore come un ragionamento sillogistico in sé concluso, prevede che

«piccola esser debba la fronte dell'esercito, e grande rispettivamente la grossezza; che cogli ordini ben serrati insieme a pigliare s'abbia poco terreno; e non tanto si voglia intendere ad accerchiare il nemico, quanto ad urtarlo ed a romperlo. Tale ordinanza di uno o più corpi di fanteria chiama egli colonna. Le prime file della colonna consumate dal nemico vengono ad essere instaurate dalle seconde, e dalle altre, che van loro succedendo di mano in mano: e le ultime file, benché a ferire inutili, fanno, dic'egli, alle prime come un appoggio e un barbacane, e ajutano a penetrar anch'esse le schiere de' nemici; trasferendo in certo modo alle militari ordinanze gli effetti meccanici dell'ariete, il quale, non già in virtù della mole o grandezza, ma in virtù della sua forma e dell'urto, veniva a spezzare e a vincere le più sode muraglie»<sup>29</sup>.

A mano a mano che procede nella descrizione, il «sistema» messo a punto dal Folard assume l'effigie di una macchina da guerra cui manca la forza offensiva e difensiva. Anche l'apparente essenzialità di lessemi tecnici desunti dall'arte ossidionale quali «barbacane» o «ariete», grazie alla contiguità con altri, talora iterati, come «virtù», caro al lessico animistico e magico delle teorie aristoteliche, proietta un bagliore ironico sull'autoipnotica suggestione in cui è immerso l'avversario, che si appaga di termini illusori. Proseguendo nel saggio con la metaforica bellica, il veneziano evoca uno scontro tattico e ideologico tra Folard e i «fieri» nemici del suo sistema, puntellato dalla forza dell'esempio, vero caposaldo argomentativo:

«Oltre alle ragioni che adduce il Folard ad istabilire tal suo sistema, le quali vennero fieramente combattute, egli ha fatto ogni suo potere per rinforzarlo e munirlo con l'autorità dell'esempio: tanto più, che argomentando la ragione come le cose debbano riuscire, e mostrando l'esempio come riescono in fatti, pare esser questo un assai miglior fondamento che non è quella, e doversi perciò seguire in un affare di così grande importanza quale è la guerra»<sup>30</sup>.

Algarotti si rivolge risolutamente a Polibio, che senza prolissi giri di parole descrive la fase preliminare dello scontro. Annibale, che per la prima volta si trovava a dover combattere su di un terreno che non aveva scelto e con la caval-

29 ALGAROTTI, *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama* [Zama], con il rimando al «Traité de la colonne, chap. III», p. 436.

30 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 436-437.

150034

**COMMENTAIRES**  
SUR  
LA DÉFENSE DES PLACES,  
*D'ÆNEAS LE TACTICIEN,*  
le plus ancien des auteurs militaires ;  
AVEC QUELQUES NOTES.  
**LE TABLEAU MILITAIRE DES GRECS**  
DU MESME TEMPS,  
**LES ÉCOLES MILITAIRES DE L'ANTIQUITÉ,**  
ET QUELQUES AUTRES PIÈCES.  
Par M. le comte DE BEAUSOBRE, maréchal des camps  
& armées du Roi.  
**TOME PREMIER,**  
CONTENANT *ÆNEAS*, ET LES NOTES.



VILLE DE LYON  
Biblioth. du Palais des Arts

A AMSTERDAM,  
*& se vend à Paris,*  
Chez PISSOT, à la Sagesse, quai de Conti, à la descente du pont-neuf.

---

M. DCC. LVII.



leria in inferiorità numerica, aveva disposto il suo esercito in tre file, imitando la formazione romana. La cavalleria fu posizionata su entrambi i lati: i Cartaginesi, con i Punici e Libi-Fenici a destra e i Numidi a sinistra, con gli elefanti e le truppe leggere disposti davanti alla fanteria<sup>31</sup>. Nella pianura di Zama, secondo lo scrittore greco, Scipione schierò i suoi uomini sulle consuete tre linee, ma anziché alternare i manipoli nell'usuale formazione a scacchiera, diede disposizione affinché i manipoli di *principes* prendessero posto alle spalle degli *hastati*. Con questo stratagemma il condottiero romano intendeva creare dei corridoi di scorrimento degli 80 elefanti, alla carica dei quali nessuno dei suoi uomini, per quanto veterani, era abituato. Per essere sicuro d'indirizzarvi i pachidermi, utilizzò a modo di esca i *velites*, che avrebbero per primi assorbito l'impatto degli animali. I *velites* erano collocati in questi spazi, con l'ordine di retrocedere se si fossero trovati al cospetto degli animali, o se era loro possibile, di riportarsi a destra e a sinistra tra le linee.

Aveva invece collocato l'alleato Massinissa, conosciuto durante la campagna in Spagna, e il suo contingente di numidi sul fianco destro, il suo luogotenente Caio Lelio con la cavalleria cittadina e confederata alla sinistra<sup>32</sup>. In quest'occasione vennero impiegati elefanti giovani e non addestrati, che durante la battaglia, spaventati e imbizzarriti, scapparono verso le ali, recando danni più all'esercito cartaginese che a quello romano. La fuga degli elefanti aiutò infatti la cavalleria romana a battere la sua controparte, cacciandola dal campo di battaglia<sup>33</sup>.

Partendo dal resoconto di Polibio, riprende Algarotti, al cavalier Folard «piace d'inferire» che Scipione, per occultare i suoi disegni al nemico, avesse in un primo tempo finto di ordinare l'esercito alla «usitata maniera» dei Romani

«e dipoi, per vincerlo, cambiasse la ordinanza, e venisse a porre le sue fanterie le une alla coda delle altre nel medesimo filo in una linea o schiera di colonne. Ciascuna colonna, dic' egli, era di tre sezioni, astati principi e triarj, con uno intervallo di soli quattro passi da principio tra una sezione e l'altra; le quali poi nel combattimento si riunirono insieme testa con coda, senza lasciare tra loro il minimo intervallo. E un tal ordine di combattere, aggiunge il Folard, stimò quel gran capitano esser quell'uno che nel caso

31 POLYB., XV, 11, 1.

32 Facciamo nostre le osservazioni di Giovanni BRIZZI, *Scipione e Annibale. La guerra per salvare Roma*, cit., pp. 198-210, cui rimandiamo anche per la ricca bibliografia sulla battaglia.

33 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 439-440.

suo potea dargli la vittoria: e ciò per trovarsi egli in campagna rasa incontro a un nemico, che avea gran numero di elefanti, e sopra il doppio di fanterie. Gli spazj diritti ed aperti tra l'una colonna e l'altra, davan libera la via al furor degli elefanti; e le colonne, che a un bisogno fanno fronte da ogni banda, lo mettevano in sicuro contro al pericolo di essere accerchiato dal maggior numero delle genti nemiche; né per romperlo, in uno niuna altra cosa dovea più confidare, che nella unione nell'urto e nel peso della colonna. Ed ecco la chiosa del Folard, e il sugo, che si può spremere, se io non m'inganno, da quella sua dissertazione sopra la giornata di Zama. Alla qual giornata si vide, egli conchiude, quanto negli andati tempi praticar potevasi di più maraviglioso e perfetto nell'arte di ordinare, e di far combattere la fanteria(1)»<sup>34</sup>.

Il racconto di Algarotti lascia il registro tecnico e punta a riassumere il «sugo» del ragionamento di Folard, fatto soprattutto di «chiose», cioè interventi arbitrari di un lettore maldestro cui piace «inferire» troppo disinvoltamente ciò che nel testo non c'è. Mai dimentico delle formule discorsive di chi è pronto al confronto delle ipotesi e al dibattito delle idee, purché esso avvenga nello stile della ragione, Algarotti mira a definire i criteri di una corretta esegesi testuale:

«E già ad ognuno dovrà pur sembrare la nuova cosa, che un uomo de' nostri giorni si metta a far descrizioni dei fatti antichi a fronte degli scrittori antichi; e che il Folard possa darsi ad intendere di aver penetrato nel consiglio di Scipione meglio, che non seppe fare un Polibio, uomo nel mestier dell'armi consumato quanto altri mai, nudrito nella casa degli Scipioni, e confidentissimo di quel medesimo C. Lelio, il quale combatté, ed ebbe tanta parte in questa istessa giornata di Zama (1). Polibio dice soltanto, che quella nuova ordinanza fu fatta in riguardo agli elefanti di Annibale, la cui furia non trovando contrasto dovesse ire a voto; né parla di altri intendimenti che sotto ci avesse Scipione; e per niente non tocca quello, che a parte a parte descrive il cavalier Folard [...]»<sup>35</sup>.

Il discredito dell'avversario gioca, in questo caso, sull'infrazione al principio di contraddizione, che è il reato logico più grave per chi discute di scienza:

«E la più solenne autorità, sopra la quale il Folard fonda il suo sistema, è tratta dallo stesso ch'egli prese a commentare: ella è l'autorità di Scipione, il quale, secondo l'interpretazione ch'egli dà a Polibio, combatté a Zama con l'esercito ordinato in colonne; e mercé di una tale ordinanza ottenne contro ad Annibale quella vittoria, che diede final sentenza tra Roma e Cartagine

34 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 441-442 con il rimando a «Folard, Observations sur la bataille de Zama au liv. XV, chap. I, de l'histoire del Polybe T. VI».

35 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 442-443; «Polyb. l. X, cap. II., n. 3».

dell'imperio del mondo. Ora per chiarire sopra tal punto la quistione, non altro converrà fare, che ben chiarire il fatto medesimo, attentamente considerando ciò, che di quella memorabile giornata ne dice Polibio, e ciò, che sopra vi ragiona il Folard: e questo appunto intendo in ora di fare»<sup>36</sup>.

Enunciato il metodo che intende seguire, cioè «considerare» attentamente il dettato dello storico e poi valutare ciò che ne deduce il Folard, con l'anadiplosi del verbo «chiarire» attiva il registro ironico e mostra gli errori di un esegeta che travisa continuamente i dati offerti dall'autore antico, pur dichiarando la propria intenzione di «penetrarne» i pensieri più reconditi:

«Niente neppure trovasi nel testo da fondarvi su quella grandezza degli spazj, o sia la distanza tra le bande degli astati de' principi e de' triarj, quale la pone il Folard; che anzi sarà facile a trovarvi, chi ben considera, di che fortemente impugnarla. Il Folard fa quella distanza picciolissima, di quattro soli passi, e non più: e dalle parole di Polibio si può raccogliere, che fosse maggiore di assai»<sup>37</sup>.

Con il ricorso a formule allocutive quali «chi ben considera», «ad ognuno dovrà parer cosa nuova», lo scrittore tende a sollecitare la solidarietà dei lettori e a isolare l'avversario. La formazione decantata dal Folard, aveva del resto osservato con un paradosso, si era dimostrata utile nella ritirata inglese del 1745, perché la fanteria anglo-hannoveriana, dovendo arretrare tra i villaggi di Fontenoy e Antoin, per evitarne i colpi d'artiglieria, si era radunata verso il varco lasciato aperto dai nemici. E «i battaglioni si misero alla coda l'uno dell'altro; e così a formar si venne la colonna; la battaglia si concluse con la vittoria delle truppe guidate dal Maresciallo di Saxe, «bello esempio della parte che ha molte volte il caso nelle cose umane, che regolate poi si credono dal più profondo consiglio», commenta Algarotti<sup>38</sup>.

Ma facciamo ritorno al saggio su Zama. L'asserto finale, dando per scontata nel lettore una risposta negativa, mira a isolare il Folard, unico a «non aver veduto» né «penetrato», cioè valutato, le ragioni profonde dell'autore greco, proponendo spazi tanto angusti da essere inaccettabili. Le conclusioni non giungono inattese:

«Male adunque regge, nel determinare qual fosse la ordinanza di Scipione a Zama, il sentimento del Folard: il quale, per farle prender sembiante di una schiera di colonne, non fa una difficoltà al mondo d'immaginare po-

36 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., p. 437; «Traité de la colonne, cap. III».

37 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., p. 444; «Polyb. I. XV, cap. I, n. 14».

38 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, III, cit., pp. 207-208.

sizioni distanze e tali altre cose, che, ben lungi dal trovarsi espresse, sono contraddette dalle parole di Polibio, e fanno direttamente contro gl'intendimenti e il fine di Scipione»<sup>39</sup>.

Incapace di comprendere il piano del generale romano, Folard intende ancor meno la dinamica dello scontro fra i due eserciti. Fa assumere il semblante di colonne alle schiere di soldati come un prestigiatore che gioca con le parole. Algarotti ci porta, con una descrizione vivacissima, nel cuore della «zuffa» quando, «stivati e tutti ingarbugliati» nell'esiguo spazio assegnato loro dal «sentimento», cioè dall'intendimento suggestionato e non razionale di Folard, i soldati di Scipione si sarebbero «messi in disordine e rovesciati gli uni sugli altri». E procede implacabile:

«Ma ciò, che a mio giudizio leva ogni dubbietà e taglia la quistione, si è questo: rotte ch'ebbero i Romani le due prime schiere di Annibale, restava da superare la terza la più valida di tutte, che ancora rimaneasi intera, e dove trovavasi l'istesso Annibale in persona. Che fa Scipione? fa sonare a raccolta per richiamare gli astati, che inseguivano tuttavia i fuggitivi; gli colloca dirimpetto al centro di questa terza schiera; fa serrar gli ordini a' principi e a' triarj sull'una e l'altra ala, a destra cioè e a sinistra; gli fa ire innanzi; e come e' furono, dice Polibio, sulla medesima fronte di pari cogli astati, ecco ch'egli dà dentro alla terza schiera, e fa ragione in tal modo di compir la vittoria (1). Dove è da considerare, che le bande degli astati principi e triarj non sono più come da prima ordinate alla schiena, ma a' fianchi le une delle altre; e la fronte dello esercito romano viene per tal nuova ordinanza a crescere di molto, e a scemare per conseguente la grossezza, che in sul principio del combattimento egli avea talché il vincere quella terza schiera non istava già nell'urtarla e nel romperla in un luogo o due, come fa un'ordinanza poco larga e grossa; ma piuttosto nel batterla da ogni lato, e nello accerchiarla, come può fare un'ordinanza assai distesa, e non così grossa. Tant'è, che non resta veruna immaginabile sembianza di colonna allora appunto, che dovendosi attaccare il nerbo delle forze di Annibale, sarebbe stata al maggior uopo di Scipione»<sup>40</sup>.

Con il ricorso a formule fátiche, che mirano a sollecitare il contatto con i lettori e guadagnare il consenso critico anche di quelli meno esperti, lo scrittore veneziano ha concluso la descrizione della battaglia, ma non il suo intento d'intellettuale alle prese con l'argomento sulle competenze richieste ai moderni interpreti di testi d'*ars militaris*. Eccoli esordire con una dichiarazione dal tono

39 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., p. 446.

40 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 448-449. «Polyb. l. XV, cap. I, n. 14».

epidittico, abilmente stemperato da formule come «quasi» e «forse»:

«Veramente egli è un vecchio costume, e quasi diritto de' comentatori, non già di chiarire i sensi dell'autore che prendono a chiosare, ma di cercar piuttosto, e ripescarvi per entro i proprj loro concetti: e niuno forse quanto il Folard di tal diritto si mostrò egualmente tenero e geloso. Suole egli far dire a Polibio e agli altri autori, che nel lunghissimo suo comento prende per mano, quello che in conto niuno trovasi nel testo; ne distorce i sensi, gli accomoda gli rivolge a talento suo; e per tal via giugne agevolmente a vedervi per entro e a formare la sua colonna»<sup>41</sup>.

Attingendo ora al lessico amoroso e cortese, in grottesco contrasto con l'argomento trattato, nella denuncia Algarotti usa la bonaria ironia che contraddistingue i giudizi sul Folard. Trasformato in amante «tenero e geloso», che «porta per mano» l'autore chiosato, quando dovrebbe accadere il contrario, questi è abituato a «pescarvi» alla rinfusa e casualmente significati da modulare sui suoi. Anche la dichiarazione di Folard sulla forza argomentativa offerta al suo sistema dalla condotta di Gneo Giulio Agricola nella battaglia contro i Caledoni al monte Graupio e di Cesare stesso nell'ordinanza dell'esercito a Farsalo, è capovolta inesorabilmente da Algarotti. Non scorgendovi ombra alcuna di colonna, deve concludere

«che al considerare la teorica del Francese, e la pratica del Romano, niente vi ha di più diametralmente opposto in effetto; e vengan quanti sofisti fur mai, non ci è verso, né via di assestare i precetti dell'uno cogli esempi dell'altro»<sup>42</sup>.

La filologia, ai suoi occhi, s'inserisce sempre in una concreta storia della cultura, riaffermando il suo statuto scientifico di conoscenza aperta e discorsiva. Fissato nelle pose di un sofista manipolatore di concetti e termini che sfuggono al rigore del «compasso» linguistico, Folard rappresenta, invece, come il Simplicio galileiano cui tanto devono queste pagine, l'ottusità che arma il dogmatismo, il grigiore intellettuale di chi si proclama portavoce di qualcuno, senza intenderne nemmeno la lingua<sup>43</sup>.

41 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 449-450.

42 ALGAROTTI, *Zama*, cit., pp. 451-452.

43 Azar Gat ne elogia il pensiero nello sviluppo della teoria militare illuminista, riconoscendo che lo studio storico era la base della teoria militare, e lo avvicina a Joly de Maizeroy come importante esperto del suo tempo sull'arte della guerra nell'antichità, vd. *The Origins of Military Thought, From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 39-42; Virgilio ILARI, per parte sua, invita già da tempo a considerare negli studi militari che «la filologia, forse la più raffinata e illuminante applicazione della critica storica, non si risolve nella mera decrittazione ed esatta comprensione di termini e concetti

Chi voglia sapere a quale commentatore militare Algarotti accordi la sua stima deve riaprire la missiva al conte Bernieri, dove non casualmente incontra Karl Théophil Guischart, membro dell'Accademia di Berlino, autore dei *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romain* appena dati alle stampe<sup>44</sup>. Originario di una famiglia di ugonotti trasferitasi a Magdeburgo, Guischart si era unito al seguito di Federico il Grande, che durante una disputa scherzosa lo aveva soprannominato con il nome di battaglia di 'Quinto Icilio', un centurione romano che avrebbe comandato la decima legione. Con questa identità guidò un battaglione libero durante le fasi successive della guerra dei Sette anni, ottenendo nel tempo il grado di colonnello in riconoscimento dei suoi lavori storici, tra i quali uno studio delle campagne di Giulio Cesare in Spagna, nel 1773<sup>45</sup>.

«Egli è raro di trovare in un uomo di guerra tanta erudizione e tanta dottrina. Si può dire, ch'egli ha veramente penetrato l'arte militare degli antichi, armato di buona critica, e della scienza del Greco; armi che non avea gran fatto alla mano il Folard. Non ha poi potuto se non toccarmi il cuore il vedere da un così valentuomo confermata quella mia opinione, che Scipione non combattesse altrimenti a Zama ordinato in colonne. Ed io godo e trionfo di potere aggiungere il voto di lui a quello del Keith, col quale io parecchi anni sono comunicai da prima i miei pensieri sopra quella ordinanza, e che io sperava rivedere anche un giorno cinto di nuovi allori»<sup>46</sup>.

Sono molte le occasioni in cui Algarotti affronta il tema dell'impegno, filologicamente lodevole, di tener fede alla lezione dei testi, usando un cribro che non

---

complessi», ma piuttosto «rende ragione delle infinite variazioni di senso e significato che esse subiscono in diversi contesti epocali e culturali», *Epistemologia della Storia Militare*, in Atti del II Convegno Nazionale di Storia Militare, Roma, Centro Alti Studi della Difesa, 28-29 ottobre 1999, pp. 47-70: 62; Antonello BIAGINI, Paolo ALBERINI (curr.), Roma, Commissione italiana di Storia militare, 2001, pp. 47-70. Su Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy (1719-1780), vd. Alexandre DAVID, *Joly de Maizeroy: L'inventeur de la stratégie*, Paris, Éditions de l'école de guerre, 2018.

44 L'opera uscì nel 1758 e subito ampliata apparve col titolo *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains: pour servir de suite en d'éclaircissement à l'histoire de Polybe commentée par[ ...] Folard; avec une dissertation sur l'attaque et la défense des places des anciens, la traduction d'Onosander et de la tactique d'Arrien et l'analyse de la campagne de Jules César en Afrique*, Lyon, Bruyset, 1760.

45 Thierry WIDEMAN, «L'histoire de l'histoire de la guerre: l'exemple de la référence antique», *Revue Historique des Armées*, 207 (1997), *L'historien, le stratège et le combattant*, pp. 3-6. Sulle critiche al Folard e le ragioni del soprannome 'Quinto Icilio' fa luce ILARI, *Imitatio, restituito, utopia: la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno*, cit., pp. 360-361 e nota 235, p. 361.

46 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, III, cit., pp. 203-204.

# HISTOIRE DE POLYBE,

NOUVELLEMENT TRADUIT DU GREC

Par Dom VINCENT THUILLIER, *Bénédictin de la  
Congregation de Saint Maur.*

AVEC UN COMMENTAIRE

OU

UN CORPS DE SCIENCE MILITAIRE,  
*ENRICHIS DE NOTES CRITIQUES ET HISTORIQUES,*  
OU TOUTES LES GRANDES PARTIES DE LA GUERRE,  
soit pour l'Offensive, soit pour la Défensive, sont expliquées,  
démontrées, & représentées en Figures.

Ouvrage très-utile non seulement aux Officiers Généraux, mais même à tous ceux qui  
suivent le parti des armes.

Par M. DE FOLARD, *Chevalier de l'Ordre Militaire de Saint Louis,  
Mestre de Camp d'Infanterie.*

T O M E P R E M I E R .



A AMSTERDAM,  
AUX DEPENS DE LA COMPAGNIE  
MDCCLXXXIX.

risparmiava neppure i nomi più celebrati dell'antichità. Con Giuseppe Pecis, un nobile lombardo che aveva saputo coniugare le lettere e le scienze con l'impegno civile, si congratula per l'*Essai sur les qualités et les connaissances nécessaires à un général d'armée, ou Dissertation préliminaire aux campagnes de Jules César dans les Gaules*, donatogli dal Frisi, concepito come introduzione ad uno studio sulle campagne cesariane in Gallia, che aveva riscosso l'ammirazione anche del padre Frisi e di Pietro Verri. Si compiaceva di avervi trovato

«stile fermo e animoso, benché scritto in lingua non sua, grandezza di disegni, convenienza di mezzi, sugosissime relazioni dei fatti più importanti, e discussioni finissime sopra di essi; e ho potuto anche quivi chiaramente conoscere, quanto l'occhiale della meditazione e dello studio abbia virtù di slungar le viste della pura pratica. E tutto questo non è, che un prolegomeno della sua analisi, della grand'opera sopra di Giulio Cesare. Non posso dirle, con quanta impazienza io l'aspetti, e se mi par mill'anni, che io la possa leggere a mio talento, e considerare. Mi sapeva pur strano, che in un secolo, come si è il nostro, ci dovesse mancare una tal'opera; e che quello che ha fatto il Puysegur sulla impresa di Durazzo, e sulla spedizione in Ispagna; che quello che ha fatto il Guischartt sulla campagna in Affrica e sull'assedio di Marsiglia, alcun grande ingegno non lo dovesse fare sopra tutte le guerre di quel gran capitano»<sup>47</sup>.

Proprio a confermare che l'abito del capitano non è diverso da quello dello scienziato, dovendo questi conoscere la topografia, la morfologia del terreno, la resistenza dei materiali e le tecniche di fortificazione, Algarotti ricorre alla metafora del telescopio in grado di «slungare» cioè potenziare le «viste della pura pratica» con le risorse dello studio critico. Il discorso non poteva che scivolare su argomenti di comune interesse e, quasi a continuare un ragionamento iniziato a voce, Algarotti fa il nome che ci aspettiamo:

«Mi ricorda avermi raccontato il Maresciallo Keith, che domandato al Folard, per che ragione quella fatica che avea impreso sopra Polibio non l'avesse impresa piuttosto sopra Giulio Cesare; gli rispose, perché Polibio gli apriva un più largo campo alle sue riflessioni, e gli forniva anche materia di ragionare sulle cose di mare, del che assai poco ne vien toccato dall'altro. Ma chi sa, che la ragion vera non ne fosse, che nella tattica di Giulio Cesare non poté mai trovare il Folard, come confessa egli medesimo, la menoma ombra di colonne; dove egli sperava di potervi stracchiare, come ha fatto, qualche ordine di battaglia descritto da Polibio. Come sia di questo, a lei era riserbato darne un tale comentario. Niente a lei fuggirà di quello ch'è

---

47 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 218-219.

nel testo; ma niente altro vi vedrà, che quello che veramente ci è: ed ella seguirà in tutte le marce e contramarce, in tutti i suoi voli colui, 'Che nol seguiria lingua né penna'. Un bel punto ella tocca nel suo prolegomeno, e spero vederlo pienamente trattato nel libro: qual fosse la pianta della guerra, che avea disegnato Giulio Cesare contro a' Parti»<sup>48</sup>.

La citazione dantesca, caduta sul tema del linguaggio, sigilla il giudizio negativo che già conosciamo sul Folard, ma introduce anche una sezione concertata in modo da immaginare in quali difficoltà si sarebbe trovato Cesare nella guerra progettata contro i «bellicosissimi Parti, somiglianti a meraviglia con i Tartari di oggi»<sup>49</sup>, e «co' quali ebbero novellamente a fare il Munich e il Lascy» nella guerra russo-turca<sup>49</sup>. Quelle analisi dovettero suonare del tutto convincenti se il Pecis le accolse come ipotesi di lavoro nel suo poemetto *L'Austriade* e ne rese affettuosa testimonianza in una didascalia apposta tra le note di commento<sup>50</sup>.

Proprio la ricostruzione di quegli scontri, realizzata alla luce di notizie ricevute e conversazioni con intendenti, porta Algarotti per analogia a concludere «risolutamente che finita la impresa dei Parti, non avrebbe Giulio Cesare quello operato giammai, che sogna Plutarco», cioè fare il giro attorno al Ponto attraverso l'Ircania, lungo il Caspio e il Caucaso, per penetrare in Scizia e, attraversati i luoghi vicini ai Germani, avrebbe fatto ritorno in Italia, passando per la Gallia, chiudendo l'impero in un cerchio delimitato da ogni parte dall'oceano<sup>51</sup>. Il verbo «so-

48 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 219-220. Abbiamo consultato l'operetta di Pecis (Milan, Chez J. Marelli, 1758), nella copia conservata alla Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna (segn. A IV L VIII 9), con nota di possesso di Algarotti del 1760; ID., *Les Campagnes de Jules César dans les Gaules: Présentées À Son Altesse Royale L'Archiduc Joseph*, Milan, Chez J. Marelli, 1760.

49 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 218-233: 220.

50 PECIS, Giuseppe, *L'Austriade*, Milano, Nella Stamperia di Giuseppe Marelli, 1775, canto III, ottava XXVIII, p. 317: «Si esamina quale avrebbe potuto essere il sistema di guerra, al quale si sarebbe appigliato Cesare per soggiogare i Parti, e il suo disegno di poscia passare alla conquista de' regni Settentrionali; il tutto relativamente a una lettera dal celebre Conte Francesco Algarotti scritta all'Autore di questo Poema, e stampata fra le Opere sue». Su Giuseppe Pecis (1716-1799), vd. Elena BRAMBILLA, *Le professioni scientifico-tecniche a Milano e la riforma dei collegi privilegiati (sec. XVII-1770)*, in *Ideologia e scienza nell'opera di Paolo Frisi (1728-1784)*, Gennaro BARBARISI (cur.), Milano, Angeli, 1987, I, pp. 345-446.

51 Plutarco (*Caes.* 58, 6-7) è più esplicito di Cassio Dione e Nicola di Damasco nel delineare la periegesi dei progetti orientali di Cesare. Egli si fa portavoce del proposito di Ottaviano di rimodellare la memoria delle guerre civili attribuendo al padre adottivo un disegno di conquista universale che ne valorizza il profilo di audace generale, attribuendosi l'onere di

gnare», già usato per definire l'atteggiamento poco scientifico di Folard, permette di comporre un sistema articolato relativo alle ragioni di un moderno commento dei classici militari, della sua strutturazione tecnica tutt'altro che improvvisata, che anche quando accoglie l'aiuto della «fantasia», come nella ricostruzione dei piani di battaglia di Nādir Shāh, la sottopone sempre alla prova dell'oggettività, aderendo all'approccio illuministico riconosciute da Piero Del Negro<sup>52</sup>.

A Folard si sostituisce Plutarco, che pure Algarotti leggeva e imitava per gli avvincenti chiaroscuri delle sue biografie. Gli errori dello scrittore greco nascono prima di tutto dalla sua ignoranza della lingua latina.

«Vi si applicò in Cheronea nella sua età più avanzata; e la cognizione, dic'egli, che avea delle cose gli agevolò a intender la significazione dei termini; metodo che non è il migliore del mondo, come avverte lo stesso suo interprete Dacier per apprendere una lingua»<sup>53</sup>.

Algarotti, invocando l'autorità del prestigioso erudito e traduttore di classici, bibliotecario del *Cabinet du Roi* e segretario perpetuo dell'Académie française, affronta un tema cui avrebbe dedicato anche un saggio specifico<sup>54</sup>, osservando che

«Non pochi sbagli dell'autor suo intorno alle cose romane, e singolarmente alle imprese di Giulio Cesare, ha egli rilevati nelle note, di che lo correda. Parecchi fatti assai importanti o scambia Plutarco, o gli confonde gli uni cogli altri; poco esatto si mostra e fedele nel riferire la giornata di Alessia: in quella più memorabile di Farsaglia mette Pompeo all'ala diritta dell'e-

---

realizzarlo, vd. Giovannella CRESCI MARRONE, *Geografia e geometrie della conquista cesariana 'in rebus' e 'post res'*, Giampaolo URSO (cur.), *Cesare: precursore o visionario?*, Atti del Convegno (Civiale del Friuli, 17-19 settembre 2009), Pisa, ETS, 2010, pp. 105-121.

52 PIERO DEL NEGRO, *Le 'Lettere militari' di Francesco Algarotti*, in Gilberto PIZZAMIGLIO, Manlio PASTORE STOCCHI (cur.), *Nel terzo centenario della nascita di Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764)*, Atti del Convegno (Venezia, 11-12 dicembre 2012), Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2014, pp. 89-104: 98-100. Sullo scivoloso rapporto tra storia romanizzata e fantasia, vd. Denise ARICÒ, «Metamorfosi di un guerriero. Castruccio Castracani da Machiavelli ad Algarotti», *Nuova Antologia Militare [NAM]*, 2 (2021), 7, pp. 3-94 e la recente, utilissima, messa a punto di Virgilio ILARI, «Secret History. An Early Survey», *NAM*, 5 (2024), 19, pp. 560-575.

53 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 228-229; André DACIER, *Les Vies des Hommes Illustres de Plutarque, Traduites en François, Avec des Remarques Historiques et Critiques, Revuë, Corrigée et Augmentée de plusieurs Notes [...]*, A Paris, Chez Hochereau l'aîné, 1735, t. VII, pp. 199-200, 224-225; 288-289.

54 Si tratta del *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua*, risalente al 1750, dedicata al gesuita Saverio Bettinelli, *Opere varie*, t. II, *Discorsi sopra differenti soggetti*, In Venezia, Per Giambattista Pasquali, 1757, pp. 1-11.

sercito, la quale difesa da un fiumicello non doveva avere, e non ebbe, si può dire, parte alcuna in quel gran fatto d'armi; laddove Pompeo era alla sinistra, dove posti avea tutti i cavalli, e la sicurezza della vittoria, e quivi egli intendeva di governare la fortuna di quella giornata. Similmente, contro alla descrizione dello stesso Giulio Cesare, ragiona del suo ordine di battaglia; e fa giuocare quella quarta schiera di fanti, ch'egli avea collocata di sghembo dietro a'suoi cavalli, per fortificar l'ala sua diritta contro la moltitudine della cavalleria di Pompeo, e far tornar vano ogni disegno di lui. Quante cose importantissime non lascia ancora Plutarco nella penna? e tra le altre la battaglia navale vinta da Cesare contro ai Bretoni, la più valorosa nazione che fosse altre volte tra' Francesi nelle cose di mare, come lo è anche al di d'oggi; battaglia singolare per gli artifizj onde si avvisarono i Romani, e per cui fu pacificata la maggior parte della spiaggia dell'Oceano, che sguarda l'Inghilterra»<sup>55</sup>.

La mancata conoscenza della lingua latina, notava Dacier e Algarotti con lui, aveva impedito a Plutarco di accostarsi alla «sorgente» dei fatti, cioè alle fonti documentarie. La diagnosi non era così scontata e per intenderne le risonanze più profonde è utile fare un passo indietro nel tempo, quando l'eloquenza umanistica, uscendo dai chiostrini medievali, si era saldata agli ideali della vita attiva e si era immersa nella realtà sociale e politica. La narrazione storica implicava una retorica appassionata e l'uso dei meccanismi psicologici ed emotivi che la riconducevano alle sue origini deliberative. L'appello al vero diveniva sempre, alla fine, pathos teatrale, sul tipo di quello plutarchiano, per l'appunto; si pensi ai resoconti numerici dei morti nei due schieramenti a Farsalo di Mario Savorgnano<sup>56</sup>.

Nel passaggio dal Seicento al clima razionalistico del Settecento, la retorica, lontana dalle dispute astratte del Barocco, si afferma come scienza pratica, ricerca linguistica e antropologica atta a descrivere le caratteristiche strutturali della società che si evolve diacronicamente. Assumono grande considerazione testimo-

55 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 229-230.

56 Vd. Simona BIANCALANA, *Attualizzare il conflitto: il racconto delle guerre di Cesare nei volgarizzamenti francesi e italiani medievali*, in *Scenari del conflitto nella letteratura italiana*, Roma, Atti del XXV Congresso dell'Adi-Associazione degli Italianisti (Foggia, 15-17 settembre 2022), Sebastiano VALERIO, Antonio R. DANIELE, Gianni Antonio PALUMBO (curt.), Adi editore, 2024, pp. 1-13; Michel PRETALLI, «La bataille de Pharsale dans l'Art militaire terrestre e maritime de Mario Savorgnano: composition et décomposition d'un récit», *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 41 (2015), 1, pp. 201-228. Jean-Yves LAURICHESSE, *La guerre en latin. Claude Simon et la bataille de Pharsale*, in *Translatio: traduire et adapter les Anciens*, Corinne BONNET et Florence BOUCHET (éds.), Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013, pp. 285-303.

nianze scritte e documenti già esistenti, riemersi da un remoto passato ed esposti per essere esaminati come punti di partenza di una scepsi nemica di quelle che Muratori avrebbe chiamato «le anticipate opinioni»<sup>57</sup>.

Il lettore che nel Settecento desiderava accostarsi agli scritti di Plutarco senza essere soffocato dalla polverosa terminologia erudita dei commenti, ma per informarsi sulle ragioni di certe scelte linguistiche, disponeva della recente traduzione francese delle *Vies des hommes illustres* di André Dacier, folta di precisazioni e rettifiche, ma strumento prezioso, dato il declino irreversibile dello studio della lingua greca<sup>58</sup>. Non stupiscono dunque le riserve di Algarotti sull'ignoranza del latino da parte di Plutarco, su cui s'erano già pronunciati Jean Bodin e Jean Ruault, perché gettano una nuova luce sul problema delle sue opere e della loro genesi:

«Non avea letto i comentarj di Cesare, ch'egli confonde con l'efemeridi, che di quanto gli avveniva di per di scrivea quel grand'uomo: non avea letto le lettere ad Attico; come ben apparisce nella vita di Cicerone, le quali sono il più fedele ritratto di quell'oratore più ambizioso che repubblicano, e le migliori memorie di quel tempo, in cui vennero a così gran conflitto le passioni dell'uomo. Per via della conversazione, dic'egli, conviene instruirsi delle particolarità, che sono sfuggite agli storici, e che, essendosi conservate nella memoria degli uomini, divengono più verisimili e più degne di fede, in virtù della tradizione. Non so, se i moderni nostri critici, i le Clerc e i Muratori, gli avessero menato buono tal suo criterio. [...] Egli è certo, che delle cose romane le migliori informazioni si può dire che le dobbiamo a' Greci: ed è naturale, che così sia. A' forestieri ogni cosa giugne nuovo: s'informano degl'instituti del paese dove sono, delle origini delle leggi, del perché dei costumi; e ne informano dipoi per minuto i loro compatrioti, che pur sanno esserne non meno ignoranti e curiosi»<sup>59</sup>.

L'esegeta veneziano, che come Locke vede nella lingua l'impronta del «genio» di ogni nazione<sup>60</sup>, fa altri due nomi importanti, quello di Jean Le Clerc e di Ludo-

57 Andrea BATTISTINI-Ezio RAIMONDI, *Le figure della retorica. Una storia letteraria italiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1984, pp. 203-204, 212-213. Sui caratteri del commento illuminista vd. Ezio RAIMONDI, *I lumi dell'erudizione. Saggi sul Settecento italiano*, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1989, pp. 99-124.

58 Jean-Louis QUANTIN, «Traduire Plutarque d'Amyot à Richard, Contribution à l'étude de mythe de Sparte au XVIIIème siècle», *Histoire, économie et société*, 7 (1988), 2, pp. 243-259.

59 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, V, cit., pp. 230-231 da integrare con il contrappunto critico di Luciano CANFORA, *Giulio Cesare. Il dittatore democratico*, Bari, Laterza, 2006, *Appendici*, 1. *Cesare scrittore*, pp. 389-399.

60 Anche nel *Saggio sopra il Triumvirato di Crasso, Pompeo e Cesare* Algarotti riprende il

vico Antonio Muratori, alfiere di un'indagine storica concreta e metodica, che si traduce in un razionalismo fiducioso nella verità del fatto e della testimonianza, così come lo scienziato crede all'evidenza dell'osservazione disappassionata<sup>61</sup>.

### 3. «Belle avvertenze intorno all'arte militare degli antichi»

Forse per il buon senso fortificato dalla diligenza della ricerca e dalla pazienza dell'osservazione, nelle pagine di Algarotti trova un'udienza particolare Andrea Palladio, «che avea letto tutti gli storici ed autori antichi che hanno trattato della guerra, ed erasi per molti anni continui intorno a così fatto studio affaticato», firmando anche un *Proemio* ai *Commentari* di Giulio Cesare<sup>62</sup>.

Le informazioni autobiografiche contenute nel *Proemio*, incrementate dal materiale rinvenuto durante le ricerche negli archivi veneziani e felsinei, avevano permesso ad Algarotti di farsi un'idea più completa dell'architetto vicentino e della sua parabola esistenziale:

«con grandissimo ordine e sobrietà di parole, come era suo costume, ha saputo in quel suo proemio stringere in poco molte belle avvertenze intorno all'arte militare degli antichi. Pare, ch'egli proceda anche quivi con la regola e col compasso, con quella precisione medesima, che procede nell'arte sua. Senza fare proemj inetti, senza tante belle dicerie, va di lancio alle cose fondamentali; quelle afferra, e quelle presenta al lettore. Varie osservazioni ci sono in quelle quattro pagine, che in vano si cercherebbono in parecchi libri sopra tali materie»<sup>63</sup>.

Confermata la predilezione per la «brevitas» di una scrittura più sottile che

---

tema della «meraviglia» generata in commentatori come il Casaubon davanti agli errori di Plutarco: «ma questa meraviglia cesserà, se si considera che il greco autore non intendeva il latino, piuttosto nascerà un'altra meraviglia che non sia caduto in maggiori errori che non ha commesso», conclude argutamente, p. 323.

61 Sul primato della dimensione etica sull'esattezza storica in Plutarco, vd. invece Francesca GAZZANO, Giusto TRAINA, «Plutarque, historien militaire?», *Ktèma: civilisation de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques*, 39 (2014), pp. 347-370.

62 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, IV, *Sopra gli studj fatti da Andrea Palladio nelle cose militari. Al Sig. Abate Gaspare Patriarchi*, in *Opere*, t. V, pp. 210-233: 211-212. Si riferisce ai *Commentari di C. Giulio Cesare con le figure in rame de gli alloggiamenti, de' fatti d'arme, delle circonuallationi delle città, et di molte altre cose notabili descritte in essi. Fatte da Andrea Palladio per facilitare a chi legge, la cognition dell'istoria*, In Venetia, Appresso Pietro de' Franceschi, 1575.

63 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, IV, cit., pp. 212-213.

morbida, più metallica che pittoresca<sup>64</sup>, il suo sguardo si era fermato su una dichiarazione di Palladio colma di gratitudine per il maestro Gian Giorgio Trissino, che gli aveva insegnato anche i principî della scienza militare illustrati nel poema *L'Italia liberata da' Gotthi* nel 1548<sup>65</sup>. L'allievo non aveva tardato a metterli a frutto e per dimostrare che anche persone di scarsa cultura avrebbero potuto, con la disciplina e l'esercizio, difendere la propria terra, aveva fatto compiere a cinquecento rematori di galee le evoluzioni descritte nella *Tactica theoria* dal greco Eliano davanti ad un gruppo scelto di nobili veneti, tra i quali spiccavano Francesco Patrizi, Valerio Chiericato e Francesco Robortello<sup>66</sup>.

Con i trattati di Vegezio e di Polibio, la *Tactica theoria* di Eliano era diventata nel Cinquecento un vero e proprio *best-seller* della cultura militare e ne circolavano traduzioni spesso corredate da schemi geometrici ottenuti con lettere dell'alfabeto greco e latino o con piccole figure di armati, per indicare la dislocazione delle truppe che manovravano in uno spazio bianco e piatto. Eliano non voleva raffigurare battaglie vere, ma solo modelli e movimenti ideali, perciò riscuoteva, secoli dopo, anche l'interesse di condottieri come Luigi di Nassau, che vi trovavano un'accurata descrizione dei tre tipi di contromarcia, greca, macedone ed ellenistica, mediante i quali si poteva garantire un getto continuo di armi da lancio, funzionalmente analoghe a quelle da sparo<sup>67</sup>.

64 Sullo stretto rapporto tra laconismo e scrittura militare, vd. il nostro «Uomini che 'scrivono e parlano come operano, e come sentono'. Eloquenza politica e retorica militare nelle riflessioni di Algarotti», *NAM*, 4 (2023), 15, pp. 515-568.

65 In Roma, Per Valerio e Luigi Dorici, 1547, In Venezia, Per Tolomeo Ianiculo, 1548, che allegava una *Tavola dell'accampamento del generale romano Bellisario* nel l. XV, 112v-113r. Sul poema in endecasillabi sciolti, che tratta della guerra tra Bizantini e Ostrogoti (535-539) sulla base della narrazione storica di Procopio di Cesarea, Algarotti espresse un giudizio negativo per il massiccio uso di tecnicismi militari in un'opera poetica, vd. *Lettera a Giovanni Baldasseroni a Livorno, Bologna 5 novembre 1760*, in *Opere*, t. X, *Lettere scientifiche ed erudite*, pp. 76-90. John Rigby HALE vi ha invece colto una vera e propria teatralizzazione di strategie antiche desunte soprattutto dai precetti di Eliano, «*A Humanistic Visual Aid. The Militar Diagram in the Renaissance*», in *Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1988), 2, pp. 280-298; ma vd. anche Michele COMELLI, *Un poema «utile a tutte le guerre, che si faranno»: scienza militare nell' 'Italia liberata dai Goti' del Trissino*, in *Letteratura e Scienze. Atti delle sessioni parallele del XXIII Congresso dell'Adi (Associazione degli Italianisti) Pisa, 12-14 settembre 2019*, Alberto CASADEI, Francesca FEDI, Annalisa NACINOVICH, Andrea TORRE (curr.), Roma, Adi editore, 2021, pp. 1-27.

66 ILARI, *'Imitatio, restitutio, utopia'*: cit., pp. 89-90.

67 Immacolata ERAMO, *Disegni di guerra. La tradizione dei diagrammi tattici greci nell' 'Arte della guerra' di Niccolò Machiavelli*, in *Scienza antica in età moderna. Teoria e imma-*

*Bibl. Coll. Lugd. SS. Trin. Soc. JESU. 1761.*

# MÉMOIRES



## MILITAIRES

324827

SUR LES

## GRECS ET LES ROMAINS,

*POUR servir de suite & d'éclaircissement à l'Histoire  
de Polybe commentée par le Chevalier FOLARD,*

A V E C

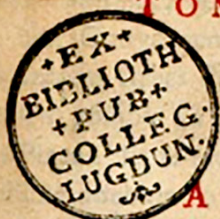
UNE DISSERTATION SUR L'ATTAQUE  
& la Défense des Places des Anciens;

LA TRADUCTION D'ONOSANDER  
& de la Tactique d'Arrien,

ET L'ANALYSE DE LA CAMPAGNE  
de Jules César en Afrique.

Par CHARLES GUISCHARDT.

TOME SECOND.



A LYON,

Chez JEAN-MARIE BRUYSET,  
Imprimeur-Libraire, rue Mercière, au Soleil.

M. DCC. LX.

AVEC APPROBATION ET PERMISSION.

E giacché se n'è fatto il nome, conviene ricordare anche «quel Valerio Chiericato fatto da' Veneziani Governator Generale delle Fanterie di Candia, quando essi avevano in animo d'introdurre in quel regno una gagliarda e ben disciplinata milizia»<sup>68</sup>. Col Chiericato Algarotti propone il modello del soldato umanista, autore di un trattato sulla milizia antica, ma pure acclamato 'principe' dell'Accademia Olimpica di Vicenza che, in tale veste, aveva promosso nel 1561 la messa in scena della *Sofonisba* del Trissino nel teatro ligneo della 'Basilica' progettato da Palladio. Nell'epistola al Patriarchi Algarotti racconta di aver visto il manoscritto del trattato *Della militia* nella biblioteca del doge Marco Foscarini, da dove si augurava che qualcuno lo avrebbe preso per darlo alla luce, data la sua importanza nella formazione militare del vicentino. Il ricordo di quella lettura illumina una rete di rapporti epistolari nei quali vediamo Algarotti conversare con lo storiografo Foscarini di opere d'arte o di rarità bibliografiche<sup>69</sup>.

Lo scrittore veneziano affronta allora l'esame tecnico del primo argomento del *Proemio*, dove Palladio «pone di un sol tratto dinanzi agli occhj d'uno intendente il parallelo di quelle ordinanze», cioè la descrizione della legione romana, delle sue tecniche di difesa e di attacco, per poi confrontarla con gli 'aggiornamenti' sull'impiego della falange macedone appresi da Eliano, Polibio, Vegezio. L'avversativa con cui esordisce il secondo enunciato segna un profondo divario fra chi esibisce una conoscenza superficiale della guerra pur di sembrare *à la page*, e chi, come Palladio, ne aveva fatto una riflessione meditata.

Ragionando su quelle xilografie e confrontandole con le conclusioni del marchese di Puysségur e di Guischart, moderni 'tecnocrati' della guerra, Algarotti ha modo di giustificare l'esigenza di trattare a fondo l'organizzazione degli schieramenti antichi e il loro mutarsi nel tempo, perché «a chi legge la storia romana senza tali avvertenze molto rimane dell'oscuro nelle fazioni militari che tanta parte

---

gini, Vanna MARAGLINO (cur.), Bari, Cacucci, 2012, pp. 35-62; Denise ARICÒ, *L'arte della guerra nel Settecento. I 'Discorsi militari' di Francesco Algarotti*, Andrea BATTISTINI (pref.), Roma, Aracne, 2016, II, pp. 63-89.

68 *Discorsi militari*, IV, cit., pp. 212-213. Su Valerio Chiericato (Chieregato) si vedano le puntuali note di Virgilio ILARI, *Scrittori Militari Italiani dell'Età Moderna. Dizionario bibliografico 1410-1799*, Collana SISM, Roma, Nadir Media, 2021, p. 243.

69 *Lettera del sig. Conte Francesco Algarotti al sig. Abate Gaspero Patriarchi a Venezia, Bologna 4 settembre 1759*, in «Nuove Memorie per servire all'Istoria Letteraria», Venezia, S. Marsini, 1759, II, pp. 263-269: 268. Il testo dell'articolo sarebbe diventato il quarto discorso militare nel III tomo delle *Opere*, Livorno, Coltellini, 1764.

compongono di quella storia»<sup>70</sup>. Sviluppa infine il terzo punto della sua lettura del *Proemio*, dove trova quella che chiama con enfasi sincera «la bella notizia, fondamentale, e ciò è il terreno che occupava nella grossezza sua uno esercito romano ordinato a giornata»<sup>71</sup>. Il discorso che ne scaturisce tenta la ricostruzione dell'episodio più arduo della campagna in Spagna, cioè i quarantaquattro giorni d'assedio di Ilerda, l'odierna Lérida, combattuti da Cesare contro Lucio Afranio e Marco Petreio, e risoltisi, dopo alcuni insuccessi iniziali, nel luglio del 49 a. C., con la capitolazione dei legati di Pompeo.

La visione realistica della guerra genera un esercizio ricognitivo dove parola e illustrazione si controllano e si rafforzano a vicenda<sup>72</sup>. Algarotti 'immagina' la stretta pianura tra le due colline, sulla quale Cesare aveva schierato in ordine di battaglia tre legioni, sperando di tagliare i rifornimenti al nemico. Ma il condottiero, con strana imprevidenza logistica, mise a rischio la vita dei suoi soldati, sbagliando nella scelta del posizionamento e nell'organizzazione della scorta di convogli. Algarotti una volta di più 'fa i conti' con questo evento nelle deduzioni tattiche inviate al conte Bernieri, frutto della lettura dei classici *de re militari* e dei colloqui berlinesi dove, «usando co' soldati», era divenuto «soldato egli stesso» e, accompagnando il monarca, anche «un Eliano a un bisogno»<sup>73</sup>.

Convinto che Palladio avesse completato anche un commento su Polibio, Algarotti ne auspicava la pubblicazione<sup>74</sup>. E smentendo critici come Tommaseo,

70 Jacques-François de Chastenet, de PUYSEGUR, *L'art de la guerre par principes et par règles*, Paris, C.-A. Jombert, 1748.

71 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, IV, cit., pp. 210-217: 214.

72 Non sarà superfluo ricordare che «fra il 1492 e il 1570 furono stampate a Venezia centoquarantacinque opere relative a questioni militari o attinenti ad esse in misura significativa», molte delle quali illustrate da tavole, cfr. John Rigby HALE, *Industria del libro e cultura militare a Venezia nel Rinascimento*, in *Storia della cultura veneta dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1980, vol. II, pp. 245-288: 245.

73 ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, II, cit., p. 196 e, per un'indagine condotta con acribia filologica, vd. Luigi LORETO, *Pensare la guerra in Cesare. Teoria e prassi*, cit., pp. 239-343: 306-335.

74 Sul commento a Polibio raggugliano Andrea BELTRAMI (cur.), *Andrea Palladio e l'architettura della battaglia, con le illustrazioni inedite alle storie di Polibio*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2009; Gastone BRECCIA, *La geometria di Marte. Polibio e Cesare nelle incisioni di Andrea Palladio: il volto rinascimentale della battaglia*, in *Scienza antica in età moderna. Teoria e immagini*, cit., pp. 139-158; Margaret Daly DAVIS, «On Military Encampments: Antonio Alberti's unknown Treatise 'Della architettura militare chiamata volgarmente fortificazione' in its Synoptic Redaction by Fra Egnazio Danti», *Fontes* 69, 2012, pp. 1-51,

osservava che sarebbe stato un nuovo esempio di

«uomini non militari che abbiano dato regole per ben condurre un esercito, [...] simili alla cote, che rende tagliente il metallo non tagliando essa; o piuttosto simili a' medesimi metalli, i quali non essendo elettrici per sé, pur sono di tutti i corpi gli attissimi a trasmetter la elettricità, anzi ne sono essi i conduttori»<sup>75</sup>.

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- [ALGAROTTI, Francesco], *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, con lettera del 12 febbraio 1749, da Posdammo. Al Maresciallo di Keith, in *Opere del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambelano di S. M. il Re di Prussia e Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito*, t. II, *Discorsi sopra differenti soggetti*, In Venezia, Presso Giambattista Pasquali, 1755, pp. 147-162
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, con lettera del 12 febbraio 1749, da Posdammo. Al Maresciallo di Keith, in *Opere varie*, In Venezia, Per Giambattista Pasquali, 1757, t. II, pp. 37-47
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, con lettera del 12 febbraio 1749, da Posdammo. Al Maresciallo di Keith in *Opere del Conte Algarotti, Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito, e Ciambelano di S. M. il Re di Prussia*, In Livorno, Presso Marco Coltellini, 1764, t. III, pp. 149-168
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, con lettera del 12 febbraio 1749, da Posdammo. Al Maresciallo di Keith in *Opere del Conte Algarotti Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito, e Ciambelano di S.M. il Re di Prussia*, Cremona, Per Lorenzo Manini regio stampatore, 1778, t. III, pp. 139-156
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la giornata di Zama*, con lettera del 12 febbraio 1749, da Posdammo. Al Maresciallo di Keith, in *Opere del Conte Algarotti. Edizione novissima [Opere]*, Venezia, Carlo Palese, 1791, t. V, pp. 431-452
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Essai sur la bataille de Zama, Œuvres du Comte Algarotti*, III, Berlin, Decker, 1772, pp. 159-180
- SCHUMACHER, Hans W., *Der Versuch über das Heidentum*, in *Francesco Algarotti Philosophische, philologische und historische Versuche*, herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert, 2011, pp. 65-71; 299-302 <https://www.algarotti.de/downloads-auswahl-ausgabe-francesco-algarotti>

---

URL: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2012/2097/> urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-artdok-20970, che esibisce a p. 48 una tavola di Palladio rappresentante *L'accampamento romano secondo Polibio* reperita in tre copie delle *Storie* di Polibio tradotte da Lodovico Domenichi, In Vinegia, Appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli, 1553, custodite nella Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia.

<sup>75</sup> ALGAROTTI, *Discorsi militari*, IV, cit., p. 217.

- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la pittura*, William SPAGGIARI (cur.), Roma, G. Izzi, 2000
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra Orazio*, Bartolo ANGLANI (cur.), Osanna, Venosa (PZ), 1990
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra il Gentilesimo*, Denise ARICÒ (cur.), Roma, Nadir Media, 2025
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Scienza militare del Segretario fiorentino, Lettere militari, Discorsi militari, Opere*, t. V
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, II. *Al Sig. Conte Aurelio Bernieri, Se sia miglior partito schierarsi con l'ordinanza piena, oppure con intervalli*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 195-202
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, III. *Sopra la colonna del cavalier Folard, Al Sig. Conte Aurelio Bernieri*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 203-209
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, IV. *Sopra gli studj fatti da Andrea Palladio nelle cose militari. Al Sig. Abate Gaspare Patriarchi*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 210-217
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, V. *Sopra la impresa disegnata da Giulio Cesare contro a' Parti. Al Sig. D. Giuseppe Pecis*, in *Opere*, t. V, pp. 218-233
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, VI. *Sopra l'ordine di battaglia di Koulicano contro ad Asraffo capo degli Aguan. Al Signor D. Giuseppe Pecis*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 234-257
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, VII. *Sopra l'ordine di battaglia di Koulicano a Leilam contro a Topal Osmano. Al medesimo*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 258-274
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Discorsi militari*, VIII. *Sopra gli esercizj militari de' Prussiani in tempo di pace. Al Sig. Co. di Perron*, *Opere*, t. V, pp. 275-283
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Opere*, t. VII, *Pensieri diversi sopra materie filosofiche e filologiche, Lettere di Polianzio ad Ermogene intorno alla traduzione dell'Eneide del Caro*, 1792
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Lettera al sig. Abate Gaspero Patriarchi a Venezia, Bologna 4 settembre 1759*, in «Nuove Memorie per servire all'Istoria Letteraria», Venezia, S. Marsini, 1759, II, pp. 263-269
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Lettera a Giovanni Baldasseroni a Livorno, Bologna 5 novembre 1760*, in *Opere*, t. X, *Lettere scientifiche ed erudite*, pp. 76-90
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio sopra la necessità di scrivere nella propria lingua, Opere varie del Conte Francesco Algarotti, Ciambelano di S. M. il Re di Prussia e Cavaliere dell'Ordine del Merito*, t. II, *Discorsi sopra differenti soggetti*, In Venezia, Per Giambatista Pasquali, 1757, pp. 1-11, poi *Opere*, t. IV, pp. 5-28
- ALGAROTTI, Francesco, *Saggio critico del triumvirato di Crasso, Pompeo, Cesare. Opere inedite, parte ottava*, *Opere*, t. XVII, 1794, pp. 149-522
- ARICÒ, Denise, *L'arte della guerra nel Settecento. I 'Discorsi militari' di Francesco Algarotti*, Roma, Aracne, 2016

- ARICÒ, Denise, «Metamorfosi di un guerriero. Castruccio Castracani da Machiavelli ad Algarotti», *Nuova Antologia Militare [NAM]*, 2 (2021), 7, pp. 3-94
- ARICÒ, Denise, «Uomini che ‘scrivono e parlano come operano, e come sentono’. Eloquenza politica e retorica militare nelle riflessioni di Algarotti», *NAM*, 4, 2023, 15, pp. 515-568
- BATTISTINI, Andrea-RAIMONDI, Ezio, *Le figure della retorica. Una storia letteraria italiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1990<sup>2</sup>
- BATTISTINI, Andrea, *I ‘Discorsi militari’ di Francesco Algarotti tra dialogo, lettera e biografia*, in *Svelare e rigenerare. Studi sulla cultura del Settecento*, Bologna, Bononia Univ. Press, 2019, pp. 77-86
- BAUDINO, Carlo, *Eserciti e guerre nel mondo. Lineamenti di storia militare*, Milano-Varese, Istituto editoriale Cisalpino, 1962
- BEAUSOBRE de, Jean-Jacques, *Commentaires sur la défense des places d'Aeneas le Taciticien, le plus ancien des auteurs militaires, avec un tableau militaire des Grecs du même temps et les écoles militaires de l'antiquité*, Amsterdam-Paris, Pissot, 1756
- BELTRAMI, Andrea (cur.), *Andrea Palladio e l'architettura della battaglia, con le illustrazioni inedite alle storie di Polibio*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2009
- BIANCALANA, Simona, *Attualizzare il conflitto: il racconto delle guerre di Cesare nei volgarizzamenti francesi e italiani medievali*, in *Scenari del conflitto nella letteratura italiana*, Roma, Atti del XXV Congresso dell'Adi-Associazione degli Italianisti (Foggia, 15-17 settembre 2022), Sebastiano VALERIO, Antonio R. DANIELE, Gianni Antonio PALUMBO (curt.), Adi editore, 2024, pp. 1-13
- BRECCIA, Gastone, *La geometria di Marte. Polibio e Cesare nelle incisioni di Andrea Palladio: il volto rinascimentale della battaglia*, in *Scienza antica in età moderna. Teoria e immagini*, Vanna MARAGLINO (cur.), Bari, Cacucci, 2012, pp. 139-158
- BOIS, Jean-Pierre (dir.), *Les armées et la guerre: de l'Antiquité à la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Nantes, Ouest éditions, 1998
- BOIS, Jean-Pierre, *Guerre antique, guerre moderne: un dialogue nécessaire*, in *Dialogue militaire entre Anciens et Modernes*, Jean-Pierre Bois (éd.), Rennes, P. U. Rennes, 2004, pp. 117-129
- BOIS, Jean-Pierre, «Polybe et le chevalier de Folard», in *La Grèce et la guerre. Actes du 25e colloque de la Villa Kérylos à Beaulieu-sur-Mer les 3 et 4 octobre 2014*, Philippe CONDRAMINE, Jacques JOUANNA, Michel ZINK (éds.), Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 26 (2015), pp. 215-244
- BRAMBILLA, Elena, *Le professioni scientifico-tecniche a Milano e la riforma dei collegi privilegiati (sec. XVII-1770)*, in *Ideologia e scienza nell'opera di Paolo Frisi (1728-1784)*, Gennaro BARBARISI (cur.), Milano, Angeli, 1987, I, pp. 345-446
- BRIZZI, Giovanni, *Scipione e Annibale. La guerra per salvare Roma*, Bari, Laterza, 2007
- CALCATERRA, Carlo, *Il nostro imminente Risorgimento. Gli studi e la letteratura in Piemonte nel periodo della Sanpaolina e della Filopatria*, Torino, SEI, 1935

- CALCATERRA, Carlo, *Il Barocco in Arcadia, e altri scritti sul Settecento*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1950
- CANFORA, Luciano, *Giulio Cesare. Il dittatore democratico*, Bari, Laterza, 2006
- CHAGNIOT, Jean, *Le chevalier de Folard: la stratégie de l'incertitude*, Monaco, éd. du Rocher, 1997
- CHAGNIOT, Jean, «L'apport des Anciens dans l'oeuvre de Folard», *Pensée stratégique et humanisme. De la tactique des Anciens à l'éthique de la stratégie*, Bruno Colson et Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, dir., Paris, Économica-ISC, 2000, pp. 111-124
- COLSON, Bruno, «Le prince de Ligne et le chevalier de Folard», *Combattre, Gouverner, Écrire: études réunies en l'honneur de Jean Chagniot*, Paris, Économica, 2003, pp. 267-279
- COMELLI, Michele, *Un poema «utile a tutte le guerre, che si faranno»: scienza militare nell' 'Italia liberata dai Goti' del Trissino*, in *Letteratura e Scienze Atti delle sessioni parallele del XXIII Congresso dell'ADI (Associazione degli Italianisti)* Pisa, 12-14 settembre 2019, Alberto Casadei, Francesca Fedi, Annalisa Nacinovich, Andrea Torre (curt.), Roma, Adi editore, 2021, pp. 1-27
- CRESCI MARRONE, Giovannella, *Geografia e geometrie della conquista cesariana 'in rebus' e 'post res'*, Giampaolo URSO (curt.), *Cesare: precursore o visionario?*, Atti del Convegno (Cividale del Friuli, 17-19 settembre 2009), Pisa, ETS, 2010, pp. 105-121
- DACIER, André, *Les Vies Des Hommes Illustres de Plutarque, Traduites en François, Avec des Remarques Historiques et Critiques, Revuë Corrigée et Augmentée de plusieurs Notes [...]*, A Paris, Chez Hochereau l'ainé, 1735, t. VII
- DAVID, Alexandre, *Joly de Maizeroy: L'inventeur de la stratégie*, Paris, Éditions de l'école de guerre, 2018
- DAVIS, Margaret Daly, «On Military Encampments: Antonio Alberti's unknown Treatise 'Della architettura militare chiamata volgarmente fortificazione' in its Synoptic Redaction by Fra Egnazio Danti», *Fontes* 69, 2012, pp. 1-51 URL: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2012/2097/> urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-artdok-20970
- DEL NEGRO, Piero, *Gli Aforismi militari di R. M.: rapporti tra scrittura e arte della guerra*, in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi su Raimondo Montecuccoli, e i rapporti culturali tra Italia Austria nel XVII secolo*, Modena, Mucchi, 1992, pp. 359-368
- DEL NEGRO, Piero, «Strategia e tattica nelle riflessioni di Federico II di Prussia», *Rivista di Studi Militari*, 6 (2017), pp. 97-110
- DEL NEGRO, Piero, *Le 'Lettere militari' di Francesco Algarotti*, in Gilberto PIZZAMIGLIO, Manlio PASTORE STOCCHI (curt.), *Nel terzo centenario della nascita di Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764)*, Atti del Convegno (Venezia, 11-12 dicembre 2012), Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2014, pp. 89-104
- Domenichi, Lodovico, *Undici libri di Polibio, nuovamente trovati, et tradotti. Con la tavola delle cose piu notabili che nell'opera si contengono*, In Vinegia, Appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli, 1553

- ERAMO, Immacolata, *Disegni di guerra. La tradizione dei diagrammi tattici greci nell'Arte della guerra di Niccolò Machiavelli*, in *Scienza antica in età moderna. Teoria e immagini*, Vanna MARAGLINO (cur.), Bari, Cacucci, 2012, pp. 35-62
- FEUQUIÈRES, Antoine de PAS, marquis de, *Mémoires sur la guerre, où l'on a rassemblé des maximes les plus nécessaires dans les opérations de l'art militaire*, Amsterdam, F. Changien, 1731
- FEUQUIÈRES, Antoine de PAS, marquis de, *Mémoires*, A Londres, Chez Pierre Dunoyer, A Paris, Chez Rollin Fils, 1740
- FOLARD, Jean-Charles de, *Histoire de Polybe [...] Avec un commentaire ou un corps de science militaire enrichi de notes critiques et historiques...*, Paris, P. Gandouin, 1727-1730, 6 voll.
- FOLARD, Jean-Charles de, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre dans une dissertation sur Polybe [...]*, 2e éd., Bruxelles, F. Foppens, 1724
- FOSCOLO, Ugo, *Opere edite e postume*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1850, vol. I, *Prose letterarie, Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*; IV, *Lezioni di eloquenza*.
- FRÉDÉRIC, roi de Prusse, *L'esprit du chevalier de Folard. Tiré de ses commentaires sur l'histoire de Polybe, pour l'usage d'un officier, de main de maître*, A Berlin, Chez Chrétien-Frédéric Woss, 1761
- GAT, Azar, *The Origins of Military Thought, From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001
- GAZZANO, Francesca, TRAINA, Giusto, «Plutarque, historien militaire?», *Ktèma: civilisation de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques*, 39 (2014), pp. 347-370
- GUINEBAUD, Simon, *Polybe et la guerre de siège*, in *Figures et expressions du pouvoir dans l'Antiquité, Hommage à Jean-René Jannot*, Thierry PIEL (dir.), Rennes, P. U. de Rennes, 2009, pp. 49-60
- GUISCHARDT, Karl G., *Mémoires militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains: pour servir de suite en d'éclaircissement à l'histoire de Polybe commentée par ... Folard; avec une dissertation sur l'attaque et la défense des places des anciens, la traduction d'Onosander et de la tactique d'Arrien et l'analyse de la campagne de Jules César en Afrique*, Lyon, Bruyset, 1760
- HALE, John Rigby, «A Humanistic Visual Aid. The Militar Diagram in the Renaissance», in *Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1988), 2, pp. 280-298
- HALE, John Rigby, *Industria del libro e cultura militare a Venezia nel Rinascimento*, in *Storia della cultura veneta dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980, vol. II, pp. 245-288
- ILARI, Virgilio, *Epistemologia della Storia Militare*, in Atti del II Convegno Nazionale di Storia Militare, Roma, Centro Alti Studi della Difesa, 28-29 ottobre 1999, Antonello Biagini, Paolo Alberini (curr.), Roma, Commissione italiana di Storia militare, 2001, pp. 47-70
- ILARI, Virgilio, 'Imitatio, restitutio, utopia': *la storia militare antica nel pensiero stra-*

- tegico moderno*, in *Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco e romano*, Marta SORDI (cur.), Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2002, pp. 269-381
- ILARI, Virgilio, *Scrittori Militari Italiani dell'Età Moderna. Dizionario bio-bibliografico 1410-1799*, Collana SISM, Roma, Nadir Media, 2021
- ILARI, Virgilio, «Secret History. An Early Survey», *NAM*, 5 (2024), 19, pp. 560-575
- ILARI, Virgilio, «A Bibliographical Survey. 1. Present and Past Approaches to the Ancient Military History. A Short Bibliographical Survey of the Current Studies», *NAM*, 6, 2025, fasc. 22, pp. 9-110.
- LAURICHESSE, Jean-Yves, *La guerre en latin. Claude Simon et la bataille de Pharsale. Translatio: traduire et adapter les Anciens*, Corinne Bonnet et Florence Bouchet (éds.), Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013, pp. 285-303
- LIBERTI, Giuseppe Andrea, *La difesa del Segretario. Algarotti lettore dell' 'Arte della guerra'*, in *L'arte del dialogo, il mestiere della guerra. Studi per il quinto centenario dell' 'Arte della guerra' di Niccolò Machiavelli*, Milano, F. Angeli, 2022, pp. 149-162
- LORETO, Luigi, *Pensare la guerra in Cesare. Teoria e prassi*, in *La cultura in Cesare*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Macerata-Matelica, 30 aprile-4 maggio 1990, Diego POLI (cur.), Roma, Il Calamo, 1993, I, pp. pp. 239-343
- MONTECUCCOLI, Raimondo, *Le Opere*, vol. I-II Raimondo LURAGHI (cur.), Roma, Ufficio Storico Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, rist. 2000, vol. III, Armando TESTA (cur.), con la collaborazione di Luigi VILLA FREDDI
- PALLADIO, Andrea (Andrea di Pietro della Gondola), *Commentari di C. Giulio Cesare con le figure in rame de gli alloggiamenti, de' fatti d'arme, delle circonuallationi delle città, et di molte altre cose notabili descritte in essi. Fatte da Andrea Palladio per facilitare a chi legge, la cognition dell'historia*, In Venetia, Appresso Pietro de' Franceschi, 1575
- PECIS, Giuseppe, *Essai sur les qualités et les connoissances nécessaires à un général d'armée, ou Dissertation préliminaire aux campagnes de Jules César dans les Gaules*, Milan, Chez J. Marelli, 1758
- PECIS, Giuseppe, *Les Campagnes de Jules César dans les Gaules: Présentées À Son Altesse Royale L'Archiduc Joseph*, Milan, Chez J. Marelli, 1760
- PECIS, Giuseppe, *L'Austriade*, Milano, Nella Stamperia di Giuseppe Marelli, 1775
- PIERI, Piero, *L'evoluzione dell'arte militare nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII e la guerra del secolo XVIII*, in *Nuove questioni di storia moderna*, Milano, Marzorati, 1968, II, pp. 1123-1180
- PRETALLI, Michel, «La bataille de Pharsale dans l'Arte militare terrestre e maritima de Mario Savorgnano: composition et décomposition d'un récit», *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 41 (2015), 1, pp. 201-228
- PUYSÉGUR, Jacques-François de Chastenot, *L'art de la guerre par principes et par règles*, Paris, C.-A. Jombert, 1748
- QUANTIN, Jean-Louis, «Traduire Plutarque d'Amyot à Richard, Contribution à l'étude de

mythe de Sparte au XVIIIème siècle », *Histoire, économie et société*, 7 (1988), 2, pp. 243-259

RAIMONDI, Ezio, *Per le Opere di un guerriero*, in *Anatomie secentesche*, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1966, pp. 119-138

RAIMONDI, Ezio, *I lumi dell'erudizione. Saggi sul Settecento italiano*, Milano, Vita e pensiero, 1989

SAXE, Maurice, maréchal de, *Mes rêveries, Ouvrage posthume*, A Amsterdam et a Leipzig, Chez Arkstee et Merkus, et se trouve a Paris chez Desaint et Saillant, [Chez] Durand, 1757

TRISSINO, Gian Giorgio, *L'Italia liberata da' Gotthi*, In Roma, Per Valerio e Luigi Dorici, 1547; In Venezia, Per Tolomeo Ianiculo, 1548, 3 voll.

TOMMASEO, Niccolò, *Storia civile nella letteraria*, Torino, Loescher, 1872

VERRIER, Frédérique, *Les armes de Minerve. L'Humanisme militaire dans l'Italie du XVIe siècle*, Christian BEC (préf.), Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997

WIDEMAN, Thierry, «L'histoire de l'histoire de la guerre: l'exemple de la référence antique», *Revue Historique des Armées*, 207 (1997), *L'historien, le stratège et le combattant*, pp. 3-6

## L'importanza delle materie prime nella *grand strategy* romana

di ALESSANDRO GIRAUDO<sup>1</sup>

Questo contributo di uno studioso di geopolitica delle materie prime affronta dalla sua specifica prospettiva il tema controverso, proposto da Edward Luttwak nel 1976, dell'applicabilità del concetto lidellhartiano di *grand strategy* come criterio interpretativo dell'espansionismo e dell'imperialismo romano. L'autore propone di includere in questa interpretazione anche l'importanza dello sfruttamento e del commercio delle materie prime nell'Orbe romano, che alla morte di Augusto (14 d.C.) includeva una popolazione complessiva di 54 milioni, e di oltre 60 milioni all'epoca di Traiano, apogeo del Principato, e che attraverso la conquista del Mar Nero, del Vicino Oriente, del Mar Rosso e dell'Africa settentrionale controllava i grandi "corridoi" commerciali del mondo antico, le "vie" dell'Ambra e della Seta e dall'Egitto si affacciava anche sugli spazi commerciali dell'Oceano Indiano. In quali modi e in quale misura, il controllo diretto e indiretto delle miniere e dei traffici può aver contribuito ad orientare – anche in mancanza di una teorizzazione analoga ai criteri geopolitici contemporanei – la formazione dell'impero, interpretata dalla storiografia antica e moderna in riferimento esclusivo a criteri politico-militari e a circostanze particolari determinante dalle dinamiche contingenti del rapporto tra Roma e le province d'Oltremare?

<sup>1</sup> Alessandro Girauo insegna « Geopolitica delle materie prime e gestione dei rischi » all'INSEEC du Parigi. Fra i suoi libri figurano *Storie straordinarie delle materie prime* (2019), *Altre storie straordinarie delle materie prime* (2021), *Quando il ferro costava più dell'oro* (2023), *Oro, argento e scintillanti follie* (2024), tutti editi da EDD-Torino.

### *Materie prime essenziali e strategiche per l'Impero*

Base di questa ricerca è definire e catalogare l'esigenza di "materie prime" nel sistema economico antico. Evidentemente la lista è lunga ma la sintesi è breve e si concentra essenzialmente sull'alimentazione e sui prodotti "industriali" essenziali per la vita. Quindi, oltre all'acqua (ed i Romani erano i grandi maestri del trasporto e della distribuzione dell'acqua), cereali, carne ed pesce, vino e olio (che serve anche per illuminare gli edifici), frutta e verdura fanno parte della lista a cui bisogna aggiungere il sale, ingrediente fondamentale dell'alimentazione umana ed animale e prodotto essenziale per la conservazione dei cibi. I metalli non ferrosi (bronzo compreso), il ferro e il mercurio, il legname (per produrre il carbone di legna e per fabbricare imbarcazioni e edifici), le pietre da costruzione, la lana, il lino (impiegato per le vele delle navi militari, perché è molto leggero, e per il *velum* per coprire il Colosseo, mentre le navi civili e commerciali impiegano le vele di cotone e canapa), la canapa e lo sparto (questi due essenzialmente per cime e vele), il cotone (che però è molto caro perché arriva dall'India e dall'Egitto) fanno parte del secondo blocco "industriale" delle materie prime essenziali a cui bisogna aggiungere alcuni prodotti chimici come l'allume (mordente per l'industria tessile e del cuoio), il bitume (impiegato per calafatare), l'urina (che contiene dell'ammoniaca ed è quindi essenziale ancora per l'industria tessile e del cuoio), ceneri e materie coloranti come la robbia e il gualdo, senza dimenticare l'indaco (proveniente dall'India), i lapislazzuli (estratti nella sola miniera conosciuta all'epoca di Sar-e Sang, in Afganistan) e la costosissima porpora levantina. Poi ci sono i metalli preziosi; oro ed argento servono per effettuare i pagamenti commerciali, per remunerare legionari e mercenari, per fabbricare le monete (come il bronzo ed il rame), per versare tributi e riscatti e per stoccare del valore (i famosi tesori degli stati che oggi figurano nelle riserve ufficiali della banche centrali). L'argento è anche largamente utilizzato dai medici militari romani per curare le ferite e le piaghe dei legionari, grazie al potere antibatterico e germicide del metallo. Infine, ci sono le materie prime voluttuarie e del lusso: le spezie (ingredienti alimentari, della farmacopea, stimolanti sessuali), incenso, mirra, zucchero (per la farmacopea; il vero dolcificante dell'epoca è il miele), marmo, diamanti (questi arrivano tutti da un solo luogo di produzione : Golconda, nel centro dell'India), pietre preziose, corallo ed ambra, porpora e seta.

Roma importa la quasi totalità di questi prodotti voluttuari che sono acquistati

letteralmente a peso d'oro (un oncia di seta costava un'oncia d'oro; un oncia romana pesava 28.35 grammi, meno dell'oncia Troy che pesa 31.10 grammi) da imperatori, cortigiani, generali, uomini politici e ricchi mercanti. Spesso sono offerti a matrone ed a cortigiane. Le ricche donne romane fanno delle follie per la seta e Seneca scrive “Vedo vesti di seta, se possono essere definite vesti cose che non nascondono il corpo, nemmeno le parti intime”. Si sa che la bilancia commerciale romana era deficitaria di almeno cento milioni di sesterzi per anno, come ha segnalato Plinio. Il deficit è coperto dalle esportazioni di metalli preziosi e numerose monete d'oro sono trovate in luoghi molto lontani dai confini dell'Impero. Non bisogna dimenticare la domanda romana di cavalli (soprattutto allevati nel nord dell'Africa e destinati alla cavalleria) ed animali feroci e selvatici usati nelle arene; questa fauna è essenzialmente importata dall'Africa. Infine, è necessario enumerare i vari prodotti (piante officinali e materie minerali) che entrano nella della farmacopea con delle funzioni antipiretiche, disinfettanti, cicatrizzanti (come la mirra), analgesiche, antinfiammatorie, ecc..

### *I metalli degli Etruschi e la lotta contro Cartagine*

Quando Roma decide di espandere il suo territorio sceglie immediatamente l'invasione della Toscana e delle zone dominate dagli Etruschi, che sono i più grandi metallurgisti di tutto il bacino mediterraneo dell'epoca<sup>2</sup>. La geologia della Toscana (e dell'isola Elba) offre numerosi metalli, di base e ferro. Paradossalmente il cinabro (mercurio) del monte Amiata non fu sviluppato dai Romani, mentre gli Etruschi lo estraevano regolarmente. La Toscana è anche una grande terra che produce olio e vino<sup>3</sup>. La conquista dei territori della penisola italiana continentale continua con le guerre sannitiche e pirriche; queste rappresentano una ulteriore disponibilità di cereali e di olio, ma mancano ancora le isole: Sicilia (cereali), la Sardegna (minerali ed argento del S/O dell'isola), Corsica (gli abili marinai dell'isola che servivano nelle galere, luogo di pensionamento « agricolo » per i vecchi legionari, alcune miniere di rame e cave di granito). Tre guerre puniche (118 anni di conflitto) sono la dimostrazione evidente di una lotta all'ulti-

2 Timothy Green, *The Ages of Gold: Mines, Markets, Merchants and Goldsmiths from Egypt to Troy, Rome to Byzantium, and Venice to the Space Age*, GFMS, London, 2007, ch.6.

3 Jean-Marc Irollo, *Histoire des Étrusques, l'antique civilisation toscane viii<sup>e</sup> : i<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C.*, Paris, Perrin, coll. Tempus, 2004: 2010, introduction.

mo sangue per dominare il bacino mediterraneo. Roma, centro di potere agricolo e terrestre, e Cartagine, centro di potere marittimo e commerciale, si scontrano in un duello senza esclusione di colpi per conquistare un bacino dove non c'è spazio per due avversari<sup>4</sup>

Le guerre puniche iniziano con le battaglie per controllare le risorse minerarie della Spagna : l'argento, il rame (le miniere di rio Tinto), il piombo ed il mercurio (le miniere di cinabro di Almaden), soprattutto nelle regioni del sud. La vittoria contro Cartagine favorisce l'incremento di disponibilità di grano della regione, di olio e cavalli del Maghreb (termine arabo che significa *ponente*, da opporre a Mashrek, cioè il *levante*). L'occupazione di alcune regioni della Sardegna e della Sicilia, sotto dominazione cartaginese, permette il recupero di terre agricole in Sicilia (grano, olio e vino) e delle importanti miniere sarde (soprattutto di argento e di piombo, ma anche di rame e di stagno)<sup>5</sup>. Il nord dell'Africa produce cereali, olio, vino, prodotti importanti per la Repubblica.

### *Il mercurio dei Romani ed ...il cappellaio matto di Alice*

Nella Spagna del Sud c'è la grande miniera di cinabro (da cui si estrae il mercurio), di cui Plinio parla diffusamente. Questo metallo è usato nella farmacopea, nella produzione di unguenti, di profumi, di rossetti per le labbra e per la fabbricazione del colore rosso utilizzato per dipingere le pareti delle case dei ricchi proprietari ; il *rosso pompeiano* è molto stabile, come si può osservare ...ancora due mila anni più tardi<sup>6</sup>. Ma il mercurio è un minerale terribilmente tossico perché i suoi vapori hanno due effetti drammatici sugli uomini : rendono permeabili le vene e quindi si sviluppano emorragie epidermiche difficili da bloccare perché il sangue trasuda dalle vene, senza la formazione di una vera ferita che sarebbe possibile curare. In genere, gli uomini colpiti da questa malattia hanno una vita molto corta; ecco perché Roma manda in queste miniere i *damnata ad effodienda metalla*, i condannati ai lavori forzati ed, in certi casi, dei condannati a morte; la loro vita spesso dura solamente 4-5 anni. Il secondo effetto dei vapori del metallo

4 John Richardson, «Spain, Africa, and Rome after Carthage» in Dexter Hoyos (ed.), *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, Chichester, Wiley, 2015, pp. 467-482.

5 Robert J. Rowland, «Sardinians in the Roman Empire». *Ancient Society*, 5, 1974, pp 223-229.

6 A. Giraudo, *Or, argent e folies des grandeurs*, Paris, Economica, 2016, pp. 49-50.

si manifesta sul cervello con dei casi di follia...il cappellaio matto di *Alice nel paese delle meraviglie* non è un'invenzione letteraria! Per molti secoli, la produzione di cappelli di feltro ha impiegato un processo chiamato 'carotatura'; la pelle degli animali (essenzialmente dei conigli) è immersa in una soluzione color arancione di nitrato mercurico. Questo processo separa il pelo dalla pelle, compattandolo. Sovente, al contatto permanente con i vapori di mercurio, i cappellai alla fine della loro carriera erano vittime della follia o di gravi disturbi psichici<sup>7</sup>.

### *Pompeo, la Colchide ed il "vello d'oro"*

Nel 148 a.C. è la volta della Macedonia di essere conquistata dalla Repubblica romana che cerca l'oro e l'argento della regione (i due metalli hanno finanziato Filippo e soprattutto l'inizio dell'avventura di Alessandro) e nel 146 la Grecia diventa una provincia romana. La Grecia offre pochi metalli e grano, sicuramente il marmo; ma ha un ruolo strategico nel Mediterraneo e soprattutto rappresenta un centro culturale che i Romani vogliono imitare...numerosi rampolli delle ricche famiglie romane sono stati inviati in Grecia per educarli e consolidare la loro cultura.

L'Anatolia passa nelle mani della Repubblica romana nel 129 a.C.; nella regione ci sono numerose miniere fra cui quelle di stagno e rame delle montagne della catena del Tauro e la miniera d'oro di Pimolise, segnalata da Strabone, dove la forte presenza di arsenico causa la morte di molti schiavi che vi lavorano. Il marmo è un prodotto molto importante delle esportazioni anatoliche. E' necessario attendere Pompeo, brillante stratega militare, per la conquista del Ponto con la guerra contro Mitridate (66-62 a.C.)<sup>8</sup>. L'obiettivo è di formare un bastione (nel nord della Turchia attuale) contro i Parti, di penetrare stabilmente nel mar Nero (dove si trova una abbondante offerta di ferro, cereali, canapa, miele provenienti essenzialmente dall'attuale Ucraina e le feconde 'terre nere') e di andare a sfruttare le miniere d'oro (l'attuale miniera di Sakdrisi) della Colchide, la regione estremo-orientale del mar Nero, una parte del Caucaso e dell'attuale Georgia. In questa area si trova molto oro di origine alluvionale ed il mito del vello d'oro è una grande verità; all'epoca, i cercatori d'oro distendono delle pelli di ovini nei

7 A. Giraudo, *Storie straordinarie delle materie prime*, ADD ed., Torino, 2019, pp. 206-207.

8 John Leach, *Pompey the Great*, London/New York, Routledge, 1978, pp. 15-19.

letti dei fiumi per bloccare le pagliuzze del metallo, trasportate da flusso dell'acqua<sup>9</sup>. Queste pelli sono poi esposte al sole per asciugare e brillano; infine, sono bruciate per ottenere l'oro<sup>10</sup>. Il Ponto rappresenta per Roma una abbondante disponibilità di legname di ottima qualità e la Repubblica ha bisogno di una grande flotta militare e mercantile. Pompeo poi continua la conquista delle terre levantine con la Siria e una parte della Palestina. La Siria è il principale produttore di allume di Rocca, componente essenziale per la produzione tessile e del cuoio<sup>11</sup>. Inoltre la Siria, come Alessandria, è una regione dove arrivano le carovane cariche di merci provenienti dall'Asia e dal bacino indiano.

### *Cipro, il rame e la deforestazione dell'isola*

In seguito, la Repubblica si lancia alla conquista di Cipro. L'isola, controllata dai faraoni egiziani, è il più grande centro di estrazione di rame di tutto il Mediterraneo, con la famosa miniera di Tamassos, di cui parla Strabone. Cipro è all'origine del nome del metallo per varie lingue europee, tranne in italiano, dove il termine proviene dal tardo latino *aeramen*<sup>12</sup>. All'epoca, chi dispone di rame e di stagno può produrre il bronzo che è ancora largamente utilizzato nel mondo civile, mentre ormai le legioni sono equipaggiate da armi in ferro; spesso i loro nemici utilizzano armi ancora di bronzo che, però, sono più fragili. Il ferro è molto più resistente, anche se più difficile da lavorare perché questo metallo ha un punto di fusione di 1538°, contro quello del bronzo, circa 1000°. Quindi è necessario disporre di una temperatura molto elevata per trattare il ferro...ecco perché, all'epoca, questo metallo è battuto ed è raramente fuso, mentre stagno (temperatura di fusione a 232°), rame (1085°) e bronzo sono fusi...e Vulcano *battete* il ferro, non lo fonde! Prima dell'età del ferro (iniziata verso il 1200 a.C.), tutto il ferro ha una origine meteorica e costa molto caro (fino a otto volte il prezzo dell'oro!) perché i potenti vogliono possedere le impugnature delle loro armi in ferro, mentre i religiosi vogliono esporre le meteoriti nei templi per presentare « i doni degli dei dal cielo »...non a caso il termine siderurgia proviene da *sidera* (le

9 A. Giraud, *Storie, op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

10 Green, *op. cit.*, ch. 8.

11 P. Borgard, J.-P. Brun, M. Picon, M. (dir.), *L'Alun de la Méditerranée*, Publications du Centre Jean Bérard, Napoli, 2005, ch. 4.

12 "Copper" in *Mindat.org*, *Hudson Institute of Mineralogy*, 2000–2021.

stelle). La forte domanda di legname per produrre del carbone di legna *deforesta* grandi regioni dell'isola ed è necessario importare del legno dalle vaste foreste alpine del Libano... proprio quel legno che ha favorito il successo dei Fenici, diventati grandi navigatori e mercanti.

### *I minerali del Norico ed i cereali della Gallia*

Intanto le popolazioni del Norico, minacciate dall'invasione dei Cimbri e dei Teutoni, chiedono l'aiuto e l'intervento militare di Roma (battaglia di Noreia, 113 a.C.). La regione diventa protettorato romano e poi una vera provincia subito dopo la conquista di Cesare della Gallia. Il Norico è una terra ricca di molti metalli (oro, argento, piombo e ferro); più tardi, Plinio, Strabone, Ovidio parlano diffusamente della ricchezza mineraria di questa regione montagnosa<sup>13</sup> che si estende fra il Tirolo, le Alpi Noriche e la Germania del Sud. La metallurgia romana nel settore del ferro fa un grande balzo perché i fabbri ferrai del Norico possiedono una tecnica fra le più avanzate dell'epoca per il trattamento del ferro per renderlo ancora più duro. Fabbricano delle leghe con l'arsenico o carbonio per produrre un primo tipo di acciaio<sup>14</sup>. Questo è largamente impiegato dall'esercito: è più leggero e più duro del ferro e, soprattutto, non arrugginisce. Molto ferro norico proviene dalle miniere della Carinzia e della Stiria

13 O. Davies, *Roman Mines in Europe*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935; David Sim, *Beyond the Bloom: Bloom Refining and Iron Artifact Production in the Roman World*, - Ed. Ridge, Isabel - BAR International Series 725 - Oxford: Archaeopress - 1998, ch. 1 e 3. Peter Rothenhoefer and Norbert Hanel, «The Romans and Their Lead - Tracing Innovations in the Production, Distribution, and Secondary Processing of an Ancient Metals», in Stefan Burmeister, Svend Hansen, Michael Kunst and Nils Müller-Scheeßel (Eds.), *Metal Matters. Innovative Technologies and Social Change in Prehistory and Antiquity*, Rahden/Westf., Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH, 2013, pp 273-282. Linda Gosner, «Subsidiary Industries and Cross-Craft Production in the Roman Mining Landscapes of Southwest Iberia», in Frank Hulek, und Sophia Nomicos (Hrsg.), *Ancient Mining Landscapes: Panel 4.2*, Heidelberg: Propylaeum, 2022 (Archaeology and Economy in the Ancient World: Proceedings of the 19th International Congress of Classical Archaeology, Cologne/Bonn 2018, Band 25), pp. 113-128.

14 François de Callataÿ, «The Graeco-Roman Economy in the Super Long-Run: Lead, Copper, and Shipwrecks», *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 18, 2005, pp. 361-372.

### *Lo stagno della Cornovaglia...ed il carbone inglese*

E' ancora Cesare a lanciare la prima spedizione romana per la conquista della Britannia (55 e 54 a. C). Le legioni sono soprattutto alla ricerca dello stagno della Cornovaglia (all'epoca, principale fornitore dell'Europa di questo metallo), di rame (ancora la Cornovaglia), d'argento (Devon), di piombo (Mendip Hills nel Somerset), d'oro (la miniera di Dolaucothi nel Gales), di ferro (ci sono 33 miniere di ferro romane, di cui 2/3 nel Weald, regione all'est ed all'ovest di Londra) ed anche di lana<sup>15</sup>. E' proprio l'arrivo del ferro della Britannia romana che permette all'impero di diffondere questo metallo in tutte le terre che occupa. Le legioni però si arrestano al sud della Scozia per due precise ragioni : la combattività delle popolazioni autoctone e la scarsa disponibilità di risorse della Scozia (ad eccezione della lana). E sono i mercanti romani che incoraggiano gli allevatori a coprire il dorso delle pecore con dei tessuti per proteggere la qualità della lana...I due muri che proteggono le province romane sono costruiti nel 122 d.C. (vallo di Adriano) e nel 142 (vallo di Antonino). Ma quest'ultimo, localizzato a 160 km più a nord del vallo di Adriano, è abbandonato solo 20 anni dopo la costruzione; Settimo Severo lo ristrutturava nel 208 e diventa nuovamente operativo e strategico. I soldati romani trovano del carbone affiorante ed in miniere poco profonde e lo utilizzano per lottare contro il freddo, per preparare i pasti, per scaldare l'acqua nelle terme ed anche per produrre armi e strumenti agricoli. Ma le quantità sono relativamente ridotte ed i Romani non possono inviarlo nelle altre regioni dell'Impero perché è difficile e costoso trasportare questo materiale, troppo pesante e friabile<sup>16</sup>.

### *L'oro ed il grano dei faraoni*

Poi arriva il "colpaccio" straordinario dell'Egitto. La morte drammatica di Cleopatra e di Antonio sollevano molta polvere intorno ad una conquista romana che è forse un colpo da maestro sul piano economico, oltre che strategico. La conquista rappresenta un trilione di sesterzi che arrivano a Roma, dove i tassi di interesse praticati sulla *via sacra* (il mercato finanziario dell'impero, la Wall Street

---

15 A. Giraud, *Altre storie straordinarie delle materie prime*, ADD ed., Torino, 2021, pp.44-48.

16 Martin Dearne & Keith Branigan, «The Use of Coal in Roman Britain», *The Antiquaries Journal*, 75, Sept. 1995, UCP, pp. 71-105.

dell'epoca) scendono dal 12% a 4% ! L'Egitto controlla le miniere di rame del Sinai, estrae il granito dal Monte Claudianus, produce molto papiro e, soprattutto, il cotone ed il grano nelle pianure (lunghe e strette) del Nilo. Roma riceve enormi quantità di questo cereale tramite la flotta « alessandrina » ; fino ad 800 navi / anno sbarcano il grano a Pozzuoli <sup>17</sup>. Da questo importante porto - che dispone di un profondo pescaggio e di vasti magazzini - cereali ed altre merci sono spediti con chiatte e piccole imbarcazioni ad Ostia, il porto dell'Urbe, molto attivo come confermano le rovine delle caserme dei pompieri e delle installazioni portuarie. Però il traffico commerciale lo rende insufficiente e l'imperatore Claudio decide la costruzione di un porto artificiale nella zona paludosa posta a nord della foce del Tevere, collegata a Roma dalla Via Portuense, parallela all'Ostiense, ma sulla riva destra del fiume. Il nuovo porto presenta subito problemi d'insabbiamento e di scarsa sicurezza per le navi. Ed allora l'imperatore Traiano fa costruire un vasto bacino esagonale retrostante che moltiplica i punti d'attracco delle navi; è anche dotato di canali di collegamento con il Tevere e di ampi magazzini portuali per lo stoccaggio delle merci. In seguito, altre chiatte trasportano il grano a Roma ; una quota è stoccata come riserva, una grande quantità è commerciata dai negozianti che lo vendono ai 329 fornai (soprattutto greci)<sup>18</sup> ed un'altra importante quantità è comprata dall'Annona che si incarica di distribuire il grano gratuitamente ai meno abbienti (*panem et circenses...*). Più di 200 000 romani ricevono il *frumentum publicum* ! L'Annona, dal nome della dea Annona (la dea italica dei raccolti, sovente rappresentata da Ceres) ed anche da *annus*, indica i magazzini di stato dove sono stoccati i cereali dell'anno; in seguito il termine designa l'amministrazione incaricata di distribuire certi prodotti alimentari gratuiti (grano, olio e più tardi pane ed anche il vino). Chiunque si trovò in posizione di controllo rispetto al rifornimento del grano ebbe un ruolo essenziale per la città di Roma. Nell'anno dei quattro imperatori Vespasiano, che controllava l'Egitto ed i suoi rifornimenti granari, riuscì anche per questo a prevalere sugli altri contendenti.

Ma l'Egitto significa - soprattutto - l'oro della Nubia (che aveva fatto la fortuna dei faraoni neri e aveva finanziato lo splendore straordinario delle XVIII-XIX dinastie) e l'oro sotterrato nelle tombe dei faraoni che sono aperte e saccheggiate

<sup>17</sup> Martin W. Frederiksen, «Puteoli ed il commercio del grano in epoca romana», *Studi e ricerche su Puteoli romana*, atti del Consegno di Napoli del 2-3 aprile 1979, pp. 14-17.

<sup>18</sup> Giraudo *Storie...*, ibidem, pp. 68-69,

alla ricerca di oggetti di metallo giallo da fondere. Nella sua *Bibliotheca Historica* (pubblicata nel 60 a.C., quindi prima della conquista romana), Diodoro Siculo descrive le miniere d'oro dove è estratto il quarzo aurifero; gli schiavi devono frantumare le rocce che, in seguito, sono trattate con dell'acqua. I responsabili delle miniere devono scegliere come distribuire l'acqua: destinarla alla produzione d'oro e/o servirla agli schiavi che spesso muoiono di sete, di stenti e dei maltrattamenti inflitti dagli aguzzini che devono rispettare le cadenze prescritte dagli scribi i quali lavorano per i responsabili delle miniere<sup>19</sup>.

L'Egitto rappresenta anche l'accesso all'oceano indiano, il grande bacino delle spezie. Per procurarsele gli uomini di potere romani sono disposti a fare delle follie ed a spendere delle fortune per poter presentare sui loro tavoli cibi cucinati con vari tipi di spezie e fare preparare dei piatti prelibati, vero *status symbol*. L'Egitto diventa formalmente una provincia romana nel 30 a.C. ed i giuristi si ingegnano per aggiungere ai voluminosi testi di diritto romano un nuovo tipo di contratto. Si tratta del *Pecunia Traiecticia* che regola giuridicamente le condizioni di finanziamento del commercio, nolo ed assicurazione dei viaggi dei mercanti romani (soprattutto dei Levantini) fino sulla costa occidentale del sud dell'India. In genere, il contratto tradizionale di navigazione dura 12 mesi; questo nuovo contratto dura 15 mesi, il tempo necessario per realizzare il viaggio, sapendo che la navigazione deve tenere conto dei monsoni, che il transito fra Suez ed Alessandria con le carovane di camelidi prende molto tempo e che le due operazioni presentano vari rischi: ecco l'importanza dell'assicurazione marittima e terrestre<sup>20</sup>. Numerosi porti diventano molto importanti: Arsinoe-Clysmia (Suez), Berenice e Mylos-Hormos (Egitto del sud) e sulla costa occidentale dell'India come Barbaricum (Karachi), Barigaza (attuale Bharuch), Muziris (Kerala), Ariamedu (Pondichéry, sulla costa del sud-est indiano). Tutti questi porti ormai sono largamente frequentati da mercanti romani, greci ed ebrei, come segnala Strabone nella sua opera *Geographia*, dove parla di queste regioni che sono, in seguito, descritte da un autore anonimo sotto il nome di *Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Bisogna ricordare che Traiano ristruttura e riabilita il canale fra Zagazig (uno dei

---

19 Green, op. cit. ch. 2.

20 Gianfranco Purpura, «Tabulae pompeiane 13 e 34: due documenti relativi al prestito marittimo», *Atti della Accademia di Scienze Lettere e Arti di Palermo*, ser. V, II, 1981 -82, II, pp. 449 - 474. = Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Napoli, 1984, pp.1245-1266.

rami del delta del Nilo) e i Laghi Amari. Questo canale è stato scavato all'epoca di Tolomeo (285-247 a. C). La decisione di Traiano indica l'importanza per l'economia romana della logistica che permette di accedere al mar Rosso ed al bacino indiano.

### *La conquista del nord della Spagna (miniere d'oro e di ferro)*

Augusto dispone del bottino egiziano e può lanciarsi nella conquista delle ultime regioni non ancora controllate della Spagna del nord (guerre cantabrice, 29-19 a. C). I Romani non hanno mai osato attaccare in un terreno difficile da controllare i combattivi autoctoni che manipolano efficacemente delle armi leggere e corte e sono molto pericolosi perché applicano la tattica della guerriglia, favorita dalla loro grande mobilità<sup>21</sup>. Lo sforzo militare è molto importante perché sono mobilitate 7-8 legioni e numerose truppe ausiliarie, secondo lo storico romano Cassio Dione; è necessario l'intervento di Agrippa (generale, amico e genero di Augusto) ma è largamente compensato su un piano economico. Infatti in queste contrade esistono le miniere di ferro (in Galizia e nei monti cantabrici) e quelle d'oro nella provincia di Leon. Queste ultime sono soprattutto sviluppate a cavallo dell'anno zero<sup>22</sup>. Plinio, che fondamentalmente è un ingegnere minerario, diventa anche il principale responsabile di queste miniere dove lavorano 60 000 minatori liberi (gli schiavi sono impiegati essenzialmente nei trasporti e nell'assistenza ai minatori), protetti e controllati dai legionari romani e, a partire dal 74 d.C., dalla potente VII legione che ha anche il compito di difendere le miniere di ferro<sup>23</sup>. L'acqua per trattare il metallo giallo è trasportata dalla *Sierra de la Cabrera* su distanze di 150 km con sette acquedotti tecnicamente molto sofisticati. L'acqua è essenziale per frantumare le rocce che contengono l'oro. Plinio parla della tecnica della "ruina montium" perché l'acqua è scagliata contro le rocce delle montagne per spaccarne la struttura. Le informazioni sui giacimenti minerari sono state raccolte dagli efficientissimi servizi spionistici romani che spesso

21 R.J.F Jones, «The Roman military occupation of north-west Spain», *Journal of Roman Studies*, 66, 1979, pp. 45-66 e José María Blázquez, *Historia economica de la Hispania romana*, Ediciones Cristianidad, Madrid, 1878, pp. 10-23.

22 Rostovtzeff, Michael. *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, ch. II.

23 M.H.D. Parker, *Roman Legions*, Ares Publ., New York, 1997, pp. 70-75.

disponevano di tecnici altamente qualificati con delle conoscenze di ingegneria, di geologia, di botanica, di medicina, di geografia.

### *Il disastro di Teutoburgo: Vare redde legiones*

Augusto, rafforzato dal successo in Egitto ed in Spagna, decide di lanciare una vasta operazione (12 a.C.) contro le tribù teutoniche e tenta la conquista della regione compresa fra la frontiera del Reno-Danubio e l'Elba. L'operazione è fruttuosa, anche<sup>24</sup> se le terre conquistate presentano solo delle foreste e degli acquitrini, ma la guerriglia minaccia in modo permanente le legioni. L'idea di Augusto è di spostare ancora più all'est i confini per conquistare le pianure (grano) e le foreste (Roma è alla ricerca permanente di legno) dell'attuale Germania ed eventualmente della Polonia. L'operazione deve essere ritardata a causa delle rivolte delle popolazioni della Dalmazia e della Pannonia, dove i generali Tiberio e Germanico ottengono brillanti vittorie e, nel 9 d.C., la regione diventa formalmente una provincia romana. Questa procura legname, metalli e molti legionari combattivi (gli stessi tipi di uomini che formeranno il nucleo duro dell'esercito e della marina militare di Venezia nel XVI secolo). Allo stesso momento, l'occupazione delle regioni della Germania che dura una ventina di anni termina con il drammatico ed umiliante disastro di Teutoburgo, dove tre legioni, accompagnate dalle unità ausiliarie, comandate dal generale romano Publio Quintilio Varo sono massacrate (9 d.C.) da Arminio, cittadino romano di origine teutonica, diventato prefetto di una coorte cherusica dell'esercito romano. Arminio tradisce Varo e diventa il principale nemico di Roma. Gaius Iulius Arminius, che ha seguito la preparazione romana per gli ufficiali di cavalleria, conosce perfettamente le tecniche militari romane ed è stato un brillante comandante delle unità della cavalleria ausiliaria romana durante la guerra in Pannonia. Secondo Svetonio, Augusto, fortemente scosso dalla terribile sconfitta, pronuncia la famosa frase « Vare, redde legiones »<sup>25</sup>. Dopo la morte di Augusto, è la volta di Germanico (brillante generale) di tentare la riconquista alcune di queste zone, ma il costo della guerra e le minacce permanenti delle tribù locali scoraggiano l'imperatore Tiberio di continuare le operazioni ed i confini dell'impero sono fissati sul Reno.

<sup>24</sup> Cassio Dione *Storia di Roma*, libro LIII.

<sup>25</sup> Jason R. Abdale, *Four days in September: the battle of Teutoburg*, Pen & Sword Military, 2016, ch. 6.

### *Traiano e le miniere della Dacia*

Dopo l'annessione ufficiale della Britannia (44 d.C.), Roma rallenta la conquiste e le consolida. Sulla frontiera con la Dacia, le popolazioni invadono la Mesia romana e Domiziano lancia la prima guerra dacica (85-89 d.C.) che termina con la pace firmata con questi popoli molto irrequieti<sup>26</sup>. E quando i filoni d'oro di Las Medulas iniziano ad affievolirsi, Roma deve pensare ad una alternativa. Gli efficaci servizi dello spionaggio romano, che operano non solamente in tempo di guerra<sup>27</sup>, segnalano che nel nord della Dacia, nella regione di Rosia Montana, ci sono delle miniere d'oro e d'argento con un forte potenziale. Inoltre c'è il tesoro di Decebal, re dei Daci, e Traiano coglie al volo l'opportunità; ma ha bisogno di due spedizioni (101-102 e 105-106) per conquistare la regione. Occupa principalmente la zona nella quale ci sono le miniere e non si cura di conquistare le regioni limitrofe, anche se queste possono offrire legname e cereali, che già trova nella Dacia<sup>28</sup>; questa diventa, tra l'altro, un grande produttore di ferro e di sale.

### *I Romani nel Golfo Persico*

Ed è ancora Traiano che decide nel 106 d.C. di conquistare il regno dei Nabatei. Petra è il principale mercato di tutto il Mediterraneo dove è negoziato il bitume. Questo prodotto è un materiale strategico; si trova nei depositi della Mesopotamia ed in Luristan. È utilizzato dai marinai per calafatare le navi, dai muratori per costruire delle cisterne, dai sellai per trattare il cuoio, dagli orefici per fissare le pietre preziose sugli anelli e dagli specialisti per mummificare i cadaveri. Inoltre Petra è un'importante tappa della via dell'incenso. Nel 116 d.C., Traiano si lancia nella guerra contro i Parti per conquistare le ricche terre agricole comprese fra il Tigri e l'Eufrate e nel 117 può contemplare il golfo Persico da Bassora. L'Impero romano annette l'Assiria e la Bassa Mesopotamia. La regione produce grano, canna da zucchero (che a Roma costa molto caro: è utilizzato nella farmaceutica; il miele è il principale dolcificante), bitume e soprattutto permette

26 Alexandre Simon Stefan, *Les guerres daciques de Domitien et de Trajan : architecture militaire, topographie, images et histoire*, École Française de Rome, 2005, ch. 5-6.

27 Rose Mary Sheldon, *Intelligence Activities in Ancient Rome*, London/New York, Routledge, 2005, pp. 250-261.

28 Cassio Dione, *Storia di Roma*, libro LXVII.

di raggiungere l'oceano indiano più rapidamente che dal mare <sup>29</sup>Rosso. Il progetto di Traiano è quello di occupare le regioni dell'attuale Iran del sud-ovest, dove nei massicci montagnosi si trovano ricche miniere di metalli (soprattutto argento, proprio il metallo che, in seguito, ha finanziato l'espansione dei califfati). Ma deve rinunciare al suo progetto per ragioni di salute ed infatti muore nell'agosto del 117 a Selinunte in Cilicia. Il suo successore, Adriano, preferisce ripristinare lo *status quo ante bellum*, precedente ai primi scontri, per poi riportare i confini imperiali ancora al fiume Eufrate<sup>30</sup>. Più tardi, sono i legionari di Avidio Cassio (165, quando l'imperatore è Marco Aurelio) che marciano sull'Eufrate verso il nord e raggiungono l'importante città di Seleucia al Tigri (attuale Irak). La nuova frontiera è stabilita sul fiume Chabura (affluente dell'Eufrate) ed il controllo di Roma si estende lungo l'Eufrate fino a Dura Europos. La turbolenza dei Parti rappresenta una minaccia permanente per le legioni romane e Caracalla è l'ultimo imperatore capace di battere questi guerrieri persiani che applicano tecniche militari spesso sconosciute dai Romani<sup>31</sup>. La storia romana nella regione termina con l'inizio della crisi del III° secolo ed il cambiamento climatico che fa cadere tre imperi quasi simultaneamente: la dinastia degli Han (220), l'impero dei Parti (224) e quello dei Kushan (la grande decadenza e lo spezzettamento dell'impero comincia nel 225)<sup>32</sup>. Dei quattro grandi imperi dell'epoca, quello romano è il solo a salvarsi, ma la crisi dura quasi un secolo, gli imperatori si susseguono con un ritmo frenetico e la febbre della decadenza dell'impero lo rode progressivamente.

---

29 C. S. Lightfoot, «Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth-Century Perspective», *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 80, 1990, pp. 115-126.

30 Julian Bennet, *Trajan, Optimus Princeps*, London/New York, Routledge, 1997, ch. XVIII.

31 Rose Mary Sheldon, *Le guerre di Roma contro i Parti*, Gorizia, LEG, 2018, cap. IX.

32 A. Giraud, *Quand le fer coûtait plus cher que l'or*, Paris, Fayard, 2015, p. 293.

*Recensioni / Reviews*  
*Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina*

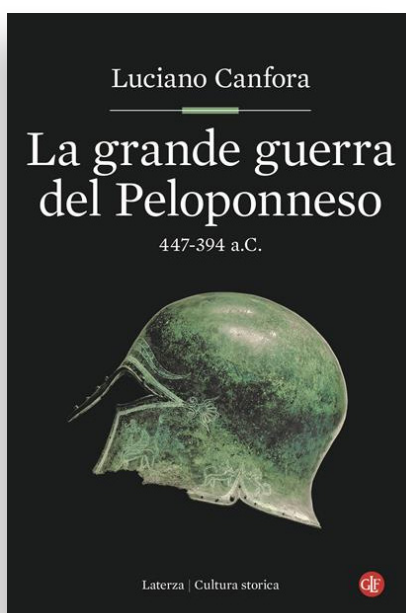




LUCIANO CANFORA

*La grande guerra del Peloponneso.*  
*447-394 a.C.*

Laterza, Roma, 2024, pp. 280.



**I**l volume di recente pubblicazione di Luciano Canfora si distingue fin da subito per la sua ambiziosa prospettiva storiografica: l'opera non si limita ad affrontare "solo" i ventisette anni che martoriarono la Grecia nel logorante conflitto fra Atene e Sparta – impresa già di notevole complessità –, ma abbraccia anche due altri periodi, tanto più brevi quanto non isolati dal grande conflitto fra le due potenze del V secolo: la pace dei Trent'anni e la cosiddetta guerra di Corinto. Come le origini del secondo conflitto mondiale del secolo scorso, per citare uno dei numerosi eventi moderni richiamati più volte e mai senza un pro-

fondo motivo dall'autore, non possono essere comprese appieno senza considerare le conseguenze figlie del duro trattato di Versailles nei confronti della sconfitta Germania, allo stesso modo, nella prospettiva di Canfora, la guerra del Peloponneso richiede una contestualizzazione di più ampio respiro. In questo contesto, risulta particolarmente efficace, rispetto agli studi odierni ove il 404, anno della capitolazione di Atene dopo l'assedio ad opera di Lisandro, viene percepito come una marcata cesura, la connessione con gli anni venturi fino alla Pace del Re.

Uno dei punti cardine del volume è costituito dall'antinomia fra la democrazia ateniese dai marcati tratti imperiali – all'interno del libro non mancano fini stoccate su quel sistema che non fu sempre digerito già dai contemporanei – e la potenza terrestre spartana: questa opposizione, per certi tratti portata agli estremi, ha le sue profonde radici nella polarizzazione proposta da Tucidide. Così, non senza esimersi dall'avanzare critiche ai vari studiosi che lo hanno preceduto sui numerosi nodi delle *Storie* tucididee, Canfora presenta le profonde e quanto mai evidenti cause che portarono alla guerra fra Sparta e Atene. La visione dell'autore è tutta tucididea e nonostante l'autorità dello storico Ateniese, come Canfora ben spiega offrendo un quadro dettagliato al lettore, non era per forza condivisa dagli antichi. Una particolare attenzione viene riservata a quella tradizione parallela, la quale imputava soprattutto a Pericle l'entrata in guerra di Atene. Nelle sezioni successive i temi trattati sono molteplici e ognuno è il frutto di una presa di posizione dell'autore: si noteranno, a più riprese, commenti sull'interpretazione di Demostene dell'opera tucididea, una marcata attenzione a quei personaggi che, per alcuni anni, ebbero il ruolo di protagonisti. Non si può non apprezzare il quadro offerto di Cleone, costruito anche attraverso il filtro della commedia aristofanea, che rileva le complessità del personaggio politico ateniese. Fra gli Spartani, invece, oltre ad alcuni cenni a Pausania, l'autore riserva una particolare attenzione a Brasida. Lo spartano, più di una volta, viene presentato come un elemento destabilizzante per la sua stessa comunità intenta a recuperare quanto prima gli Spartani catturati a Sfacteria, tanto che Canfora suggerisce di interpretare con sospetto la stessa morte di Brasida sotto le mura di Anfipoli.

Nei capitoli successivi vengono trattati, con significativi spunti di riflessione, la spedizione siciliana e i due colpi di stato di matrice oligarchica che videro, per brevi periodi, venire meno il sistema democratico ateniese. In tutte queste vicissitudini fra le poleis, bisogna necessariamente segnalare un dato a cui l'autore presta una doverosa e meritoria attenzione: la presenza costante della Persia.

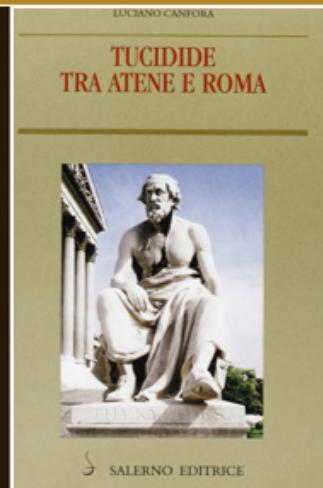
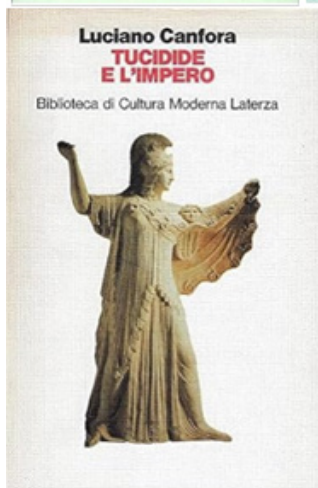
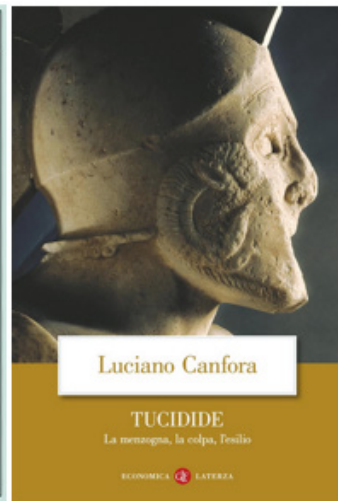
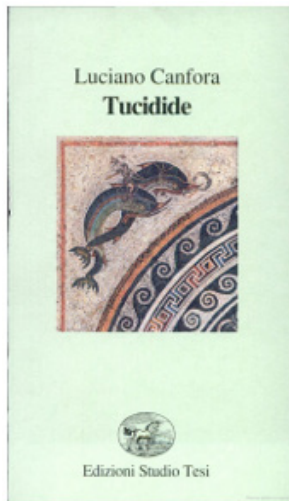
Quest'ultima emerge come quella figura dietro le quinte sempre pronta a tirare quei fili che avrebbero logorato uno o l'altro contendente.

Fin dalle prime pagine, attraverso un approccio analitico che mantiene una certa accessibilità grazie allo stile caratteristico dell'autore, il lettore viene messo a contatto non con una semplice descrizione di tutte le vicissitudini che portarono al conflitto fino al tuo svolgimento. Infatti, per chiunque sia interessato a intraprendere la lettura di questo volume, Canfora, è opportuno precisarlo, disvela, seguendolo passo dopo passo, le numerose complessità interpretative del testo di Tucidide. Pertanto il lettore troverà come gli eventi sono presentati, organizzati e, cosa più importante, quali sono i fili che li collegano, attraverso la lente tucididea. Per mezzo di quella diagnosi – termine più volte adoperato da Canfora – che rende sempre di estremo interesse le *Storie*, in cui politica e rapporti diremmo oggi internazionali si intersecano.

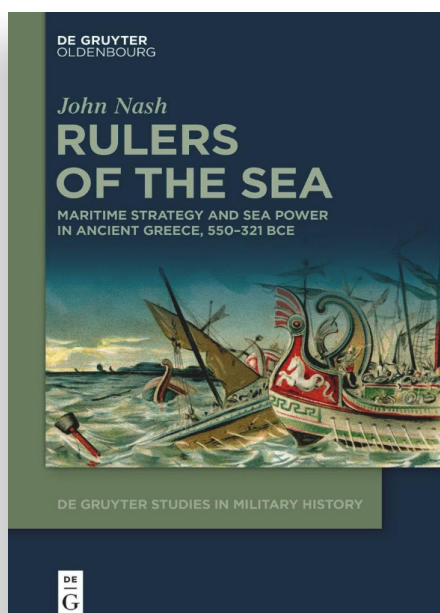
Per concludere questo prospetto, crediamo sia di particolare interesse il capitolo 29 ove l'autore ripropone la Sua nota posizione riguardante il presunto esilio di Tucidide negato ancora una volta con forza, il lavoro svolto da Senofonte, con il possesso delle carte tucididee – dato ben noto a una parte degli antichi ma, nella maggior parte dei casi, non messo in risalto dai moderni – e il rapporto presentato con dovizia fra i due storici antichi. Il libro dimostra come per comprendere appieno il pensiero di Tucidide sia inscindibile la lettura di Canfora (e viceversa).

ALESSANDRO CARLI

[ALESSANDRO.CARLI2@UNISI.IT](mailto:ALESSANDRO.CARLI2@UNISI.IT)



JOHN NASH

*Rulers of the Sea**Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece,  
550 – 321 BCE*

**L**a pubblicazione di un volume completamente dedicato al ruolo e alle dinamiche del *sea power* nel mondo greco di età tardo-arcaica e classica è di per sé un evento degno di nota, in un momento in cui gli studiosi della storia militare antica hanno incominciato a interessarsi a tale concetto e alle sue applicazioni storiche, ma di solito demandando le loro considerazioni a singoli articoli o miscellanee<sup>1</sup>. La sua comparsa all'interno della prestigiosa

<sup>1</sup> Alcuni esempi, tra i molti menzionabili, possono essere la collezione di saggi dedicati al

collana dei *De Gruyter Studies in Military History*<sup>2</sup> – di cui costituisce il volume n. 8 – alimenta senza ombra di dubbio una serie di aspettative nei confronti della monografia di John Nash *Rulers of the Sea*. Non tutte, a dire il vero, vengono però soddisfatte, soprattutto se si tiene in considerazione il taglio netto e molto specifico del suo sottotitolo: *Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece, 550 – 321 BCE*.

Per comprendere il piano generale del libro, occorre anzitutto inquadrare il suo autore. Nash è, infatti, attualmente membro, in qualità di Academic Research Officer, del centro per la ricerca storica delle Forze Armate Australiane (Australian Army Research Centre), ed ha il grado di Tenente nella riserva della Reale Marina Australiana (Royal Australian Navy Reserve), dopo avervi ricoperto per diversi anni la posizione attiva di Maritime Warfare Officer. Di conseguenza, la sua è una formazione ampiamente versata nell'ambito delle scienze strategiche, e in particolare delle dottrine navali più recenti – ciò che traspare con evidenza nell'impostazione e nello stile stesso del volume. Quest'ultimo è essenzialmente derivato dalla tesi di Dottorato che Nash ha difeso presso la Australian National University nel 2019, in cui, per l'appunto, lo studioso aveva cercato di applicare concetti contemporanei della guerra navale agli sviluppi storici della marineria nella Grecia antica, concentrandosi sul periodo compreso fra la metà circa del VI secolo a.C.<sup>3</sup> e la morte di Alessandro. Un'epoca, in altri termini, corrispondente allo sviluppo e all'apice dell'utilizzo del vascello da guerra per eccellenza dei Greci (ma non solo: di tutto il Mediterraneo orientale), la trireme<sup>4</sup>.

---

potere marittimo nel mondo greco apparsa nel numero 5 (2015) della rivista *Historiká* (raccolti sotto il titolo 'tucidideo' di *Great Is the Power of the Sea*); oppure, la presenza di due contributi dedicati alla storia navale greca nel volume collettaneo e diacronico di Rolf STROOTMANN, Floris VAN DEN EIJNDE, Roy VAN WIJK (eds.), *Empires of the Sea. Maritime Power Networks in World History*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2020. Tra i lavori più brevi, dedicati all'approccio al *sea power* da parte dei diversi autori antichi, si segnala per sua recenziorità Kai RUFFING, «Herodotus and Naval Power», in J. Degen, H. Klinkott, R. Rollinger, K. Ruffing, B. Truschneegg (eds.), *Ancient Worlds in Perspective. Contextualizing Herodotus (Philippika 150)*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2024, 123-136.

- 2 Il piano editoriale e i volumi pubblicati nella collana sono reperibili al *link*: [https://www.degruyter.com/serial/gstmh-b/html?srsItd=AfmBOorDiELuUpqUY5Y\\_SrOrHbhNhbcgLgDWz\\_vKyu93\\_oXlvSx2Bt43](https://www.degruyter.com/serial/gstmh-b/html?srsItd=AfmBOorDiELuUpqUY5Y_SrOrHbhNhbcgLgDWz_vKyu93_oXlvSx2Bt43).
- 3 Le date degli eventi trattati all'interno del libro vanno intese, naturalmente, in a.C.
- 4 L'idea di una "età della trireme" corrispondente a tale periodo è diffusa in tutte le opere di riferimento per questo ambito di studi, elaborate da grandi nomi come Lionel Casson, Lucien Basch, John S. Morrison, e Herman T. Wallinga. Sugli sviluppi successivi della ma-

La produzione bibliografica dell'Autore mostra, ad ogni modo, come i suoi interessi si siano diversificati negli ultimi anni, in virtù, chiaramente, del suo servizio presso istituti di ricerca legati alle forze armate del suo Paese. I suoi contributi più recenti si trovano invero all'interno della rivista del Sea Power Centre, un ente anch'esso affiliato alla Royal Australian Navy, il cui obiettivo è quello di "promote the study, discussion and awareness of maritime strategy, sea power and Australian naval history"<sup>5</sup>. Essi non hanno quindi per loro oggetto la storia antica, bensì si concentrano su aspetti tecnici e statistici oppure su ricostruzioni storiche su mezzi e operazioni della marina da guerra australiana, perciò sostanzialmente nella seconda metà del Novecento<sup>6</sup>.

Il volume qui in esame, pertanto, sembrerebbe riflettere almeno in parte l'oggettiva distanza esistente tra un tipo di approccio come questo, e lo studio di materie di per sé molto complesse nel Mediterraneo antico. Senza nulla togliere all'utilità del lavoro, e alla ricchezza del progetto di ricerca che vi soggiace, la coniugazione delle due 'anime' che lo alimentano – la storia greca, da un lato, e la dottrina navale contemporanea, dall'altro, ciascuna con i propri riferimenti e metodologie – non sempre pare riuscita, o calzante, nelle 223 pagine complessive dell'edizione (escluse le appendici).

Il problema, a una lettura complessiva, risiede soprattutto nel fatto che il tentativo di Nash di applicare categorie presenti a un contesto tanto antico – ammesso, ma non concesso, che una tale pratica sia del tutto giustificabile – non

---

rineria e dei vascelli da guerra in età ellenistica, vd., per esempio, William MURRAY, *The Age of Titans: The Rise and Fall of the Great Hellenistic Navies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York 2012.

5 Sito ufficiale: <https://seapower.navy.gov.au/>.

6 Trattasi perlopiù di pubblicazioni *online*, ad esempio: John NASH *et al.*, «For Your Situational Awareness: Autonomous Systems and Constabulary Tasking», *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 5, 2 (2022) - <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2979842/for-your-situational-awareness-autonomous-systems-and-constabulary-tasking/>; John NASH, «4th Royal Navy Squadron: Introduction of the Oberons», *Sea Power Centre Publications*, 2022 - <https://seapower.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/4th-royal-navy-squadron-introduction-oberons>; *id.*, «Nuclear-Powered Submarines for Australia: Origin Stories», *Sea Power Centre Publications*, 2022 - <https://seapower.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/nuclear-powered-submarines-australia-origin-stories>; *id.*, «Port Visits to Australia by Nuclear-Powered Vessels: A Historical Context Cover image US Navy Cruiser USS CANBERRA and submarine HALIBUT in Sydney Harbour», *Sea Power Centre Publications*, 2023 - <https://seapower.navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/port-visits-australia-nuclear-powered-vessels-historical-context>.

sembra possedere il medesimo vigore attraverso i vari capitoli di cui si compone la monografia. Detto altrimenti, l'associazione pare un'ipotesi di lavoro praticabile, poiché ben argomentata e sapientemente approfondita, in alcune sezioni del libro, mentre in altre si registra una diminuzione, e talvolta anche una completa assenza nell'adesione e nel perseguimento di un tale, ambizioso obiettivo. In particolare, il discrimine più netto si riscontra verso la metà del libro, tra i capitoli 7 e 8 dedicati alle operazioni navali della Guerra del Peloponneso, ma in maniera nettissima a partire dal capitolo 9, con cui si apre la trattazione del IV secolo – la quale, a conti fatti, è certamente quella che più lascia a desiderare, e che sembra essere stata in sostanza impostata su criteri differenti da quelli dei primi capitoli.

Una rapida scorsa di alcuni punti-chiave dell'argomentazione chiarisce questa dicotomia, certo non voluta dall'Autore, ma che si può immaginare essere stata determinata da fattori esterni ai suoi piani originari, o verosimilmente alle difficoltà insorte nel metterli in pratica. Difficoltà che, peraltro, riguardano in generale lo studio delle materie navali nel mondo greco antico, trattandosi di un ambito in cui la documentazione disponibile ha una prevalente, se non esclusiva matrice ateniese, o gravita comunque intorno a notizie e realtà che ebbero a che spartire con Atene a vario titolo. La questione è ben nota e riguarda in realtà l'intero panorama della storia greca, ma costituisce un gravame ancor più ingombrante in questo campo, considerato il ruolo assolutamente predominante di Atene sui mari nel V e ancora, in parte, nel IV secolo. Di questo, l'Autore è pienamente consapevole, e fin dall'Introduzione afferma di voler tentare, per quanto possibile (afferma giustamente, a p. 7, “as much as possible”), di superare questo *bias* delle fonti, o perlomeno di applicarvi correttivi concentrandosi sui dati – anche iconografici, archeologici, ed epigrafici – provenienti da altre realtà marittime del mondo greco della ‘età della trireme’. Nonostante gli affondi, anche piuttosto interessanti, sulle vicende navali di comunità più piccole o ‘esterne’ – non soltanto quelle ricordate in sequenza ‘cronologica’ nella ben nota *archaiologia* di Tucidide<sup>7</sup> (pp. 83-86), ma anche realtà minori considerate all'interno della categoria delle “non-hegemonic sea powers”, quali Corcira, Leucade e Chio (pp. 202-213) –, il fatto è che l'indagine di Nash rimane perlopiù limitata ai soli dati della storiografia.

---

7 Già ben esplorate, insieme alle emergenze in altri autori da Omero a Polibio, nel breve ma intenso contributo di Arnaldo MOMIGLIANO, «Sea-Power in Greek Thought», *The Classical Review*, 58, 1 (1944), 1-7.

Per giunta, di solito, a essere presi in considerazione sono le opere e i passaggi degli autori più noti; meno, invece, quelli minori o frammentari che, talvolta, possono contribuire a offrire informazioni interessanti in un ambito documentario altrimenti apparentemente monocromatico. Perciò, nel capitolo che di fatto è dedicato alle fonti impiegate per la ricerca (il capitolo 3), l'Autore, dopo una rapida rassegna del rapporto della mitologia e dell'epica greca (da Omero in avanti) con il mare, procede commentando passi noti dei tragici e dei comici ateniesi di V secolo, per poi focalizzarsi sulle grandi voci della storiografia: Erodoto, Senofonte e Diodoro. A Tucidide - che senza confronti rappresenta la fonte più citata e adoperata all'interno del volume -, è dedicata la sezione già menzionata del capitolo 4, e di fatto lo sono altrettanto i capitoli in cui è ripresa la sua narrazione degli eventi della Guerra del Peloponneso. Discreta attenzione è riservata anche agli oratori attici del IV secolo: i principali discorsi isocratei sull'egemonia marittima, i suoi vantaggi e i suoi rischi nei casi di Atene e di Sparta hanno posto sempre nel capitolo 3 (insieme a noti *loci* di Platone: pp. 71-77). La trattazione del conflitto di Atene con Filippo II negli anni 340, realizzata attraverso le orazioni di Demostene, occupa invece il capitolo 10 (pp. 191-200). Va detto che una simile impostazione risulta, per quanto determinata dalla natura della documentazione, inevitabilmente viziata dal posizionamento caratteristico, ed interno ad Atene, dell'oratore<sup>8</sup>.

A tratti, più che sui dati desumibili da fonti primarie diverse dalla storiografia o dalla letteratura, Nash si sofferma sul richiamo a eventi o fasi della guerra navale in tempi assai più recenti, e sulla discussione di concetti che sono a tutti gli effetti propri all'epoca odierna, piuttosto che al Mediterraneo antico. Vero è che il principio che di fatto governa (almeno nelle aspirazioni e secondo le dichiarazioni di apertura) l'intero impianto del lavoro, cioè la distinzione basilare (che, invero, può risultare non sempre cristallina ai non specialisti) tra *sea power* in senso lato, operazioni marittime ("maritime operations") e operazioni/azioni navali ("naval operations"), è essenziale e ben delineata dall'Autore, fin dalle primissime pagine (2-3). Nell'Introduzione, infatti, il concetto di *sea power* viene identificato nella forma più larga possibile accogliendo la definizione 'massimalista' di Geoffrey

---

8 Si veda il volume, dedicato precisamente al ruolo delle opere (e della vita) di Demostene nella ricostruzione delle vicende di Atene nel conflitto con Filippo II, di Ian WORTHINGTON, *Demosthenes of Athens and the Fall of Classical Greece*, Oxford University Press, Oxford - New York 2013. Nash lo riporta nella bibliografia finale del suo libro, ma esso non compare citato nei riferimenti del capitolo in questione.

Till (non a caso, uno storico della marineria britannica nel Novecento): “the capacity to influence the behaviour of other people or things by what one does at or from the sea”<sup>9</sup>. Le “maritime operations” costituiscono allora, spiega l’Autore, una sola parte delle molte attività marittime in grado di contribuire al *sea power*. A loro volta, le “naval operations” (s’intende, le attività condotte mediante navi da guerra, o approntate a tale scopo) rappresentano soltanto una parte di quanto rientra nel dominio del “maritime”.

Richiamandosi espressamente – come, del resto, prevedibile – alle norme tracciate nella dottrina marittima della Royal Australian Navy<sup>10</sup>, che Nash dimostra di ben conoscere, viene poi operata un’ulteriore distinzione tra operazioni navali a carattere prettamente militare, cioè belliche (“military [naval] operations”), azioni diplomatiche (“diplomatic”) e “di polizia”, vale a dire l’insieme delle attività di pattuglia/monitoraggio e deterrenza dal mare (“constabulary” – vd., in particolare, lo schema riportato a p. 6). Sebbene tale separazione risulti sostanziale, e l’Autore abbia scelto saggiamente di introdurre questi riferimenti sin da subito, c’è da rilevare che, alla prova della lettura, l’impiego di una definizione – corretta – così ampia di *sea power* stride abbastanza nettamente con il senso che si potrebbe pensare di attribuirvi secondo il sottotitolo del volume. Quest’ultimo, a dire il vero, sembrerebbe fare riferimento a una visuale del *sea power* più limitata, ridotta, la quale di fatto va a combaciare con il “naval power” e con le operazioni navali di tipo militare (“military operations”). Detto altrimenti – e con i dovuti caveat a livello documentario e metodologico -, ad un’idea più simile a quella che è invalsa nell’uso quando le fonti greche parlano di *thalassokratia*. Il titolo del libro, “Rulers of the Sea”, pare a tutti gli effetti un richiamo all’etimologia, e alla *communis opinio* in merito alla ‘talassocrazia’. Sostenere, quindi, che esso sia fuorviante è sicuramente eccessivo, ma è inevitabile dover sottolineare questo scarto. Quanto alle distinzioni interne alle varie tipologie di operazioni navali, allo stesso modo, gli interessi dell’Autore convergono in larghissima parte sulle operazioni militari, ovvero sulla guerra navale nel mondo greco-eggeo. Pur non mancando mai di rimarcare l’interconnessione e l’interoperabilità delle compo-

9 Geoffrey TILL, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge, New York 2013<sup>3</sup>, 25. Stranamente, Nash cita la terza edizione del volume (2013), e non la quarta (2018).

10 Vd., ad esempio, nella nota 14 a p. 6, ove si cita il testo della *Australian Maritime Doctrine* del 2010.

nenti di quella che egli chiama “the trinity of maritime operations” (cui sono dedicate specificamente le pp. 213-221, le ultime prima della Conclusione), molto spesso, come si è detto, la trattazione si riduce a una spiegazione commentata dei resoconti di guerra dei grandi autori.

L’efficacia dei frequenti paragoni con il contemporaneo e con le marine del Novecento (ormai oggetto di studio privilegiato, pare, dell’autore, come visto) è spesso inficiata da questa scelta evidentemente selettiva, ma mai del tutto ammesa. Se è chiaro che l’ampiezza cronologica e tematica degli argomenti in esame abbia dovuto imporre delle selezioni, cioè, non sempre il loro criterio appare chiaro – o meglio, si chiarisce da sé avanzando con la lettura, ma non lo si trova esplicitato negli snodi più importanti del volume. Penalizza il tutto, infine, il posizionamento di un ricchissimo e dettagliato glossario di termini ed espressioni specifiche delle dottrine navali recenti – oltremodo utile per il lettore, dal momento che esse vengono adoperate ripetutamente da Nash – solo in appendice, dopo la chiusura della trattazione principale (Appendice 1, pp. 225-229). Certo avrebbe potuto giovare di più – al lettore, e all’argomentazione - presentare tale glossario, in qualche modo, all’interno dell’Introduzione.

Riperkorrendo ora in ordine, brevemente, gli undici capitoli di cui il volume si compone, quanto detto in merito alla sua prevalente impostazione - che ne fa piuttosto una ‘storia delle talassocrazie’ delle *poleis* greco-eggee tra l’epoca di adozione della trireme e il tempo di Alessandro – si dispiega con ancor maggiore chiarezza.

I capitoli 1 e 2 hanno la funzione di delineare le coordinate geografiche e logistiche relative al fenomeno della marineria nella Grecia antica. Il primo costituisce una delle sezioni meglio riuscite dell’intero libro, in quanto presenta con estrema precisione aspetti che è fondamentale tenere in considerazione quando si approcciano temi di storia navale in generale, ma che spesso possono sfuggire a un pubblico non specificamente versato nella materia. Protagoniste di queste pagine (10-33) sono le variabili geografiche, ambientali e climatiche che in ogni epoca e luogo hanno influito e afflito la navigazione a vela e/o remi; tanto più, in effetti, per l’intricato Egeo e Mediterraneo orientale antichi. Nash argomenta con perizia il fatto che la stagione della navigazione in questi mari era molto più estesa di quanto si sia portati a ritenere sulla scorta del paradigma del ‘*mare clausum*’<sup>11</sup>; di

---

11 Cfr. Veg. *Mil.* IV 39.

fatto, essa occupava quasi l'intero anno salvo che per i mesi invernali più freddi e burrascosi. Considerata l'ampiezza degli spunti e l'ambizione a fornire un quadro il più possibile 'completo' di tali questioni, si sarebbe potuta auspicare, da parte dell'Autore, un'attenzione altrettanto significativa per i fattori della geomorfologia costiera – i quali, inutile dirlo, regolavano i flussi della navigazione determinando le rotte e la localizzazione dei porti. In merito a questi ultimi, tuttavia, ci si limita ad accennare alcuni casi di studio tra i più noti<sup>12</sup>. Il capitolo successivo, invece, si presenta assai meno originale del precedente: esso è dedicato alla presentazione dell'organizzazione delle forze navali delle *poleis* in epoca tardo-arcaica e classica. I temi di queste pagine (34-51) gravitano dunque intorno alla trireme, di cui vengono presentate l'evoluzione e la struttura, la logistica del mantenimento, gli equipaggi<sup>13</sup>, e le formule del finanziamento delle flotte<sup>14</sup>.

Come già accennato, il capitolo 3 (pp. 52-77) ripercorre le fonti letterarie, epiche, storiografiche, drammaturgiche e oratorie attraverso cui l'Autore delinea lo sviluppo della "Greek maritime consciousness". Un fattore, quest'ultimo, cruciale nella mentalità e nelle vicissitudini di buona parte delle comunità della Grecia e dell'Egeo sin dall'epoca arcaica, come evidenziato nell'attenzione riservata ai racconti mitologici legati al mare che costellavano il loro immaginario di riferimento<sup>15</sup>. Altri recensori del volume, tuttavia, hanno notato la natura fin troppo cursoria di alcuni passaggi in queste pagine (in particolare, lo spazio risicato riservato a Omero e all'*Odissea*<sup>16</sup>). Qui può inoltre lamentarsi – ciò che in realtà riguarda l'intero libro – l'assenza di una prospettiva più ampia, capace

12 In questi casi, l'Autore rimanda alle schede contenute all'interno del volume di David BLACKMAN, BORIS RANKOV, *Shipheds of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013.

13 Il riferimento principale rimane, nel libro di Nash come altrove, la monografia di John S. MORRISON, JOHN COATES, BORIS RANKOV, *The Athenian Trireme. The History and Reconstruction of an Ancient Greek Warship*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2000<sup>2</sup>.

14 Su cui il rimando imprescindibile (per il più noto caso ateniese) è VINCENT GABRIELSEN, *Financing the Athenian Fleet. Public Taxation and Social Relations*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1994.

15 Nel capitolo, il riferimento costante è a Marie-Claire BEAULIEU, *The Sea in the Greek Imagination*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2016, un lavoro la cui lettura merita in effetti estrema attenzione. Sulla scorta (anche) delle sue argomentazioni, Nash riserva spazio in questo capitolo anche al ruolo del mare e dell'economia marittima nei *Poroi* di Senofonte, i quali forniscono un'interessante prospettiva d'indagine.

16 Vd. la recensione al volume di Nicholas D. Cross (membro della United States Naval Academy) sulla *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, del settembre 2024.

cioè di oltrepassare laddove necessario i limiti della sfera greco-eggea. La “maritime consciousness” che Nash attribuisce ai Greci fu, invero – pur con tutte le dovute differenziazioni -, una postura comune a molte altre popolazioni e realtà dei litorali del Mediterraneo orientale: ivi compresi, s’intende, contesti anch’essi (almeno, parzialmente) greci, ma che non rientrano in alcun modo nelle considerazioni dell’Autore, come ad esempio Cipro. Certo, non è effettivamente questo l’obiettivo dichiarato in apertura, ma stupisce comunque la mancanza di riferimenti a tali realtà ‘esterne’ anche laddove esse influirono pesantemente sulle vicende navali elleniche.

Il capitolo successivo (4, pp. 78-86), pur nella sua brevità, costituisce uno snodo importante nell’economia del libro. Questo perché l’argomento che ne è oggetto sono le origini delle forze navali degli Stati greci, cioè delle *poleis*. Un passaggio, questo, davvero fondamentale, avvenuto nel corso del VI secolo in corrispondenza – non a caso – con l’avvento della trireme e gli esordi del suo impiego massivo in seno (per l’appunto) alle flotte delle città greche. Di fatto, è da questo punto in avanti che il concetto specialistico di *sea power*, per come lo si è presentato nei capitoli precedenti, si sovrappone sempre più alla concezione greca della *thalassokratia*, fino a identificarsi senza troppe spiegazioni anche alle *moderne* visuali delle ‘talassocrazie’ greche antiche. Come già detto, queste pagine riprendono i più noti passaggi di Erodoto<sup>17</sup> e Tucidide in cui emergono questi temi, e nei quali occorrono, per l’appunto, termini come *thalassokratia* ed espressioni analoghe<sup>18</sup>. Ci si attenderebbe dunque, in questo senso, una trattazione specifica di una fonte certo complessa, ma estremamente interessante e significativa quale la cosiddetta ‘Lista delle talassocrazie’ di Diodoro, conservata in Eusebio di Cesarea<sup>19</sup>. Tuttavia, ad essa l’Autore accenna soltanto rapidamente, sostenendo che “Eusebius’ thalassocracy list is an interesting work, less import-

17 Sul concetto di “naval power” (e di *thalassokratia*) in Erodoto, vd. ora RUFFING, *Herodotus and Naval Power* cit.

18 Per una disamina esaustiva del lessico della *thalassokratia* presso la storiografia e l’oratoria greche, vd. Elisabetta BIANCO, «*Thalassokratia*: un concetto, molti nomi», *Historiká*, 5 (2015), 97-110.

19 Diod. VII 11 = Eus. *Chron.* I, Karst pp. 106-107). A riguardo, Nash cita l’articolo capostipite della critica - John L. MYRES, «On the ‘List of Thalassocracies’ in Eusebius», *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 26 (1906), 84-130 -, ma non fa riferimento a studi più completi come quello cronografico di Molly MILLER, *The Thalassocracies: Studies in Chronography II*, State University of New York, Albany 1971.

ant for what it tells us about maritime history in the eighth to sixth centuries but quite revealing of the importance of sea power *as the Greeks saw it in their own history...*” (p. 80, corsivo aggiunto). Pare, inoltre, forse un po’ troppo puntiglioso il confronto (dagli esiti abbastanza scontati) della *lesteia* (pirateria) presentata da Tucidide nella *archaiologia* con le normative contemporanee della Convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sulla Legge del Mare (UNCLOS), che definiscono il fenomeno *contemporaneo* della pirateria.

Segue (capitolo 5, pp. 87-100) quel che nei fatti è l’inizio della trattazione sostanzialmente evenemenziale dei maggiori eventi della storia navale greca del V e IV secolo: vale a dire, l’analisi degli aspetti più propriamente marittimo-navali delle Guerre Persiane. In realtà – comprensibilmente, del resto –, a essere prese in considerazione sono la Rivolta Ionica e la grande invasione anfibia di Serse nel 480-479. Sin da qui si manifesta, però, una lacuna importante, che accompagna l’intero prosieguo del libro. Nonostante queste pagine contengano alcuni degli affondi meglio condotti per quanto concerne l’applicazione dei concetti strategici moderni alle operazioni navali antiche (molto interessante, e sensato, è il riesame dello “operational level” alla base delle tattiche adottate dagli Ateniesi di fronte ai ‘barbari’), a mancare quasi del tutto è un’attenzione per lo schieramento che si oppose alle triremi dei Greci<sup>20</sup>. Lo studio delle flotte achemenidi è materia di per sé assai complessa e altrettanto poco affrontata, ma in generale la sensazione è che l’ottima indagine del fronte ellenico risulti almeno in parte sminuita dal mancato avanzamento di ‘correttivi’ alla sola narrazione erodotea e classica. Si deve pur sempre pensare, si ritiene, che lo stesso fenomeno della creazione delle flotte di triremi presso le maggiori *poleis* di Grecia, verso la fine del VI secolo, vada ascritto in certa misura alla pressione esercitata sull’Egeo e i mari limitrofi dalla crescita del potere navale dei Persiani.

Il capitolo 6 (pp. 101-116) si occupa invece della fase successiva alle Guerre Persiane, ed è pertanto incentrato sull’ascesa del potere navale di Atene e della Lega Delio-attica nel periodo della *pentekontaetia* – senza, però, che ne vengano

---

20 Il fronte navale persiano nella guerra del 480-479 e i grandi scontri dell’Artemisio, di Salamina e di Micale sono al centro delle ricostruzioni di Herman T. WALLINGA, *Xerxes’ Greek Adventure. The Naval Perspective*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2005. In generale, nessun lavoro di questo importante autore (studioso non soltanto della marineria persiana, ma anche della trireme e del funzionamento delle flotte greche in età tardo-arcaica e nel V secolo) è citato nelle note o riportato in bibliografia.

ripercorsi gli eventi punto per punto<sup>21</sup>. Alla sequenza flotta – commercio – mura – potenza (militare), ripresa esplicitamente dalle teorie formulate a suo tempo dalla De Romilly<sup>22</sup>, Nash accosta una panoramica della vocazione marittima di un testo come la *Athenaion Politeia* dell'anonimo Vecchio Oligarca, sempre appropriata laddove si discutano le pratiche e il retroterra ideologico dell'egemonia marittima ateniese. I successivi capitoli 7 (pp. 117-140) e 8 (pp. 141-160) sono dedicati alla Guerra del Peloponneso, e – come detto sopra – seguono essenzialmente il resoconto tucidideo (e poi, delle *Elleniche* di Senofonte) di quel conflitto. In particolare, l'Autore teorizza ampiamente (pp. 121-131) la “strategia” impostata da Pericle all'inizio della guerra – quella, cioè, della resistenza all'interno delle mura accompagnata da continue incursioni della flotta lungo le coste nemiche – in termini di continuità con la condotta di Atene nelle successive fasi del conflitto. L'idea di una “strategy of Pericles and his successors” (corsivo aggiunto)<sup>23</sup>, tuttavia, non sembra reggere del tutto quando al suo interno vengono fatte confluire anche azioni ‘devianti’ quali le spedizioni in Sicilia, o l'andamento assunto dalla strategia navale ateniese durante la fase ‘ionica’. Per converso, Nash individua anche una “Spartan strategy”, che sarebbe a suo dire stata (per)seguita dalla flotta peloponnesiaca negli anni 413-404. Sebbene la sua disamina occupi il sottocapitolo più lungo dell'intero volume (pp. 146-159), si avverte qui lo scarso peso assegnato dall'Autore – almeno, per come è presentata l'argomentazione – al ruolo dei satrapi persiani dell'Asia Minore (Tissaferne e Farnabazo), e del denaro del Gran Re, nel supporto alle operazioni navali di Sparta. Di quest'ultima, come di Atene, viene detto più volte come negli ultimi anni della guerra si fossero trovate in diverse occasioni “sul filo del rasoio”, o “a una sola sconfitta in più dalla disfatta”.

21 Per un'analisi puntuale, e in lingua italiana, del percorso storico, politico e militare che condusse alla creazione della Lega Delio-attica e delle sue azioni (prevalentemente navali) durante la *pentekontaetia*, si rimanda ad esempio a Silvio CATALDI, «Sulle origini e lo sviluppo della Lega Delia (478-461 a.C.)», in L. Aigner Foresti et al. (a c. di), *Federazioni e federalismo nell'Europa antica. Bergamo, 21-25 settembre 1992 (Alle radici della casa comune europea*, vol. I), Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1994, 117-159.

22 Nel suo noto saggio *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide*, del 1967, che Nash cita testualmente più volte in nota, in una sua recente traduzione inglese.

23 Di fatto, l'intera analisi delle “strategie” navali adottate dai due blocchi contrapposti durante la Guerra del Peloponneso (con un focus direzionato, però, soprattutto su Atene) viene ripresa dall'Autore – come egli stesso ammette - a partire da un suo precedente studio: JOHN NASH, «Sea Power in the Peloponnesian War», *Naval War College Review*, 71, 1 (2018), 119-139.

ta totale”, ma sembrerebbe quasi esclusivamente (così come nelle loro riprese) in virtù di fattori interni, e poco altro. Una figura fondamentale come quella di Ciro il Giovane viene, per esempio, introdotta *ex abrupto* nella narrazione, menzionando una sola volta “Cyrus” in rapporto a Lisandro (a p. 157), e senza che se ne riscontrino altre occorrenze nel resto del capitolo.

Il capitolo 9 (pp. 161-180) e il capitolo 10 (pp. 181-201) condividono la medesima tendenza: quella cioè, da parte dell’Autore, a operare panoramiche più rapide dei diversi contesti, in un’epoca in cui notoriamente le varie egemonie navali (o meglio, i loro tentativi) si succedettero senza soluzione di continuità, fino al tracollo del sistema delle *thalassokratiai* delle singole *poleis*. In merito alla prima metà circa del IV secolo, Nash suddivide così l’argomentazione in una prospettiva spartana (una nuova “Spartan strategy”, ancor più votata all’uso delle flotte e al predominio navale, tra il 404 e il decennio 370), una ‘occidentale’ (operando un affondo sul potere marittimo di Siracusa, di fatto non accompagnato però da analoghi approfondimenti nei contesti precedenti), e infine di Atene (la Seconda Lega navale). Del metodo selezionato per indagare queste cronologie e il periodo immediatamente successivo già si è detto, ma in apertura di capitolo non può tacersi una lacuna di un certo spessore. Difatti, gli intricati equilibri navali dell’Egeo, ma in generale dell’intero Mediterraneo orientale durante i primi due decenni del secolo appaiono fortemente semplificati nella trattazione. Tale semplificazione, al netto delle esigenze autoriali ed editoriali, può rendere però difficile seguire le argomentazioni e la stessa sequenza degli eventi, specie per il lettore non specialista della storia navale greca, o anche solo di quella fase cronologica. Il ruolo cruciale di Conone nelle relazioni diplomatiche e militari tra Atene, Sparta, la Persia e l’intero Levante è ridotto a una veloce rassegna dei resoconti sulla battaglia di Cnido, considerandoli peraltro secondo una prospettiva meramente ellenocentrica, la quale non dà giustizia allo spessore del grande ammiraglio<sup>24</sup>. Lo stesso vale per un contesto fondamentale per comprendere la portata delle massime azioni navali di quegli anni: Cipro, Evagora, gli interventi ateniesi a suo

---

24 Sulla posizione di Conone in seno alla flotta allestita con materiali ed equipaggi fenici e ciprioti dal Gran Re, e sui rapporti di gerarchia con Farnabazo prima, durante e dopo la battaglia di Cnido, un’ottima disamina è ad esempio quella di Christian BOUCHET, «Conon, navarque perse à Cnide en 394?», *Rivista di cultura classica e Medioevale*, 49, 2 (2007), 231-247. Come prevedibile, né questo né altri riferimenti bibliografici specificamente dedicati a Conone sono presenti nella bibliografia raccolta.

sostegno, e la risposta armata (navale) dei Persiani alla sua resistenza non hanno spazio alcuno in queste pagine. Le menzioni di personaggi come Cabria, Timoteo e Carete, in quelle successive, seguono la medesima impostazione.

Infine, la seconda parte del IV secolo è anch'essa oggetto di trattazioni separate – ciò che, se da un lato contribuisce a ridurre la potenziale confusione nel lettore, rischia di far perdere il senso della contemporaneità e correlazione di molti degli eventi richiamati. Così, un sottocapitolo è dedicato al tentativo di egemonia navale tebana degli anni 360 (ben riuscito ed argomentato, va sottolineato<sup>25</sup>); un altro alla narrazione delle politiche marittime ateniesi nel Nord Egeo e intorno agli Stretti<sup>26</sup>; gli ultimi due, invece, alla narrazione in prima istanza ‘demostenica’ (lo si è già visto più sopra) del conflitto di Atene con Filippo II e delle sue motivazioni economiche. Nonostante già nell'Introduzione l'autore affermi come non sia sua intenzione trattare delle forze navali di Alessandro, questo silenzio si fa più assordante dal momento che, invece, è fatto cenno, nelle ultimissime pagine, alle operazioni navali della Guerra Lamiaca.

Chiudono il tutto l'ultimo capitolo (11, pp. 202-221) dedicato alle realtà “non egemoniche” dotate di *sea power* (vd. sopra), una brevissima conclusione riassuntiva, e le due appendici. Della prima, già si è detto; la seconda contiene un elenco delle operazioni navali avvenute nel mondo greco nel periodo ricoperto dallo studio (dunque, tra la metà del VI secolo e il 322) che viene definito “Database of maritime operations” (pp. 231-250). Pur tenendo conto delle mancanze e delle scelte autoriali operate nel corso della trattazione principale, questa raccolta rappresenta davvero un'acquisizione preziosa per lo studioso e per lo specialista. Ogni voce riporta la data dell'evento, il luogo, una descrizione schematica degli avvenimenti, e i riferimenti nelle fonti (che, coerentemente con l'impostazione dello studio, sono tratte però esclusivamente dai grandi nomi della storiografia). Inoltre, l'elenco è suddiviso in tre parti, ciascuna comprendente le “military”, “diplomatic” e “constabulary operations”. Tutto questo risulta, com'è compren-

---

25 Si veda, comunque, il dettagliato contributo di Roy VAN WIJK, «Contested Hegemonies: Thebes, Athens and Persia in the Aegean of the 360s», in R. Strootmann, F. Van Den Eijnde, R. Van Wijk (eds.), *Empires of the Sea. Maritime Power Networks in World History*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2020, 81-112.

26 Sui conflitti combattuti da Atene per il possesso di Anfipoli e del Chersoneso nel periodo compreso tra il 371 e il 360, l'opera di riferimento rimane tuttora Julia HESKEL, *The North Aegean Wars, 371 – 360 B.C.* (*Historia Einzelschriften* 102), Steiner, Stuttgart 1997.

sibile, assai utile a scopi di consultazione e di ricerca, soprattutto – per esempio – per quanto concerne gli intricati eventi della narrazione tucididea della fase centrale della Guerra del Peloponneso.

Nel complesso, si ritiene opportuno operare un giudizio sulle diverse parti che compongono questo volume, piuttosto che definirlo univocamente. Ognuna, come visto, possiede i suoi punti di forza e di debolezza, e il *fil rouge* che nei piani dell'Autore le connette non sempre emerge con chiarezza. Il tenore dell'argomentazione e il pubblico a cui il lavoro è indirizzato non sempre risultano del tutto chiari: in effetti, a passaggi dotati di maggiore specificità, e in cui molte conoscenze o riferimenti vengono dati per scontati, se ne affiancano altri in cui la spiegazione pare molto più distesa, e ci si sofferma anche su definizioni o distinzioni ovvie (specificando in nota, ad esempio, che il Demostene *strategos* della flotta nel Golfo di Corinto del 429 non è lo stesso Demostene oratore del IV secolo). Una simile oscillazione è quella che si riscontra anche nella bibliografia – molto ampia e ben selezionata in fondo al volume, ma che non sembra comparire al completo nelle note a piè di pagina -, e nell'indice – ove certi nomi o luoghi compaiono (anche quelli relativi ai riferimenti al Novecento, sicuramente meno utili per il lettore), mentre altri, anche piuttosto importanti, no. Per quanto concerne la forma, si debbono segnalare non pochi errori di stampa e/o di scrittura, ciò che risulta tuttavia comprensibile considerando l'estensione del libro, nonché le differenze tra i diversi capitoli – recanti sezioni più o meno approfondite, e dunque anche più o meno raffinate nello scritto.

Ad ogni modo, con questo libro Nash inaugura una letteratura monografica che mira esplicitamente alla coniugazione delle dottrine e delle scienze strategiche di ambito navale alla storia antica, in questo caso, quella delle operazioni navali presso i Greci. Soprattutto – dal punto di vista di un antichista, perlomeno -, esso offre una trattazione complessiva (ma non completa, appunto) del fenomeno navale in quella porzione del Mediterraneo antico, solitamente lasciata ad appendice di lavori più ampi. L'auspicio, adesso, è di proseguire a colmare le lacune che rimangono, seguendo una bussola non soltanto greca, ma davvero *mediterranea*.

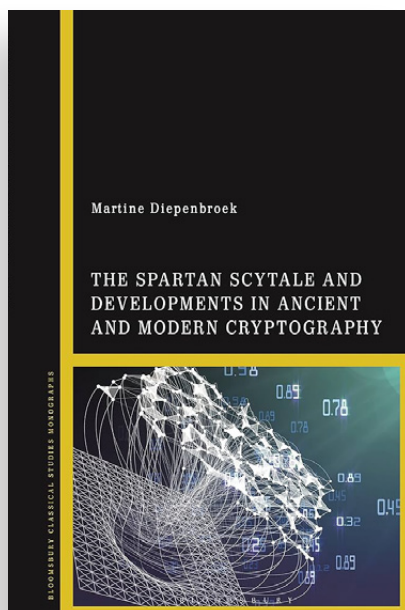
VITTORIO CISNETTI

vittorio.cisnetti2@unibo.it

MARTINE DIEPENBROEK

*The Spartan Scytale*  
*and Developments in Ancient and Modern Cryptography*

Bloomsbury Academic, London, New York, Dublin, 2024



**L'**Autrice, una studiosa olandese, ha pubblicato negli ultimi anni numerosi saggi, compresa la sua tesi di dottorato presso l'Università di Bristol, riguardanti la scitale o scitale (greco σκυτάλη) impiegata nell'antica Sparta per trasmettere dispacci cifrati. Questo libro può considerarsi un compendio delle precedenti pubblicazioni.

La scitale crittografica è costituita da un bastone intorno al quale si avvolge a spirale un nastro di papiro, di pergamena o di pelle, scrivendo poi il messaggio da trasmettere su più righe, con il bastone tenuto in posizione orizzontale. Il nastro staccato dal bastone contiene il messaggio cifrato, poiché per esempio, nel caso

del messaggio in chiaro contenuto in due sole righe, alla prima lettera del testo in chiaro segue sul nastro la lettera del rigo inferiore e così via per le lettere successive. Il destinatario della striscia deve disporre di un bastone con diametro uguale a quello del mittente, nel caso in cui siano cilindrici, intorno a cui riavvolgere la striscia per poter leggere, riga per riga, il messaggio in chiaro. Una maggiore segretezza potrebbe ottenersi scrivendo le lettere sui bordi tra una striscia e l'altra. Questo metodo è ritenuto dai più noti autori di storia della Crittologia ed è comunemente riconosciuto come il primo esempio di "cifatura a trasposizione" in cui le lettere o i numeri di un messaggio in chiaro vengono spostate secondo regole e secondo chiave concordate tra mittente e destinatario. Nel caso della scitala la forma e la dimensione dei due bastoni rappresentano la chiave.

La cifatura con scitala si trova descritta nelle Vite di Plutarco (Vite di Lisandro di Artaserse e di Agesilao) del II secolo d.C. e poi anche nelle Notti Attiche di Aurelio Gellio che fanno riferimento a fatti accaduti circa 700 anni prima, cioè tra la fine del V e l'inizio del IV secolo d.C. Più precisamente allo scambio di messaggi tra gli Efori spartani e i loro Generali operanti sul campo, dall'inizio della Guerra del Peloponneso (431 a.C.). Tra le fonti anteriori a Plutarco, l'Autrice cita Tuciddide in relazione alla "scitala" inviata dagli Efori a Pausania dopo la conquista di Bisanzio (471 a.C.) per invitarlo a tornare immediatamente a Sparta ove era accusato di tradimento, senza però specificare se il messaggio fosse cifrato. Altri autori della Grecia antica, come il commediografo Aristofane e il Poeta Pindaro menzionano la scitala intesa come messaggio, anche se mancano chiari riferimenti alla cifatura.

L'Autrice considera inoltre l'impiego della scitala come coerente con l'evoluzione della natura delle guerre combattute dai Greci e soprattutto dagli Spartani, divenute sempre più vaste e complesse nel corso dell'evoluzione dal mondo arcaico a quello classico, richiedendo quindi l'invio di dispacci a grandi distanze. Parallelamente, l'impiego della scitala sarebbe cambiato da semplice mezzo di riconoscimento personale al sistema di cifatura descritto da Plutarco. D'altra parte, scitala significa "bastone", termine polisemico che può indicare, come si è accennato, anche il distintivo dei messaggeri e l'antico equivalente greco della "piastrina" di identificazione dei caduti in battaglia (per gli opliti si trattava infatti di un bastoncino con inciso il proprio nome). Abbondano altre accezioni del termine: da serpente a fallo.

Anche per la confusione che ne deriva, alcuni studiosi moderni hanno avanzato dubbi sul racconto di Plutarco, cioè sull'effettivo impiego del metodo di cifratura nella Grecia del V e del IV secolo a.C. Secondo diverse ipotesi, il bastone avrebbe potuto contenere il messaggio in chiaro sovrascritto o nascosto all'interno. In quest'ultimo caso si tratterebbe di un esempio di steganografia (comunicazioni celate come quelle con inchiostri simpatici), largamente impiegata dai popoli antichi compresi i Greci e i Romani. C'è inoltre chi attribuisce l'invenzione della scytala crittografica allo stesso Plutarco o addirittura ad Archimede, senza che vi sia alcuna prova in tal senso. I dubbi o la negazione dell'impiego della scytala crittografica nel V e nel IV secolo a. C., sarebbero avvalorati dal racconto di Enea il Tattico nel libro dedicato ai metodi per la resistenza negli assedi. Questo Autore, vissuto probabilmente nel IV secolo a.C., non cita la scytala, persino nel capitolo dedicato ai sistemi per comunicare al di là delle mura delle città assediate.

Diepenbroek giustifica invece tale mancanza, sostenendo che Enea il Tattico, interessato più ai sistemi di steganografia che a quelli di crittografia, avrebbe trattato esclusivamente le comunicazioni a breve distanza, mentre il sistema crittografico della scytala è idoneo a inviare messaggi a distanze maggiori, argomentazione questa non del tutto condivisibile. L'Autrice contesta inoltre l'argomento della pretesa rozzezza degli Spartani del V secolo a. C. sostenuta dagli Ateniesi che li definivano illetterati e sostiene invece la capacità almeno delle classi più elevate di saper scrivere e interpretare brevi messaggi come quelli delle scytale. Comunque, anche nel caso in cui la scytala crittografica sia stata inventata nel II secolo a.C., non si può non riconoscere, d'accordo con l'Autrice, il suo valore crittografico come primo metodo noto di cifratura a trasposizione.

Un capitolo del libro è dedicato alla descrizione dei sistemi di comunicazioni nascoste o cifrate della



Una ipotetica ricostruzione della scytala (Wikimedia Commons)

Roma antica, ponendo in evidenza la tendenza dei Romani a impiegare la Steganografia, senza quindi aver mai usata la scitala. Si descrive poi l'alfabeto di Cesare, uno dei primi esempi di "cifatura a sostituzione" monoalfabetica, in cui ogni lettera dell'alfabeto nel messaggio in chiaro viene sostituita da una lettera di un altro alfabeto, secondo una regola predefinita. Svetonio racconta come il Condottiero romano usasse nei suoi dispacci sostituire le lettere dell'alfabeto con quelle dello stesso alfabeto spostate di tre posizioni. Ovviamente sarebbe stato possibile variare la chiave di cifatura, pari in questo caso a 3, ma non sembra che Cesare l'abbia mai cambiata. L'Autrice si rammarica per la grande popolarità dell'alfabeto di Cesare tra gli storici della crittografia, a differenza di quanto accade per la scitala che sarebbe negletta o considerata poco più di un giuochino, mentre in effetti offrirebbe una maggiore segretezza rispetto a una lettera cifrata con un semplice alfabeto a sostituzione.

Nel descrivere i metodi crittografici ideati nel Rinascimento, Diepenbroek cerca di dimostrare la loro analogia con la scitala. Come è noto, sia il disco di Leon Battista Alberti, sia la *tabula recta* di Tritemio, come la tabella di Giovan Battista Bellaso, sono esempi di sostituzione polialfabetica di cui il primo, in assoluto, è il metodo ideato dall'Alberti. Le similitudini con la scitala ricercate dall'Autrice appaiono quanto meno forzate e non possono che limitarsi a caratteristiche comuni a tutti i metodi di cifatura privata, come il possesso della chiave e dello strumento cifrante/decifrante - per esempio un uguale disco ovvero un uguale bastone nel caso della scitala - da parte dei due corrispondenti.

Uno sforzo analogo è erogato per dimostrare l'analogia con i sistemi crittografici ideati dal 1800 in poi, anche se la gran parte di quelli presi in considerazione sono del tipo a sostituzione polialfabetica. Particolare attenzione è rivolta ai sistemi meccanici a dischi, descrivendo in dettaglio il funzionamento del primo esempio costituito dal "cilindro di Jefferson" ideato alla fine del XVIII secolo e reiventato in diverse versioni fino alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale. La forma cilindrica del dispositivo e la scrittura di un alfabeto sul bordo di ciascuno dei dischetti forati e montati in sequenza predefinita su un asse centrale, rendono probabilmente il cilindro di Jefferson in qualche modo assimilabile alla scitala. Tuttavia, anche i cilindri a dischi sono basati sulla sostituzione del messaggio in chiaro, composto dal mittente in sequenza, lettera per lettera, su ciascun disco, mentre il messaggio cifrato viene letto su un'altra riga del cilindro. Il ricevente deve comporre sul suo dispositivo le lettere del cifrato in sequenza e ricercare sulle altre righe un

insieme di lettere che abbia un senso compiuto. Anche la maggior parte degli altri esempi di cifrari menzionati per le analogie con la scitale, come il “cifrario di Vigenère” o le versioni moderne del “quadrato di Polibio” non sono a trasposizione. Fa eccezione il cifrario ADFGVX usato dall’Esercito tedesco verso la fine della Grande Guerra, in cui ad una prima cifratura effettuata con un quadrato di Polibio in cui le suddette lettere vengono disposte sulla prima riga e sulla prima colonna, segue una trasposizione per colonne con chiave. L’Autrice spiega, tra l’altro, il metodo descritto dal Bauer per decrittare i messaggi con cifre a trasposizione, forse per rappresentare le difficoltà di questa operazione. Insomma, il paragone tra la scitale e altri metodi crittografici appare, a giudizio di chi scrive, quanto meno inessenziale.

Per chiarire questo giudizio, si ricorda che il primo cifrario noto - detto cifrario di Atbash - risale al Libro del profeta Geremia, attivo nel VII secolo a. C., e adopera il metodo di sostituzione in cui la prima lettera dell’alfabeto ebraico viene sostituita con l’ultima, la seconda con la penultima e così via. La sostituzione monoalfabetica reinventata da Cesare ha dominato, in varie forme, le comunicazioni cifrate per più di un millennio, anche dopo l’invenzione del metodo delle frequenze da parte dei crittoanalisti arabi del X secolo d.C. Poi, l’ideazione della sostituzione polialfabetica nel Rinascimento ha esteso fino a tempi recenti la validità del metodo sostitutivo. Questo è il semplice motivo della “popolarità” goduta dalla cifratura a sostituzione tra gli storici della crittografia. Invece, dopo la scitale, non sembra che altri cifrari a trasposizione siano stati impiegati diffusamente, fino alla fine del XVIII secolo, quando sono comparse le trasposizioni per colonne, semplici, doppie, con chiave, ecc. e le prime griglie quadrate a rotazione. Questi metodi hanno trovato largo impiego sui campi di battaglia della Grande Guerra e in parte anche della Seconda Guerra Mondiale. Le macchine cifranti/decifranti elettromeccaniche, come Enigma, fondate su sostituzioni polialfabetiche multiple, hanno progressivamente sostituito i metodi di cifratura con carta e matita, compresi quelli a trasposizione, a partire dal decennio 1920 -30 fino all’avvento dei computer. Le notevoli capacità di memoria di questi ultimi consentono oggi di gestire notevoli quantità di dati e di implementare metodi complessi di cifratura comprendenti sostituzioni e trasposizioni multiple di sequenze di dati, come avviene nel Advanced Encryption Standard (AES), giustamente citato dall’Autrice.

Edited by  
Andriana Domouzi & Silvio Bär

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
IN GREEK AND ROMAN EPIC

BLOOMSBURY CLASSICAL STUDIES MONOGRAPHS

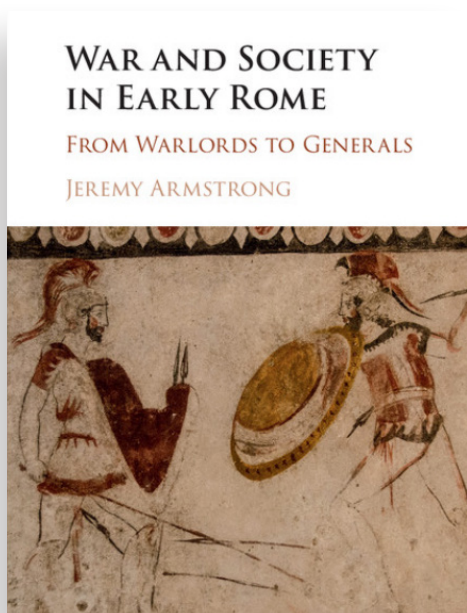


BLOOMSBURY

JEREMY ARMSTRONG

*War and Society in Early Rome:  
From Warlords to Generals*

Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. xiv, 317



**W**ar and Society in Early Rome è un testo importante, di eccezionale valore e interesse per chiunque studi seriamente la Roma arcaica e che sarà sicuramente oggetto di analisi e dibattito nei prossimi anni. Iniziare dalle conclusioni è strano, ma condividere l'opinione diffusa su questo lavoro era opportuna per introdurre adeguatamente la recensione di un libro che ritengo dirompente.

Che la guerra sia stata alla base della ricchezza, dell'identità aristocratica e del potere politico dei primi romani, è indubbio. È altrettanto vero che la guerra nel mondo arcaico romano, e non solo, è stata oggetto di un ampio dibattito storiogra-

fico, anche in relazione allo sviluppo del militarismo e della sua influenza sulla nascente società romana<sup>1</sup>. Che non si potesse e dovesse analizzare l'una senza l'altra e che fosse opportuno esaminare l'intero "organismo" e le sue interazioni con altre realtà sociali (amiche e nemiche), è stato evidente dalla prima storiografia sulla Roma arcaica.

Certamente le teorie gentilizie non sono una novità e l'idea che i signori della guerra siano una componente della società romana arcaica è ormai diventato parte del paradigma dominante. Tuttavia, fino a tempi relativamente recenti, gli storici dell'antica Roma si sono sempre preoccupati di trovare un modello ordinato dell'ascesa all'impero, trovando sempre come ostacolo principale l'incongruenza tra differenti tradizioni e fonti, scritte e archeologiche. Purtroppo, questo dibattito, spesso acceso, non è stato in grado di proporre una chiave di lettura che mettesse in relazione le diverse testimonianze e arrivasse ad una grandezza storiografica in grado di comprendere e raccontare con chiarezza come e perché la guerra e la società romana, due facce della stessa medaglia, si svilupparono e come si sono influenzate.

Armstrong va oltre il consenso e riesce a proporre un nuovo approccio all'evoluzione del modo di fare la guerra all'interno del mondo romano arcaico e a ipotizzare, con un solido sviluppo argomentativo, che uno stato e una società romana unificati non emergono fino al V/IV secolo a.C. Armstrong<sup>2</sup>, partendo da una revisione delle fonti letterarie classiche e dalla crescente disponibilità di dati archeologici, ci presenta "un nuovo paradigma" per comprendere sia la società che la "guerra romana antica" e della relazione di questa con la formazione delle varie istituzioni sociali, politiche, religiose ed economiche della città.

La "guerra" nel titolo non è il fenomeno unitario che conosciamo degli eserciti permanenti dei secoli dell'espansione romana, ma piuttosto un "ambiente" culturale e materiale fatto di incursioni e saccheggi. I molteplici attori sociali (gentes, comunità o individui) organizzati in gruppi o bande avevano come obiettivo i beni

1 Tema trattato a partire dagli anni '70 con opere già classiche come quella di E. D. Rawson: "The literary sources for the pre-Marian army", *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 39 (1971), pp. 13-311; anche di K. A. Raafaub: "Born to be wolves? Origins of Roman imperialism", in R. W. Wallace y E. M. Harris (eds.), *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History 360-146 BC. in honor of E. Badian*, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996, pp. o più recentemente J. Rich: "Warfare and the army in Early Rome", P. Erdkam (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army*, Oxford, Blackwell, 7:23 2007,

2 Il lavoro è una versione riveduta e aggiornata della sua tesi di dottorato discussa presso l'Università di St. Andrews nel 2009, tesi che suggerisco di leggere.

mobili (bestiame, donne, oggetti di valore) che i capibanda redistribuivano tra i loro seguaci come legittimazione della leadership<sup>3</sup>. Come detto prima, la presenza di gruppi mobili che operarono nel Lazio arcaico è unanimemente accettato dalla storiografia, ma come fenomeno occasionale e circoscritto.

Quando affronta l'evoluzione dell'esercito romano, Armstrong dimostra che durante la monarchia e l'inizio della Repubblica era composta dalle bande di clan e *condottieri* (si pensi all'episodio dei Fabi al Cremera nel 477 a.C.) piuttosto che dalla proto-legione di Servio Tullio della tradizione. Queste bande, in realtà, si sono gradualmente evolute in una forza basata sulla «comunità», che a sua volta ha dato origine alla legione, probabilmente dopo il sacco gallico.

Armstrong sostiene che il Lazio arcaico (ma anche il mondo centro-italico) era composto da molti gruppi diversi di persone. Alcuni organizzati in forme di tipo gentilizio (clan) con bande mobili che combattevano per ottenere ricchezza trasportabile e altri, allo stesso tempo, che si costituivano in comunità e la difendevano, con fortificazioni e forme di milizie. Pertanto, bande di guerra mobili e comunità non itineranti, esistevano contemporaneamente.

Armstrong, questa è la novità, ci presenta l'azione (militare e politica) di questi gruppi come una caratteristica culturale e comportamentale diffusa della società romana, coerente con la tradizione e i dati archeologici, e quindi riesce a "rimappare" l'ascesa delle gentes romane arcaiche (le uniche che possiamo conoscere) come il risultato dell'interazione tra la popolazione sedentaria delle numerose comunità arcaiche, tra cui Roma, e questi gruppi mobili e di come i loro leader siano riusciti ad integrarsi nelle comunità, dove ricevevano il riconoscimento di rex o praetor dalla popolazione urbana.

Furono i fenomeni migratori (Volsci, Equi, Sabini ecc.) nel V secolo che spinsero i clan mobili a privilegiare l'acquisizione di terre e a identificarsi maggiormente con il centro urbano. Il nuovo obiettivo della guerra divenne quello di ottenere ricchezza e terra per sé stessi e per la comunità. La società romana si trasforma così da una opportunistica coalizione di signori della guerra, in un corpo civico protetto da un esercito che combatteva per obiettivi collettivi. Da questa esigenza nacque la

---

3 L'esempio migliore è il Lapis Satricanus, una pietra con iscrizione datata intorno al 500 a. C., rinvenuta nelle fondamenta di un tempio a Satricum. Si tratta di una consacrazione a Marte (mamars) da parte dei *sodales* (seguaci nel senso di "compagni di spada" o "seguaci-guerrieri" dei signori della guerra aristocratici), in questo caso un certo Poplios Valesios, forse Publio Valerio Publicola.

necessità di un esercito che potesse contare sui guerrieri delle bande e sulle risorse umane della comunità. Non fu per l'opera di illuminati riformisti che Roma arrivò gradualmente ad avere un esercito permanente, ma di pragmatici condottieri che furono in grado di "radunare" un esercito in cui erano rappresentati sia patrizi che plebei.

Il "sacco" di Roma nel 390 a.C. da parte dei Galli, fu un evento traumatico che mostrò ai Romani quanto fossero vulnerabili e militarmente inadeguati. Questo costrinse le gentes a fondersi ancora di più con la popolazione urbana per acquisire più terra e avere accesso a più manodopera ed a eserciti più grandi. Roma aveva bisogno dell'esercito per protezione e ricchezza e l'esercito aveva bisogno della comunità per manodopera e supporto materiale. I gruppi gentilizi (patrizi) e comunitari (plebei) avevano trovato nell'esercito il luogo istituzionale per fondersi realmente nella "civitas" della Repubblica classica.

L'opera è organizzata in sei capitoli che affrontano il tema in ordine cronologico, dalla data dal presunto accesso al potere di Servio Tullio e si concludono con la definitiva integrazione dei Latini nell'esercito romano. In particolare, i primi due affrontano le questioni dell'approccio metodologico e delle fonti (cap. 1) e della società e dell'economia di Roma nel VI secolo a.C. (cap. 2), mentre i restanti quattro ricostruiscono lo sviluppo della società, della politica e della guerra romana in quattro blocchi cronologici: dalla fase finale della monarchia (ca. 570-509, cap. 3), ai i primi decenni della repubblica e la nomina dei decemviri (509-452, cap. 4), fino al sacco di Roma da parte dei Galli (452-390, cap. 5) per concludersi con lo scioglimento della Lega Latina (390-338, cap. 6).

Nell'Introduzione l'A. espone il suo punto di vista come segue: "la guerra rappresenta una lente utile attraverso cui può essere osservata l'organizzazione politica di una società" (p. 5) e, allo stesso modo, evidenzia il concetto di signore della guerra come "il leader di un gruppo armato che usa il potere militare e lo sfruttamento economico per mantenere autonomia e indipendenza dallo stato e dalla società". Guerra e signori della guerra diventano i due riferimenti principali del discorso storico della Roma arcaica. Il suo obiettivo è quello di offrire "un nuovo paradigma per comprendere la guerra e la società romana arcaica, supportato da ampie tendenze comportamentali" che definisce come "la transizione da una cultura di razza gentilizia, in gran parte extramurale, che esisteva nel VII e VI secolo a.C., a un esercito basato sulla comunità e votato alla conquista del territorio, emerso alla fine del IV e III secolo a.C."

**Il capitolo 1** (The evidence) inizia con un esame critico delle fonti a disposizione dello storico per la ricostruzione della società e della guerra romana, dalle tradizioni delle diverse orali e letterarie ai vari tipi di testimonianze archeologiche. Se il trattamento delle fonti scritte è affrontato in maniera equilibrata e in linea con la storiografia contemporanea (di fatto rimangono l'unica narrazione disponibile), è di particolare interesse quando l'A. sottolinea la crescente importanza delle fonti archeologiche, come armi e armature provenienti dalle tombe, pitture murali tombali e fortificazioni.

**Nel Capitolo 2** (Rome in the sixth century) l'A. nota due sviluppi sociali durante la prima età del ferro laziale (830-750 a.C.), inteso non solo come ambiente fisico e culturale, ma come area di riferimento per l'élite romana, che sarebbe più un'élite "latina" o addirittura "centro-italica". Da un lato ci sarebbero le prime società urbane (agricole ed egualitarie), organizzate attorno a famiglie allargate e dall'altro da gruppi mobili organizzati in clan gentilizi, senza legami con le nascenti realtà urbane e con una chiara componente militare. Roma, come altre realtà Laziali, sarebbe stata fortemente soggetta a questa élite mobile, che non risiedeva a Roma stessa, ma operava da insediamenti rurali più piccoli e posizionati al di fuori del controllo delle comunità urbane. Questa situazione, per l'A., è alla base della distinzione e del contrasto tra la popolazione stanziale basata sulla comunità e l'"aristocrazia protopatrizia" basata sulla parentela". Questi clan gentilizi avrebbero monopolizzato sforzo militare durante il periodo arcaico, con un sistema di reclutamento in cui avrebbero avuto posto anche i clienti e gli stranieri e che sarebbe stato diretto da un "signore della guerra" con capacità decisionale al di sopra e al di fuori dell'ambito della comunità urbana.

Queste due categorie sociali erano governate dal rex, una persona militarmente potente scelta tra l'élite gentilizia, sostenuta dal suo clan e investita dell'imperium, ovvero del potere sulla vita e sulla morte. Il rex era una figura chiave nella guerra, nella religione e nella giustizia. Così, secondo l'autore, i vari "re" di Roma sarebbero quindi esempi di potenti capi clan che, secondo la tradizione storica romana, sarebbero stati i fondatori (Romolo) e i riformatori (Tarquinio Prisco e Servio Tullio) dell'esercito regio.

**Il Capitolo 3**, (Rome's regal army c. 570-509), è dedicato ad una confutazione sfumata di questa idea e analizza l'organizzazione dell'esercito romano della fase finale della monarchia, compresa la cosiddetta "riforma serviana" e i suoi numerosi problemi, alla luce della sua ipotesi sulla società "duale" e "latina".

Secondo l'A, la struttura sociale e politica non era ancora sufficientemente sviluppata per sostenere un esercito permanente, per non parlare di un esercito di opliti. L'A. rifiuta i vecchi modelli ellenocentrici, preferendo, correttamente, l'approccio revisionista di van Weese osserva che, mentre queste truppe potevano essere equipaggiate in modo simile agli opliti, difficilmente avrebbero potuto combattere in una falange, tenendo conto della sua tradizionale struttura gentilizia. Di fatto una lettura più attenta delle fonti letterarie indirette e, soprattutto, attraverso l'archeologia, mostra che un sistema politico-militare ferreo e organizzato per categorie e unità militari omogenee (Servio Tullio) non esistesse.

L'A., in linea con i lavori di Cornell o Rawlings, mette in relazione l'organizzazione militare di Roma e degli altri insediamenti laziali (Tuscolo o Satricum), con la mobilità e il militarismo delle élite gentilizie rurali, in un contesto dominato dai "clan guerrieri", composti da condottieri o signori della guerra, che vagavano per la regione. insieme alle loro schiere di clienti e seguaci. L'obiettivo restava quello di fare bottino e accumulare "ricchezza portatile" in un'economia di prestigio redistributiva. Oltre a bovini, donne e beni di valore, il bottino poteva consistere anche di prigionieri (schiavi?) e dalle fonti sappiamo che tale bottino poteva essere investito nella costruzione di templi, come fece Tarquinio il Superbo a Roma. Compiere razzie era un modo semplice e diffuso di guerreggiare, ma iniziava a manifestarsi anche il crescente interesse nell'espandere e poi difendere il territorio.

Il **capitolo 4**, (Fighting for land 509-452), affronta l'espansione e la difesa per la terra. L'A. sostiene che il modo arcaico di fare la guerra continuò oltre il 509 a.C., quando in questo periodo, le migrazioni, i cambiamenti nell'agricoltura, la contrazione del commercio, la crescita e il rafforzamento istituzionale di altri centri urbani, resero meno accessibili le forme mobili di ricchezza da cui dipendeva l'aristocrazia dei signori della guerra. I singoli "clan" non erano più in grado di operare in totale autonomia<sup>4</sup> e scelsero di unirsi in una sorta di coalizione di capi clan (senato) per nominare annualmente, in sostituzione del singolo rex (capo clan) a vita, praetores, che continuarono a ricevere l'autorità di governare dal popolo sotto forma di imperium.

I membri della popolazione urbana, liberi dal vincolo dell'affiliazione ad un clan gentilizio per fare bottino, cominciarono ad unirsi agli eserciti dei praetores

---

4 L'approfondimento dell'A. sul lapis Satricanus e le imprese militari della gens Fabia confermano questa affermazione.

in numero sempre maggiore, dando origine a forze militari miste, composte da gruppi d'élite (patrizi), dai loro seguaci (populus) e dalla comunità (plebe), che conducevano campagne militari che andavano a beneficio della comunità nel suo complesso. Fu durante questo periodo che le basi della guerra si sarebbero ampliate e l'attenzione si spostò sul latifondo, rendendo la terra un bene importante e dando progressivamente vita ad una élite terriera che non solo sfrutta, ma controlla anche l'ambiente rurale. Come esempi l'A. ricorda la confisca da parte di Roma del territorio della città laziale di Pomezia nel 495 a.C. e lo sviluppo dell'*ager romanus antiquus* immediatamente attorno a Roma.

Nel **capitolo 5**, (The incorporation of the plebs 451-390), Amstrong evidenzia il ruolo chiave dell'esercito nel favorire il processo di integrazione tra la popolazione urbana ("plebea") e quella rurale ("patrizia") in un unico sistema politico. Questo processo dinamico rese possibili la creazione di eserciti più grandi e potenti, ma al tempo stesso aumentò la tensione tra patrizi e plebei, che trovarono soluzione in una serie di cambiamenti istituzionali e militari. Esempi chiave per comprendere questa evoluzione sono, i cosiddetti tribuni militari con potere consolare, la censura, l'introduzione della paga militare e la colonizzazione delle terre conquistate.

Per l'A. l'insieme delle trasformazioni sociali e giuridiche documentate (le XII Tavole, le *leges Valeriae-Horatiae*, lo stipendio dei soldati, ecc.), suggeriscono il superamento della guerra tradizionale incentrata sui clan gentilizi aristocratici e il passaggio definitivo alla guerra sempre più vista come un'estensione dello Stato. A metà del V secolo a.C. incontriamo le tribù (nel senso di circoscrizioni urbane e rurali) la censura, che sono "un modo per la comunità di Roma di quantificare, identificare e presumibilmente controllare le varie gentes latine che si erano stabilite a Roma e nei dintorni".

Il risultato finale fu il passaggio da una guerra di clan su piccola scala privata a eserciti su larga scala basati sulla comunità, che perseguiva obiettivi comuni, più legati all'espansione e all'acquisizione di nuove terre, favorì la colonizzazione continua del territorio che, progressivamente, sostituisce il modello arcaico di occupazioni a breve termine. come la confisca delle terre sia diventata da allora in poi una nuova e vincente forma di bottino di guerra. Tuttavia, abbiamo ancora testimonianze fino agli inizi del IV secolo di azioni militari su piccola scala, con razzie guidate dai signori della guerra. Come per i secoli precedenti, continuità e cambiamento coesistono.

L'analisi culmina nel **capitolo 6**, dedicato agli effetti storici del sacco gallico

del 390. L'autore vede infatti nella resilienza romana – con la costruzione di mura in grado di resistere ad un assedio prolungato, il potenziamento del manpower con la prima estensione della cittadinanza senza diritto di voto e la riforma militare (comando magistratuale, ordinamento manipolare) – come una vera e propria “rifondazione” della *civitas* basata sul patto sociale patrizio-plebeo che sostanzia “la società repubblicana romana e l'esercito repubblicano romano come li intendiamo oggi”. Gli antichi Warlord latini e le loro schiere di seguaci vengono così sostituiti da generali eletti e da eserciti regolari di cittadini, in grado in grado di integrare i contingenti della Lega latina in un esercito comune non solo più efficiente ma anche e soprattutto sotto indiscusso comando romano.

In conclusione, Armstrong propone un vero e proprio cambio di paradigma nella storiografia militare della Roma arcaica. Indubbiamente molte inferenze di carattere sociale, come l'origine guerriera, più che economica, del patriziato e della clientela, investono questioni colossali, non affrontabili da una prospettiva esclusivamente storico-militare, e rischiano di incrociare inavvertitamente le *vexatae quaestiones* della “democrazia guerriera” (Marx) e della “rivoluzione oplitica” (Weber / Aristotele). Tuttavia, se locuzioni come *Warlords* e *Soldatenkaiser* sono ormai ammesse nel gergo storiografico contemporaneo in riferimento alle guerre civili e all'età severiana, la tesi di un'evoluzione del comando militare dal *ductus* all'*imperium*, dal Warlordism alla Generalship, e della potenza bellica dal *comitatus* all'*exercitus* è indubbiamente suggestiva e non priva di echi nella storiografia più recente<sup>5</sup>.

Ma in questa ricerca sul proto-esercito della Roma arcaica si coglie anche l'intento di rintracciare l'origine di costanti dello stile di guerra romano, come il carattere politico del comando e della disciplina, integrando e valorizzando armamenti e modi di combattere differenti. Non però attraverso il mercenariato, secondo il modello degli eserciti ellenistici, ma attraverso la capacità di mobilitare il manpower sia mediante l'estensione della cittadinanza e sia mediante stabili rapporti di alleanza che porteranno all'esercito romano-italico stabilito alla vigilia della seconda guerra punica e superato dalla guerra sociale.

GIANLUCA NOTARI

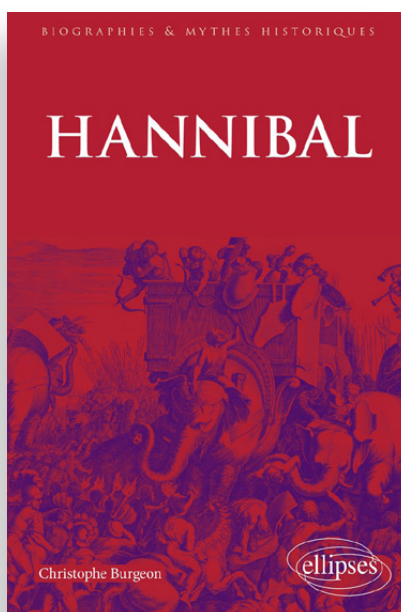
---

5 Richard Evans / Shaun Tougher (eds.), *Generalship in Ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2022.

CHRISTOPHE BURGEON

## *Hannibal. L'ennemi de Rome*

Paris, Ellipses, 2023



**D**ans cet ouvrage, Christophe Burgeon, spécialiste d'histoire militaire romaine, nous offre la biographie d'un des personnages les plus marquants de l'histoire de l'*Urbs*. La biographie s'organise en trois parties principales, suivant une organisation très classique, avec une introduction qui ambitionne d'éclairer les sources utilisées afin de pouvoir montrer au lecteur tout le vaste panorama textuel consulté lors de l'étude de la vie d'Hannibal.

Étant donné que la quasi-totalité des renseignements sur la vie du général carthaginois sont donnés par des sources latines ou grecques, les trois parties présentent une évidente disproportion dans leur contenu. La première : « Hannibal

avant la deuxième guerre punique » cherche à développer le contexte historique qui précède le deuxième affrontement entre Carthage et Rome, tout en retraçant les éléments biographiques d'Hannibal et de sa carrière militaire quand cela est possible. Les événements étudiés par Christophe Burgeon commencent donc en 241 av. J.-C., juste après la fin de la première guerre punique. Défaite, Carthage doit revoir sa politique extérieure et chercher de nouveaux soutiens pour augmenter ses revenus et son prestige. Hamilcar Barca, père d'Hannibal, s'étant illustré lors du premier affrontement contre Rome, propose de se tourner vers la péninsule ibérique dont la richesse du sol semble une promesse d'enrichissement. C'est ainsi qu'en 237 av. J.-C. les Puniques se lancent dans l'entreprise espagnole. Hasdrubal est accompagné par son fils Hannibal, qui, lors de cette campagne, a la possibilité d'apprendre le métier du soldat. Né vers 247 av. J.-C., Hannibal reçoit une solide éducation, comme tout jeune noble carthaginois. Malgré tout, son enfance reste très mal connue des historiens vu le manque criant de sources à ce sujet. Après la mort de son père et de son oncle, autour de l'an 220 av. J.-C., Hannibal prend le commandement de l'armée carthaginoise en Espagne.

Après une première digression historique sur l'expansion carthaginoise dans la péninsule ibérique, le lecteur peut relier les premières expériences militaires d'Hannibal à la guerre qui a fait de lui le premier ennemi de Rome. Dans la deuxième partie de l'ouvrage : « La deuxième guerre punique », Christophe Burgeon étudie d'une manière tout à fait pertinente l'affrontement entre Carthage et Rome. De plus, l'auteur ne se limite pas à rapporter le simple récit des sources comme Polybe et Tite-Live, mais il accomplit un vrai travail d'historien, en croisant plusieurs éléments historiques et en cherchant à résoudre des questions moins évidentes de l'histoire de la deuxième guerre punique. Cette partie s'ouvre naturellement sur l'exposé des causes de la guerre et du revanchisme qui règne à Carthage après la défaite de 241 av. J.-C., ce dernier se concrétisant avec le siège de Sagonte, ville alliée de Rome. Les Carthaginois auraient, selon les Romains, lors de la prise de Sagonte, violé le traité de l'Èbre conclu en 226 av. J.-C. ; ce traité, cependant, ne prévoyait aucune clause concernant la ville espagnole, qui, en se trouvant plus au Sud de l'Èbre, demeurait dans le territoire sous influence punique. En outre, au dire de Polybe, le Sénat carthaginois aurait affirmé que cet accord avait été stipulé entre Rome et Hasdrubal (frère d'Hamilcar et oncle d'Hannibal, à ne pas confondre avec le frère d'Hannibal qui porte le même nom), laissant comprendre que la mort d'Hasdrubal avait rendu ce traité caduc. De toute

façon, la prise de la ville représente le *casus belli*, empêchant Rome de se soustraire du combat. Après avoir mis en lumière les causes apparentes et, celles, plus profondes de la guerre, Christophe Burgeon fait une digression plus que pertinente sur l'organisation militaire des deux puissances, réfléchissant sur quel type de forces la République pouvait disposer et combien de soldats elle pouvait lever en cas de nécessité ; une place importante est donnée aussi aux *socii*, les alliés, qui contribuent à renforcer et à augmenter les rangs des armées romaines. Pour l'armée carthaginoise, les sources sont moins abondantes et toutes sont grecques ou romaines. Malgré cette carence, l'auteur parvient tout de même à présenter l'organisation des armées puniques en mettant en lumière l'apport significatif du mercenariat et la présence singulière des éléphants.

Après la prise de Sagonte, Hannibal décide de passer en Italie. Cette décision, étudiée par l'auteur dans une sous-partie, naît de l'idée du général carthaginois d'enlever à Rome la possibilité de combattre sur le sol espagnol et d'entraîner la défection des alliés italiens de Rome, lesquels constituaient la moitié des forces de l'*Urbs*. Cette défection aurait été possible seulement en combattant en Italie, car les *socii* n'auraient jamais abandonné les rangs romains en Espagne ou en Afrique ; d'où la nécessité de porter la guerre dans la péninsule italienne. Christophe Burgeon revient également sur le refus d'Hannibal de naviguer jusqu'à la péninsule, transport qui aurait sûrement permis un déplacement plus rapide, mais qu'on choisit d'éviter vue la supériorité navale de Rome.

Dès le départ d'Hannibal de l'Èbre jusqu'à la fin de la deuxième guerre punique, Christophe Burgeon s'intéresse à deux aspects qui sont trop souvent oubliés par les auteurs : le poids des alliés et l'importance du terrain. Pour toute la durée de la guerre, à la fois en Italie et en Espagne, Hannibal et son frère Hasdrubal se servent des populations locales pour combattre les Romains. La même chose est accomplie par l'*Urbs*, qui cherche à pérenniser les alliances existantes tout en en créant de nouvelles, comme c'est le cas en Espagne. Ainsi toute une série de renversements d'alliances, de trahisons et de châtements opérés par telle ou telle partie jalonnent les dix-huit années de la guerre. Pendant la deuxième guerre punique, le soutien des populations locales s'est révélé fondamental, voire indispensable, pour la conduite de la guerre dans la péninsule ; il permet de ravitailler les soldats en nourriture, connaître la géographie du lieu et combler ses propres rangs de nouvelles recrues. C'est ici la principale force d'Hannibal en Italie. De l'autre côté, l'étude du terrain que Christophe Burgeon accomplit est

très intéressante. Il faut dire que lors d'un affrontement entre deux armées, le sol et l'environnement ont un poids presque décisif dans le sort de la bataille. Hannibal montre aux Romains qu'il est capable de parfaitement maîtriser le terrain sur lequel il marche et sur lequel il organise ses troupes. Pendant la traversée des Alpes, il doit tracer un parcours suffisamment large et simple pour permettre à son armée, à son train de ravitaillement et surtout à ses éléphants de le parcourir ; en même temps, les embuscades menées par la cavalerie numide dénotent une maîtrise admirable de la tactique et du terrain italien.

C'est ainsi que l'auteur présente le franchissement des Pyrénées et des Alpes en 218 av. J.-C., les premières victoires puniques sur le Tessin, sur la Trébie et sur les rivages du lac Trasimène, pour arriver au triomphe de Cannes en 216 av. J.-C. Toute la campagne carthaginoise est ponctuellement entrecoupée par les réactions militaires des Romains, de leurs décisions politiques et des commandants qui s'opposent à Hannibal. Il serait impossible de résumer ici tout le récit extrêmement précis et soigné que Christophe Burgeon fait de la campagne italienne, ce dernier mettant en exergue les énormes quantités de ressources, à la fois humaines et matérielles, employées par les deux camps. Dès la victoire de Cannes, Hannibal demeure en Italie, semant plusieurs fois la panique dans les rues de Rome (*Hannibal ad portas !*). La Sicile devient elle aussi un champ de bataille, comme elle l'avait été lors de la première guerre punique, suivie rapidement par l'Espagne, où la famille des Scipions a la possibilité de montrer la combattivité de Rome face aux forces d'Hasdrubal. Dès le déclenchement des hostilités en 218 av. J.-C., la péninsule ibérique est le théâtre d'une guerre permanente où des dizaines des tribus locales prennent parti pour telle ou telle faction. En 210 av. J.-C., le débarquement de Publius Cornelius Scipio (appelé « le Jeune », le futur « Africanus ») ouvre la reconquête romaine de la péninsule dont la prise de Carthagène en 209 av. J.-C. et les deux victoires de Baecula et Ilipa, qui chassent définitivement Hasdrubal et ses contingents puniques d'Espagne à la fin de l'année 206 av. J.-C., en constituent des étapes essentielles.

Les affrontements continuent cependant dans la péninsule italienne, où en 209 av. J.-C. Quintus Fabius Maximus, appelé le « Cunctator », s'empare de la ville de Tarente, base d'approvisionnement des Carthaginois. Cette perte fragilise la présence punique mais Hannibal conserve un espoir dans le débarquement en Italie du Nord de son frère Hasdrubal, en 207 av. J.-C. Malgré la tentative de réunir ses forces avec celles de son frère, Hasdrubal est battu lors de la bataille

de Métaure, où il trouve la mort. Hannibal se retire désormais dans le Bruttium (Calabre) où il cherche à réorganiser ses forces.

Après sept ans de guerre, les Romains trouvent opportun de profiter de l'avantage dont ils disposent après la victoire en Espagne et sur le fleuve Métaure. C'est ainsi que Scipion, consul en 206/205 av. J.-C., propose au Sénat un débarquement en Afrique pour porter la guerre chez l'ennemi. Une fois la décision prise, après des grands préparatifs à l'été 204 av. J.-C., l'armée romaine débarque en Afrique du Nord. Cette dernière, commandée par Scipion et jouissant de l'alliance du roi numide Massinissa, défait une première fois l'armée punique dans la bataille des Grandes Plaines avant de vaincre définitivement les forces carthagoises à Zama en 202 av. J.-C.

Cette bataille sonne la fin de la deuxième guerre entre Rome et Carthage, ouvrant au lecteur la troisième (et dernière) partie de la biographie du général carthaginois : « Hannibal après la deuxième guerre punique ». Les événements de la vie d'Hannibal qui suivent la guerre sont mal connus comme ceux qui l'ont précédée. Le général recouvre tout d'abord la magistrature de suffète à Carthage, cherchant à redresser les finances de l'État face à l'énorme indemnité de guerre due à Rome. On ne sait s'il chercha vraiment à jeter Carthage dans une nouvelle guerre avec l'*Urbs* mais le bruit d'une alliance anti-romaine avec Antiochos III le met hors la loi en 199 av. J.-C. Il s'enfuit donc de la capitale punique et se réfugie à Tyr avant de se placer sous la protection du roi Antiochos III. Cependant, avec les conflits qui voient la Grèce devenir le théâtre des opérations militaires entre 197 et 189 av. J.-C., Hannibal se réfugie en Arménie auprès de la cour du roi Artaxias pour enfin entrer au service du roi Prusias en 186 av. J.-C. comme commandant de la flotte. C'est à l'occasion de la guerre contre Eumène II, allié des Romains, qu'Hannibal conduit la flotte dans le dernier affrontement de sa vie, qui se révèle aussi sa dernière victoire. Trahi par Prusias, Hannibal préfère s'empoisonner plutôt que de tomber dans les mains de ses ennemis. Il meurt en 183 av. J.-C., la même année que Scipion l'Africain.

Le livre de Christophe Burgeon rend compte de la vie du protagoniste de la deuxième guerre punique. Il s'avère un très bon outil pour comprendre l'affrontement entre l'*Urbs* et Carthage, allant au-delà de la simple biographie et réfléchissant sur les principaux enjeux qui ont influencé l'évolution du conflit et qui ont permis son achèvement. Cet ouvrage s'inscrit parfaitement dans le sillage

des bons livres d'histoire militaire, réalisant une étude précise et soignée de la vie d'Hannibal. Les plans de bataille que Christophe Burgeon insère dans son ouvrage sont tout à fait utiles pour comprendre les affrontements qui ont marqué la deuxième guerre punique. Pour conclure, le livre se révèle être une bonne référence en langue française sur le sujet.

GIOVANNI ZAMPROGNO

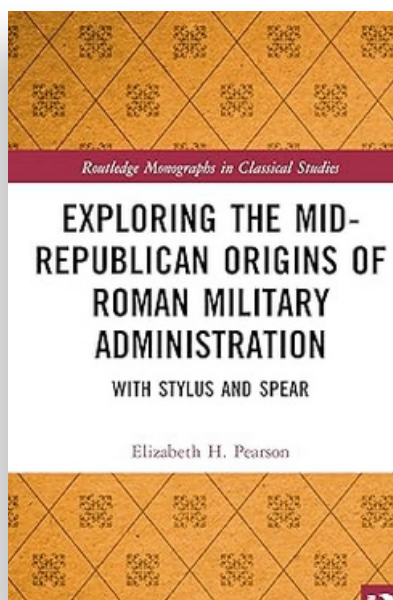


Photographie du buste de marbre d'Hannibal Barca. Le buste du général carthaginois a été découvert dans la ville italienne de Capoue en 1667. Le buste de l'époque romaine a été réalisé entre le 1<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C. et le 4<sup>ème</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.

ELIZABETH H. PEARSON

*Exploring the Mid-Republican origins  
of Roman Military Administration  
With Stylus and Spear*

London-New York, Routledge, 2021 (paperback edition 2024), pp. 217



**T**his book, already appeared in 2021, but now available in paperback as well, has a very ambitious aim. The author's objective is to unveil the way in which the Roman military administration worked during the Middle Republic. In the initial abstract, the book promises to employ several kinds of evidence besides the traditional literary sources (Livy and Polybius in particular). While this statement is perhaps somewhat over-optimistic (as the Author recognises in the Introduction) in some cases demographic and topograph-

ical models are employed to support the Author's theses. Nevertheless, the bulk of her arguments, as was inevitable, is based on the literary sources. These sources allow, according to Pearson, to understand, "despite the lack of extant documentation, a great deal [...] concerning the paperwork which enumerated Roman manpower and tracked it on campaign". In the Introduction, besides describing her aims and discussing her sources, the Author also starts to express her belief that the Roman republican military administration must have been far more complex than generally allowed for. This statement is probably correct; this belief, however, should not lead us to assume that specific documents or administrative procedures existed, even though we have no evidence about them. In some cases, as will be said, I had the impression that some of the author's theses relied a bit too heavily on this initial assumption.

The first chapter, "Dilectus", discusses the procedures to levy the Roman troops. Pearson's main contention is that Polybius is right. His description of the *dilectus* in book VI is defended against the criticism of those (especially Brunt) who deem it implausible: Pearson stresses the fact that Polybius was in Rome, and that he was an expert in military matters. Moreover, no one (not even Cato) apparently found fault with his account, which, therefore, could not be outdated. While I do agree that Polybius' account should be taken seriously, I also think that it is important to remember that Polybius himself represents his description as a brief sketch, excusing himself for the incomplete nature of the account. Even if we assume that the historian did not make any mistakes, we should be wary of assuming that he did not omit anything. This has important consequences for the main thesis of the author, namely, that the administrative procedures related to the *dilectus* were held in the area of the Capitol hill. In order to prove that Polybius is right, she estimates both the Roman recruitment pool (i.e., those that had to assemble in *Capitolio* for the *dilectus*) and the capacity of the area, showing that the men could fit in the area of the Capitol. However, she fails to discuss an important issue raised by both Brunt and Rawson, namely that of practicality<sup>1</sup>. If we

---

1 While Brunt's arguments (P.A. BRUNT, *Italian Manpower: 225 BC – AD 14*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 625-34) are reviewed in detail, I think that Rawson's reconstruction might have received a more in-depth discussion. Rawson had the same goal of the Author, namely the defence of Polybius against Brunt's criticism, but she did not carry this demonstration to the extreme (E. RAWSON, «The Literary Sources for the Pre-Marian Army», *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 39 (1971), pp. 13-31: p. 15), as she assumed that local

choose to believe that all of the *dilectus* procedures were held on the Capitol, and we rule out the existence of local levies of Roman citizens (in Roman *municipia* as well as in *fora* and *conciliabula*), it follows that all Roman citizens of military age had to assemble in Rome every year (actually, twice, if we follow Polybius), for several days. This seems to be impractical to say the least; considering that Polybius might well be incomplete, I don't see why one should not suppose that local recruitments did in fact exist, perhaps on the model of those carried out by the Latin and Italian communities. The author's belief in a very centralised and efficient bureaucracy, as well as her decision to follow Polybius and nothing but Polybius, might have influenced her conclusions on this point.<sup>2</sup> Another point which might be (at least in part) dependent on the Author's assumptions about the pervasiveness of military bureaucracy is that of military exemptions, especially following the completion of the maximum period of military service required by Rome. The Author states that Rome was able to "track" individual citizens through documents stating, for each of them, how many years they had served. While some military exemptions must have been recorded in some ways, those for the citizens who had completed their period of service need not have been. Theoretically, it was just possible, if a man did not attend the levy and the consuls wished to prosecute him, to ask him when and in what legion he had served, and to check these claims against the lists of the enrolled in each legion for the various years. It might have been more practical to choose the soldiers among those who attended the *dilectus* and then, if there were not enough people, to call citizens from the roster and, if they did not come, to start examining each citizen's reasons for not attending.<sup>3</sup> Given the lack of conclusive sources, a *non liquet* could be the

---

levies in Roman colonies and *municipia* might have been carried out, although she accepted Polybius' account for Rome and the rest of the *ager Romanus*. The only arguments employed by the Author against this view (p. 62) are that regional levies would be less efficient (without discussion) and that, at this time, Rome still was "a glorified polis".

- 2 Another problem is that of *conquisitio*. BRUNT, cit., p. 633 thought that the levy of 212, through *conquistores* in two areas around Rome, is to be understood as a normal levy outside of Rome, in *fora* and *conciliabula*. The Author, instead, interprets this levy as a *tumultus* (pp. 35-36). She might well be right in this case. However, there are other cases of *conquistores* and *conquisitio* (not always carried out by *conquistores*, but also by magistrates) in Livy: these should have received attention.
- 3 The terms employed by our sources, *dilectus* and *legere*, need not imply that all of the citizens were called by name. Leaving aside the volunteers, it is possible that, as a norm, the recruiting officers just chose among the attending men, and, if chosen, each gave his na-

only possible answer; some caution, at any rate, is needed. The Author, in brief, thinks that “some form of personal service record was held by Rome for each citizen”. Apart from the matter of the exemptions, she infers this from the fact that the newly recruited soldiers had to be divided into the three *ordines* (and the *velites*) according to their experience. However, while Polybius states that some consideration had to be paid to their age (and not, strictly speaking, to their military experience: Polyb. 6.21.7-8: τοὺς μὲν νεωτάτους [...] τοὺς δ’ ἀκμαιοτάτους ταῖς ἡλικίαις [...] τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτάτους), the wealth of the recruits must have been important as well (again, Polybius: τοὺς μὲν νεωτάτους καὶ πενιχροτάτους), as the *milites* in the different *ordines* had to show up with different weapons according to their *ordo*. Most importantly, Polybius states that the number of *triarii* was fixed, as was the ratio between *velites*, *hastati* and *principes*. Does this mean that, during the first phase of recruitment, the consuls already knew that they had to choose, at least roughly, 600 men for the *triarii* and, say, 1,200 each for the *velites*, *hastati* and *principes*? If so, Polybius’ reconstruction of two different phases (selection of the recruits; division into *ordines*) is puzzling. If not, it is still very much unclear. For the rest, the chapter is very interesting, especially in the use of demographic and topographical models to estimate whether the crowd of citizens attending the *dilectus* could fit the Capitol area.<sup>4</sup>

The second chapter (The census and centralised military bureaucracy) resumes where the first stopped. Pearson again focuses on the ability, this time by the censors, and not by the consuls, to read records of the service history of the citizens. She demonstrates this in particular with Livy’s account of the 169 BC census, when the censors ordered the soldiers disbanded from the Macedonian legions who attended the census and who had not yet completed their service period to go back to the province, and with the punishment inflicted by the censors of 209

---

me. Indeed, as noted by the Author, Polybius does not mention names being called out. Of course, this could still happen if no one, or too few people, attended the *dilectus*.

4 Although some points, such as the inclusion of the *capite censi* in the census, might have needed a more in depth discussion. While I do agree with the Author on this matter, different views have been put forward. See, for example, the traditional view of E. GABBA, «Le origini dell’esercito professionale in Roma: i proletari e la riforma di Mario», *Athenaeum*, 27 (1949), pp. 173-209: p. 187. A good case for the presence of the proletarians in the lists of the census is made by S.J. NORTHWOOD, (2008), «Census and tributum», in Id. and L. De Ligt (eds.), *People, Land, and Politics: Demographic Developments and the Transformation of Roman Italy, 300 BC - AD 14*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2008, pp. 257-70.

BC to the cavalrymen who had survived the defeat of Cannae: without regard to their previous service, they were compelled to serve in Sicily for ten years *equo privato*. Both interpretations do not seem compelling. In the first case, Livy states that the censors would have reviewed the reasons for the discharges (*missorum quoque causas sese cognituros esse*), in the context of the census, which might well mean that they asked all previous soldiers from the Macedonian legions whether they had completed their service, and when they had served; again, they could simply check these claims against the lists of soldiers of the various legions of the previous years. In the second case, Livy might mean that the cavalrymen were just compelled to serve for ten years in a row, without discharge, without any consideration to their previous service. On balance, I don't think that the existence of documents recording the service history of each and every Roman citizen is sufficiently proved, although the Author is right in assuming that, if a quarrel arose, the magistrates were able to reconstruct this service history, potentially from other lists. Another point that I did not find compelling, for the same reasons expressed above about the *dilectus*, is the assumption that local forms of census never existed. To my mind, Brunt's arguments still carry some weight<sup>5</sup>. The discussion of the census itself, however, is very good, and I found it intriguing especially in the second part of the chapter. Here, the Author discusses the potential underrepresentation, during a census, of those who were on campaign. Through careful scrutiny, the Author concludes that, while no separate census was conducted in the legions, the underrepresentation was mitigated by the fact that around 50% of the soldiers were still counted, mainly because many still had an alive *pater familias*.

Overall, the military documents whose existence is demonstrated in these two chapters are the census (obviously), the *tabulae iuniorum* (mentioned by the sources) and the lists of enrolled soldiers for each legion. This latter is, in my opinion, the most interesting outcome of the Author's research: indeed, the next chapter, on the military administration during the campaign (ch. 3: "Recording men on campaign"), is perhaps the book's best. Here, Pearson starts from logistical considerations, especially concerning food and supplies, to show that a commander had to know exactly how many men he could count on. Hence, he needed to know the figures of the dead in all circumstances. The author even tries

---

5 BRUNT, cit., p. 36-43.

to redeem Valerius Antias and his casualty figures. I think that this is not even necessary: the fact that a historian, or even a commander, could lie about these figures does not detract from the fact that he needed to have precise (and correct) numbers. In many cases, as the Author argues, the Romans must have counted the corpses to make an estimation of the dead as precise as possible. I think it might also be possible, given the existence of lists of the soldiers, that something like a roll call was carried out after a battle, or maybe even at set intervals. The attention then shifts to the quaestor, who, it is argued, needed to know more. Here I much liked the discussion of the necessity to keep track of the retinues for food, clothes and, above all, additional weapons (the author is right about Polybius' mention of replacement and additional weapons).

The next chapter (ch. 4: *Tributum* and *stipendium*) focuses on the mechanisms through which the money to pay the soldiers was raised and then redistributed to the soldiers. The main contention of the Author is that, originally, the money was provided in advance by rich individuals, from the *ordo* of the so-called *tribuni aerarii*, who then paid the wages of the soldiers who came back from the military campaign at the end of each year. They were able to tell how much each citizen of their tribe owed them, and so they could get the money back. Once the military campaigns lost their seasonal nature (and, at any rate, before the Hannibalic War), the soldiers started to be paid during the campaign, by the quaestors, but the *tribuni aerarii* were still the men who levied the *tributum* (or rather, who provided the money for it in advance, and then got it back by “taxing” the citizens<sup>6</sup>). Large sections of this reconstructions are, despite the Author's claims to the opposite, purely conjectural.<sup>7</sup> The sources about the *tribuni aerarii* are very few and very

---

6 Actually, the Author, building upon the theories put forward by J. TAN, «The Long Shadow of *tributum* in the Long Fourteenth Century», in S. Bernard, L.M. Mignone and D. Padilla Peralta (eds.), *Making the Middle Republic: New Approaches to Rome and Italy, c. 400-200 BCE*, Cambridge, University Press, 2023, pp. 38-63, thinks that these wealthy citizens had wide networks within their tribe, and so were presumably able to recover the money without a proper direct taxation, through exchanges of money, favours, and goods. Tan's account is intriguing and fascinating, but, as Pearson's one, is based on a “wealth of evidence” (p. 44) that is simply not there. Tan just accepts, without any discussion, Nicolet's theories.

7 The idea that the *tribuni aerarii* were wealthy private individuals who raised the money for *tributum* has been put forward by several scholars, but also challenged numerous times. A larger *status quaestionis* would have been desirable, especially concerning the early German scholarship (J. MARQUARDT, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. 2, Leipzig, S. Hirzel,

difficult to make sense of. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (4.19.1-4) does not, as the Author states, compare the Roman *tributum* to the Athenian *eisphora*, and he does not at all imply that the *tributum* was “lent” by wealthy individuals to the Roman Republic. Moreover, not a single source about the *tribuni aerarii* ever hints at the fact that these men provided in advance, or raised in any way, the money to pay the soldiers. The very few sources that mention their role only tell us that they paid the soldiers. Most importantly, Varro states that the *pecunia* to pay the soldiers was *attributa* to them, so that they could act as paymasters. In our sources, the act of *attribuere*, or *enumerare* a sum of money to meet some of the state’s expenses usually entails that this money was provided to some magistrates from the Roman treasury. Plautus, who is twice credited with mentions of the *tribuni aerarii*, actually never writes about them.<sup>8</sup> The only thing that we can infer from the passages of Gellius (from Varro) and Gaius is that there was a time

---

1884, pp. 173-7; T. MOMMSEN, *Römische Staatsrecht*, vol. 3.1, Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1887, pp. 189-95; J. LENGLE, «Tribunus aerarius», *RE*, VI.A (1937), pp. 2432-5), for its tendency to stress the role of public officers (sometimes identified with the *tribuni aerarii*) and not of private citizens, a point later made also by E. GABBA, «Sul *miles inpransus* dell’Aulularia di Plauto», *Rendiconti dell’Istituto Lombardo*, 113 (1979), pp. 408-14. For an interpretation of the *tribuni aerarii* as private citizens, see especially C. NICOLET, *Tributum: recherches sur la fiscalité directe sous la république romaine*, Bonn, Rudolf Habelt Verlag, 1976, pp. 46-55; J. MUÑIZ COELLO, «El *stipendium*, el *cuestor* y *qui aes tribuebat* (Gai. inst. IV 26). El abono de la paga al soldado en la república», *Klio*, 93 (2011), pp. 131-48; and N. ROSENSTEIN, «*Tributum* in the middle republic», in J. Armstrong (ed.), *Circum mare: themes in ancient warfare*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, pp. 80-97 (p. 91).

8 In one of the two passages (Plaut. *Aul.* 3.505-535), a rich man complains about the expenses of his wife, which compel him to pay a number of men, leaving him no money to give to a *miles* who *cedit* asking for *aes*. In this passage, the man is never defined as a *tribunus aerarius*, and it is never implied that he took any money from Roman citizens to pay the *miles*. The passage is puzzling, and it cannot be employed without very careful contextualisation (see GABBA, «Sul *miles inpransus*», cit.). Moreover, according to the Author, at the time of Plautus’ play, the *tribuni aerarii* were not paymasters any more, but only collectors of the tribute. It is very improbable that Plautus brought into the play a figure whose role was declining, without defining this role at all, not mentioning what this man still did (levy the *tributum*) and making reference to what the *tribuni aerarii* did not do any more (paying the soldiers). In the other case (Plaut. *Poen.* 5.1286) a soldier steals something from a *leno*, with the words “*aere militari tetigero lenunculum*”. Again, some caution is needed. Despite the interpretation of MUÑIZ COELLO, cit., the passage is not necessarily an instance of *pignoris capio*. The *leno* was obviously not a *tribunus aerarius*, no reference to *pignoris capio* is made, and the soldier does not say that he wanted to collect the *aes* from the *leno*, but that he wanted to “touch”, or “hit”, the *leno* with it: the meaning of the expression is likely to be connected with booty.

in which the soldier had the right to carry out *pignoriscapio* against a paymaster (who is defined *tribunus aerarius* by Gellius) to get his pay.<sup>9</sup> This does not necessarily entail that the *tribuni aerarii* had raised the money: as Varro suggests, the *pecunia* might have been *attributa* to them. It should also be noted that these men are mentioned as paymasters only in an antiquarian context. One cannot entirely rule out the possibility that Varro was just wrong. Once again, definitive sources are simply lacking, and a good degree of caution is needed. During the latter part of the Middle Republic, the soldiers were paid, as the Author recognises, by the quaestors. However, she still assumes that the *tribuni aerarii* provided the money in advance, and even that, when the *tributum* was given back to the people, the *tribuni* themselves had to give the money back to the single citizens. Again, no source proves (or disproves) this view.<sup>10</sup>

The last two chapters take a different approach. In these, the Author switches to consider, in a very moderate way, several possibilities about the documents themselves and about those who produced and kept the records. In ch. 5 (Documents and archives), Pearson takes into account the material and form of the documents. She stresses the importance of wax tablets, but also tentatively suggests that linen might have been used, too. She also maintains, with a good degree of plausibility, that the records kept in the legions had to be rather more agile: perhaps leaf style tablets were employed. Then, she switches her attention to the places where records were kept, examining the role of the *Aerarium Saturni*, the *Aedes Nympharum* and the *Atrium Libertatis*. All these buildings are discussed in terms of their administrative functions. The last chapter (ch. 6: Record producers and record keepers) examines the role of the *scribae* and, more generally, of those charged with keeping administrative records.

In the Conclusion the Author again states that the Roman mid-republican mil-

9 The passage quoted by Gellius is not, as Tan and Pearson think, from Cato, but from Varro: Gellius mistakenly quotes the *verba Catonis [...] ex primo Epistolicarum Quaestionum*: this work was written by Varro, not by Cato. At any rate, the *pignoriscapio* further weakens Pearson's position about Plautus' passage: the *miles* goes away *inpransus*, without attempting to carry out *pignoriscapio*.

10 The only instance in which a specific magistrate distributes money to Roman citizens in the Middle Republic that comes to my mind is Plaut. *Aul.* 1.107, where a man makes reference to a distribution of money made by the *magister curiae* to the *curiales*. MOMMSEN, cit., p. 189 states, without discussion, that these distributions were made by the *magister tribus*, whom he equates with the *tribunus aerarius*.

itary administration was well developed, and makes a comparison with the age of Augustus, who, according to the Author, tried to reinstate the previous bureaucratic system. So, the argument circles back to the beginning, and to the Author's assumption of a high degree of centralisation and bureaucratic development. As said, I sometimes felt like this assumption acted as the premise, rather than the outcome, of some of the Author's arguments. In this discussion, I focused on most of the points that I found less convincing. It would be unfair, however, to end on a critical note. The only serious complaint that I have about this work is that tentative conclusions are often presented as facts. On the other hand, the book is well written and interesting. Its contention that the mid-republican administration was more developed than generally allowed for must be taken seriously, even if one chooses not to follow Pearson's arguments on specific matters. Any student or scholar interested in the study of the Roman Middle Republic will inevitably find in this book much food for thought.

GABRIELE BRUSA

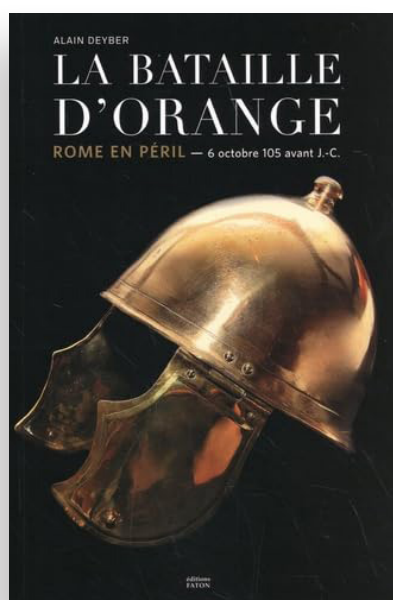


Ara detta degli scribi, del 25/50 d.C., dalla Necropoli di Porta San Sebastiano (Terme di Diocleziano) che rappresenta gli scribi addetti a registrare le delibere dei magistrati, Foto Sailko 2014, CC SA 3.0. Wikimedia Commons.

ALAIN DEYBER

*La bataille d'Orange*  
*Rome en péril – 6 octobre 105 avant J.-C.*

Dijon, Éditions Faton, 2022, pp. 128



**I**l volume, dedicato a un riesame della battaglia di Arausio (Orange), nasce dal lavoro di una équipe di ricercatori e archeologi sul sito stesso della battaglia, coordinata dallo stesso autore del libro.<sup>1</sup> In realtà, il sito della

<sup>1</sup> Il team è composto anche da Loïc Buffat (direttore scientifico), Nathalie Ginoux, Mathieu Engerbeaud e Bernard Petit. Una prima pubblicazione di parte del materiale ritrovato (nel primo campo romano) è già apparsa: Alain Deyber e Thierry Luginbühl, «Cimbri and Teutones Against Rome: First Research Results Concerning the Battle of Arausio (105 BC)», in Manuel Fernández-Götz e Nico Roymans (eds.), *Conflict Archaeology: Materialities of Collective Violence from Prehistory to Late Antiquity*, London-New York, Routledge,

battaglia di Arausio è stato identificato nel 1986, ma gli scavi hanno avuto inizio solo nel 2014, e sono ancora in corso. Di fatto questo libro rappresenta un primo inquadramento generale e d'insieme di queste ricerche, mentre una pubblicazione più sistematica dei risultati degli scavi viene lasciata a un momento successivo. Nonostante questo, il volume offre già spunti molto interessanti. Il taglio è divulgativo, cosa che lo rende adatto a un pubblico piuttosto ampio: in effetti, l'autore raramente dà per scontate nozioni di storia romana e di storia militare romana in particolare. Il lettore meno esperto è anche aiutato dal glossario dei termini militari alla fine del libro. Nonostante questo taglio, come detto, l'opera potrà risultare utile anche agli studiosi più esperti.

Nella prima sezione (*Prolégomènes*, pp. 13-33), l'autore inquadra e contestualizza i punti centrali della trattazione. Si parte da una descrizione del progetto di scavo e di ricerca (e da una giusta enfattizzazione dell'importanza dei ritrovamenti archeologici), per proseguire con un'analisi delle fonti su questi avvenimenti. Delle fonti storiografiche si mette in luce specialmente l'incompletezza: mancano dati specialmente dal punto di vista geografico e dell'andamento strategico e tattico della campagna e della battaglia. Si passa poi a considerare la coalizione celtico-germanica dei popoli in marcia, dal punto di vista delle varie popolazioni presenti e delle caratteristiche della loro migrazione. Quest'ultima parte si ricollega con la sezione successiva (*Les forces en présence*, pp. 35-65), in cui si analizzano le forze e gli eserciti delle due parti in gioco. Per i Romani si prende in considerazione specialmente l'esperienza diretta del campo di battaglia e del nemico (o, piuttosto, la mancanza di tale esperienza) che avevano gli eserciti di Scauro, Cepione e Massimo. Per quanto riguarda i Germani, lo stato delle fonti consente ovviamente minor precisione, ma l'autore tenta comunque di offrire un quadro generale della loro organizzazione. Di qui si arriva al punto centrale (*La bataille d'Orange*, pp. 67-89). Lo scontro è ricostruito specialmente a partire dall'evidenza archeologica, che consente all'autore, che comunque si mostra sempre giustamente moderato nelle proprie proposte, di ipotizzare gli sviluppi strategici e tattici dello scontro. Nelle conclusioni (*Les conséquences du désastre*, pp. 91-99, alle quali si aggiunge la *Conclusion générale*, pp. 101-103), l'autore tratteggia le conseguenze della sconfitta nel mondo romano. Il disastro determinò la necessità di una riforma da parte di Mario, con la quale fu possibile battere, ad

*Aquae Sextiae* e ai *Campi Raudii*, i Celti e i Germani.

Il volume ha due punti di forza importanti, che lo rendono una lettura molto interessante. Per prima cosa, e questo riguarda maggiormente l'aspetto più divulgativo dell'opera, offre un resoconto completo, coerente e ben leggibile della battaglia di Orange.<sup>2</sup> In realtà, considerata la cursorietà con la quale questa battaglia è stata fino ad oggi trattata dalla storiografia, si deve pensare che anche gli studiosi più esperti possano trarre beneficio da questo quadro d'insieme. A prima vista, si potrebbe pensare che il capitolo espressamente dedicato alla battaglia sia troppo ridotto rispetto alla parte introduttiva e di contestualizzazione. In realtà, però, tutta questa sezione iniziale risulta utile e funzionale alla descrizione del confronto armato stesso.

L'altro grande punto di forza – e non potrebbe essere altrimenti, considerate le premesse del lavoro – è l'attenzione ai dettagli archeologici. Come si è detto, l'autore rimanda a una pubblicazione successiva una analisi archeologica sistematica e approfondita. Alcuni dei dati citati, però, sono già di estremo interesse. Tra questi, la menzione (p. 44) di ritrovamenti sul campo di battaglia che testimoniano la presenza di *auxilia* balearici, numidi e cretesi, non menzionati dalle fonti. Il dato di maggior interesse riguarda però senza dubbio la definizione della posizione degli accampamenti romani, di cui uno lasciato incompiuto (probabilmente il campo che Massimo stava facendo preparare per le truppe di Cepione). L'autore, sulla base della posizione dei due comandanti, ipotizza che Massimo volesse operare uno sbarramento della valle del Rodano, rovinato da Cepione, che, al proprio arrivo, si piazzò più avanti. Questi dati rappresentano senza dubbio la novità più rilevante offerta dall'autore.

A questi punti di forza si accompagnano però, mi sembra, due criticità. Il problema a mio avviso più rilevante è costituito dalla contrapposizione continua, nel testo, tra Germani-Celti e Romani dal punto di vista del professionalismo. L'autore ha senza dubbio ogni ragione nell'accettare gli argomenti di C. Wolff sulle critiche alla visione dell'esercito romano (repubblicano) come una macchina da guerra impeccabile, composta da soldati sempre capaci ed esperti.<sup>3</sup> Meno giustificabile (e comunque presentata in modo apodittico) è invece la visione

2 Per utilizzare le parole impiegate da Y. Le Bohec nella prefazione, “une description complète et surtout totalement nouvelle de la bataille d'Orange”.

3 Catherine Wolff, *L'armée romaine. Une armée modèle?*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2012.

secondo cui Celti e Germani sarebbero stati “des guerriers professionnels depuis l’âge de 13-14 ans jusqu’à un âge avancé”, che componevano “hordes de guerriers professionnels” indurite dal fatto di provenire da “contrées désolées”.<sup>4</sup> Una contrapposizione così netta pare fuori luogo. Se è vero che l’esercito romano era composto da cittadini che in caso di necessità prendevano le armi per arruolarsi nelle legioni, non c’è però alcun motivo per ritenere che lo scenario fosse molto differente per quanto riguarda i Germani e, a maggior ragione, i Celti. A dimostrazione della propria visione, l’autore cita solo i due famosi discorsi dei Galli Divicone e Critognato. Entrambi rinviano però soltanto alla durezza dei popoli in questione, ed entrambi vanno contestualizzati. Il primo è un discorso presentato da Cesare come arrogante (al quale Cesare stesso provvede a rispondere con altrettanta sicurezza); il secondo riflette gli stereotipi di Cesare (e dei Romani) a proposito della rozzezza e della durezza dei Celti. Se ci si vuole fidare degli stereotipi delle fonti, bisogna anche ricordare che, per lo stesso Cesare, i Galli non osavano neppure paragonarsi ai Germani per valore guerriero, e che autori come Livio e Polibio dipingono un quadro tutt’altro che lusinghiero delle abilità guerriere e delle doti di resistenza dei Celti.<sup>5</sup> È noto come la presentazione di questi autori sia frutto di pregiudizi. Tutti, quelli “positivi” come quelli “negativi”, vanno considerati dai commentatori moderni con la dovuta cautela. Spingersi a parlare di professionalismo, senza alcuna evidenza di un addestramento militare standard e di istituzioni militari ben sviluppate, stona con le sacrosante cautele applicate all’analisi dell’altro versante, quello romano. In generale, si deve dire che l’autore tratta le fonti a proposito dei Celti e dei Germani in modo un po’ troppo acritico, accettando senza discussione punti che andrebbero problematizzati.

Un risvolto di questa dicotomia, sul quale l’autore spende qualche riga nella conclusione, è l’idea che i Romani abbiano avuto bisogno di una riforma militare, operata da Mario, per poter affrontare il nemico. L’entità della “riforma mariana” è stata giustamente sfumata dagli autori più recenti, al punto che la stessa validità

---

4 Pp. 22; 36; 48. Peraltro l’autore, subito dopo aver descritto queste contrade desolate, si spende invece a dimostrare la ricchezza di questi popoli, che poteva aver indotto i Romani ad attaccarli.

5 Si vedano ad esempio Polyb. 2.33 (sulla battaglia di Flaminio contro gli Insubri nel 233), Liv. 7.10.6-8 (sullo scontro tra Tito Manlio Torquato e il suo avversario gallo) e Liv. 38.37.2-8 (discorso di Cn. Manlio Vulsona, 189). In tutti i casi l’idea di fondo è che il furore iniziale dei Celti sia terribile, ma poco efficace, soprattutto per l’assenza, da parte di questi uomini, di resistenza fisica e mentale e di disciplina.

di questo concetto è stata messa in discussione. L'introduzione più esplicitamente citata dall'autore, la creazione della coorte, è probabilmente del tutto svincolata sia dall'azione di Mario, sia dalle sconfitte subite dai Romani ad opera dei Germani-Celti.<sup>6</sup> Da questo punto di vista, bisogna anche dire che, come è stato notato (per esempio dagli autori menzionati qui in nota), la tattica della coalizione germanico-celtica con cui Roma si confrontò alla fine del secondo secolo non sembra differire da quella delle popolazioni celtiche con le quali Roma si era già confrontata. Tutt'al più si può supporre che questa coalizione, data la lunga marcia, fosse più pronta alla guerra rispetto alle legioni di Cepione e Massimo (ma anche qui occorre usare cautela: è impossibile sapere in quante campagne avessero servito i soldati romani).

L'altra criticità, senza dubbio minore, riguarda piccoli errori, inesattezze o mancanze di precisazioni su punti secondari. A titolo di esempio si può citare il fatto che la battaglia finale della campagna è posta a Vercelli senza discussione, nonostante un certo dibattito su questo punto nella storiografia.<sup>7</sup> A p. 47, gli *extraordinarii* sono equiparati agli esploratori.<sup>8</sup> Il glossario, che pure completa bene l'opera, non è sempre preciso: dei *socii* italici si dice che erano soggetti al *tributum* (non c'è alcuna evidenza di questo nelle fonti, e sembra di capire che il loro contributo economico fosse semplicemente il pagamento dello stipendio alle proprie truppe). Gli stessi Italici sono definiti *auxilia interna* (solo per contrasto rispetto agli *auxilia externa*). Soprattutto, nella definizione di "Phalange",

6 Per una de-costruzione delle riforme di Mario, l'opera imprescindibile è François Cadiou, *L'armée imaginaire: les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la République*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2018, che si può leggere con François Gauthier, «The Transformation of the Roman Army in the Last Decades of the Republic», in Jeremy Armstrong and Michael P. Fronda (eds.), *Romans at War: Soldiers, Citizens, and Society in the Roman Republic*, London-New York, Routledge, 2020, pp. 283-96. Per quanto riguarda il problema specifico dell'introduzione della coorte, si vedano François Cadiou, «Les guerres en Hispania et l'émergence de la cohorte légionnaire dans l'armée romaine sous la république: une révision critique», *Gladius*, 21 (2001), pp. 167-82 e, da ultimo, Michael J. Taylor, «Tactical Reform in the Late Roman Republic: The View from Italy», *Historia*, 68 (2019), pp. 76-94.

7 Il più grande sostenitore dello spostamento della battaglia dei *Campi Raudii* da Vercelli a una zona della pianura veneta è stato Jacopo Zennari, «La battaglia dei Vercelli o dei Campi Raudii (101 a. C.)», *Annali della Biblioteca Governativa e Libreria Civica di Cremona*, 9 (1958), fascicolo 2. Ma il luogo dello scontro è ancora dibattuto dai commentatori.

8 Sugli *extraordinarii* si può vedere Catherine Wolff, «Les *extraordinarii*», *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire Ancienne*, 9 (2020), pp. 167-79.

si distingue tra falange oplitica, obliqua e macedone, dando per scontato che i Germani-Celti adottassero uno di questi tre modelli, senza notare il fatto che “falange” indica semplicemente una formazione monolitica caratterizzata dalla natura particolarmente serrata dei ranghi. Il fatto che si adotti questo termine per parlare delle masse serrate dei Germani non significa che si debba rintracciare nell’esperienza greca un precedente diretto alla loro disposizione.

Nel complesso, l’opera è senz’altro interessante e stimolante, e il suo tentativo di ovviare almeno in parte con l’evidenza archeologica alle mancanze delle nostre fonti va guardato con approvazione. I problemi che mi è sembrato di ravvisare non mutano questo giudizio e sono, per lo più, questioni di dettaglio, trascurabili specialmente in un lavoro dal taglio divulgativo.<sup>9</sup> L’unica eccezione è l’idea molto stereotipata dell’autore a proposito del professionalismo militare dei Celti e dei Germani. Questa visione poco sfumata mi sembra l’unico reale limite del libro. Da questa derivano infatti due assunti poco condivisibili: che la sconfitta dei Romani fosse pressoché inevitabile e che le riforme di Mario fossero necessarie per dare all’esercito romano la possibilità di sconfiggere l’esercito professionale del nemico. Pur con questa riserva importante, l’opera, oltre ad essere di piacevole lettura, resta comunque densa di spunti. Non si può che attendere con ansia la pubblicazione più sistematica dei risultati degli scavi.

GABRIELE BRUSA

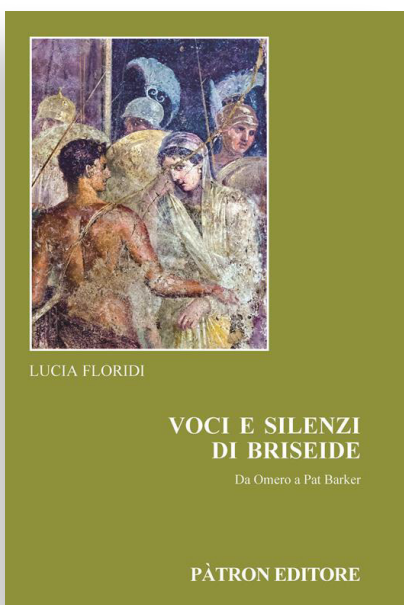
---

9 Questa natura dell’opera giustifica anche le caratteristiche della bibliografia, molto ridotta e contenente quasi esclusivamente opere in francese.

LUCIA FLORIDI

*Voci e Silenzi di Briseide.*  
*Da Omero a Pat Barker*

Pàtron Editore, Bologna 2024, p. 190 - ISBN 978-88-555-3564-1, £ 16,00



**L**a frase “una canzone non diventa nuova solo perché è una voce di donna a cantarla”, messa in bocca da Pat Barker a Briseide, non soltanto conclude l’agile volumetto di taglio filologico-divulgativo scritto da Lucia Floridi, ma ne rappresenta una sorta di *fil rouge*, di dichiarazione del progetto della filologa bolognese: la voce di Briseide, e soprattutto i silenzi propri delle schiave, sono già stati trasmessi dall’antichità e non è necessario riscriverli, ma è opportuno studiare i testi per conoscerli. La studiosa, infatti, non segue la

tendenza degli ultimi anni delle riscritture, in chiave femminista, del mito, ma ricostruisce la vicenda di Briseide attraverso un'analisi precipua dei testi che narcano di lei e indaga la ricezione che di questo mito vi è stata nelle letterature moderne.

Il punto di partenza non può non essere la figura di “Briseide nell’Iliade” (I Capitolo), i cui versi sono riletti attraverso una precisa analisi filologica, anche con il fondamentale ricorso agli scoli, e con una puntuale disamina di numerosi *loci* paralleli. La studiosa segue le tracce testuali che permettono di delineare l’identità di Ippodamia, la figlia di Brise sacerdote di Apollo a Limesso, ora sposa ora vergine, a seconda delle fonti, desumendo che sia impossibile e ozioso ricomporre in maniera univoca la sua storia, poiché vi erano differenti varianti locali del mito con cui si spiegherebbero anche le incongruenze presenti nell’Iliade. Per chiunque si accosti a una lettura del mito di Briseide, centrale risulta il rapporto che la donna aveva con Achille, per la cui ricostruzione è indispensabile il ricorso agli scoli, tuttavia l’autrice si sofferma maggiormente sul legame che la donna aveva instaurato con Patroclo, rileggendo filologicamente soprattutto i versi del XIX libro, in cui, come si sottolinea a più riprese, Briseide è l’unica schiava ad avere la parola e ad intonare il lamento funebre. Attraverso l’analisi dei versi a lei dedicati, quindi, la studiosa può concludere come Briseide appaia ora come un’altra Elena, ora come un’altra Clitemnestra, ora come un’altra Andromaca, ovvero una figura che riunisce in sé le vicende e le sorti delle altre donne dell’*epos* omerico, divenendo anch’ella una sorta di “simbolo” del destino femminile durante le guerre.

Nel secondo capitolo l’autrice segue le tracce letterarie della storia d’amore tra Achille e Briseide, che ha trovato ampio spazio negli scrittori successivi ad Omero, a partire già, con un certo dubbio dato dallo stato di trasmissione dei suoi testi, dal lirico Bacchilide. È, però, soprattutto tra gli elegiaci latini del primo secolo che il mito del Pelide e della sua schiava viene raccontato in termini romantici, con l’eroe che si ritira dalla battaglia soltanto per ragioni sentimentali e Briseide che diviene paradigma mitologico della concezione dell’amore come *servitium* a cui dedicare le scelte di un’intera vita: “tutto sopportò a causa della bella Briseide: tanto incrudelisce il dolore per un amore rapito” (Prop., 2, 8, 35-36 Canali). Tra di essi, è l’anticonformista Ovidio a dare voce a Briseide, nelle *Epistulae Heroïdum*, in cui la schiava piange per l’abbandono da parte di Achille che la aveva ceduta ad Agamennone, scrivendo una lettera al suo amato. La studiosa



Patroclo consegna Briseide ad Agamennone, particolare  
Affresco pompeiano del IV stile, *Pompeii*, VI, 8, 5, atrio della Casa del poeta tragico  
Napoli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, B. 9105.  
CC BY SA 4.0 Wikimedia Commons

dimostra filologicamente come l'elegiaco latino, nella stesura del suo testo, abbia da molto vicino il modello omerico. La rilettura di Omero *sub specie amoris* da parte di Ovidio non è, però, limitata alle sole *Epistulae Heroïdum*, ma risultano degni di nota anche due versi dell'*Ars Amatoria* (vv. 713-714 Pianezzola: “e tu, Briseide, acconsentivi d'essere toccata da quelle mani / ch'erano sempre intrise di sangue frigio”), in cui Ovidio tace, tuttavia, il fatto che il “sangue frigio” fosse quello dei familiari della stessa Briseide, uccisi proprio dal Pelide. Questo aspetto, invece, non soltanto era evidentissimo in Omero e rendeva, come la studiosa argomenta anche in altri paragrafi, Briseide una “novella Andromaca”, ma ritorna preponderante nell'oratore Dione di Prusa (I secolo), il quale, invece, evidenzia proprio come la fanciulla amasse il Pelide nonostante questi fosse stato l'assassino della sua famiglia. In conclusione al capitolo, l'autrice conduce un cursorio *excursus* all'interno della letteratura latina imperiale, in cui diversi sono i riferimenti a Briseide (Seneca, Marziale ...), dimostrando come Achille e la sua schiava fossero considerati, al pari di altre, una coppia ormai consolidata del

mito, ma, al contempo, notando come Briseide, talvolta, fosse diventata una sorta simbolo misogino, causa e principio di tutti i mali, fin da quando, per la sua contesa, Achille si era ritarato dalla battaglia. La poesia elegiaca, focalizzandosi sulla vicenda amorosa, infine, ha contribuito a una “umanizzazione”, o “diseroicizzazione”, in chiave erotica di Achille, ripresa poi dal più tardo cronista Giovanni Malala e dal bizantino Giovanni Tzetzes. La studiosa dedica un intero paragrafo del Capitolo II anche ai *Posthomeric* di Quinto di Smirne, che raccontano, come è noto, episodi della saga troiana e vicende biografiche di Achille che non avevano trovato spazio nei poemi omerici. Quinto di Smirne presenta Briseide come la “sposa” di Achille, suggerendo con un solo termine un’intera trama narrativa: ancora una volta attraverso un’analisi condotta per *loci* paralleli, l’autrice nota come la Briseide dei *Posthomeric* sia un personaggio composito, che racchiude in sé molteplici figure femminili della saga troiana.

Nel III Capitolo (“Nuove Briseidi”) la filologa passa in rassegna le occorrenze di Briseide nelle arti *tout court*, a partire dal Medioevo, grazie alla fortuna goduta *in primis* dalle opere di Ovidio e poi alla successiva riscoperta di Omero. Questa risulta essere la sezione più squisitamente divulgativa. Dall’indagine emerge preponderante il fatto che Briseide, nel corso dei secoli, sia stata quasi esclusivamente considerata come la protagonista di una storia d’amore e, dunque, abbia perso quella sua complessità che il solo Pascoli sembra restituirle, nei *Poemi Conviviali*, rendendola incarnazione dell’ambiguo nesso amore e morte. In anni più recenti, Briseide ha conosciuto nuova popolarità, complice il blockbuster cinematografico *Troy*, uscito nelle sale nel 2004, che suggella il suo essere, in epoca moderna, la protagonista di una vera e propria *love story*, portatrice di un’etica pacifista davanti all’eroe “dall’ira funesta” che, in punto di morte, dice alla sua amata “tu mi hai dato la pace in una vita di guerra”. È evidente come il film abbia contribuito a dare nuova centralità anche in ambito letterario a Briseide, che compare nel “caso letterario” della Miller, *The song of Achilles*, e in diversi altri romanzi, fino a *The Silence of the Girls* di Pat Barker, riscrittura della guerra di Troia dal punto di vista di una schiava che per salvare la sua vita è disposta a qualsiasi sacrificio, anche a sposare l’assassino dei suoi familiari. La studiosa conclude, nel suo epilogo, mettendo in guardia, però, sul fatto che in rete pullulano una serie “biografie” di Briseide, in cui la riscrittura di Petersen è scambiata per dato mitico originario.

FRANCESCO FIORUCCI (CUR.)

*La Scienza Militare Antica.  
Autori opere e la loro fortuna*

Das Antike Militärwesen Autoren, Werke und ihr Nachleben  
Rombach Wissenschaft – Reihe Paradeigmata, 2024, pp. 206.



**L**a trattatistica militare, in particolare modo quella che si occupa della ricezione e dell'uso del materiale proveniente dal mondo antico, ha avuto una fiorente rinascita negli ultimi anni. Riprova di questo fortunato momento di una disciplina molte volte “sconosciuta” o poco praticata anche dagli stessi studiosi di guerra del mondo antico, è il recente volume curato da Francesco Fiorucci, ove, nell’arco di sei ricchissimi contributi, sono toccati una serie di temi cruciali; dai primi passi in questo ambito settoriale a partire da Enea Tattico nel IV secolo a.C., passando per il dotto lavoro svolto a Bisanzio nell’arco di

vari periodi, fino all'approdo in Occidente del sapere militare di età classica, con la sua ricezione.

Il contributo iniziale del volume si concentra sulla figura di Enea Tattico e della sua opera. Il testo di Vela-Tejada ripercorre una serie di punti cardine sui problemi concernenti i *Poliorketikà*, già a partire dall'identificazione dell'autore, operazione quasi impossibile alla luce delle testimonianze. Il profilo delineato di Enea, tuttavia, è quello di una figura proveniente dall'Arcadia, probabilmente un mercenario o comunque una persona che ha combattuto varie guerre, che possiede una fine conoscenza della psicologia dei soldati. È pure possibile, così sembra propendere lo studioso, che l'autore provenisse anche da una famiglia con una significativa esperienza militare alle spalle. Dopo aver affrontato la questione riguardante lo stesso titolo dell'opera, Vela-Tejada cerca di inquadrare i *Poliorketikà* all'interno della produzione in prosa del IV secolo, ove i confronti con l'*Ipparchico* senofonteo si rivelano un'operazione proficua in questa prospettiva. Tenendo conto dello stile, dell'ampio uso di esempi tratti dalla storiografia che ben si inseriscono nel sapere dell'autore, oltre alla fruibilità da parte di un pubblico non così ristretto, l'opera di Enea, pertanto, si configura il vero primo trattato di arte militare del suo tempo.

Il secondo capitolo, scritto dal curatore del volume, si propone di analizzare alcuni elementi problematici del *γαστραφότης* di Bitone. Fin dalle sue prime battute, il testo si presenta come un'analisi tecnica, che prende le distanze dalla nota lettura di Marsden, non scevra di problemi dal momento che considera pienamente l'*usus* bitoniano. Oltre a dimostrare una fine conoscenza filologica del testo di Bitone e di altri trattati sul tema, il contributo si apprezza soprattutto per la resa, da un punto di vista tecnico, degli strumenti presentati nel testo greco. Filologia e ricostruzione vanno di pari passo – operazione quanto mai complessa e spesso sottovalutata pure dagli addetti ai lavori –, oltretutto Fiorucci si distingue per la fluidità della sua argomentazione, redendo un tema, di per sé alquanto ostico, privo di asperità e alquanto fruibile.

Il terzo contributo di Anna Busetto ha come focus il trattatello di Arriano. Pur ammettendo che l'autore, a differenza ad esempio di Eliano, si contraddistingua, alludendo alla *τέχνη*, per un approccio che ricorda un'esercitazione retorico-filosofica, Busetto mette in luce l'esperienza di prima mano di Arriano e propone una rilettura di grande interesse di *Tact.* 32, 2-3, in particolar modo dell'annoso problema legato a *ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως*.

Il testo successivo tratta invece una questione di primario interesse legata alla produzione trattatistica latina in ambito bellico, rispetto a quella più prolifica in ambito greco. La lingua ellenica, in effetti, emerge come *medium* privilegiato per la trasmissione di un sapere in un determinato settore. Nella seconda parte del contributo, Philip Rance rivolge la propria attenzione al cosiddetto *Strategikon* VIII, mettendo in luce, fra le altre cose, anche alcuni elementi di questo testo che ne denotano non solo la stratificazione compositiva, infatti spiccano anche le irregolarità linguistiche caratterizzate da una mancata differenziazione dalla terminologia standard dello *Strategikon*. Divergenze che, come ben evidenzia l'autore, rivelano la natura antologica di questa sezione dell'opera. Nella terza parte del contributo, l'autore dedica una serie di riflessioni ai significativi punti di contatto fra l'opera e l'*Epitoma rei militaris* di Vegezio, analogie fra le massime 2 e 6 con le *regulae* 2 e 7 di Vegezio che dimostrerebbero come la parte greca costituisca in realtà una traduzione dal latino. A partire da questo presupposto, Rance offre alcune ipotesi riguardo le modalità con cui l'autore greco, in qualità di compilatore e traduttore, avrebbe lavorato tenendo in considerazione l'opera di Vegezio.

Il penultimo capitolo, il più esteso della raccolta, ad opera di Georgios Chatzelis è incentrato sul suolo riservato alla trattatistica militare nell'ambito del sistema educativo bizantino. Dopo aver redatto un dettagliato prospetto su come venisse inteso l'insegnamento a Bisanzio, Chatzelis riflette su come per i Bizantini, specialmente quelli che si dedicarono agli aspetti militari, ritenessero i trattati provenienti dal mondo antico come indispensabili: così potevano essere inclusi nei manuali del tempo e, cosa più importante, dimostravano la superiorità di Bisanzio sui propri nemici. Non ci misero molto tempo i Classici ad acquisire lo *status*, mai garantito *a priori*, di vere e proprie autorità. I testi antichi, o meglio alcune parti ritenute particolarmente utili, vennero di fatto riprodotti direttamente o in maniera indiretta. Questo modo di operare, tuttavia, secondo l'autore non sarebbe solo proprio della trattatistica militare, ma della produzione bizantina in senso più ampio. È opportuno evidenziare, come sottolinea più volte l'autore del capitolo, che sforzi profusi dai Bizantini nel riprodurre e rielaborare la trattatistica militare precedente non dovrebbero essere considerati come un mero lavoro teorico, anzi si trattava di un'operazione fondamentale in vista delle sfide belliche dell'impero. Così, ad esempio, devono essere interpretate alcune modifiche, e reinterpretazioni del materiale classico.

Il capitolo finale del volume è incentrato invece sulla ricezione, nell'età mo-

derna, dei trattati militari di lingua greca. In questa ricchissima ed esaustiva analisi, Immacolata Eramo presenta le fortune e le sfortune di questi trattatelli oggetto di grande interesse degli umanisti. A partire dal caso di Asclepiotodo e della sua *Techne taktike*, la studiosa nota come al tempo sollevò non pochi problemi già l'identificazione dello stesso autore, fino a quando non vi fu il risolutivo intervento di Claude Saumaise. Il dotto francese, oltre ad aver rivalutato la figura di Asclepiodoto, ebbe un ruolo anche per quanto concerne l'*Ars tactica* di Arriano. Nella seconda parte del contributo, la studiosa rivolge invece la propria attenzione a Eliano, il quale ebbe già un significativo seguito nel mondo bizantino. Proprio a partire da quest'ultimo, figura chiave nella riscoperta in Occidente di Eliano come di altri autori di tattica fu Giovanni Aurispa e ai successivi lavori di Ludovico Carbone.

ALESSANDRO CARLI  
alessandro.carli2@unisi.it

ELENA SANTAGATI

*Filone di Bisanzio, Μηχανική Σύνταξις.  
La costruzione delle mura.  
L'approvvigionamento della città assediata.*

Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2021, pp. 294 ISBN 978-88-5491-192-5

Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2023, pp. 204 ISBN 978-88-5491-284-7



I volumi in esame avviano un progetto di ampio respiro, che ambisce a pubblicare il testo, con la prima traduzione in italiano e commento, dell'opera poliorcetica di Filone di Bisanzio, facente parte della *Μηχανική Σύνταξις*, grandioso compendio di meccanica andato in buona parte perduto<sup>1</sup>.

A fungere da molla all'impresa, come esposto in sede di premessa (pp. 11-12),

<sup>1</sup> Sulla (verosimile) composizione originaria dell'intera opera vd. proprio Elena SANTAGATI, *Filone di Bisanzio, Μηχανική Σύνταξις La costruzione delle mura*, Edizioni Quasar, Roma, 2021, pp. 92-99.

che si deve alla firma congiunta di Luigi M. Calìo ed Elena Santagati, è stata la constatazione che in tempi recenti, nello studio della poliorcetica antica, è “venuto meno quel dialogo tra testi scritti e monumenti architettonici” e che “sempre più spesso i due ambiti, quello storico-filologico e quello archeologico, divergono”. Partendo da tale situazione, questo nuovo progetto “mira, pertanto, a riunire le due anime scientifiche”, mettendo al servizio di un scopo comune le rispettive competenze degli specialisti.

La critica ha ormai da tempo riconosciuto e accettato una divisione interna del trattato poliorcetico in parola in due parti distinte, i *Paraskeuastika* e i *Poliorketika*, all'interno delle quali la materia è a sua volta organizzata in due sezioni. I due volumi qui discussi offrono rispettivamente l'edizione della prima e della seconda sezione dei *Paraskeuastika*. In linea con la partizione appena osservata, anche la presente recensione si articolerà in due parti, dedicate appunto rispettivamente ai tomi finora usciti.

## PARTE I

Nella prima sezione dei *Paraskeuastika*, come si evince dal titolo “La costruzione delle mura” adottato da Elena Santagati (d'ora in poi E.S.), Filone espone le tecniche necessarie all'allestimento delle difese di una città, affinché questa sia in grado di resistere ad un diretto attacco: si discute come progettare correttamente la forma e le dimensioni delle mura, i materiali da utilizzare, come posizionare l'artiglieria, ma anche come difendere le immediate vicinanze del centro abitato, impedendo p.e. l'avvicinamento delle grandi macchine ossidionali nemiche tramite profondi fossati. Filone, che assume la prospettiva degli assediati, ha infatti in mente un nemico molto ben preparato ed in grado di servirsi di numerosi metodi, sofisticati o subdoli che siano, per prevalere.

Dopo la breve premessa cui sopra ci accennava, il saggio in parola si articola in una serie di capitoli che provvedono ad introdurre alla materia del testo filoniano, prendendo in esame l'evoluzione dei sistemi di difesa a partire dalle fasi più antiche<sup>2</sup>. Attenzione è posta anche alla disamina del fenomeno ‘guerra’ in generale, osservato sotto varie prospettive, nella società greca prima di Filone (vd. soprattutto il capitolo “Teoria e prassi nel pensiero antico”, pp. 57-84)<sup>3</sup>.

2 Il capito “L'affermazione dei sistemi di difesa” (pp. 33-56) è a firma di Luigi M. Calìo.

3 Ovviamente non è “Frontone” (p. 82, n. 93) menzionato da Eliano Tattico (pr. 3), ma Fron-

Questa sezione introduttiva del saggio risulta senz'altro utile e ben strutturata, ed ha il fine di inquadrare l'opera del Nostro nel genere manualistico meccanico-polioretico di epoca ellenistica<sup>4</sup>.

Per scelta programmatica esposta nella premessa (p. 9-10), è stata presa in considerazione solo la bibliografia più recente<sup>5</sup>. In effetti si privilegia costantemente, nell'indagare i vari temi, un "continuo ricorso alle testimonianze letterarie che, accanto a quelle archeologiche, diventano prova del fatto che quanto egli (Filone *n.d.a.*) teorizza nel suo manuale era già divenuto prassi" (p. 9). Tale approccio è senz'altro lodevole ed ha il merito di far cogliere al lettore la valenza e l'apporto del testo filoniano nel contesto polioretico antico, ma a volte si sente l'esigenza di qualche approfondimento critico, come nel caso della lunga dissertazione sull'uso delle scale (pp. 181-187), che altrimenti rischia di trasformarsi in un elenco di occorrenze, seppur naturalmente ben vagliate e discusse, che assume un carattere più divulgativo che scientifico<sup>6</sup>.

Per quanto concerne il testo, il volume non vuole assurgere a edizione critica, ma E.S. fa comunque oculatamente precedere l'inizio del trattato filoniano da una 'nota critica' (pp. 105-107), nella quale si espongono le divergenze rispetto a quanto stampato dai predecessori<sup>7</sup>.

Proprio a partire dalle informazioni esposte nella 'nota critica', emerge che il saggio non esibisce sempre piena coerenza tra testo greco e traduzione. Segnaliamo alcuni punti significativi: quanto evidenziato come espunto in greco compare regolarmente in traduzione, come in par. 67, dove troviamo [βαρῶν καὶ τῶν]

---

tino. Inoltre Erone non scrive "nel II secolo d.C." (p. 83), ma nel I sec. d. C., come detto poi in effetti a p. 90.

4 I testi sono accompagnati da una serie di immagini esplicative.

5 Laddove ritenuto evidentemente indispensabile, si offrono tuttavia riferimenti bibliografici ricchi e precisi, come p.e. su Enea Tattico (p. 77 n. 71). In proposito noto incidentalmente che a p. 140 si rimanda al titolo del capitolo 37, ma si badi bene che i titoli, come anche la suddivisione dell'opera, non risalgono all'autore: vd. Marco BETTALLI, *Enea Tattico. La difesa di una città assediata (Poliorketika), introduzione, traduzione e commento*, ETS Editrice, Pisa, 1990, p. 7.

6 Valendo il criterio appena ricordato della preminenza accordata agli studi più recenti, si poteva forse citare Tracey E. RHILL, «Technology in Aineias Tacticus: Simple and Complex», in Maria PRETZLER – Nick Barley (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Aineias Tacticus*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2018, soprattutto pp. 269-281.

7 Si adotta la divisione in paragrafi divenuta canonica (tra parentesi si riportano infatti le pagine dalla *editio princeps* di Thévenot) e alla quale ci si riferirà anche in questa recensione.

(in accordo al testo di Diels–Schramm, che come vedremo E.S. tende sovente a preferire<sup>8</sup>), ma poi leggiamo “delle grandi costruzioni”<sup>9</sup>; o al contrario troviamo in par. 50 [e gli arieti], ma senza espunzione in greco (vd. anche p. 106 s.). Altre volte una lacuna <...> è indicata nel testo greco, ma non nel corrispettivo italiano (es. parr. 8, 22, 80). Nella traduzione di par. 28 troviamo [realizzare], ed in effetti in greco il primo ποιῆν è senz’altro da espungere, ma il secondo viene regolarmente (e giustamente) stampato ed è necessario che rimanga in italiano.

Possiamo a questo punto discutere più nel dettaglio alcuni passi significativi.

Ha perfettamente ragione E.S. (vd. il commento p. 129) a ripristinare come lezione dei codici la dedica ad Aristone (in accordo con Diels–Schramm e Garlan), contro la svista di Whitehead, secondo cui questa sarebbe da aggiungere solo grazie al confronto con l’inizio dei *Belopoiika*<sup>10</sup>.

In par. 1 leggiamo ἀσφαλοῦς, riferito al precedente ἐδάφους, al posto di ἀσφαλῶς della tradizione. Trattandosi di una correzione di Graux, accolta da Diels–Schramm<sup>11</sup>, andava innanzitutto segnalata come tale (non compare invece nella ricordata ‘nota critica’), inoltre andava approfondito il netto cambio di prospettiva che il testo così ricostruito implica. Con l’avverbio, connesso a quanto segue, si presuppone un più massiccio intervento di messa in sicurezza del luogo da parte dell’uomo. La correzione tramite l’aggettivo presuppone invece che il terreno sia già di per sé ‘sicuro’ e concorda con la testimonianza di Vitruv. 1,5,1 (*ad solidum et in solido*), il quale probabilmente annoverava Filone tra le sue fonti (vd. anche il relativo commento a p. 132 s.).

In. par. 8, contrariamente a quanto annunciato nella ‘nota critica’ (p. 105), si stampa οἱ ἔσχατοι τῶν λίθων<sup>12</sup>. Non esente da dubbi mi sembra anche la resa del (comunque difficile) aggettivo παράφορος in riferimento alle baliste col senso di

8 Vd. Hermann DIELS – ERWIN A. SCHRAMM, *Exzerpte aus Philons Mechanik B. VII und VIII (vulgo fünftes Buch), Griechisch und Deutsch*, Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Jahr. 1919. Nr. 12, Berlin 1920, p. 34.

9 Che E.S. sia favorevole alla duplice presenza di torri e bastioni si evince anche dal relativo commento (p. 229).

10 Vd. David WHITEHEAD, *Philo Mechanicus: On Sieges*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2016, p. 135.

11 Vd. WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 136 con i vari riferimenti.

12 Contraddittorio col testo prescelto risulta anche il riferimento alla lezione dei codici nel commento (p. 174).

“che sono malferme” (vd. anche par. 61). Credo che il valore sia lo stesso che in par. 65 “i colpi delle baliste sono deviati”<sup>13</sup>.

In par. 13 il rivestimento ligneo posto a protezione delle mura ha poco a che vedere con il passo di Bitone 52, 3 ss., chiamato in causa come ulteriore esempio di questo tipo di difesa “da inserire nelle strutture contro i colpi delle macchine” (p. 189). Bitone parla infatti dei vari tipi di legno utili ad assemblare un modello di elepoli<sup>14</sup>. Fuorviante secondo me anche l’aggiunta “(mura e torri)” in traduzione (p. 111), a chiarimento del precedente “queste”, perché in realtà *αὐτά* va riferito proprio ai legni (*ξύλα δρύινα*), come dimostra del resto anche la concordanza di *συνεχῆ*.

Nei parr. 17-18 Filone illustra un modello di cortine adottate a Rodi. Sebbene il testo non esibisca particolari difficoltà, la ricostruzione di tali difese non appare così ovvia. A parte il fatto che *πάχος* designa normalmente lo spessore e non la larghezza (così invece traduce E.S., sulla scorta di Garlan, ma Whitehead adotta il più ortodosso “thickness”<sup>15</sup>), non credo che gli ambienti per le guardie siano dei quadrati con lato di 7 cubiti (vd. commento p. 193), dato che tale misura è riferita ai camminamenti (gr. *πάροδοι*); inoltre almeno due lati dovrebbero misurare dieci cubiti<sup>16</sup>.

In par. 20 ha ragione secondo me E.S. a ritenere che con *παρατεινομένων <τῶν> βελῶν* si intendano le armi dei difensori, in linea con Garlan, ma contro il parere di Whitehead<sup>17</sup>. Il paragrafo è infatti esplicitamente incentrato su come costruire le mura e piazzarvi correttamente e nel modo più efficace l’artiglieria, facendo al contempo stare al sicuro i propri uomini. Una volta che è stato tutto sistemato, gli artiglieri possono sparare a piacimento (cfr. *οἷ προαιροῦνται*). In base a questa ricostruzione sembra anche coerente e opportuna la scelta di E.S. di interpretare *βέλη* come “proiettili” e non come pezzi di artiglieria. Rimane tuttavia certamente molto difficile attribuire a *παρατείνω* un valore congruo al contesto<sup>18</sup>. La traduzione “dopo che i proiettili sono stati posizionati contro” la-

13 Vd. infatti già WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 148.

14 Anche la traduzione del passo bitoniano non pare adeguata, cfr. infatti Eric W. MARSDEN, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Technical Treatises*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 71. Più preciso il commento al medesimo paragrafo in WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 154 s.

15 Vd. YVON GARLAN, «Le livre «V» de la *Syntaxe mécanique* de Philon de Byzance», in YVON GARLAN, *Recherches de Poliorcétique Grecque*, Diffusion de Bocard, Paris, p. 293 e WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 71.

16 Vd. la ricostruzione di GARLAN, cit., p. 348 fig. 47.

17 Vd. GARLAN, cit., p. 293 e WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 165.

18 Vd. GARLAN, cit., p. 350, con richiamo al senso del verbo nel registro geometrico.

scia qualche perplessità, ma coglie secondo me il senso spaziale che il verbo comunque possiede nel frangente. Partendo dalla valenza primaria di ‘estendere/ dispiegare’ e simili, si potrebbe forse pensare che παρατείνω designi qui la collocazione dei proiettili sulle mura, cosicché il nesso in parola assumerebbe un senso del tipo: “distribuiti i proiettili (lungo le mura)”.

Non adeguata sotto vari aspetti l’analisi del par. 22. Innanzitutto c’è da chiedersi come è possibile che semplici arcieri possano rappresentare una minaccia per strutture leggere e macchine d’assedio, da intendere di grandi dimensioni (gr. μηχανήματα<sup>19</sup>). Il fatto è tematizzato da Whitehead<sup>20</sup>, ma non da E.S., la quale nel relativo commento (p. 197) si limita ad affermare che “tra i compiti degli arcieri si pone anche quello di distruggere i travicelli” (non considerando tra l’altro la presenza delle macchine maggiori). Lo studioso inglese appiana la difficoltà sopra accennata chiamando in causa la vaghezza dell’espressione, soluzione senz’altro possibile, ma forse la lacuna all’inizio di paragrafo, riconosciuta nelle edizioni, poteva includere informazioni decisive per la comprensione del resto dell’enunciato. Whitehead vi suppone un riferimento alle torri, quindi al dove le feritoie per gli arcieri erano praticate, ma nulla esclude, anzi sembrerebbe un elemento chiarificatore, che vi siano stati ricordati i lanciasassi, cioè l’unico tipo di artiglieria in grado di creare seri problemi alle macchine<sup>21</sup>. Nell’edizione di E.S. invece il testo in italiano (dove in effetti il soggetto sembra siano le feritoie), non riportando la lacuna iniziale, diviene non coerente col corrispettivo greco. Ancora, la traduzione di τὰς προστιθεμένας δοκίδας tramite “i travicelli posizionati” non sembra impeccabile<sup>22</sup>, tanto più che i riferimenti ad altre fonti segnalati in n. 189 non risultano chiarificatori: basti dire che tra i passi citati compare *Parang. Poliorc.* 49, 7 s. (ed. Sullivan) ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγκυρωτῶν δοκίδων, ma i ‘travicelli’ di par. 22 non possono certo essere assimilati a queste δοκίδες, ricordate invece

19 È infatti questo il termine con cui sono normalmente designati i grandi macchinari in autori come Enea Tattico e Ateneo Meccanico, tra gli altri.

20 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 168 s.

21 Ateneo Meccanico si premura infatti di rammentare, tra le peculiarità della *helepolis* di Epimaco, che questa era in grado di sopportare l’impatto di una pietra di circa 3 talenti (rr. 249-250 ed. Maurizio GATTO, *II ΠΕΡΙ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΜΑΤΩΝ di Ateneo Meccanico. Edizione critica, traduzione, commento e note*, Aracne, Roma, 2010, p. 227.

22 Vd. anzi la differente ricostruzione ancora di WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 168 s., il quale vi ravvisa strutture lignee (probabilmente leggere, perché distinte dalle ‘macchine’ che seguono), con discussione dei pareri precedenti.

espressamente da Filone in par. 79 (che rappresenta la fonte dell'Anonimo Bizantino, come la critica ha mostrato<sup>23</sup>).

Come si evince dalla traduzione “le torri addette alle macchine” di par. 26 (p. 115) e dal relativo commento (p. 199), E.S. ritiene che le macchine qui menzionate siano quelle allestite dai difensori per respingere gli assediati. La cosa non è impossibile, ma andava comunque sostanziata con maggior chiarezza e l'apporto di riferimenti, anche perché contrasta soprattutto con la posizione di Whitehead<sup>24</sup>. C'è da chiedersi in effetti che tipo di μηχανήματα abbia in mente Filone. Penso si possa escludere l'artiglieria, per indicare la quale il Nostro utilizza i termini λιθοβόλος, πετροβόλος e καταπάλτης, per cui si può ipotizzare si tratti di strumenti di difesa simili a quelli ricordati da Thuc. II 76, 4 e Aen. Tact. 32, 5 (una specie di argano o gru in grado di far cadere pesi sugli arieti nemici).

Nel par. 29 Filone istruisce sull'utilità di costruire fortificazioni più efficaci possibile contro l'artiglieria nemica, tramite l'impiego di pietre molto dure e in certi punti, a distanza ravvicinata, anche sporgenti una spanna (circa 23 cm.). Nel frangente il menzionato πετροβόλος non sta per l'arma (E.S. traduce “tanto da non ricevere nella zona centrale una balista dal peso di un talento”), ma per i relativi proiettili, come del resto chiarito da αἱ πλῆγαί di inizio paragrafo<sup>25</sup>.

Nonostante la lacuna segnalata all'inizio di par. 31, E.S. ne associa il breve enunciato al par. 30 (vd. commento p. 204), ignorando in pratica la questione, già sollevata da Diels–Schramm, della sua problematica collocazione<sup>26</sup>. In effetti nel saggio si accoglie la designazione di *excerpta* (assegnata nell'edizione di Diels–Schramm) in riferimento all'opera poliorcetica filoniana (p.e. p. 9 e 100), ma senza approfondirne le implicazioni<sup>27</sup>.

Interessante la discussione sviluppata intorno agli antemurali menzionati in par. 32 (pp. 204-207), con sostanzioso apporto di fonti letterarie, riferimenti archeologici e bibliografia.

23 Vd. Denis F. SULLIVAN, *Siegecraft. Two Tenth-Century Instructional Manuals by “Heron of Byzantium”*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington D.C. 2000, p. 231.

24 WHITEHEAD, cit., 170 s.

25 Vd. DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., 29 e WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 172.

26 Vd. DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 24 e soprattutto WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 174.

27 Si rimanda a WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 21.

Secondo i precetti di par. 36, nei luoghi non ‘soggetti a inondazioni’<sup>28</sup>, dove cioè, scavando, non ci si imbatte in sorgenti o simili, le trincee dei difensori rimangono asciutte (E.S. traduce “siano asciutte”, ma qui Filone non intende impartire una disposizione, quanto constatare un fatto). Ciò comporta che gli assediati possono colmarle con materiale di varia natura, ovviamente al fine di poterle oltrepassare. Filone prevede pertanto lo scavo di gallerie suppletive (ὑπόνομοι), che devono possibilmente rimanere invisibili agli attaccanti, tramite le quali i difensori possono rimuovere il materiale accumulato dai secondi, vanificandone gli sforzi. Sarei in effetti propenso a considerare ὑπόνομοι come sostantivo (regolarmente attestato, vd. LSJ s.v. II), diversamente da Whitehead<sup>29</sup> (si noti tuttavia che l’interpretazione generale del passo non cambia: “served by tunnels” vuol dire infatti che le trincee sono fornite di tunnel suppletivi). Non proprio cristallina la posizione di E.S. (p. 213): si avanza la presenza di una endiadi, che presuppone di considerare ὑπόνομοι un sostantivo, ma se si propone il significato di “gallerie asciutte sotterranee”, vuol dire che si ritiene anche κατάξηποι membro del nesso, invece l’aggettivo è riferito senz’altro solo a τάφροι<sup>30</sup>. Inoltre il commento (p. 212), dove si afferma che gli assediati operano “sia di giorno sia di notte”, non rispecchia fedelmente la traduzione del passo (“tutte le cose poste all’interno dal nemico durante il giorno, di notte siano portate via di nuovo”, p. 117), che invece pare rifarsi al testo di Diels–Schramm<sup>31</sup>. Ancora, la traduzione “qualora siano attaccati” pare avere come soggetto i “luoghi adatti” appena prima menzionati, quando invece la voce συγγύνονται sta con τάφροι.

Dal commento del par. 44 (p. 217 s.) apprendiamo come fatto acclarato che Poliedo (definito tra l’altro “costruttore di baliste”, resa molto discutibile di μηχανοποιός) è stato “impegnato nella costruzione delle mura di Megalopoli”, ma la notizia è frutto di una congettura colmante una lacuna (discussa a p. 106), sulla quale aveva espresso un parere secondo me definitivo Whitehead: “caution is preferable, however, to textual supplementation which stretches so speculatively the establishable data about Polyidus”<sup>32</sup>. Nelle stesse pagine risulta non

28 Vd. l’interpretazione di WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 75.

29 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 179.

30 Si noti tra l’altro che poi in realtà nella traduzione a p. 117 leggiamo “gallerie sotterranee”.

31 DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 26. Vd. anche le diverse ricostruzioni di WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 179 e GARLAN, cit., p. 355 s.

32 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 186.

ineccepibile il trattamento della testimonianza di Ateneo Meccanico. Non è difatti vero che Vitruvio “chiaramente segue quale sua fonte Ateneo Meccanico”, quando la critica tende a proporre una fonte comune, da identificare probabilmente con Agesistrato (che E.S. dimostra tra l’altro di conoscere, menzionandolo in un elenco di autori poliorcetici a p. 83)<sup>33</sup>.

La traduzione in par. 48 “le torri <o> grandi costruzioni pentagonali” (p. 119 e nota critica p. 106) presuppone in greco πύργοι <ῆ> βάρεις (stampato da Garlan e Whitehead)<sup>34</sup>, ma in realtà nella presente edizione leggiamo πύργοι [βάρεις], cioè il testo di Diels–Schramm<sup>35</sup>.

Filone sembra implicare l’utilizzo di diversi modelli di στοαί nelle varie occorrenze della sua opera poliorcetica (la migliore disamina del fenomeno in Whitehead<sup>36</sup>) e credo si possa affermare con contezza che in par. 50 non si tratta di “passaggi sotterranei”, come intende E.S (p. 119), ma di protezioni una cui parte emerge senz’altro dal terreno, essendo esposte al tiro dell’artiglieria dei difensori (στοὰς ἐκ τοῦ πλαγίου τυπτόμενας τοῖς λιθοβόλοις).

In par. 62 andava forse approfondita la questione sulla valenza di τῶν βαρῶν. In effetti pare aver ragione E.S. (p. 121) ad interpretare come “i pesi” (sulla scorta di Diels–Schramm e Garlan) e non “bastions” (come Whitehead): con quest’ultima interpretazione si introduce infatti un terzo elemento di paragone, che di primo acchito non pare conforme al discorso di Filone, il quale sta trattando della inopportunità di “unire le cortine alle torri”. Più logico quindi ritenere che l’autore sposti l’attenzione su una caratteristica dei due elementi architettonici già menzionati, appunto cortine e torri. La caratteristica in parola è il loro peso, la loro massa. Tuttavia non va sottovalutato l’argomento di Whitehead, secondo cui l’interpretazione come ‘pesi’ “would make the sentence forbid the bonding of curtains to towers of whatever kind and adduce a reason of no practical validity for that extremely unlikely prohibition”<sup>37</sup>.

33 Vd. da ultimi David WHITEHEAD – Philip H. BLYTH, *Athenaeus Mechanicus, On Machines* (Περὶ μηχανημάτων). *Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2004, pp. 25-31 e GATTO, cit., pp. 53-66.

34 GARLAN, cit., p. 297; WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 76.

35 DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 29. Il commento (p. 219 s.) conferma che qui E.S. intende leggere come Garlan e Whitehead.

36 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 190 s.

37 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 197.

Nella ‘nota critica’ (p. 107) veniamo edotti che  $\tau$  di par. 63 è un inserimento proposto da Garlan<sup>38</sup>. Nel testo greco non viene tuttavia additato come tale, ed in effetti non pare frutto di correzione di Garlan, né di altri. Ancora, a fine par. troviamo  $\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$   $\pi\tilde{\upsilon}\rho\gamma\omega\nu$  (tradotto coerentemente “delle torri”), cioè il testo di Diels–Schramm<sup>39</sup> invece di  $\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$   $\beta\alpha\rho\tilde{\omega}\nu$  della tradizione (accolto da Whitehead e Garlan), senza che ne sia data spiegazione.

Per quanto concerne il commento ai parr. 61-64 (pp. 225-229), si registra un approfondimento interessante sulle tecniche costruttive esposte, con aggiornamenti bibliografici rispetto agli studi precedenti.

Oltre ai problemi testuali di par. 67 sopra accennati, mi sembra che le indicazioni spaziali  $\kappa\alpha\tau\omega\theta\epsilon\nu$   $\pi\alpha\rho\grave{\alpha}$   $\tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\gamma\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$  si riferiscano ad entrambi gli elementi architettonici menzionati, bastioni e torri (sempre che ovviamente si ritenga il testo trádito corretto, come fa da ultimo Whitehead).

Qualche fraintendimento palesa la comprensione del paragrafo 71, così tradotto: “infatti il braccio cavo della balista del peso di un talento è di 12 cubiti, mentre la leva è di 4 cubiti, in modo che l’espulsione non porterà impedimenti a coloro che fanno girare l’argano”. Innanzitutto il peso di un talento è riferito al proiettile (e non alla balista), indicando il calibro dell’arma e la sua capacità offensiva<sup>40</sup>, inoltre dal testo italiano si evince che gli artiglieri non hanno problemi ad azionare la macchina. In realtà Filone ha appena istruito (par. 70) proprio sul modo di impedire agli assediati di piazzare tale balista tra gli intervalli dei fossati, allestendo una serie di ostacoli ulteriori per ridurre lo spazio di manovra a disposizione di chi attacca. Centrale è la corretta traduzione del termine  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$  (difficile rintracciarlo nel dettato italiano sopra citato), che vale semplicemente ‘spazio’ (come riportato in LSJ s.v. II, 5, con riferimento al passo filoniano); mentre il soggetto sottinteso di  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\iota$  va probabilmente rinvenuto nell’arma nel suo insieme. I calcoli di Filone appaiono precisi: se i due intervalli tra i fossati esterni sono di 40 cubiti, e di questi una superficie di 28 cubiti è occupata da ostacoli quali steccati, gallerie e paliuri, restano liberi solo 12 cubiti, insufficienti a piazzare e manovrare una balista da un talento, la cui lunghezza complessiva,

38 GARLAN, cit., p. 298.

39 DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 33 in apparato.

40 Errore ripetuto anche in parr. 29, 70 e 73, ma vd. la corretta interpretazione nel commento a p. 230.

calcolando corpo e leve dell'argano, raggiungeva i 16 cubiti. Interessante l'approfondimento sul paliuro (p. 230), che rappresenta un'integrazione alle notizie reperibili nel commento di Whitehead.

Nella traduzione del par. 73 pleonastico l'inserimento di <una> in traduzione. Interessante la resa del verbo ἀντιτόπτω, che difficilmente può valere “*beat in turn*” nel frangente, come proposto in LSJ s.v. E.S. traduce infatti “colpirà questo alla base”, per sottolineare che i proiettili non hanno la forza necessaria per raggiungere le parti più alte del muro. Mi sembra che Whitehead in pratica lo consideri alla stregua di τόπτω, come anche Garlan<sup>41</sup>. Non mi sembra invece del tutto confacente al contesto l'affermazione nel commento: “le gallerie non devono essere scavate in prossimità della città per tenere a bada l'avanzata degli arieti” (p. 231). Si parla infatti delle στοαί degli assediati (vd. sopra sul par. 50), le quali semmai operavano in concomitanza con gli arieti. Inoltre non credo che qui si tratti di στοαί sotterranee (E.S. specifica “scavate”), ma di Schutzdächer (per dirla con Diels–Schramm<sup>42</sup>) portatili, impossibilitati ad avanzare a causa delle profonde trincee approntate dai difensori<sup>43</sup>.

In par. 76 ἄσηπτος non indica che l'alga è ‘asettica’, come vuole E.S. (p. 123); né è pertanto condivisibile il parere del relativo commento, dove si asserisce che gli uomini “anche se si fossero procurati una ferita, non ne avrebbero sviluppato alcuna infezione grazie alla presenza dell'alga” (p. 231). Filone infatti, trattando nel frangente il punto di vista dei difensori, non si premura certo di tutelare la salute degli assediati. L'aggettivo descrive invece la resistenza dell'alga, che non marcisce e rimane salda quel tanto che basta per non crollare sotto il peso dei soldati, ma solo al passaggio delle macchine d'assedio<sup>44</sup>.

Qualche difficoltà presenta la resa dell'oggettivamente molto difficile verbo ἀλοάω nel contesto di par. 79. E.S. preferisce il generico “percuotere”, mentre gli editori precedenti optano per un senso più ‘tecnico’, evocante l'azione del ‘mie-

41 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 81 (vd. anche commento p. 204) e GARLAN, cit., p. 299.

42 DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 36.

43 Vd. sopra sul par. 50.

44 Vd. da ultimo WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 205 s., ma c'è accordo tra gli editori. La valenza appena osservata si conserva del resto anche nelle altre occorrenze filoniane: vd. p.e. B, 1, dove infatti E.S. traduce “cose non deperibili” (nel secondo volume sotto discusso, p. 89, con accenno al concetto di ‘non deperibilità’ espresso da ἄσηπτος a p. 105).

tere<sup>45</sup>. In effetti l'assenza di un oggetto espresso nella frase e l'identificazione del tribolo in questione col *tribulum* latino proposta da Whitehead (determinante pare l'occorrenza in *AP* 6, 104, 3), fanno propendere per quest'ultimo significato. Il commento crea qualche confusione perché da una parte si annoverano i menzionati triboli tra gli “arnesi di metallo con i quali fare leva sulla scala per poterla spingere indietro più facilmente” (p. 232), ma poi si ricordano le testimonianze sull'uso dell'arma sui campi di battaglia, in pratica ignorando la suddivisione tra le diverse varianti della stessa, ben evidenziate da Whitehead, che riprende Diels-Schramm. Del tutto ignorato inoltre da E.S. è anche il vistoso problema del (probabile) falso posizionamento del paragrafo nel testo, discusso ancora dallo studioso inglese.

Da segnalare qualche refuso: p. 105, manca il punto dopo τὰ μέν; nella stessa pagina manca il riferimento al par. 20 nella disamina di παρατεινομένων (vd. sopra); p. 114 par. 28 da togliere il punto dopo τοίχους; p. 121 “siano lavorare” per “siano lavorate”; p. 122, par. 73 manca il punto dopo πύργους; p. 125 manca il punto dopo “queste” alla fine di par. 80; p. 197 “a sua volta ferito” per “a loro volta feriti”; p. 204 “nei capitolo”.

Nel complesso il saggio necessita di essere maneggiato con una certa cautela, soprattutto per quanto concerne il testo. Generalmente buono e utile invece il commento, specialmente dal punto di vista dei riferimenti archeologici, in parte aggiornati rispetto a Garlan, che rimane comunque imprescindibile.

## PARTE 2

Questo secondo volume, cui E.S. ha assegnato il titolo “L'approvvigionamento della città assediata”, completa l'edizione dei Παρασκευαστικά, contenendo testo, traduzione e commento della seconda sezione<sup>46</sup>.

L'assedio era probabilmente l'esperienza più drammatica e spaventosa che una popolazione cittadina potesse sperimentare nell'Evo Antico (e ciò vale anzi per tutti i tempi), perché un blocco totale di ogni attività esterna alle mura e di ogni contatto col territorio avrebbe inesorabilmente costretto a sopravvivere di

45 DIELS-SCHRAMM, cit., p. 37 s.; GARLAN, cit., p. 299; WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 207 s.

46 Curiosamente, tuttavia, nell'introduzione (p. 9) si parla di “seconda sezione della Μηχανική Σύνοψις”. Vd. sopra e nel primo volume, p. 92 ss.

quello che la città stessa poteva produrre e delle riserve accumulate in precedenza. Ben conscio di tale situazione, il trattatista espone allora con dovizia di particolari come si debbano costruire diverse tipologie di edifici per lo stoccaggio e la conservazione del cibo, soprattutto grano e orzo. In caso di assedio diveniva essenziale sfruttare ogni superficie disponibile per piantare e produrre ortaggi. Con altrettanta previdenza era indispensabile ammassare tutta una serie di materiali utili alla realizzazione di armi o per la riparazione di eventuali danni alle mura, come ferro, bronzo, legna, pietre, pelli, piombo, cordame.

Parzialmente differente, rispetto al primo volume, l'organizzazione interna della materia. E.S. riserva infatti parecchio spazio ad approfondire gli argomenti esposti in questa sezione dell'opera filoniana in altrettanti capitoli introduttivi, dedicati p.e. a "Grano e orzo" (pp. 46-58), a "Gli aspetti economici" (pp. 66 s.) o ai Φάρμακα (pp. 68-77). Ne consegue che piuttosto stringate (si intende ancora rispetto al primo volume) si rivelano le informazioni nel commento. In quest'ultimo comunque E.S. non manca di sviscerare alcuni concetti essenziali come δημοσίαι di par. 1 (pp. 103-105).

Apprezzabile l'assiduo sforzo (comune anche al primo volume) di instaurare un confronto con numerose altre testimonianze letterarie, per far emergere il contributo di Filone nell'orizzonte culturale della sua epoca (vd. p.e. il capitolo intorno a "Il tema della fame in Polieno", p. 26 s., o quello dal titolo "Sulla responsabilità dell'approvvigionamento in tempo d'assedio", pp. 33-38).

Il saggio è anche arricchito da due contributi, a firma rispettivamente di Luigi M. Caliò e Gian M. Gerogiannis, che approfondiscono i temi "Il *siros* e i granai interrati" (pp. 133-144) e "I granai sopraelevati" (pp. 145-163).

Dal punto di vista delle scelte editoriali si noti che, come emerge dalla 'nota critica' (p. 85 s.) e poi dal testo greco, si adottano le parentesi {} al posto delle più usuali quadre [], utilizzate nel primo volume, per indicare le espunzioni (ma in par. 57 troviamo curiosamente [καί]).

Anche per questa sezione dell'opera filoniana da segnalare alcune incongruenze tra testo greco e traduzione: in par. 10 non indicata l'integrazione della negazione (dovrebbe essere "<non> marcisce"); in par. 11 dovremmo trovare <e> in corrispondenza di <καί>.

Conviene a questo punto soffermarsi ancora una volta su alcuni punti critici del testo.

In par. 1 si accoglie <καί> di Diels, ma la traduzione “molte cose non deperibili” (p. 89) pare in realtà seguire il testo con πολλά di Schoene, stampato da Whitehead<sup>47</sup>. A conferma di ciò si noti che ‘anche’ non compare in traduzione.

Tra le derrate che Filone, proprio in apertura di trattato, elenca come indispensabili da immagazzinare, compare anche l’ippace, che pone grossi problemi di identificazione agli esegeti. E.S. dichiara il proprio stupore “nel rilevare la citazione dell’ἰππάκη tra grano orzo e legumi”, sulla base del fatto che con questo nome è noto un formaggio di cavallo, come attesta il lessicografo Esichio (p. 56 s. e 108 con relativi rimandi alle fonti). E.S. non tiene tuttavia conto della possibilità che potesse esistere una pianta omonima, come sembra emergere dalla duplice testimonianza di Plinio, giudicata semplicemente erronea<sup>48</sup>. Si noti inoltre che E.S., richiamando la testimonianza pliniana (Nat. Hist. 28, 34), attribuisce le straordinarie capacità nutritive al formaggio denominato ippace, mentre l’autore latino ne parla altrove in riferimento ad una pianta apprezzata presso gli Sciti (Nat. Hist. 25, 44). Interessante, nelle stesse righe, il caso sollevato da E.S. sulla difficile interpretazione della qualifica φοινικικός in riferimento a del pane.

Come esplicitato nella ‘nota critica’ (p. 85), E.S. suggerisce di integrare la lacuna in par. 6 con <θησαυρίζειν>, in base al confronto con il par. 8, al posto di <φυλάσσειν> degli editori precedenti. Mi sembra una proposta da tenere in considerazione, che merita qualche riflessione, pur premettendo che il testo così restituito non cambia nella sostanza rispetto a quello finora accolto dalla critica. L’azione immediatamente successiva del ‘pulire’ l’orzo e il grano (espressa dal verbo καθαίρω) restituisce più un’idea di ‘cura’ dei prodotti, che si adatta forse meglio a <φυλάσσειν>. D’altra parte <θησαυρίζειν> è sostanziato dalla menzione delle buche per il grano, comparenti unitamente al verbo anche nei parr. 8 e 27.

47 WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 221 s. Nella ‘nota critica’, p. 85, si afferma che “Whitehead preferisce attenersi al testo tradito dai manoscritti”, quando invece accoglie l’emendazione di Schoene. Noto incidentalmente che l’edizione di Richard SCHOENE, *Philonis Mechanicae Syntaxis, libri quartus et quintus*, Berolini 1893, benché più volte citata, non figura in bibliografia (regolarmente presente invece nel primo volume, p. 270).

48 In realtà l’ipotesi che il termine ippace indicasse anche una pianta viene ventilata già in William H. S. JONES, *Pliny. Natural History, Volume VII: Books 24-27*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 196 nota a. Vd. inoltre, in tempi più recenti, il parere di Jacques ANDRÉ, *Pline l’Ancien. Histoire Naturelle Livre XXV*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2003, p. 128 *ad locum*. La duplice valenza è del resto registrata in LSJ s.v. e nei lessici latini. Sul passo filoniano vd. il commento di WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 224.

Nei parr. 11-24 Filone illustra le tecniche per edificare i granai in muratura. Si tratta di una parte della sua opera segnata da lacune, che rendono a volte difficoltosa la comprensione del testo. Secondo E.S. μήκος in par 12 (p. 91) esprimerebbe la dimensione dell'altezza degli archi. Il termine può in effetti assumere anche tale valenza (vd. LSJ s.v.), ma nel frangente la compresenza di ὕψος due volte in poche righe sembra complicare le cose (va inoltre aggiunto che un'altezza di un cubito, circa 50 cm., non sembra utile). Dato che la larghezza è sopra esplicitata, non resta che pensare alla lunghezza (da prendere forse nel senso dello spessore), ma come accennato l'interpretazione del passo rimane per certi aspetti incerta. In par 16 credo che διαστήματα siano gli intervalli tra gli archi (esattamente come sopra in par. 15), e non la "parte sommitale", come traduce E.S. (p. 91).

In par. 17 E.S. traduce le ultime parole così: "coprilo con le tegole e intonaca al meglio" (p. 91), considerando pertanto le due azioni del 'coprire con tegole' e 'intonacare' non in opposizione. Dal commento emerge però il contrario, perché si parla di "sistemi alternativi" e del fatto che "giustamente Diels aveva proposto di emendare καί con ἤ" (p. 119). In realtà nell'edizione Diels-Schramm si stampa proprio καί, che è correzione di Diels per il tramandato ἤ<sup>49</sup>.

In par. 19 resta poco perspicua la scelta di stampare "(proporzionato)"<sup>50</sup> tra parentesi, considerando che traduce σύμμετρον, regolarmente comparente nel testo.

Per il par. 28 E.S. segue come di consueto l'interpretazione di Diels-Schramm (p. 121)<sup>51</sup>, facendo derivare οὐρῶ da οὐρός ('vento propizio'). Dato che Garlan e soprattutto Whitehead<sup>52</sup> sono invece concordi nel ritenere che qui si tratta di 'urina' (da οὐρον: in effetti l'aggettivo ἐπίρρυτος, da ἐπιρρέω, si accompagna meglio a liquidi o simili), il fatto andava approfondito e la scelta della traduzione adeguatamente motivata.

Rimane forse un po' in sospenso il senso di "nello stesso" (p. 95) nella traduzione di par. 42, se non si specifica che qui si deve sottintendere 'mortaio', come già palesato da Diels-Schramm<sup>53</sup>.

49 DIELS-SCHRAMM, cit., p. 43. Vd. anche WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 235.

50 Vd. sotto tra i refusi.

51 DIELS-SCHRAMM, cit., p. 45.

52 Vd. GARLAN, cit., p. 303 e gli argomenti addotti nel commento, con rimandi a studi precedenti, da WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 240 s.

53 DIELS-SCHRAMM, cit., p. 48.

Non ritengo accettabili alcuni punti della traduzione del par. 49. Filone non parla infatti di “armi sia di ferro sia di bronzo” (p. 97, ma vd. anche p. 78.), ma σίδηρον καὶ χαλκόν sono i materiali. Per tradurre come E.S. dovremmo trovare in greco i corrispettivi aggettivi riferiti a ὄπλα. Inoltre βέλη sono nel contesto i proiettili, e non “armi da getto”<sup>54</sup>, le quali compaiono specificate immediatamente dopo. Infine le catapulte ὀξυβελεῖς sono semplicemente ‘lanciadardi’ e non di certo “che lanciano rapidamente (lungi)”, definizione francamente difficile da decifrare (si è forse pensato al valore di ‘rapido’ che può assumere l’aggettivo ὀξύς?).

In par. 51 si deve attribuire a φορμοί il senso di ‘ceste’ o simili, come presupposto dal verbo ἐμπίπλημι e dall’analogo utilizzo in un contesto poliorcetico attestato da Enea Tattico 32, 2; 8<sup>55</sup>, e non “fascine di legno incrociato” (p. 99 e commento p. 129)<sup>56</sup>. Del resto il legno poteva essere facilmente incendiato, mentre in caso di crollo parziale del muro le ceste riempite di terra o altro materiale del genere garantivano una certa solidità (è quanto Filone stesso prevede più avanti nella sua opera, in C, 33). Inoltre il successivo “riempiendoli” (al maschile) a che cosa si riferisce?

In par. 52 (p. 99) E.S. adotta la specificazione “corde di giunco” di Diels–Schramm (“Binsenstricke”)<sup>57</sup>, che tuttavia non pare necessaria, dato che Filone non istruisce sul materiale usato per la produzione di queste corde.

Alcuni refusi di questo secondo volume: p. 57 “ritenuto” per “ritenuta”; p. 85 l’integrazione <ἐν> di Diels è in II 9 (non II 8); p. 90 in par. 12 ἐπιτεθεισῶν è un’unica parola; “proporzionato” per “proporzionata” in par. 19; “costituita” per “costituito” e “solo” per “sola” in par. 20; p. 99 manca il punto in par. 51 dopo “riempiendoli”; p. 110 “secondi” per “secondo”; p. 133 “della la guerra”.

FRANCESCO FIORUCCI

<sup>54</sup> Traduzione già di GARLAN, cit., p. 305.

<sup>55</sup> Vd. commento di WHITEHEAD, cit., p. 259.

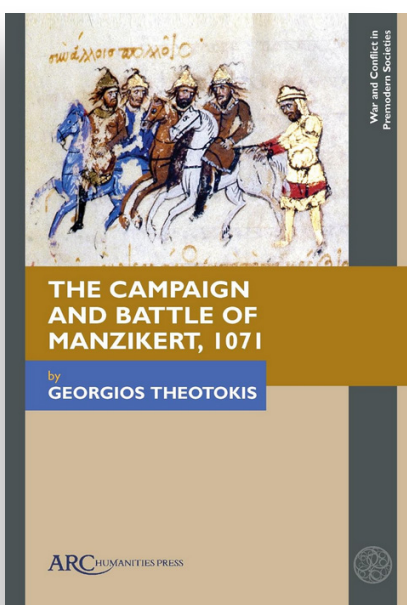
<sup>56</sup> Sarebbe semmai interessante capire la differenza tra questi contenitori e le ‘ceste’ menzionate nell’elenco di par. 49 (gr. κόφινοι).

<sup>57</sup> DIELS–SCHRAMM, cit., p. 49.

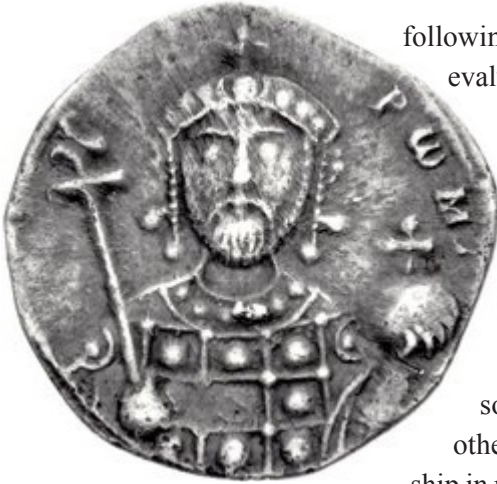
GEORGIOS THEOTOKIS

## *The campaign and battle of Manzikert, 1071*

[War and Conflict in Premodern Societies], ARC Humanities Press 2024, 224 pp.



**D**espite the importance of the battle of Manzikert to so many aspects of byzantine and medieval history, there is surprisingly little written exclusively about it. John Haldon did a massive study on Byzantine logistics based on the imperial army moving to the battlefield that appeared on-line, at first, and then in print (Archaeopress, 2024). Moreover, Carole Hillenbrand wrote a book (*Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert*, Edinburgh University Press, 2007), which focuses mainly on the memory of the battle in the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian sources afterwards. Theotokis now brings us a comprehensive monograph on the battle, re-reading the sources and methodically



following all stages of the development, conduct and evaluation of this engagement.

His book consists of 7 chapters, which are further divided into sections, focusing on the sources themselves. Most of them (chapters 1-5) are dedicated to a detailed analysis of the events leading up to and culminating in the Battle of Manzikert. In particular, in chapter 1, the author skilfully presents the sources alongside the studies conducted by other scholars, drawing on secondary scholarship in multiple languages, including French, Greek, and Italian. This approach contextualizes the sources, enabling readers to evaluate their reliability. Chapter 2 ‘sets the scene’ and poses the question of whether we should consider the battle of Manzikert as a “decisive battle”. It is an interesting chapter since it includes the entire theoretical environment for approaching military events in relation to historical sources. Here the author sets up his material on the campaign and battle chapters. The next chapter (chapter 3) stays close to the sources to explore the military demography and topography of the battle. This is a difficult task – military numbers can only be a guess in medieval times – and only if utilized in combination with the recent studies of Haldon can it provide a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal battle.

Chapter 4 explores the geopolitical background of Turkish incursions into eastern Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia and discusses how the Byzantine defensive system in Vaspourakania, which eventually became the epicenter of Seljuk incursions into central Anatolia, was compromised by Turkish advances and weakened because of the internal uprisings after Emperor Basil II’s death in 1025.

Chapters 5 and 6 follow, examining the Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes’ campaigns against the Seljuk Turks in 1068 and 1069, and finally the campaign of 1071, which culminated in the Battle of Manzikert. The author offers a captivating interpretation of a medieval battle through a detailed analysis of the battle itself, including the strategic errors made by Diogenes and a day-by-day narrative of the fighting from August 24 to 26, 1071.

Chapter 7 then delves into the aftermath of the Battle of Manzikert, as viv-

idly described by the key eyewitness, Michael Attaleiates. It also examines the reception of Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes' capture by Alp Arslan in Muslim historiography in the centuries that followed, a section that could be incorporated into the concluding chapter where this issue is discussed further.

Indeed, the book's conclusions include two distinct sections. The first poses convincingly the argument that the Battle of Manzikert should not be viewed as a military or tactical failure but rather as a strategic disaster for the Byzantine Empire. This strategic collapse granted the Seljuks a "free hand" in Anatolia for the remainder of the decade. The author also draws insightful parallels between Manzikert and the Battle of Myriokephalon, the latter marking Byzantium's final imperial attempt to reclaim central Anatolia. The second section, focusing on modern Greek and Turkish historiography, is particularly attractive and would deserve a stand-alone presentation within the book. The Greek historiographical analysis (pp. 182–187) spans from the 19th century to the 1950s, while the Turkish section extends to recent events, including presidential speeches and the construction of a commemorative mosque. Undoubtedly, this exploration underscores a crucial point: the enduring significance of Manzikert in the modern historiography of both nations. The author highlights how the battle has been portrayed by prominent historians in Greece and Turkey during pivotal moments in the formation of their respective national identities.

In summary, Theotokis' book is an invaluable contribution to the field of Byzantine military history, presenting all the interpretive tools that the historian must have at his disposal in order to thoroughly analyze a battle, from its preparation to its aftermath, combining the operational with the political and social environment that accompanies it.

EFSTRATIA (EFFIE) SYGKELLOU



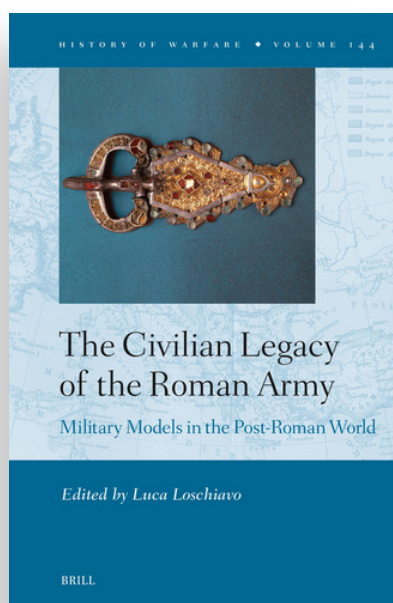
Due guerrieri selgiuchidi Bassorilievo nel Museo di arte turca e islamica a Istanbul (Sultanahmet (Fatih)), Wikimedia commons.

LUCA LOSCHIAVO (ED.)

## *The Civilian Legacy of the Roman Army*

### *Military Models in the Post-Roman World*

Leiden / Boston, BRILL, pp. xiv-512. ISBN 1385-7827



**V**i sono molte ragioni strutturali e di carattere scientifico per cui, in questi ultimi decenni, nei vari settori della storia antica - anche se credo che il problema riguardi molti altri ambiti delle scienze umane - siano apparse, sempre più frequente, grandi imprese scientifico-editoriali in cui, sotto la guida di due o più coordinatori, una pluralità di specialisti s'impegna a studiare un grande tema affrontato da una molteplicità di punti di vista. Si tratta di un'impostazione scientifica quanto mai utile se non fosse che sempre più spesso il lettore che s'attende moto proprio per l'ampiezza e la centralità del titolo dell'opera, è poi deluso dal disordine e dalla casualità con cui singoli precorsi

molto settoriali sono assommata insieme senza che il lavoro degli *editors* riesca in una certa misura a dare a dare unità a tali frammenti casuali di sapere. Il che inevitabilmente finisce col favorire una segmentazione totale di una problematica che ci si attendeva proposta in termini unitari. Talché, sempre più spesso, mi sono trovato a rimpiangere le grandi trattazioni con cui la generazione dei nostri maestri ci ha lasciato quelle esaustive visioni prodotte dal sapere e dal lavoro di un singolo studioso.

E quindi con grande piacere, unito ad una certa dose di sorpresa e ho scorso questa ennesima raccolta miscellanea, che proprio per l'interesse di un titolo quanto mai suggestivo mi faceva temere l'ennesima delusione. Che non c'è stata: e questo per il fatto che il bravo editore è riuscito a mobilitare tante diverse competenze facendole confluire in un quadro unitario, facendo leva, a me sembra, su due fondamentali parametri. Da un lato capovolgendo la tradizionale prospettiva, soprattutto in noi storici del diritto ancora così profondamente radicata, che tende ad associare il mondo tardo-antico all'idea di decadenza. Dove l'insieme di società che si affacciano sul bacino del Mediterraneo governate ancora dal declinante potere romano erano viste essenzialmente attraverso il filtro della sopravvivenza, lasciando arbitrariamente al margine l'efflorescenza economica e culturale associata alla genesi ed allo sviluppo di Costantinopoli e del suo impero. Perché noi possiamo leggere Ostrogorsky o gli altri storici della civiltà bizantina quanto vogliamo ma la nostra ottica resta sempre profondamente incardinata alla centralità occidentale ed al suo collasso.

Il secondo parametro utilizzato da Loschiavo, credo si sostanzia in un disinteresse abbastanza nuovo per l'altro tradizionale percorso della moderna contemplazione della 'decadenza e caduta' dell'Impero d'Occidente, focalizzato sugli esiti in termini di 'regresso', 'desertificazione' e 'barbarie', rafforzati dall'idea di cesura che il sopravvenire dell'elemento germanico inevitabilmente comportava. Alla desolazione dei paesaggi rurali dell'alto Medioevo, al depauperamento demografico di città e campagne, ed al sopravvenire dell'incolto e della naturale *sauvagerie* del bosco, si viene così opponendo, non già un'altra lettura dei fenomeni naturali e sociali intervenuti nelle contrade europee tra V ed VIII secolo, ma una maggiore attenzione sulle persistenze e sulle innovazioni strutturali che intervenivano comunque, in un tessuto storico senz'altro indebolito, ma non annullato. Ma la filosofia di fondo che ispira quest'opera e che ha reso possibile dei risultati veramente interessanti è indicata al meglio nello splendido *incipit* di uno

dei nostri migliori studiosi del ‘tardo antico’, Walter Pohl, nelle sue conclusioni al termine del libro. Dove egli scrive appunto come esso si contraddistingua per seguire “one of the most productive new roads through the jungle of debates about an old historical problem, the replacement of the Western Roman Empire by the kingdoms of the Goths, Franks, Longobards and others”. Distaccandosi dalle vecchia alternativa che ha legato alternativamente la crisi al collasso interno dell’impero o all’assalto dei ‘barbari’, per concentrarsi sui molteplici aspetti di continuità e di trasformazione che accompagnarono il generalizzato mutamento di contesto seguito al ‘crollo’ dell’Impero d’Occidente, per cui tanta parte dei “legal systems and institutional models of the new kingdoms” derivassero dalle norme e dalle pratiche dell’ordinamento militare romano. Una nuova prospettiva atta a ingenerare nuove domande storiografiche con cui meglio esplorare la ricchezza del passaggio dal vecchio al nuovo mondo, ma anche il fortissimo legame di continuità che ci permette, tra l’altro, di meglio comprendere anche la rinascita dell’antico e degli antichi miti imperiali sin dall’età dei Carolingi.

E qui prendono così corpo i diversi percorsi tracciati dagli ideatori di questo libro così singolare e stimolante. Dove la questione di fondo della continuità e della rottura – o meglio, direi, delle rotture, molteplici e varie ma di segno anche diverso – con le istituzioni militari tardo-imperiali è proposta e sviluppata in modo esaustivo nella generale introduzione di Wood. Dove già affiora appunto la non omogeneità degli svolgimenti successivi che assume progressiva evidenza nei singoli saggi che vengono articolandosi secondo quattro grandi unità tematiche: il mondo dei soldati, le strutture sociali e legali, i modelli ideologici e l’architettura del potere militare. Ma dove, nel saggio di Wood, appunto sono soprattutto colpito dal giusto rilievo dato alla persistenza delle forme e delle logiche giuridiche *d’antan* anche in contesti radicalmente mutati. A me sembra infatti – e non è forse casuale il numero di storici del diritto coinvolti in quest’impresa – che un’acquisizione preziosa che esso ci fornisce è la fortissima capacità di trasmissione di simboli che la persistenza delle forme giuridiche assicura, anche quando è presumibile che la loro efficacia pratica sia fortemente ridotta. Anche se, com’è ovvio, è l’impiego della forza militare il punto focale del saggio, dove si definisce l’ottica capovolta rispetto al sistema imperiale romano, potendosi concludere con l’autore che l’Impero romano, “where the military was largely to be found on the frontiers, was more concerned with its army than were the Successor States, most of whose male members were only potential warriors, who were rarely called upon to fight”.

E' questa una chiave di lettura molto interessante perché ci fa cogliere il generalizzato mutamento di fisionomia di un sistema sociale che nel corso della lunga *pax Romana* aveva introiettato al suo interno quella sostanziale smilitarizzazione resa appunto possibile dalla concentrazione delle sue capacità militare sulle aree di frontiera. Con tali cambiamenti, le società che vengono emergendo agli albori di questa nuova fase storica tornano ad assumere una fisionomia fortemente militarizzata su cui gran parte delle indagini raccolte in questo libro vengono approfondendo i vari aspetti che ne discendono. Basti ricordare in proposito come a tali processi s'associno la stretta interazione degli stanziamenti militari e dei percorsi di eserciti nelle aree territoriali con i nuovi oneri gravanti sulle popolazioni, ma anche la rivoluzione sul piano delle rappresentazioni ideali ingenerata dal nuovo linguaggio, con la ricchezza dei riferimenti alla forza militare di matrice germanica. Hp in mentre i saggi di Trisciuglio, Porena, ma anche di Falluomini.

Lungi dal costituire solo note di colore o appunti disorganici intorno ad un più generalizzato processo di trasformazione, questi percorsi ed i molti altri che si trovano raccolti in questo libro, a mio giudizio, esprimono la consapevolezza con cui coloro che hanno concepito tale progetto scientifico, Loschiavo in testa, avevano individuato nel fattore militare uno strumento fondamentale della trasformazione della società antica. Almeno per quanto concerne la storia romana, va detto, questa prospettiva appare riproporsi in effetti sin dalle origini: ho speso troppe pagine, insistendo sul valore determinante dell'organizzarsi della comunità armata nel processo di formazione della *civitas Romana* e del potere del *rex*, perché torni ancora sul punto. Qui ci troviamo al punto terminale d'una storia millenaria: e nuovamente è alle intrinseche trasformazioni strutturali dell'organizzazione militare, ma anche del complesso apparato istituzionale che l'accompagna che dobbiamo rivolgerci. Cosa che troviamo largamente sviluppata, in questo libro, con i contributi di Haubrichs, Falluomini, Verardi, e Poly, da un lato, e quelli di Marotta, Botta, Gasparri e lo stesso Loschiavo, dall'altro.

Ed è qui che meglio s'evidenzia il progressivo mutamento di significato delle antiche pratiche con cui la società civile poteva e doveva fornire supporto ai corpi militari, e delle regole ad esse relative, nei nuovi meccanismi acquisitivi di aree territoriali a favore di militi arruolati nelle varie armate, siano essi Ostrogoti, Vandali e Visigoti. Il che, del resto discendeva inevitabilmente dalla nuova centralità della guerra costitutiva della stessa struttura sociale del mondo germanico, venuto a contatto con le società romanizzate, e destinato a pesare così profonda-

mente sulla formazione dell'Europa medievale. Ma qui gli editori dell'opera mi sembra impongano una torsione al percorso da loro suggerito, perché il quadro ricostruttivo sinora accennato, seppure focalizzato su singoli elementi e meccanismi significativi anche per una storia più generale, tende poi a virare verso altra direzione. L'asse focale infatti si sposta dalla crisi e dai fenomeni di rottura e di faticosa saldatura tra vecchie istituzioni e meccanismi e i nuovi strumenti, verso l'inventario – o meglio il reperimento di alcuni elementi significativi – dei un nuovo modo d'esser dell'antico mestiere della guerra e delle sue istituzioni.

E qui di nuovo, se scorriamo i saggi dello stesso Marotta, come di Castagnino e Ruggiero, ma anche di Osaba, Kernels e dello stesso Borri, noi vediamo antiche tradizioni e pratiche istituzionali mutar in parte almeno la loro fisionomia nei nuovi contesti, divenendo a loro volta il materiale costitutivo di nuovi ordinamenti. Iniziando così una nuova storia che verrà a sostanzarsi nei grandi modelli istituzionali, ma anche nella complessità delle relazioni destinate a dar vita ad una nuova formazione economico-sociale, per usare il linguaggio di Sereni.

Avendo davanti a me le incisive pagine di conclusione di Pohl, da cui invero avevo preso le mosse in questa mia rapida rassegna, e riflettendo su di esse, si chiarisce meglio la mia reazione che, proseguendo la lettura dei vari contributi è venuta maturando. E che non si concentra tanto sui nodi affrontati dai singoli autori e neppure sulla questione di fondo affrontata dagli editori e che abbiamo messo in evidenza sin dalle prime righe: il contributo del patrimonio d'esperienze ed organizzativo dell'organizzazione militare romana al configurarsi dei nuovi ordinamenti politici con un forte legame di continuità con l'eredità romana. O meglio questa questione s'amplia, se vogliamo, sostanziosamente in un tema ancora più vasto e che attiene al carattere di fondo della successiva storia delle società europee, come anche alla fisionomia di quella speciale 'civilizzazione' che ne è stata il frutto, sin dai suoi albori tardo-medievali. I risultati di questo libro, infatti, ci offrono un elemento importante di quel complesso di fattori che ha condizionato l'intero percorso alto-medievale delle comunità variamente sparse nella grande area ch'era stata la *pars Occidentis* dell'Impero mirato appunto a ricostituire i modelli antichi, seppure ormai concepiti come mito, più che come realtà politica. Un passaggio fondamentale, come ben sappiamo, che ha segnato il carattere della 'rinascita' delle società e della civiltà europea dopo il Mille.



Scena di giuramento. Due soldati uno di fronte all'altro, uno barbuto e senza armatura, uno senza barba e con armatura; ognuno tiene la lancia nella mano sinistra e con la spada nella mano destra tocca un maiale tenuto da una figura inginocchiata tra loro; in esergo, iscrizione. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC-SA 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) licence



Cristo appare a San Mercurio e a Santa Caterina di Alessandria nell'atto di calpestare Giuliano l'Apostata la cui morte, supplicata da San Basilio difronte ad un'icona di San Mercurio, fu attribuita all'intercessione del santo. Icona del laboratorio di Georgios Klontzas, Creta, ca 1560/70.  
Yale University Art Gallery, ID 255. Connecticut, U. S. Wikimedia Commons

## Storia Militare Antica e Bizantina (6)

### A Bibliographical Survey

- *Present and Past Approaches to the Ancient Military History. A Short Bibliographical Survey of the Current Studies,*  
di VIRGILIO ILARI

#### STORIA GRECA

- *The dog barks around the hedgehog Reassessing the κόκλος in ancient naval warfare,*  
by ALESSANDRO CARLI
- *Tra guerra e politica il caso dei mille logades di Argo,*  
di ALESSANDRO BRAMBILLA

#### STORIA ROMANA

- *Early Roman Cavalry in Combat (6<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE),*  
by J. ARMSTRONG and G. NOTARI
- *The republican legionary cohort once again tactical reform in the Roman republic,*  
by GABRIELE BRUSA

### Insight

- ‘La giornata di Zama’.  
*Note in margine alla recente edizione di un saggio militare di Francesco Algarotti*  
di DENISE ARICÒ

- *L'importanza delle materie prime nella grand strategy romana*  
di ALESSANDRO GIRAUDDO

### Articoli / Articles

- *Le nombre l'identité et l'origine des légions du Bellum Africum,*  
par BATISTE GÉRARDIN
- *Autour de la bataille de Thapsus*  
par OUIZA AIT AMARA
- *Le ballistae, i ballistarii delle legioni e le legioni di Ballistarii,*  
di MAURIZIO COLOMBO
- *Riflessioni sulle componenti tecniche e sull'uso tattico della ballista quadritrotis e del tichodifrus (De rebus bellicis 7-8)*  
di FRANCESCO FIORUCCI

#### STORIA BIZANTINA

- *L'imperatore e la guerra. Eraclio e la “guerra santa”.*  
di FRANCESCO MORACA
- *Le facteur scythe dans la ‘dernière grande guerre de l’Antiquité’*  
par GUILLAUME SARTOR
- *Magyar ‘raids’ and Frankish invasions: A new perspective*  
by CHRISTOPHER SZABÓ
- *The Enseignements of Theodore Palaiologos*  
by JÜRIG GASSMANN

### Recensioni / Reviews

- LUCIANO CANFORA, *La grande guerra del Peloponneso, 447-394 a.C.*  
(di ALESSANDRO CARLI)
- JOHN NASH, *Rulers of the Sea Maritime Strategy and Sea Power in Ancient Greece, 550 – 321 BCE*  
(di VITTORIO CISNETTI)
- MARTINE DIEPENBROEK, *The Spartan Scytale and Developments in Ancient and Modern Cryptography*  
(di COSMO COLAVITO)
- JEREMY ARMSTRONG, *War and Society in Early Rome From*

- Warlords to Generals*  
(di GIANLUCA NOTARI)
- CHRISTOPHE BURGEON, *Hannibal. L'ennemi de Rome*  
(di GIOVANNI ZAMPROGNO)
- ELIZABETH H. PEARSON, *Exploring the Mid-Republican Origins of Roman Military Administration*  
(by GABRIELE BRUSA)
- ALAIN DEYBER, *La bataille d'Orange. Rome en péril – 6 octobre 105 avant J.-C.*  
(di GABRIELE BRUSA)
- LUCIA FLORIDI, *Voci e Silenzi di Briseide. Da Omero a Pat Barker*  
(di FABIANA ROSACI)

- FRANCESCO FIORUCCI (cur.), *La Scienza Militare Antica. Autori opere e la loro fortuna*  
(di ALESSANDRO CARLI)
- ELENA SANTAGATI, *Filone di Bisanzio, Μηχανική Σύνταξις*  
(di FRANCESCO FIORUCCI)
- GEORGIOS THEOTOKIS, *The campaign and battle of Manzikert, 1071*  
(EFSTRATIA SYGKELLOU)
- LUCA LOSCHIAVO (cur.), *The Civilian Legacy of the Roman Army*  
(LUIGI CAPOGROSSI)