

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-0-521-78273-9 — The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare
Volume 1: Greece, The Hellenistic World and the Rise of Rome
Edited by Philip Sabin, Hans van Wees, Michael Whitby
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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF GREEK AND ROMAN WARFARE

Warfare was the single biggest preoccupation of historians in antiquity. In recent decades fresh textual interpretations, numerous new archaeological discoveries and a much broader analytical focus emphasizing social, economic, political and cultural approaches have transformed our understanding of ancient warfare. Volume 1 of this two-volume *History* reflects these developments and provides a systematic account, written by a distinguished cast of contributors, of the various themes underlying the warfare of the Greek world from the archaic to the Hellenistic period and of early and middle Republican Rome. For each broad period developments in troop-types, equipment, strategy and tactics are discussed. These are placed in the broader context of developments in international relations and the relationship of warfare to both the state and wider society. Numerous illustrations, a glossary and chronology, and information about the ancient authors mentioned supplement the text. This will become the primary reference work for specialists and non-specialists alike.

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VOLUME I

Greece, the Hellenistic world and the rise of Rome

Edited by

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EDITORS' PREFACE

Warfare was the single biggest preoccupation of historians in antiquity, but modern academic interest in the subject has revived only in the last few decades. The narrowly focused studies of war written before the First World War by Delbrück, Kromayer, Veith and others have now been superseded by a much wider spectrum of work, ranging from the individual soldier's experience of battle to the place of ancient warfare within wider social, economic, political and cultural structures. Partly as a result of this broader focus, and partly through richer textual analysis and a flood of new archaeological discoveries, our understanding of ancient warfare has been transformed.

With the exception of popular survey works, however, there is no comprehensive overview of this burgeoning field of study. The *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare* aims to fill this gap: its two volumes survey the advances made since the 1970s in all aspects of research on ancient warfare, and provide an opportunity for a distinguished group of experts in the field to take the subject further still by presenting an array of new ideas and suggesting many new directions. Our aim in this work is not to provide a narrative account of the countless wars which took place across a period spanning fifteen centuries – such accounts are readily available from any number of other sources, not least the *Cambridge Ancient History* – but to offer a thematic analysis of the main aspects of warfare in the ancient world.

Three important introductory chapters set the scene: the first puts the present volumes in their historiographical context and explains further the rationale for their publication; the other two address the nature of evidence and the problems of its interpretation, two issues which are fundamental to a new and better understanding of ancient warfare. The bulk of the volumes is divided into four chronologically ordered parts, each covering a span of three or four centuries. These chronological divisions serve to draw attention to the broad changes which occurred in warfare and the societies in which this warfare was practised and pursued. Detailed chronological tables at the end of each volume also help readers to place the discussion in its proper historical frame. The first part of volume 1 covers the earliest

centuries of Greek society, which generated our most famous accounts of ancient warfare, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as well as the first 'proper' historical accounts of conflicts, with Thucydides' record of the Peloponnesian War often regarded as the acme of ancient historiography. In the second part, early Rome and the Hellenistic world are dealt with in parallel, a rather unusual combination designed to stimulate a fresh analytical perspective and to overcome the common tendency to keep the Greek and Roman worlds in entirely separate compartments. The first part of volume II bridges one of the great political transitions of the ancient world, that from the Roman Republic to the Principate of Augustus and his successors, with the intention of highlighting continuing issues and recurrent themes. The final part deals with the later Empire, a period long seen through the prism of 'Decline and Fall' but one in which most scholars now identify a robust and protracted defence of imperial interests in a world which was experiencing profound changes, internally through the adoption of Christianity and externally through the arrival of the Huns.

Within each chronological part, the sub-divisions are thematic and reflect the key aspects of ancient warfare identified in modern historiography: (1) the role of war and peace in international relations; (2) the nature, composition and status of different kinds of armed forces; (3) the practicalities and ethics of the conduct of wars and campaigns; (4) the nature and experience of combat in pitched battles and sieges; (5) the political and economic dimensions of war; and (6) the social and cultural dimensions of war. The same sub-divisions are applied in each of the four parts, so as to enable readers to make comparisons and to pursue particular themes throughout antiquity. (All dates in volume I are BC unless indicated.)

'War is terrible', said Polybius, 'but not so terrible that we should put up with *anything* to avoid it' (4.31.3). These volumes examine both the forms taken by the terror of war in the ancient world and the forces which all too often made it seem necessary to resort to violence at the cost of giving up 'the thing which we all pray that the gods may give us . . . the only incontestable blessing among the so-called good things in life – I mean peace' (4.74.3).

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Map 1 The western Mediterranean

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Map 2 The eastern Mediterranean

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Map 3 The Near East

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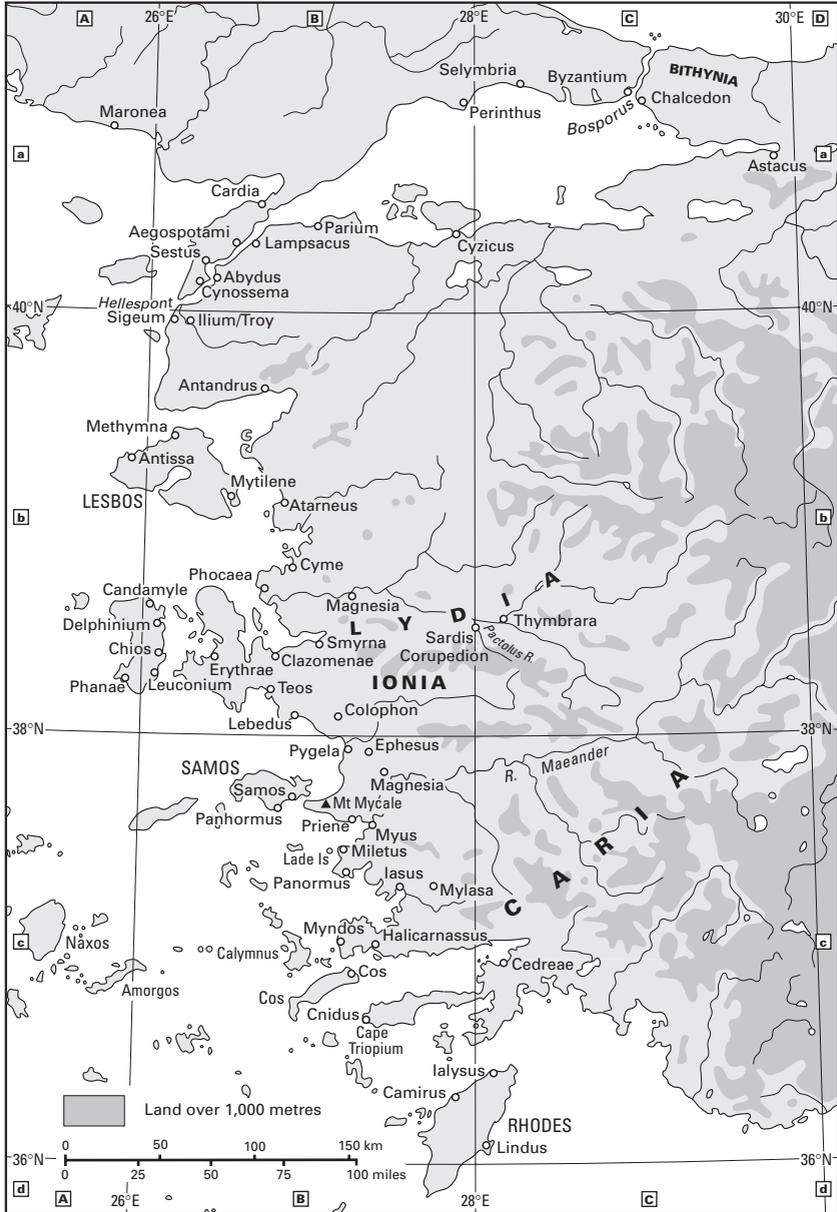
Map 4 Greece

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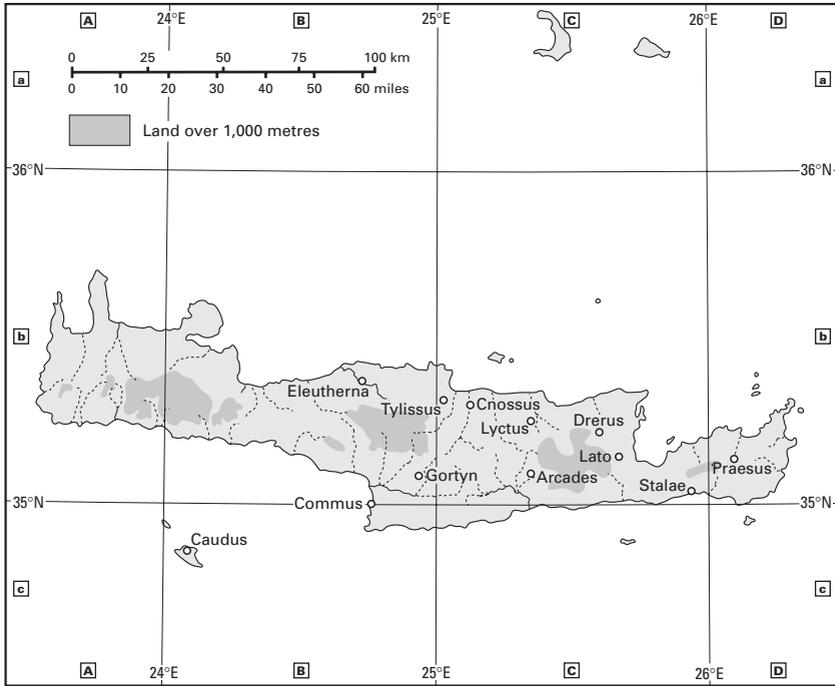
Map 5 Central Greece and the Peloponnese

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Map 6 Western Asia Minor and the Hellespont

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Map 7 Crete