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Thematic Panel: Rethinking "Barbarian" Warfare: Contact, Adaptation, and Innovation in Ancient Europe and the Mediterranean (c. 500 BCE–100 CE) – organized by Alastair Lumsden (lumsdenalastair@gmail.com) and Julian Giesecke (julian.gieseke@uni-bielefeld.de)

This panel examines how diverse communities across Europe and the Mediterranean, that did not leave an indigenous historical record of organised violence, responded to sustained contact and influenced the military systems of better-documented powers. Scholarship on ancient warfare amongst the allies and enemies of the Graeco-Roman world is still disproportionately shaped by Greek and Roman literary sources and monuments, creating an evidentiary hierarchy in which pre-historical groups have traditionally been perceived as militarily unsophisticated, with little capacity for organisational, strategic, or tactical development. The panel challenges these assumptions by tracing how pre-historical communities shaped and often initiated military innovation throughout antiquity.

Methodologically, the papers integrate critical re-readings of battle narratives with materially grounded analysis of funerary assemblages, iconography, and patterns of deposition and display. Rather than positing a timeless "barbarian" way of war, we foreground political structures, coalition dynamics, and asymmetric power relations that shaped the force composition of a diverse range of cultural groups in antiquity, their military capabilities, and training practices. This broad cultural, geographical and chronological scope, together with its interdisciplinary approach, links battlefield behaviour to institutions of mobilisation and to the cultural work performed by weapons and military identities in both life and ritual. The case studies span tactics, technology, ideology, politics, and reception across historical and contemporary contexts. Thracian warfare is re-situated within the Odrysian hegemonic landscape, investigating how mounted elites, peripheral auxiliaries, and resistance to centralised foreign powers reshaped the role of peltasts and diversified regional fighting styles. West Germanic amici and allied contingents are analysed as strategic geopolitical levers in Roman imperial frontier policy, showing how military value could facilitate political survival and the preservation of autonomy despite recurrent conflict. Iberian evidence challenges traditional Roman narratives of their unilateral adoption of foreign military technology by tracing how shields, helmets, and swords circulated through prolonged, multicultural interaction across the Mediterranean and were absorbed as potent symbols of local elite self-representation.

The development of Gallic cavalry is re-examined through funerary evidence and narrative reassessment to explain its battlefield effectiveness as a flexible, multidimensional corps whose tactical and technical innovations influenced the evolution of cavalry across Europe. A study of the hieroi lochoi of Thebes and Carthage reconstructs how cultic and diplomatic networks shaped elite martial institutions, including the Sacred Band, across the western Mediterranean. It also underscores how even highly sophisticated, urbanised states such as Carthage are often interpreted through predominantly Graeco-Roman evidentiary frameworks. Finally, an analysis of Roman auxiliaries in video games shows how modern media reconfigures the diversity of the imperial army and, in doing so, reproduces or distorts inherited scholarly perceptions. Together, the panel offers a comparative framework for integrating material, textual, and representational evidence, re-centering military development among communities that did not record their own histories, demonstrating their active participation as integral drivers, rather than merely recipients, of innovation in ancient warfare.

Earning Their Freedom: The Military Value of Rome's Germanic Allies During the Early Principate – Julian Giesecke (University of Bielefeld, julian.gieseke@uni-bielefeld.de)

In AD 28, the Frisii, Roman allies in lower Germania, successfully rebelled against the empire.1 Forty years later, they rose up again, together with the Batavians, themselves amici populi Romani. This time, the Romans prevailed in a prolonged war. And yet, both peoples retained their territory and their autonomy. There is no doubt that Rome also shaped these societies, but they remained outside the provincial borders. Just like Tacitus, recent research has highlighted the role of West Germanic contingents in the Roman army. While scholarship also emphasises a general Roman reluctance to expand the Germanic provinces, the Flavians did move the borders further east.6 Therefore, the military value of the Germanic allies must have been a crucial reason why they were never annexed. The paper will analyse both the contributions of the amici to the Roman campaigns in Germania and the developments in armament, tactics and training among the Batavi, Frisii and their neighbours. Ultimately, it will show how much influence on Roman policy the Germanic groups gained in this way, and if it thus contributed to their political survival.

"Without Cavalry, Battles Are Without Result": Gallic Cavalry Equipment, Tactics, and Techniques c. 500–50 BCE – Alastair Lumsden (University of St. Andrews, lumsdenalastair@gmail.com)

Writers of the Late Republican and Early Imperial periods held Gallic cavalry in high esteem and described training techniques later adopted by Roman Imperial cavalry.1 Yet these authors offer little explanation for their battlefield effectiveness. This paper addresses this gap by examining Gallic cavalry equipment, roles, and tactical significance c. 500–50 BC.

Drawing on funerary evidence alongside a reassessment of Greek and Roman battle narratives and broader socio-political developments, it analyses how and why cavalry supplanted infantry as the decisive arm of Gallic warfare by the second century BC, evolving into a highly flexible, technically proficient corps. It argues that their effectiveness stemmed not from frontal shock action but from mobility, disciplined coordination, and the ability to identify and exploit moments of instability within opposing formations. The paper explores how Gallic cavalry were deployed in a range of formations to execute a diverse tactical repertoire that included medium-range javelin skirmishing, characterised by highly controlled manoeuvres that foreshadowed the *petrinos*, *toloutegon*, and *xynema* exercises later incorporated into Roman Imperial cavalry training. It also examines the combined deployment of cavalry and light infantry, a partnership that broadened Gallic tactical options. Moreover, it argues that the elongated La Tène II sword, long regarded as an infantry-based development, in fact evolved to accommodate the needs of horsemen who regularly shifted between mounted and dismounted combat.4 Collectively, these practices and developments challenge traditional narratives that denigrate Gallic military sophistication, reshaping our understanding of their contributions to mounted warfare across temperate Europe and the Mediterranean.

Is It a Bug or a Feature? Roman Military Technological Adoption in Its Mediterranean Context: Perspectives from Iberian Culture – Pablo S. Harding-Vela (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, pabloharding@outlook.com)

Descriptions of the expansion of the Roman Republic frequently mention the willingness of the Roman war machine to adopt and adapt existing technologies of other peoples. Since then, it has been cemented as a defining feature of Roman weaponry, one of the reasons behind their

success, and a practice that distinguishes them from other ancient peoples. In this paper I raise two questions. Firstly, was this practice so unique to the Roman army? And secondly, how should we perceive the adoption of new technologies in a region as interconnected as the Mediterranean? To pursue this aim, I will focus on a specific case study: the Iberian peoples of the eastern coast of modern-day Spain.

The military material culture of the Iberian Peninsula has been studied in considerable detail in recent decades, and both evidence and analyses have proven that the Iberian peoples of the second half of the 3rd century fought in a manner not too dissimilar than that of the Romans before the Marian reforms: open combat in organised formations of men bearing throwing and thrusting spears, oval shields and helmets: these bodies of men would have been preceded by lightly-armoured skirmishers. Similarly to how the *gladius hispaniensis* was adopted by the Romans from Celtiberian prototypes, the Iberians adopted Hellenistic-style ovel shields, *Montefortino*-style helmets, and La Tène swords. The adoption of foreign *militaria* was, indeed, bidirectional. Interestingly, however, these new 'foreign' elements were blended seamlessly into the mental constructs of local peoples: all manner of depictions from this period show Iberian warrior elites bearing these new weapons, and they can even be found in ritual spaces. This permeability, while maintaining a strong local identity, is a recurring feature of the ancient Mediterranean, and should raise questions on how Roman technological adoption is perceived, when seen in context.

Thracian Warfare in the Context of Odrysian Hegemony – Jan Ott (University of Bochum, jan.ott@rub.de)

This paper aims to analyse Thracian warfare through a "Thracian perspective". In the studies of Classical warfare, the significance and increased usage of the Thracian peltast in Greek armies during the Late Classical period has largely been recognized. will be very illuminating in analyzing how these systems work and can potentially develop due to wars, crises and other political circumstances. This framework thus opens up new potential points of discussion for the actual structure of Thracian armies at different periods, the role of their various elements and the recontextualization of the peltast during the Classical and Hellenistic period. So much in fact that the peltast is often seen as the essential element of so-called "Thracian warfare". This, however, is the result of an overgeneralisation of the few details that survive on battles with Thracian involvement and an infantry-focused narrative of our Greek sources. Analysing "Thracian warfare", however, requires framing the army sizes, compositions and types of soldiers both from the perspective of their role in Thracian politics and society, as well as a discussion of the interconnected influences of Thracian polities on one another. This way, a generalised view of a "Thracian type" of warfare can be avoided and a multilayered picture emerges that recognises certain ways of fighting as potential ex-pressions of inter-cultural influence, hegemony and resistance.

In explicit terms, this means understanding that most of our details of "Thracian warfare" come from a time when the Odrysian kingdom ruled large parts of Thrace and regularly sought to extend its power. The Odrysian kings enforced their rule with large armies of mounted nobility, their retinues, and auxiliaries drawn from peripheral areas of the kingdom, mercenaries or allies, quickly overpowering any resistance to their hegemony by sheer force. This resistance – often itself from peripheral areas – in turn is expressed through guerilla warfare, with tactics, formations and weapons aimed at countering these largely mounted armies, thus creating a different kind of usage and role of peltasts than in either Odrysian or in Greek armies. A comparative approach with the transformation of the Classical Macedonian military, itself based

on a wealthy mounted nobility that was supported by auxiliaries, will be very illuminating in analyzing how these systems work and can potentially develop due to wars, crises and other political circumstances. This framework thus opens up new potential points of discussion for the actual structure of Thracian armies at different periods, the role of their various elements and the recontextualization of the peltast during the Classical and Hellenistic period.

The Reception of Roman Auxiliary Troops in Video Games – Ove Frank (University of Koblenz, ove-frank@uni-koblenz.de)

In contemporary perceptions of the Roman Empire, the military often plays a pivotal role. Iconic images of legionnaires marching in lockstep and forming a testudo formation under enemy fire, continue to resonate in films, comic books and video games today. Films such as Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" and video games such as "Ryse: Son of Rome" draw on this iconography, thus shaping contemporary popular perceptions of the Roman military. However, a key aspect that is frequently overlooked in popular culture is that the Roman army was not as homogeneous as it is often portrayed. By the early imperial period, around half of the army comprised auxiliary troops who were not of Roman origin. These auxiliaries were responsible for providing all other branches of the military, apart from the heavy infantry formed by the citizen legions. This included cavalry, slingers, archers, and light infantry. While films and TV shows rarely depict 'non- Romans' in the Roman military clearly as such, video games often offer a more nuanced portrayal that addresses the issue of 'diversity' and 'identity' in a tactical, functional or narrative way. Research on the Roman military in entertainment media is scarce in general, and a corresponding analysis of Roman auxiliaries in this context is completely lacking. Given that video games now represent the most lucrative entertainment sector and significantly influence perceptions of antiquity, they warrant our attention. In my doctoral thesis, I examine how Roman auxiliary troops are represented in video games, analysing their depiction and function. The objective of this study is to examine the evolution of Roman auxiliaries in video games over time and the underlying reasons for this change. To this end, I will employ discourse analysis of contemporary research, entertainment media and society.

'The *Hieroi Lochoi* of Thebes and Carthage: Parsing the Remnants of a Mutual Mythography' – Andrew M. Hill (Trinity College Dublin, hillan@tcd.ie)

The Theban 'Sacred Band' (ὁ ἱερὸς λόχος) – the elite military unit destroyed by Philip II in 338 BC – was peculiar in its organisation into 150 pairs of lovers in reverence for and in imitation of Heracles and his young lover and charioteer, Iolaus (Plut. *Pelop*. 18). Yet the enigma of this unit of lovers and fighters is deepened by the strange coincidence of its shared name with just one other military order of the classical world: the Sacred Band of the city of Carthage in North Africa – an organisation even less is known about, though so far has appeared to share no association with its Theban namesake.

This article reviews the literary and archaeological evidence for the worship of Heracles and Iolaus and their Punic cognates in the Western Mediterranean and arrives at the fresh hypothesis that the 'sacred' aspect of the Carthaginian unit refers also to this athletic and martial cult. As divine witnesses to the treaty between Hannibal and Philip V in 215, the duo must have been prominent deities within the army of the third century (Polyb. 7.9), yet fourth-century iconographic evidence from Carthage and its colonies also points to a deeper history. From Punic times an assimilated Iolaus figure was associated particularly with the island of Sardinia and its progenitor god, Sardus Pater – a likely origin for the later Theban tradition placing his

tomb on the island (Paus. 9.23.1). In the context of recorded diplomatic ties between Thebes and Carthage in the 360s-350s (RO 43), the mythographic coalescence of Iolaus' cultus with traditions to the west may have worked into a wider process of cultural exchange, serving to strengthen inter-state links rooted in the legendary kinship and shared Phoenician heritage of both cities back to their mother city of Tyre, the home of Cadmus.

Transcontinental Panel: Warfare in the Sixth-Century Roman Empire and Beyond (Chair: Christopher Lillington-Martin / Conor Whately)

Battle Tactics and Medicare – Christopher Lillington-Martin (Cardiff University, Lillington-MartinC@cardiff.ac.uk)

Procopius of Caesarea offers unusually detailed accounts of combat wounds within his narratives of sixth-century warfare, and he provides precise descriptions of terrain and tactical manoeuvres. Passages are analysed alongside medical and military manuals (Celsus, Paul of Aegina, and Maurice's Strategikon) or integrated with digital topographic data. This allows for a more nuanced reconstruction of how military medical care was organised and how specific landscapes shaped the execution of tactics. This interdisciplinary approach moves beyond the constraints of relying solely on historiographical narrative, which can obscure or compress the complexities of battlefield experience. Evidence from these textual traditions further attests to the existence of structured military medical provision for combat injuries. Through case studies of the conflicts at Dara (530 CE, Turkey), Tricamarum (533, Tunisia), and Rome (537–538), this paper argues for more precise assessments of battle locations, tactical decision-making, and the organisation of medical care.

Late Antique Generalship: the Tension between Manuals and Histories – David Parnell (Indiana University Northwest, parnelld@iu.edu)

When considering techniques of generalship in the Late Antique world, we are blessed with two very different types of sources. Military manuals provide abstract ideals about how generals should behave and what decisions they should make, while contemporary histories record (or at least purport to record) how those generals actually behaved and what decisions they actually made. Between these two source types lies a tension. How much of generalship was following the manual, and how much of it was acting "out of the box?" The best way to explore this tension is to line up examples from histories against expected behaviors from manuals. For instance, the sixth-century *Strategikon* of Maurice recommends "The general should always have a body of chosen troops about him, whom he can send to the support of sections of the army which are hard pressed" (8.2.100). In the *Wars* of Procopius, we see Belisarius follow this recommendation clearly at the Battle of Dara (530), but not at the Battle of Tricamarum (533). Why the discrepancy? The frequency with which good generals followed military manuals or deliberately ignored their mandates will be examined in this paper.

A**gathias and the Transformation of the Roman Military** – Conor Whately (University of Winnipeg, c.whately@uwinnipeg.ca)

Agathias was a historian with no firsthand experience of warfare, and so who had to rely on his sources and wide reading. Yet, despite his background as a lawyer and poet, he decided to follow

in the footsteps of previous historians from Thucydides to Ammianus Marcellinus by writing a secular history focused on war and politics. Agathias' *Histories* are increasingly the subject of scholarly attention, even if the quantity pales in comparison to the veritable explosion of research on Procopius. Though scholars like Cameron and Rance have been more sceptical about the quality of some of Agathias' military subject matter, others like Koehn and Petitjean have argued that he serves as a valuable source for some of the bigger changes in the Roman military, particularly regarding the use of cavalry. This paper will build on that trend, by evaluating Agathias as a source for the Roman military in combat in the sixth century CE. In the process, I will evaluate the impact of Agathias' choice to operate within the Greek historiographic tradition on his approach to battle description.

Pre Battle Speeches in Procopius *Bella* – Isabell Tscheinig (University of Mainz, itschein@uni-mainz.de)

The proposed paper examines the function and narrative role of field pre-battle speeches in Procopius of Caesarea's Bella. While Procopius' historiographical technique has long been studied with regard to his classical models, especially Thucydides, but also Xenophon and Herodotus, these speeches themselves are often treated either as conventional rhetorical ornaments or as largely homogeneous elements of ancient historiography. The decisive point is not to demonstrate imitation, but to identify where Procopius sticks to the classical expectations concerning commanders' rhetoric and where he deliberately breaks with them in favour of narrative control and in order to adapt them to his own purposes. The contribution focuses on a small corpus of pre-battle speeches from different war theatres (the Persian, Vandal, and Gothic Wars), delivered by important commanders such as Belisarius, Narses, and Totila. Rather than asking whether these speeches are "historical" in a factual sense, the paper investigates how they function within the narrative economy of the Bella. As has already been shown for other ancient historians, it can also be argued in the case of Procopius that speeches are not used merely to heighten dramatic tension, but serve as a flexible instrument of interpretation and evaluation. In some cases, speeches frame crucial strategic decisions and retrospectively justify or problematize the course of events; in others, they serve to characterize commanders by contrasting prudence and calculation with overconfidence or desperation. The paper also explores to what extent certain speeches appear to be addressed not only to the troops, but implicitly to the reader, thus contributing to the author's indirectcommentary on leadership, responsibility, and the nature of war. Finally, since differences in the use of such battle exhortations can also be observed among the classical authors themselves, the paper asks whether Procopius employs commanders' speeches in an original and distinctive way.

Ancient Iranian Ways of War: A Comparison of the Achaemenid, Arsacid and Sassanian Empires – Ahmed Hashim (Deakin University, ahmed.hashim@adele.edu.au)

The purpose of this paper is to address the ways of war of three ancient Iranian dynasties: the Achaemenids, Arsacids, and Sasanids, all of which were formidable military powers. Their military history was, of course, a cycle of glorious victories as well as devastating defeats. Due to the impact of ancient sources and modern scholarship, Iran's ancient victories were often glossed over, and much was made of the three dynasties defeats at the hands of their various Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Hephthalite Hun, and Arab enemies. However, until recently ancient Iranian military victories was not recognized or appreciated in military history scholarship. The accomplishment of several classical historians in recent years has begun to reverse the traditional tendency to under-appreciate this military behemoth. I build on these

accomplishments by using a concept that emerged out of military history – ways of war or styles of war – but which due to the traditional reluctance to theorize or conceptualize in depth suffered from immense problems.

Firstly, it remained underdeveloped as a concept even in contemporary military history writings. Scholars would declaim vigorously about the British, German, Russian, American, Chinese ways of war without telling us exactly what they mean.

Secondly, ways of war as an underdeveloped concept became politicized and captive to unidimensional analyses that contrasted a 'western way of war,' originating in how the Greeks and Romans fought with 'an eastern way of war,' denoting how the Iranians and other eastern peoples such as the Indians and Chinese fought. They did this without examining in detail how these civilizations actually fought; instead, they reified certain aspects and claimed that the 'eastern way of war' was characterised by distant or non-contact fighting by means of hit and run raids, use of archers and cavalry, ruses, deception, and general 'skullduggery.' If that were the case, why would the Iranians face the Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines in pitched battle time and again, and many times actually win?

Thirdly, this categorisation of an 'eastern' or to use a contemporary term, 'Eurasian' way of war, built on the strategically ethnocentric approach of ancient observers such as Herodotus, Herodian, Ammianus Marcellinus, Xenophon, Procopius, and Maurice's *Strategikon* concerning the 'Persian' way of war. Ancient orientalism has merged or rather has been absorbed by contemporary military orientalism to continue to cast aspersions about both ancient and contemporary Iranian ways of war. Not surprisingly, a man such as U.S. President Donald Trump opined that the Iranians have never won a war but never lost a negotiation. This orientalist trope must have been conveyed to him by a *soi-disant* expert on Iran, of which there are many in the U.S. at present claiming to understand that civilization and culture.

Fourthly, ways of war migrated into Strategic Studies and War Studies in recent decades. These are my fields and unfortunately, I will argue here, both sub-disciplines have not adequately developed a conceptual foundation of what is meant by ways of war. This is surprising because there is an immense amount of data – both historical and contemporary – both by military historians and strategic studies/war studies scholars to do just that. We have not succeeded. Instead, we often see a complicated conflation of ways of war and strategic culture. The latter being a concept developed and extensively theorized in those two fields. They are not the same as I will show in my case study of the ancient Iranian ways of war. Furthermore, this confusion has been deepened by the fact that Military History and Strategic Studies/War Studies often talk or write past one another. This paper will be drafted as an effort to reduce this gap between the two fields.

In this context, I propose to establish a theoretical and conceptual framework for furthering developing what is meant by a way of war, address the environmental, structural, organisational, technological, geographical, ideological, elite/personalistic and cultural factors that shape a way of war and apply it to the ancient Iranian dynasties to achieve a better understanding of how they developed their respective militaries, why they developed them the way they did, and why they fought the way they did. There are, of course, significant variations between them as a way of war is not static. This is part of a longer project that is coming to fruition as a book called *Iranian Ways of War: From Cyrus the Great to Qasem Soleimani*.

Tuesday, June 9 – Room 02

Open Panel: The Limits of Military Service in the Roman Empire (Chair: Christian Barthel)

One Last Swim for the Batavians: Crossing the Tigris July 363AD – Murray Dahm (Sydney, murraydahm@gmail.com)

The Batavians had a long history serving in Rome's armies. Their homeland, the *Insula Batavorum*, "Island of the Batavii", is mentioned by Caesar and we find them serving as auxiliaries in Roman armies from the time of Germanicus Caesar onwards. We also find them constituting the majority of men in the *Germani corpore custodes* (the German bodyguards) of the emperors, from Augustus to Nero. Eventually nine auxiliary cohorts served in Rome's armies, even after the Batavian Revolt of AD 69-70, and they were highly valued for that service. One of the noteworthy traits of these Batavians was their ability to swim rivers and bodies of water with their equipment, ready to fight as soon as they emerged from the water, something they became known for and a skill it seems which was expected of them. We find them performing just such deeds in Britian between AD 43 and 83, and in AD 69. Although we have ample evidence of the continuing service of Batavian units – we find the Batavians named as the reserve at the battle of Adrianople in AD 378 – we lose sight of this particular swimming skill until late in their service with Rome. In AD 359, we are told that Julian enrolled Batavians specifically into the legions (Zosimus *New History* 3.8) and, four years later, after Julian's death in Persia in late June 363, we find that during the disastrous retreat under the new emperor, Jovian, a unit was specifically selected to swim the Tigris (Ammianus Marcellinus 25.6.14). Although only named as *arctois Germanis* "northern Germans", it is highly probable that these men, selected because "from early childhood were taught in their native lands to cross the greatest of all rivers" were the Batavians – perhaps making their last attested swim in the service of Rome.

Roman Garrisons in Northwestern Colchis during the 1st-3rd Centuries AD – Kakhaber Pipia (Sokhumi State Universtiy, kaxaberp@gmail.com) / Eliso Baghaturia-Kner (Shota Mekshia Zugdidi State University, ebagaturia1975@yahoo.com)

Northwestern Colchis (modern Abkhazia) represented a natural corridor connecting the two great regions of the North and South Caucasus. Consequently, this frontier zone of Colchis was continually subjected to pressure from the mountain tribes of Western Caucasia. It is therefore evident that the control of the nomadic territories of Western Caucasia and the protection of the "Meotian-Colchian" corridor were of strategic importance to the romans as well. Roman garrisons in Northwestern Colchis were stationed in the renowned urban centers of Antiquity - Sebastopolis (Dioscurias) and Pityus. The purpose of this study is to investigate the construction and modernization of Roman fortifications at these sites, as well as the deployment, composition, ethnic profile, armament, functions, and logistical supply systems of the garrisons stationed there.

According to written and archaeological evidence, the roman garrisons was stationed in Sebastopolis in 63 AD, following Nero's occupation of the Black Sea coast. Initially, the Romans built a temporary wooden fortification known as „Pila muralia". Later defensive structures, dating from subsequent periods, have been identified along the coastline. Between 129 and 131 AD, under Emperor Hadrian, the fortress of Sebastopolis underwent

modernization. The early Sebastopolis castellum belonged to the category of small forts, and its garrison likely did not exceed 200 soldiers.

During the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161), a Roman garrison was also deployed in Pityus. The castellum of Pityus is classified as a cohort-level, medium-sized fortress. Its garrison was composed of legionary troops, as evidenced by fragments of brick tiles bearing the stamp of the XV legion (Legio XV Apollinaris) discovered within the fortress area. The garrison of Pityus did not exceed one cohort, numbering approximately 500-600 soldiers. Archaeological evidence indicates that the garrison was equipped with stone-throwing machines, i.e. torsion artillery, as demonstrated by a discovered component of such a mechanism and several medium-sized calibrated stone projectiles.

The garrisons of Sebastopolis and Pityus exerted significant influence on local political processes. For example, during Nero's reign, the establishment of direct Roman control over the eastern Black Sea coast and the stationing of garrisons brought about changes in the political landscape of northwestern Colchis: part of the Henioch tribes inhabiting the region were displaced and resettled further south. Similarly, the deployment of roman military units in Pityus under Antoninus Pius controbuted to the territorial expansion of the western Georgian polity – The Kingdom of Lazica – northwestward, extending its hegemony to the River Akheunt (modern Shakhe).

In the second half of the 3rd century AD, Pityus and Sebastopolis suffered devastating attacks. The coast of the Caucasus and Asia Minor were raided by the Goths and their allied tribes. According to both literary and archaeological evidence, in 257 AD, the barbarians captures and plundered Pityus, and in 291 AD, the Sarmatians advancing from the northern Black Sea region seized Sebastopolis. However, following the reforms of Emperor Diocletian, the situation along the Pontic-Caucasian frontier improved. The Romans rebuilt the castella of Sebastopolis and Pityus, which continued to safeguard Rome's geostrategic interests in the region successfully until the 370 AD.

***Ius belli* and Civil War: Septimus Severus against Didius Julianus** – Carlos González Catalán (Universidad de Zaragoza, carlos.gonzalezc@unizar.es)

The *Ius belli*, the law of war, established a set of customary rules that Rome applied in warfare. According to this code, a series of guidelines governed behavior in times of war, ranging from the formal process of declaring war to the treatment of a city under siege or assault. Likewise, victory over the enemy granted the victor authority over the vanquished and their property. Consequently, prisoners, as spoils of war, could be executed, enslaved or forgiven depending on the clemency of the general.

However, civil war entailed a change in the rules of warfare against internal enemies. The traditional custom of war were based on aggression and defence against external enemies, but the response to internal conflict produced a contradictory situation. The civil wars at the end of Republic are the precedent model. The evolution of the Empire, through the configuration of a political system that concentrated power in the figure of the emperor, required an adaptation of this model to struggle for imperial dignity in a context distinct from the Republican period.

Therefore, this study propose an analysis of the civil war between Septimius Severus and Didius Julianus. In this context, Septimius Severus came to imperial power after gaining control of Rome without armed conflict. Nevertheless, an examination of the patterns reflected in the sources suggests that Severus' victory, which included the dismissal of the Praetorian Guard who supported Julian and the repression of supporters of his opponent, was subject to the *ius*

belli applied to civil war. Consequently, it can be observed how the model of war behavior adapts to the context of civil war during imperial succession.

Total Recall? The Mustering of Discharged Veterans in the Aftermath of the Teutoburg Disaster (AD 9) – Joanne Ball (Manchester Metropolitan University, J.Ball@mmu.ac.uk)

In AD 9, Rome suffered a serious – and shocking – defeat in its new German territories beyond the Rhine. Three experienced legions, under the command of Publius Quinctilius Varus, were ambushed in the Teutoburg Forest and close to annihilated, leaving the Rhine frontier severely underdefended. When news of the defeat reached Rome, the Imperial response was dramatic, and supplementing the reduced manpower of the army in the region was evidently a priority, ahead of an anticipated German invasion. Accordingly, levies were held, freedmen enlisted in the army – and time-discharged veterans were recalled to the standards from across the Empire.

Veteran soldiers were an extremely useful military resource in the Early Imperial period, due to their experience and numbers (in a time of decreasing enlistment). Many time-served soldiers were retained, in some cases seemingly indefinitely, in a *vexillum veteranorum* to await their official discharge, and served in some of the most brutal theatres of war while doing so. But each soldier might be expected that once they had been officially discharged, that their service would finally, and permanently, be over. However, as demonstrated in the aftermath of the Teutoburg disaster, this was not necessarily the case.

This paper will explore the recall of veterans to the standards following the defeat in Germany, considering why Augustus found it necessary, contextualising the decision by discussion of the role of veterans (both in-service and discharged) in the Early Imperial Roman Army. It suggests that while the recall was an exceptional decision which reflected the emergency circumstances Augustus believed the Empire to be in, it also demonstrates a fluidity of the soldier-veteran-civilian dynamic in the early years of the Imperial army.

Open Panel: Women as Victims of War (Chair: Nikola Burkhardt)

Sexualised Violence in the Context of Armed Conflicts in Late Republican and Imperial Rome – Lara Ochtendung (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, s5laocht@uni-bonn.de)

Sexual violence in armed conflicts was a multifaceted and frequent phenomenon in late Republican and Imperial Rome. Previous research has focused primarily on so-called “war rapes” during the conquest of cities, concentrating on women and girls as the a□ected group. This narrow analytical lens not only obscures the complexity of the phenomenon of violence but also shifts it out of focus: instead of exploring the history of violence, scholarship has often pursued questions of gender history. The research project presented here therefore deliberately broadens the perspective beyond the conventional concept of “war rape” of women and instead examines “sexual violence in armed conflicts.” A qualitative discourse analysis is conducted on the basis of a comprehensive corpus of literary sources, assembled through targeted lemma searches combined with logical operators in major databases such as the The Library of Latin Texts and the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, as well as semantic analysis using digital tools such as AntConc. In addition, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic source findings are used. Furthermore to the context of conquests, occupations, captivity, and enslavement resulting from armed conflicts are also considered as settings of sexual violence; violence within the Roman

army is likewise included. Both perpetrators and victims are examined regardless of gender or age. Starting from a compilation of manifestations of the phenomenon in literature discourse, the study investigates its preconditions, functions, and consequences. In a second step, the project explores contemporary reflections on sexual violence before situating the phenomenon within a continuum that includes, among other aspects, everyday sexual violence in the Roman Empire. Finally, the findings are placed in a cross-epochal perspective. This research project aims to broaden the historical understanding of war, sexuality, and violence in the Roman world while simultaneously contributing to interdisciplinary scholarship.

Narrating the Silenced: Female Voices and the Suffering of War in Ancient Literature – Elizabeth Scharkin (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, elisabeth.scharkin@uni-tuebingen.de)

This paper explores how ancient narratives construct and constrain female experiences of war, focusing on the figure of Cassandra as a lens through which the suffering of women in wartime is simultaneously represented and silenced. Drawing on narratological theory (Genette, Bal, Booth) and feminist literary approaches, the analysis examines how narrative techniques—such as focalization, voice, and temporal structure—mediate female perspectives on violence and loss. Cassandra, both in Greek epic and Roman receptions, exemplifies a paradoxical narrative position: she foresees the catastrophic consequences of war, but her knowledge is ignored, and her voice remains unheeded. Her portrayal reveals how ancient literature frequently encodes female suffering while denying female agency. By focusing on Cassandra's narrative function, this paper sheds light on broader patterns of how female figures are positioned within ancient war discourses—not as actors, but as narrative foils, emotional catalysts, or moral warnings.

In addition to Cassandra, the paper considers how Roman literature—particularly historiographical and epic texts—addresses (or neglects) the gender-specific consequences of warfare. It asks whether Roman authors exhibited awareness of the emotional and societal costs of war for women, or whether these were systemically marginalized within the cultural imagination. This presentation forms part of a larger dissertation project that examines gendered narrative strategies in Greco-Roman literature. Through the lens of narratology, it argues that female figures, though often denied overt power, exert narrative influence by embodying suppressed perspectives on war and violence. The paper ultimately contributes to a deeper understanding of how ancient texts used narrative form to reflect, obscure, or resist the realities of war for women.

Thematic Panel: Over the 'Border'. Questioning the Classical Mirrors on Ancient 'Eastern' Warfare – organized by Orestis Belogiannis (orestis.belogiannis@etu.unistra.fr) and Vittorio Cisnetto (vittorio.cisnetti2@unibo.it)

Investigating a phenomenon as complex and multifaceted as war in the ancient world presents significant methodological challenges. Modern scholarship has long tended to compartmentalize spaces, periods, and themes. This inclination remains evident when addressing societies which were placed, so to speak, over the 'border,' namely, beyond the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, and most particularly during the much dense First millennium B.C.

Within this framework, the military vicissitudes and features of warfare among so-called 'barbarian' peoples have been largely mediated through Greek and Roman literary and historiographical sources. These testimonies commonly depicted non-classical societies as either inherently violent and undisciplined or as unwarlike and militarily ineffective, ultimately inferior to Greek and Roman ways and means of war. Canonical texts (e.g., from Aeschylus' Persae and Herodotus' Histories to the narratives of the Roman Republic's extra-Italian conquests) thus contributed to a lasting ideological dichotomy between a self-defined 'West' and its 'Eastern' counterpart, an all-encompassing contrast frequently perpetuated in modern scholarship.

As a matter of fact, war itself functioned as a marker of cultural and ideological separation, with the 'Eastern' Other often homogenized through 'Western' perspectives. However, the predominance of Greek and Latin sources, most frequently, the only available evidence regarding Near Eastern military practices, creates a double bias. First, the scarcity of indigenous perspectives is compounded by the highly ideologized and positional nature of classical accounts. Yet, this very condition offers a unique opportunity for critical reassessment. Indeed, Greek and Roman evidence allow scholars both to explore otherwise poorly documented military realities and to question the intellectual frameworks that have shaped ancient and modern 'Western' understandings of war in non-classical contexts.

Therefore, this panel aims to re-examine many aspects of war and warfare in non-Greek and non-Roman contexts during the First millennium B.C., while simultaneously reflecting on the methodological implications of relying on classical sources. In doing so, it seeks to challenge entrenched 'Orientalist' paradigms and foster more nuanced approaches to ancient military cultures. Chronologically, the proposed case studies range from the Neo-Assyrian Empire to Rome's wars against the Parthians in the late First Century B.C. Geographically, the focus extends from the eastern rim of the Mediterranean (Anatolia, the Levant, Cyprus) to the Fertile Crescent and the Iranian plateau, encompassing major polities such as the Assyrian, Persian and Hellenistic empires, as well as smaller states. By selecting a limited set of illustrative cases, it intends to address the longue durée of these phenomena and interpretive frameworks, while remaining as comprehensive as possible in terms of themes (covering, among others, strategy, equipment, conflict-shaped worldviews, and naval warfare).

The overarching objective is to create a dedicated space for discussing War in this relatively neglected part of the Ancient World, thus highlighting the methodological and analytical opportunities inherent in rethinking war and warfare beyond the Greek and Roman worlds by foregrounding the biases and potentials of classical sources.

A Practice-Based Approach to Warfare in Iron Age Levant – Alejandro Mizzoni
(Universidad de Buenos Aires, alejandro.mizzoni@uba.ar)

Classical authors have been a preeminent model for writing history, and especially war histories. Most of all, Thucydides' methodology seemed to be a good match for the evidence-based, historicist or positivist preferences of 19th- and earlier 20th-century historians. When translations of cuneiform inscriptions started to emerge, Assyriologists looked in them for information about historical events, including wars and battles. Early histories of the Assyrian Empire, for example, often paraphrased royal annals, while ripping them off of their mythical aspects and noting some of their bias – i.e., the fact that they talk about their victories, but not of their defeats. Similarly, when rationalistic ideas spread in Western intellectual circles, the Hebrew Bible, including its war narratives, was taken as a source for historical facts beyond its supernatural or theological aspects.

Scholars still try to reconstruct historical episodes based on ancient war accounts, also aided, when available, by everyday life documents and archaeological evidence. At the same time, their own narrative characters are often recognized, posing challenges to their use for the reconstruction of ancient history. While it is also possible to restrict it to the understanding of the cultural history of their creators, the problem of the relationship between war narratives and their historical referents remains unsolved.

To go beyond this dichotomy, it is possible to approach ancient war accounts as expressing the social logics underlying ancient practices and experiences in the long term, instead of taking them as proxies for historical episodes or merely as literature. In this presentation, the possibilities of such approach will be illustrated with examples of: a) how Assyrian war accounts change according to their diverging expectations to establish persistent subordination ties, b) the key role of house, kinship and patronage-based logics in the practice of war in local epigraphic materials and the Hebrew Bible.

A Greek Sea? Evidence and Bias(es) on Pre-Hellenistic Naval Warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean – Vittorio Cisnetti (Università di Bologna, vittorio.cisnetti2@unibo.it)

Among the least explored areas of warfare in the Near East of the First millennium B.C., is naval warfare. This apparent gap stems from a double bias of perspective and documentation; and both happen to be largely inherited from Greek sources. Indeed, Greek historiography traditionally assumed that the sea—specifically, the Eastern Mediterranean—was an essentially Greek domain. This view, rooted in the celebratory narratives of the early fifth-century Persian Wars, fostered the notion of a supposed "thalassophobia" characterizing the great continental, 'barbarian' empires that had ruled in Asia prior to Alexander.

As a result, modern scholarship has long perpetuated the idea that what can best be known about Assyrian, Persian, or other ancient Near Eastern maritime activities depends almost exclusively on Greek accounts. That is to say, on narratives produced by their long-standing adversaries. This paper challenges that assumption by demonstrating that the naval warfare of ancient Near Eastern empires in the Aegean and the Levantine seas can also be studied through non-Greek evidence.

This contribution, therefore, advances two case studies drawn from the maritime history of pre-Hellenistic Cyprus. The first, set in the Neo-Assyrian period, juxtaposes a passage in Ctesias–Diodorus describing the use of Cypriot and Levantine ships and shipwrights by the legendary queen Semiramis, with concrete Assyrian evidence attesting to the presence of «ten kings of *Iadnana* (i.e., Cyprus), each with their ships,» during Ashurbanipal's Egyptian campaigns of 667–664. The second focus, situated at the very heart of the Achaemenid period, reassesses the initial phases of the (naval?) conflicts between Euagoras, king of Salamis, and the other Cypriot *poleis*, placed under Persian suzerainty, through a local source: the Phoenician inscription of the «trophy» erected by king Milkyaton at Kition, in 392/1.

Demonstrating Military Power through Peaceful Images: About the Great King's View of the Persian Army – Flore Provoost (Université de Strasbourg, flore.provoost@etu.unistra.fr)

As far as Greece is concerned, many historians have studied at length the Greek perception of the Persian army, explaining how, by exaggerating its number or criticizing its order, the

Hellenes valued themselves as better than their "barbarian" adversary. But what about the Great King's own view of his army?

Given the taste of their Near Eastern predecessors for siege and battle scenes, the Achaemenids could have carried along with this tradition, putting in emphasis the many battles they won to build the Empire, but they decided nonetheless to create a peaceful representation of its power. Thus, in Persepolis and Susa, thousands of Persian and Median warriors are depicted in bas-relief, marching peacefully towards a royal scripture or towards the Persian throne room. They are dressed in robes or trousers, wear different kinds of head ornaments and carry a bow, a quiver, a short dagger, called *akinakes*, a spear and sometimes a shield.

All of these elements, whether the localisation of the warriors, the weapons they carry or the clothes they are wearing is the result of a carefully crafted artistic program devised to better convey the message intended by the Persian king. Far from being "boring," "rigid" and an "unevolved Greek archaic art," as was declared by historians such as Gisela Richter in the middle of the twentieth century, those representations are intended "to convey a message of disciplined, yet instantly available, irresistible force" (Stronach, 2001). Therefore, the aim of this presentation is to identify, study and analyse the symbols, choices made, and means used to convey this message of timeless power.

Cambyses, Polycrates and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo: World Rule and World Views – Florian Posselt (Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck, Florian.Posselt@student.uibk.ac.at)

This paper addresses the emergence of Greek political-military worldviews in light of Persian influence. In particular, it investigates the emergence of the macrotoponym 'Europe' before it is used by Greeks and Herodotus as a political-military ideologeme to divide the world into a Persian and non-Persian world (Hdt. 1.4). This geographical term appears first in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo where the (pseudo-)global dominion of Apollo is divided into the islands, the Peloponnesos and Europe (Hom. h. 3.250f, 290f). Richard Janko (1982, 114, 260–261) and Walter Burkert (1979) have both separately argued that the arrangement of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo by Kynaithos of Chios ought to be understood as a lyrical inauguration of the Pythian-Delic festival at Delos in 523 or 522 BC at the behest of Polycrates of Samos, who had managed to expand the influence of his *thalassokratía* to Delos and the Cyclades.

It is argued that such a (re-)semanticization and employment of this toponym is best understood as occurring in the process of the Greeks' globalizing worldview, influenced by Persian claims to world dominion at the time of Cambyses. This was accompanied by the recentering of a global world into the Aegean with an explicit exclusion of the Persian world, indicating Polycrates' pseudo-global claims to world dominion. By adopting Persian modes of constructing political-military space, the term 'Europe' could later be re-applied to undermine Persian claims of rulership over non-Asiatic regions, firmly embedding Greek military-geographical thinking in a Persian Imperial setting.

Blessed Wars? Eukratides and Menander: Religion as Politics – Marco Ferrario (Northeast Normal University, Changchun, ferrario.marco.fm@gmail.com)

The scanty literary evidence on the political history of Baktria and India during the Hellenistic Period (ca. 330-130 BCE) coherently points toward the rise to power of Eukratides the Great as a turning point in the regional history. Around 170 BCE, this ruler came to the throne following a fractured period of dynastic insights following Demetrios I's expansion into the

Indian subcontinent. Campaigning far and wide across Central Asia, he finally clashed against Menander I, the powerful ruler of Northwestern India, apparently resulting victorious—and indeed, numismatics shows that the responsive nature towards Eukratides' foray from Menander's issues. Yet, little attention has so far been paid to the religious side of the coin, as it were: how did the two monarchs frame their epic contest for domination in the East? By leveraging anthropological insights on divine (sacred) kingship, this paper explores the ways in which victory could be communicated and defeat coped with, showing that it may be time for scholars to take seriously (again?) the role of ideas, including religious ones, in shaping historical trajectories in the ancient world.

Mark Antony's Anabasis and the Iranian Environment: How a Western Narrative Was Made—And Why It Must Be Rewritten – Stefano Miglioli (Università della Repubblica di San Marino, s.miglioli@unirsm.sm)

Mark Antony's 36 BCE Anabasis into Atropatian Media—nominally an ally of the Parthian Empire—was a multifaceted campaign set at a turning point in ancient history. Contemporary and later authors (Strabo XI 13–14; Liv. *Per.* 130.1–3; Vell. Pat. II 82; Plut. *Ant.* 37–50; Dio 49.25–31; Flor. II 20.2–10; Front. II 3.15; 13.7) provide rich and detailed accounts of this campaign and progressively shape a narrative that aligns with the deeply rooted Western imaginary that the Iranian environment played as the Parthians' chief ally in their unconventional mode of warfare.

A deconstructive approach reveals several levels of manipulation. The role of the environment in the campaign is filtered through various elements, including inflated self-justifications for a humiliating retreat, the influence of anti-Antonian Augustan propaganda, the trauma of recent *clades*—particularly that of Crassus—and a network of literary *topoi* and precedents (Alexander and the Seleucids above all). Traditional frameworks shaped by Xenophon and Polybius resurface: long and exhausting marches through vast, hostile landscapes; extreme climatic and environmental conditions that allegedly affected only the Romans; Parthian guerrilla tactics and unconventional manoeuvres grounded in a perfect command of the terrain. All those elements represent the antithesis of Roman "ecological imperialism," based on anthropic control of nature.

Once these narrative layers are bypassed, several elements emerge that overturn the established narrative. Antonian intelligence, relying on scouts and local allies, displays a solid grasp of the Iranian interior, evident in both overall strategy and last-minute compensatory stratagems. Conversely, the Parthian contingent seems reluctant to fight in defence of a border Mark characterized by harsh landscapes and climates far from being their natural allies. In conclusion, this episode reveals the existence of a ready-made paradigm of Parthian *topomachia* that predetermines and distorts every Roman setback in the Iranian world.

Tuesday, June 9 – Room 01

Open Panel: Managing the Experience of War in Mediterranean Contexts
(Chair: Michael Zerjadtke)

Eunuch Commanders of the Hellenistic World – Velos Kyriakos (University of Melbourne, kyriakos.velos@monash.edu)

The establishment of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the wake of Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid Empire led to the increased presence of eunuchs within the expanded Hellenic world. Where eunuchs had had a minimal presence in pre-Hellenistic Greek society and appear to have served mostly as domestic slaves, they now acquired a greater prominence. Starting with Alexander himself, Hellenistic monarchs integrated eunuchs within their courts. A consequence was that eunuchs came to hold an array of significant positions in Hellenistic states. One such function, which has been largely overlook in modern scholarship, is the employment of eunuchs as military commanders. Although eunuchs are not attested in positions of military leadership in most Hellenistic states, we possess evidence for the deployment of eunuchs as commanders of major armies and garrisons in both the Kingdom of Pontos and Ptolemaic Egypt.

In this paper, I examine this evidence in an attempt to ascertain the experiences of these eunuch generals. In particular, I explore how they are presented in the sources, the circumstances by which they attained their commands and their standing relative to their non-eunuch counterparts. On the basis of the extant material, I contend that eunuchs were actively appointed to important military posts and were indistinguishable from their non-eunuch colleagues in Pontos during the reign of Mithridates VI. With respect to Ptolemaic Egypt, I argue that the situation was more nuanced. While certain eunuchs assumed military commands by virtue of their positions as regents for underaged kings, there is also evidence to suggest that eunuchs could rise to military prominence without concurrently holding supreme political authority. Ultimately, this study will enrich our understanding of the role of eunuchs in military affairs during the Hellenistic era in addition to shedding light on attitudes in Pontos and Ptolemaic Egypt towards these oft-maligned individuals.

The Roman Reaction to Naval Losses Between 255 and 248 BCE – Jonas Ortel (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, jonas.ortel@hu-berlin.de)

In 255, 253, and again in 248 BCE the Roman navy suffered significant losses in storms, with thousands of troops lost, in, according to Polybius, entirely avoidable tragedies. And yet, we see very little reflection on the Roman side – apart from a short withdrawal from naval warfare no consul was ever reprimanded for his actions. The First Punic War was the first conflict in which the Romans pursued naval warfare not only on a tactical level, but also on an operational and strategic one. Consequently, the transition from a land power to a maritime republic necessitated a negotiation process concerning the manner in which this type of warfare transformed the assessment of defeats, the prospect of booty, and competition within the Roman nobility. Particularly in the context of Roman victories in the major naval battles of the war, it becomes evident that such an adaptation to the multidimensional battlefield did occur.

However, we can see no such adaptation for the reaction to the aforementioned losses of entire Roman fleets in storms. While M. Aemilius Paullus lost his fleet in a flimsy propaganda coup and was still honoured with a *triumphus navalis*, L. Iunius Pullus attacked a heavily fortified

fortress to offset the needless loss of his fleet to a storm. In recent years, these events have often been incorporated into a broader narrative of Roman military setbacks in the context of Atilius Regulus' futile invasion of North Africa. They have served as an example of maritime naiveté, thereby discounting the analytical value these losses pose. Therefore, this paper shall examine the reaction to the ever-increasing human toll of the war and ask what insights can be gained from the reaction to Roman naval losses between 255 and 248 BCE. What does an unregulated type of warfare mean for the limits of political and/or military power? And how can the conflict between collective participation and personal gain be mitigated?

Managing Emotions on the Battlefield. Analysing the Descriptions of *salubre mendacium* Stratagems in the Roman Military Literature of the Early Principate – Rodrigo Simoes Ferreira Gomes (Universidade de Coimbra, rsferreirag@gmail.com)

It was not unusual for Greek and Roman commanders to lie to their soldiers and/or their enemies during campaigns or even in the middle of battles. However, the benefits of these ruses were usually more strategic than tactical, allowing generals to influence minor aspects of a campaign rather than the unfolding of entire battles. This tendency is particularly evident in the classical period, during which military leaders had fewer and simpler means of controlling the psychological state of their men compared to their Hellenistic counterparts, although the latter had to manage much larger and composite armies. Thus, it is reasonable to question the veracity of the Greco-Roman polemologists of the Principate (e.g. Livy, Frontinus, Polyaenus) who describe many instances of Classical and Hellenistic generals who effectively applied these stratagems on the battlefield and claim that, rather than presenting the historical account of a successful ruse in a given battle, they were projecting the military strategies that were common in their time.

This paper argues that the tendency to import contemporary military values into the historical examples they present in their works was especially evident in the descriptions of *salubre mendacium* stratagems. These ploys were based on the proclamation of falsehoods during combat by military commanders, audible to their soldiers and/or enemies, in order to boost the morale of their army and demoralize their opponents. Through intertextual and critical analysis, it can be shown that most descriptions of these stratagems follow the same literary *topos*, based on the use of this ruse against the Fidenate and Veientans by Tullus Hostilius, characterized as the greatest exponent of military deception. A final objective is to examine the axiological balance created by these authors between the clear erosion of soldiers' loyalty through the use of such fibs and their immediate benefits on the battlefield.

Mobile Armies and Local Guides in Classical Greek Historiography – Dylan James (University of Reading, dylan.s.james@gmail.com)

How did ancient armies navigate not only geographical but cultural and linguistic barriers? One of the answers is local guides. The significance of these figures for travelling armies is starkly highlighted by Xenophon when he notes that the Ten Thousand, having lost their generals, were suddenly stranded in hostile territory, without a guide (hegemon) to navigate (Xen. Anab. 3.1.4). Guides could make or break expeditions: they influenced intercultural relationships, shaped imperial designs, and contributed to Greco-Roman geographical and cultural knowledge. A colonially-influenced European scholarly tradition has conventionally viewed ancient imperialism through the lens of the Greco-Roman coloniser and neglected the contributions of indigenous individuals; thus there has been little systematic work on ancient guides, despite

their significance to the outcome of events at times (exceptions: Austin and Rankov 1995; Bosworth 1996; Russell 1999; Stoneman 2015; James 2020; 2025). Historians of later periods have expressed more interest in guides and other go-between figures (e.g. Federici-Tessicini 2014; Konishi et al. 2015)

This paper will examine these neglected figures (focusing on the term hegemon) in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. This paper forms an early stage of my Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Postdoctoral Fellowship looking at local guides in Greco-Roman historiography and their interactions with armies and imperial powers, including aspects of identity and mobility. Building off my previous work (James 2020; 2025), I will show that by reading against the grain of these texts we can create micro-biographies of movement and non-movement, as these guides are used and left behind, or travel along with armies. What agency can we detect on the part of these figures, often non-elite individuals forced to negotiate between communities and armies?

Open Panel: Aspects of Warfare in Near Eastern Societies (Chair: Martine Diepenbroek)

The Role of the "Head of the Army" at the Israelite Court – Peter Freiherr von Danckelman (Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, peter.freiherr.von.danckelman@uni-oldenburg.de)

The study of the Warfare of Ancient Israel has long been neglected by modern scholars – most Christian theologians of the Old Testament are, understandably, not enticed to put too fine a point on warlike efforts, while Ancient Historians are mostly concerned with classical texts written in Greek or Hebrew. Thus, major texts concerning the Military of the so called "Kingdom of Israel" are either extremely specialised piecemeal studies, popular history or, as the venerable study of General-turned-Archaeologist Yigael Yadin, put an emphasis on Archaeological remains and don't concentrate on the Texts themselves. This paper tries to pull back the valuable source material that is present in the Old Testament into the light of Ancient Military Studies by examining a strictly limited topos: That of the שַׂר־צָבָא or "Head of the Army. Amongst the many warlike figures portrayed in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles of Ancient Israel, few are as notorious as that of Joab ben Zerujah, the שַׂר־צָבָא or "Head of the Army" of King David. His counterpart, the head of the troops of King Saul and later King Isch-Boschet, was Abner ben Ner. Together, the careers – and fates – of both men offer not only glimpses into the court politics of a small, mountainous near-eastern kingdom around 800 BC (as envisioned by later writers, of course), but also give a fascinating insight into the role that military leaders played within the narrative of the Tenach: What is the role they play for the narrative – and can we, through careful deconstruction of said narrative, perhaps gain a glimpse of their true nature?

The Spoils of War: Qatna and the El-Amarna Letter EA 5 – Eduardo Torrecilla (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, eduardo.sanchez@uam.es)

The publication of the five letters received by King Idadda of Qaṭna in the wartime context immediately preceding the fall of his city to the Hittites (*Das Archiv des Idadda*, Richter & Lange 2012) has provided valuable insight into the process of the Hittite conquest of Syria under King Šuppiluliuma I (ca. 1340–1322 BCE). In particular, several passages in these

letters—namely, TT2 and TT5—refer to the capture and subsequent recovery of sacred statues, not only with the aim of securing the protection of the divinities, but also of humiliating and/or demoralizing the enemy.

In the historiography of the Hittite Old Kingdom, references to *god-napping* in territories conquered by Ḫatti are common; however, this practice appears to have fallen out of use by the time of the New Kingdom. This stands in contrast to the historical context reflected in the two Qaṭna letters, which is perhaps unsurprising since the New Kingdom was still in its formative stage. Moreover, this episode of sacred image plundering recalls a notoriously obscure and difficult-to-interpret passage in Amarna letter EA 55 (ll. 39–43), written by Akizzi of Qaṭna—presumably Idadda's successor. This paper proposes a new interpretation of that passage, grounded not only in the Hittite practice of god-napping but also in local cultic conceptions of gods and the dead ancestors attested in contemporaneous or slightly earlier texts from the Middle Euphrates (Emar, Ekalte, and Azû), as well as from the city of Nuzi.

Neo-Assyrian Military Fashion Through Iconography and Archaeological Remains – Eva de Pinho (Sorbonne Université, depinho.eva@gmail.com)

This paper is based on the research conducted during my master thesis at the Sorbonne University, centered on the study of Neo-Assyrian military fashion through iconography and archaeological remains. The study of military fashion in the ancient world remains a rather marginal research subject and was, in the past, more of a tool for the interpretation of iconography than an interest in its own right. The scarcity of preserved textiles in archaeological contexts for the Assyrian period means that contemporary studies must rely on interdisciplinary approaches, with the use of secondary sources in order to reconstruct and understand these costumes and the customs they portray. These depictions, which must be intelligible for their contemporaries, transcribe how populations viewed their own clothing and way of dressing and translate status, rank and other social realities.

Thus our paper focuses on the comparison of textual evidence with iconographic and archaeological sources and therefore, looks to provide a broader view of all the elements that might make up a soldier's wardrobe beyond what we already know of their basic allowance from administrative texts.

The identification and description of a number of "new ensembles" beyond the ones previously described by scholars will enable us to return to and question the idea of uniforms, understood as a standardised ensembles associated to a specific ethnic group or rank, raised notably by Nicholas Postgate1. In doing so, we are to expand on the evolution of dress in the army, through specific examples, for soldiers of various ranks, as well as the distribution pattern of some elements of clothing or weaponry throughout time. Finally, those examples will enable us to address the notion of syncretism amongst soldiers' clothing in everyday life which iconography is specifically useful to highlight. In doing so we hope to bring to light a thoroughly understudied part of both military and fashion history.

Thematic Panel: Silent Wars: Intelligence Activities in Antiquity – organized Jorge Barbero Barroso (jorge.barbero@uam.es) and Martine Diepenbroek (martined@uj.ac.za)

This panel explores the often-invisible dimensions of warfare in antiquity by examining how information was gathered, manipulated, transmitted, and exploited across diverse political and cultural contexts. Moving beyond traditional battlefield narratives, the papers collected here investigate intelligence as a fundamental—if frequently under-acknowledged—component of ancient power, shaping strategic decision-making, diplomacy, and imperial governance from the Classical Greek world to the high Roman Empire.

The panel opens with two case studies that interrogate intelligence at the level of individuals operating at the intersection of diplomacy, deception, and war. One paper reinterprets Gaius Laelius, Scipio Africanus' closest associate, as the operational architect of Rome's covert intelligence efforts during the Second Punic War, demonstrating how reconnaissance, diplomatic cover, and alliance-building with Numidian elites enabled Roman strategic success in Africa. A second contribution reassesses the alleged Carthaginian spy Hamilcar Rhodanus in Alexander the Great's army, arguing that this figure is best understood as a historiographical construct shaped by later Roman and Christian narrative tropes. Together, these studies highlight both the practical realities of intelligence work and the literary processes through which such activities were remembered—or invented.

The panel then turns to broader structural and analytical perspectives. A paper on Polybius' Histories examines how one of antiquity's most sophisticated military historians conceptualized intelligence, communication, and planning within large-scale, multi-theatre wars. While acknowledging the importance of information gathering, Polybius ultimately foregrounded political cohesion and resource mobilization, offering a critical ancient perspective on the limits of intelligence in determining outcomes. Complementing this, a study of Alcibiades' repeated defections during the Peloponnesian War analyzes how intelligence flowed through personal networks, elite mobility, and political instability. It reveals how defection functioned as a form of intelligence transfer capable of reshaping both military strategy and internal political orders.

Finally, the panel situates intelligence within imperial infrastructure by reinterpreting the Roman cursus publicus as a key component of the empire's internal security and information system. By examining couriers, officials, and agents who operated within this network, the paper demonstrates how communication infrastructures generated information asymmetries that strengthened imperial control. Collectively, these papers adopt interdisciplinary approaches and multiple scales of analysis—individual, institutional, and historiographical—to demonstrate that intelligence in antiquity was neither marginal nor ad hoc, but a central element of how ancient societies waged their "silent wars".

Defector: Alcibiades and the Peloponnesian War – Marsha McCoy (Southern Methodist University Dallas, mmccoy8598@gmail.com)

Alcibiades is one of the most famous defectors in ancient history. After surviving ostracism in 216 by political subterfuge, he prevailed over Nicias to persuade the Athenians to embark on the disastrous Sicilian Expedition of 415. When recalled to Athens to face charges of impiety and profane behavior, he defected to the Spartans and gave them important military advice, causing irreparable damage to Athens in Sicily as well as within the Delian League. He then went over to Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap in Asia Minor and, after advising the satrap to take action deleterious to the Athenian effort in the Aegean, used his position with Tissaphernes

to persuade the Athenian generals on Samos to overthrow the democracy in Athens. This led to the Revolution of the Four Hundred in 411, the first oligarchy in Athens in a century, and then the broader oligarchy of the Five Thousand before full democracy was restored. Such political upheaval during wartime no doubt made the establishment of the Thirty Tyrants by the Spartans in 404 at the end of the War easier to impose on the already defeated Athenians. By 404 therefore, when Alcibiades was assassinated in the Chersonese, having fled Athens again to another Persian satrap, Pharnabazus, there were many parties who were happy to see him dead. This paper analyzes not only why Alcibiades was so successful as a defector, but also the particular cultural, political, and military conditions in Athens and elsewhere during the Peloponnesian War that made his persistent defections possible.

Alexander the Great and Hamilcar Rhodanus: A Carthaginian Spy? – Christian San Jose Campos (Universidad de Alcalá, christian.san@edu.uah.es)

This paper re-examines the elusive figure of Hamilcar Rhodanus, a purported Carthaginian spy said to have infiltrated the army of Alexander the Great. The episode survives only in the accounts of Frontinus, Justin, and Orosius, yet it has often been repeated without close scrutiny of its origins, coherence, or historiographical context. By analysing these three testimonies systematically, the study reassesses their credibility and the narrative dynamics that shaped them. The first part of the paper considers the internal inconsistencies within the tradition. Justin situates Carthage's decision before the siege of Tyre, Orosius after it, and Frontinus provides no clear chronology. The reference to Alexandria as an established threat further undermines the plausibility of the story. The episode also presupposes implausibly direct access to Parmenion and Alexander, implying a level of trust that is difficult to reconcile with the historical realities of 332–331 BC. The second part examines how cultural and ideological filters affected the transmission of the tale. Justin's version, derived from Trogus but heavily reshaped, employs familiar Roman stereotypes about Carthaginian duplicity, while Orosius reproduces the same tropes within a Christian universalist framework. Both depict Alexander through a Romanised lens of boundless ambition, reinforcing narrative patterns rather than historical reconstruction.

The paper argues that the figure of Hamilcar Rhodanus is best understood as a historiographical construct rather than evidence for Carthaginian espionage. The surviving accounts rely on familiar narrative motifs—Carthaginian cunning and Alexander's boundless ambition—whose rhetorical purposes outweigh any claim to factual accuracy. While Carthage may well have deployed agents during this period, the contradictions, anachronisms, and literary colouring of the tradition render this episode unreliable. The story of Hamilcar therefore reveals less about intelligence practices in the fourth century BC than about the ways later authors reshaped fragmentary material into instructive narratives.

Gaius Laelius: A Diplomat and Spy in the Second Punic War? – Jorge Barbero Barroso (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, jorge.barbero@uam.es)

Alcibiades is one of the most famous defectors in ancient history. After surviving ostracism in 216 by political subterfuge, he prevailed over Nicias to persuade the Athenians to embark on the disastrous Sicilian Expedition of 415. When recalled to Athens to face charges of impiety and profane behavior, he defected to the Spartans and gave them important military advice, causing irreparable damage to Athens in Sicily as well as within the Delian League. He then went over to Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap in Asia Minor and, after advising the satrap to

take action deleterious to the Athenian effort in the Aegean, used his position with Tissaphernes to persuade the Athenian generals on Samos to overthrow the democracy in Athens. This led to the Revolution of the Four Hundred in 411, the first oligarchy in Athens in a century, and then the broader oligarchy of the Five Thousand before full democracy was restored. Such political upheaval during wartime no doubt made the establishment of the Thirty Tyrants by the Spartans in 404 at the end of the War easier to impose on the already defeated Athenians. By 404 therefore, when Alcibiades was assassinated in the Chersonese, having fled Athens again to another Persian satrap, Pharnabazus, there were many parties who were happy to see him dead. This paper analyzes not only why Alcibiades was so successful as a defector, but also the particular cultural, political, and military conditions in Athens and elsewhere during the Peloponnesian War that made his persistent defections possible.

Struggling for Resources: Polybian Views on Conducting Military Campaigns – Evgeny Teytelbaum (Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University, eugteit@yahoo.com)

Polybius' *Histories* is an excellent source for military campaigns and strategy in 3rd-2nd centuries BC. Polybius stressed the complicated nature of wars in Hellenistic and Roman world. Basic military conflicts described by him were marked by a huge territorial scope and often have several war theatres. The main strategic aim of opposing sides was to attack the most important enemy's territories to defeat the enemy by depriving him from resources. The results of military conflicts were defined by several factors. Polybius certainly recognized the role of preliminary deployment, planning and military intelligence. At the same time the role of such circumstances was not decisive. The complicated nature of communications in that period often made information gathering a very difficult task. A detailed planning often was made difficult by the frequent and often unpredictable factional struggle of political elites (both local and central). For such reasons the crucial factor influencing the result of military campaigns and wars was the state's ability to mobilize human and financial resources, which was dependent on its integrity and especially on the cohesion of elite. Such traits were the most inherent traits of Roman republic and played a crucial role in the successes of Roman military strategy.

The *Cursus Publicus* as Rome's Silent Weapon: Intelligence, Surveillance, and Strategic Communications in the Empire – Martine Diepenbroek (University of Johannesburg, martined@uj.ac.za)

This paper reinterprets the *cursus publicus*, long understood primarily as an imperial transportation and courier system, as a crucial component of Rome's intelligence and internal security apparatus. Far from being a purely logistical institution, the *cursus publicus* enabled strategic communication, rapid information transfer, and discreet surveillance across the empire, making it one of Rome's most effective but least studied instruments of power. The analysis begins by contextualising the system's Augustan origins, showing how its infrastructure of waystations, relay horses, and official couriers created an unprecedented capacity for swift and reliable communication. While its formal purpose was administrative efficiency, this paper argues that the *cursus publicus* also functioned as a silent medium for intelligence: facilitating the transmission of military reports, frontier warnings, diplomatic correspondence, and sensitive political information.

Using literary, legal, and archaeological evidence, the study examines the operators who moved within this network, particularly the *frumentarii* and later the *agentes in rebus*. Although neither group was exclusively an intelligence service, both exploited the mobility and privileged access

granted by the *cursus publicus* to monitor officials, gather information, investigate dissent, and deliver confidential messages. Their activities illustrate how a communications infrastructure could simultaneously serve administrative, military, and surveillance functions. The paper further considers how the system shaped imperial governance. By enabling the center to remain informed about distant provinces (often more quickly than local actors expected) the *cursus publicus* supported a form of "information asymmetry" that enhanced imperial authority. Conversely, its disruption during the third-century crisis reveals how deeply the state had come to rely on its intelligence capabilities.

Ultimately, this study positions the *cursus publicus* not merely as a logistical backbone of the Roman Empire but as a silent weapon: a flexible, empire-wide communication network that underpinned both strategic decision-making and imperial oversight.

Wednesday, 10 June – Room 014

Thematic Panel: Military Order, Stereotypes, and Reality in Greco-Roman Historiography of Warfare – organized by Giusto Traina (giusto.traina@gmail.com)

This panel investigates the persistent and fundamental gap between military reality and its ideological representation across three decisive periods: the Hellenistic Age, the Roman Principate, and Late Antiquity. Through close analysis of primary sources, the papers collectively demonstrate how historical accounts—driven by rhetorical tropes, political agendas, and moral concerns—systematically fabricated or distorted military facts, necessitating a critical re-evaluation of key battles, units, and technologies.

1. Hellenistic Age: Ideology and the Eradication of Nuance - This section explores how historians prioritised ideological and ethical lessons over tactical nuance in the context of Roman expansion. Couvenhes analyses the Battle of Mantinea (207 BCE), showing how Polybius's ideological stress on Achaean order and discipline obscures the tactical effectiveness of Spartan leader Machanidas. Ballesteros Pastor challenges the rigid Roman terminology applied to military units in Late Hellenistic Asia Minor, arguing that so-called à la romaine units (e.g., under Mithridates VI) were often hybrid forces that retained essential local practices, such as the use of scythed chariots.

2. The Principate: Narrative Bias and the Subjectivity of War - Papers on the Principate examine how personal, political, and rhetorical motivations influenced accounts of civil war, rebellion, and military theory. Vial-Logeay contrasts the representations of Pharsalus, analysing Lucan's rhetorical violence (symbolising the death of the res publica) against Appian's seemingly "dispassionate" tactical detail to question the nature of historical realism. Rocca interprets Josephus's brief and biased treatment of the massive Jewish defeat at Ascalon (66 CE) as a political narrative of personal justification, potentially masking the deliberate internal sabotage of rival commanders by the Jerusalem leadership. The section also scrutinises theoretical combat: a paper argues that the widespread notion of the cavalry embolon (triangular wedge) is a geometrical invention by Posidonius, contending that the term functioned pragmatically as a metaphor for an assault column in actual battle narratives.

3. Late Antiquity: Evolving Capabilities and Rhetorical Lag - The final papers examine the evolving military structures of Late Antiquity, highlighting the persistence of outdated stereotypes in the face of demonstrable military advancements. Traina demonstrates that while early groups, such as the 4th-century Goths, largely lacked siegecraft, later groups, like the Huns, successfully integrated Roman expertise (e.g., engineers) and became highly effective besiegers. This paper cautions against historians' use of rhetorical tropes of "barbarian" incompetence (Ammianus, Priscus). Wijnendaele concludes with an analysis of the Eastern Roman buccellarii (c. 400–600 CE), suggesting that this private retainership served not just for security, but primarily as a crucial means of enhancing a patron's prestige and political legitimacy amidst the evolving power of the Roman imperial government.

Order and Disorder at Mantinea (207 BCE): Reality and Ideology According to Polybius and Plutarch – Jean-Christophe Couvenhes (Sorbonne Université, jean-christophe.couvenhes@sorbonne-universite.fr)

This study examines the accounts of the Battle of Mantinea (207 BCE), a pivotal clash between the Achaean koinon under Philopoemen and the Spartan 'tyrant' Machanidas. The battle, which famously resulted in Machanidas's death, is preserved in two complementary sources: Polybius's *Histories* (11.10-18) and Plutarch's *Life of Philopoemen* (8-11). Whereas Polybius frames the conflict through the lens of military rationality—contrasting mercenaries with citizens, servitude with freedom—and establishing order and discipline as the sole source of Achaean victory, Plutarch focuses on an ethical and biographical transposition of the events. This paper scrutinises the ideological and historical reality of Polybius's discourse by integrating Plutarch's parallel account. We argue that Polybius's narrative minimises the operational failures of the Spartan commander. Specifically, Machanidas's inability to successfully execute a planned siege forced him to employ catapults in a disorderly manner during the open-field battle. This action ultimately failed, despite the Spartans coming perilously close to victory. By analysing these combined sources, we move beyond Polybian ideology to reconstruct a more nuanced picture of the battle's strategic realities.

Military Units Equipped *à la Romaine* in the Late Hellenistic Kingdoms of Asia Minor – Luis Ballesteros Pastor (Universidad de Sevilla, lbpastor@us.es)

The presence of military corps organised 'à la romaine' in the armies of Late Hellenistic Asia Minor is typically confined to testimonies concerning Mithridates Eupator of Pontus, Deiotarus Philorhomaios of Galatia, and to a lesser extent, Herod the Great. Leaving aside anecdotal accounts, this study critically re-examines the evidence, arguing that the standard terminology is inconclusive and often misleading.

Whereas the literary sources employ terms like 'legion', 'cohort', and 'centurion' (or their Greek equivalents), we contend these do not confirm the existence of units identical to Roman legions. Instead, a more plausible interpretation is that these were local troops adopting equipment and tactics intended to approximate the Roman fighting style, similar to the auxiliary contingents of the legions themselves. This distinction is crucial and underscored by the simultaneous persistence of non-Roman methods. For instance, the deployment of scythed chariots by both Mithridates and his son Pharnaces II, or the integration of 120 elephants alongside Juba I's so-called 'legions', clearly reveals a continued adherence to divergent, traditional Hellenistic combat tactics. By analysing these inconsistencies and the problematic terminology, this paper seeks to move beyond surface-level classifications to offer a more precise and historically nuanced understanding of Roman military influence in the armies of Rome's friendly kings.

Order and Harmony in Cavalry Warfare: Ancient Mathematics and Geometrical Battle Formations in the Greek Authors of *Taktika* – Maxime Petitjean (Sorbonne Université, maximepetitjean75@gmail.com)

This paper challenges the conventional understanding of cavalry formations in Greek military history by examining the treatment of cavalry in the tactical literature (Asclepiodotus, Aelian, Arrian, Maurice). The emphasis placed on geometric figures and the mathematization of tactical realities in these treatises reflects a distorted perception of actual cavalry combat. Specifically, the notion that Greek, Macedonian, and Hellenistic armies utilised a cavalry triangular wedge

(*embolon*) is an invention attributed to the Stoic philosopher Posidonius in his now-lost treatise *Technē taktikē*, which subsequent tactical writers (Asclepiodotus, Aelian, Arrian) uncritically perpetuated. The impracticality of the triangular wedge is demonstrated by its complete absence from ancient historians' battle narratives and from Maurice's comprehensive analysis of cavalry combat in the *Strategikon*. Although the term *embolon* is used to describe cavalry formations at Mantineia (362 BCE) and Gaugamela (331 BCE), we contend these units are best interpreted not as apex-led wedges, but as assault columns of tetragonal units deployed narrowly, one behind the other (with flat fronts). In these historical contexts, *embolon* functions metaphorically, better translated as "ram" than as a specific geometric 'wedge.' This study reveals how a theoretical, mathematically driven construct entered the military canon, obscuring the pragmatic realities of ancient cavalry deployment.

Image or Reality of the Battle of Pharsalus. Some Observations on the Account of the Battle in Lucan (*Bellum civile*, VII) and Appian (*Civil Wars*, II) – Anne Vial-Logeay (Université Rouen, anne.vial-logeay@univ-rouen.fr)

This study contrasts two radically opposed narrative strategies for representing the decisive Battle of Pharsalus (48 BCE). Lucan deliberately employs rhetorical silence ('I will pass over in silence whatever you committed...') but substitutes it with vivid, symbolic imagery of dismemberment to convey the war's visceral horror and the collapse of the res publica. Conversely, Appian delivers the most historically detailed account (specifying distances, deployment), yet still utilises a tragic, Homeric literary framework. By examining Lucan's emotive spectacle against Appian's detailed record, this paper raises fundamental questions about the realism of civil war narratives. We argue that the authors' distinct perspectives—Roman libertas nostalgia versus Greek focus on the transition to Empire—shape the perceived 'reality' of the battle. This analysis ultimately challenges the assumption that historical detail is inherently a more 'realistic' tool than aesthetic choice for confronting the political and physical violence of civil war.

The Battle of Ascalon Revisited: Amateurs vs. Professionals – Samuele Rocca (University of Haifa, roccasam@netvision.net.il)

The Battle of Ascalon (66 CE), though only briefly noted in Josephus's *Jewish War* (3.9–28) and largely neglected by modern scholarship, marks a crucial turning point in the conflict. This decisive defeat shifted the initial Jewish offensive operations into a defensive, siege-based war. Josephus records that a numerically superior Jewish force, led by John the Essene, Niger of Perea, and Silas the Babylonian, was composed of untrained recruits and was routed by a smaller, disciplined Roman-led force under Antonius, suffering 10,000 casualties. The confrontation never escalated into a siege, and Josephus frames the loss purely as a result of a military imbalance: amateurs versus professionals, disorder versus discipline. However, the brevity and framing of this narrative raise critical questions. We argue that Josephus's account functions primarily as a narrative pivot strategically placed to justify the ensuing Galilean campaign. The defeat at Ascalon provides the context for Josephus to introduce himself and rationalise his subsequent efforts to create a disciplined, Roman-style army—plans that were later abandoned in favour of fortifications. Furthermore, a comparative reading of the Jewish War and the Life suggests a political dimension to the military disaster. The Jerusalem leadership, wary of powerful, independent commanders, may have deliberately sanctioned a doomed operation. Josephus' narrative reticence on this point may reflect his own complicity as a member of the central government, ironically foreshadowing the political sabotage he

would later face in Galilee. Thus, the Battle of Ascalon is not merely a military loss, but a narrative device that masks political intrigue and influences Josephus' self-justification.

Late Antique historians on Barbarian War Machines – Giusto Traina (Sorbonne Université / Università del Salento, giusto.traina@unisalento.it)

This paper investigates the reality of 'barbarian' military technology and siegecraft in Late Antiquity (c. 4th–5th centuries CE), challenging the prevailing image of incompetence found in classical sources. We examine accounts by historians such as Dexippus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Priscus, with a focus on the use of war machines and artillery. Initially, groups like the 4th-century Goths did lack proficiency in sophisticated siegecraft, as evidenced by their reliance on blockading, negotiation, or trickery over direct assault or artillery (e.g., the failed siege of Adrianople in 378 CE). However, this military capacity evolved rapidly. By the mid-5th century, groups such as the Huns successfully took heavily fortified cities by storm, indicating a critical shift achieved through the adoption or hiring of Roman engineering expertise (via mercenary service or captured personnel). We argue that the accounts of classical authors should be treated with caution. Their descriptions often employ rhetorical tropes of 'barbarian' incompetence to assert Roman military and cultural superiority. While Ammianus occasionally offers nuance by acknowledging Roman failings, the actual military capacity of groups by the mid-5th century was demonstrably more sophisticated than the prevailing literary stereotypes suggest. This study aims to separate the ideological bias from the historical record, providing a more accurate assessment of non-Roman siege warfare technology.

Eastern Roman Retainership. Between Private Force and Public Fashion – Jeroen Wijnendaele (Universiteit Ghent, Jeroen.Wijnendaele@ugent.be)

The tension between public and private military forces represents a persistent problem in the scholarship of Late Antique armed forces. The *buccellarii*, a form of military retainership, offer a conspicuous case study, undergoing significant evolution between approximately 400 and 600 CE. While the historiographer Procopius provides a tantalising and enduringly influential vignette of the size and elite prowess of his patron Belisarius's household troops during the Justinianic Wars (*Wars* 7.1.20-22), the origins and initial function of the buccellarii remain obscure. Existing scholarship often privileges the image of the sixth-century elite trooper, overlooking the phenomenon's earlier development. This paper re-examines the genesis and proliferation of Late Roman retainership from a specific Eastern perspective during the critical fifth century. By analysing various descriptions in contemporary textual sources, we argue that the rapid spread of these private retinues was not simply a matter of personal security or military efficacy. Instead, we propose that the acquisition of *buccellarii* was fundamentally linked to the legitimisation and prestige of their patrons, serving as a material projection of authority. This transformation was not coincidental; it directly reflects and responds to the profound transformation of Roman Emperorship and its government during the same era. By offering a new framework that integrates military sociology with political culture, this study sheds light on the strategic role of the *buccellarii* in a shifting imperial landscape.

Transcontinental Panel: The Modern Historiography of Ancient warfare – organized by Fernando Echeverría (fecheverria@ucm.es)

This panel aims at exploring how the topic of ancient warfare has been approached and researched in modern scholarship, focusing on scholarly interests, preconceptions and concerns. It also aims at bringing different academic traditions and fields of research together, in order to encourage comparison and interconnectedness. For that purpose, the panel will focus on fields of modern historiographical discussion, not on the ancient peoples themselves, since their boundaries do not necessarily correspond. The panel will try then to dig into the more or less defined and discrete fields of research constructed by modern scholarship, fields that, due to the highly specialized nature of modern research, have for the most part been independent from (and ignorant of) each other: this exploration will show that each field has followed its own path with little or no contact with the rest. As a result, some of them seem to be still dependant from much broader philological or archaeological approaches while others have been independent for a long time and even able to reflect upon themselves in the form of surveys or publications on the scholarship on warfare.

The contributions to this panel will deal with some of the most representative of those fields and trace their evolution throughout time. They will address the fundamental question of how ancient warfare has been approached and studied in each case, through what means and with what aims, patterns and ideas. They will try to outline the fundamental topics, phases and figures in each field and draw conclusions about the scholarly relationship with ancient warfare.

Introduction and 150 Years of Ancient Greek Warfare Studies – Fernando Echeverría (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, fecheverria@ucm.es)

Greek warfare studies emerged as a proper field in the second half of the 19th century, thanks to a group of German-speaking scholars who laid down the foundations of the discipline. They studied exclusively the great wars, and focused on weapons, tactics and strategy from the point of view of command. By the beginning of the 20th century, it became a separate field and has remained so all the way down to the present, with little interaction with neighbouring disciplines (most notably Near Eastern warfare studies). Also in the first third of the 20th century, a major split occurred when Archaic-Classical warfare and Hellenistic warfare became separated, engaging from then on in entirely different discussions.

Research on Greek warfare has fundamentally relied on the analysis of the literary sources, with archaeology being incorporated later and playing mostly a secondary role. Traditionally, studies have fundamentally focused on land warfare, and more specifically on the heavy infantry, interpreted since the beginning as carrying social and political connotations, building a political-military theory on the rise of the polis that can be traced back to Aristotle. This means that the study of cavalry or light armed troops was only incorporated at a later time. In fact, naval warfare and “siege” warfare studies have also developed as separate sub-fields of research, with their own figures and discussions. Only recent interdisciplinary efforts have started to merge the different sub-fields to produce more comprehensive reconstructions of Greek warfare.

Toward a Military History of the Assyrian Empire – Sarah C. Melville (Clarkson University, smelvill@clarkson.edu)

The study of the ancient Assyrians began in the 19th century with the excavation of the cities Nineveh, Calah, Assur and Dur-Sharrukin and the decipherment of Assyrian, a dialect of Akkadian. From the beginning, scholars have investigated every aspect of Assyrian military history including army organization, recruitment and unit types, campaign histories and operations, and military representation in art and texts. Early (and still valuable) works such as Walther Manitius' "Das stehende Heer der Assyrerkönige und seine Organisation", a study of Assyrian army organization published in 1910, and A.T. Olmstead's "The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal" published in 1918, established the dual paths of future inquiry, one interested in practice and the other in meaning. By the 1960s, publication of texts, art and artifacts had reached the critical mass required for in-depth analysis. Archaeology-based research by scholars such as Israel Eph'al, David Stronach, and David Ussishkin identified fortification and weapons typology as well as Assyrian siege techniques. Art historians from R.D. Barnett to Zainab Bahrani taught us to recognize the artistic conventions that governed Assyrian sculptured reliefs, and read them accordingly.

The groundbreaking efforts of Assyriologists Hayim Tadmor, J.N. Postgate, Mario Liverani, Simo Parpola, and F.M. Fales (to name only a few) revealed how the Assyrians honed their military capability and built the world's first territorial empire. Though few Assyriologists would identify themselves as military historians, all would recognize that war, conquest, and forced occupation played a vital role in the development of the Assyrian state and identity. Military history continues to be a vibrant, if mostly unacknowledged, sub-field of Assyriology.

Hittite Warfare as Mirrored in Modern Research – Gilan Amir (Tel Aviv University, agilan@tauex.tau.ac.il)

The Hittite Empire emerged from its capital Ḫattuša in central Anatolia in the 16th century BCE to become one of the great powers of the Late Bronze Age, dominating large parts of modern Turkey, from Eastern Anatolia to the Aegean coastal regions, northern Syria, and the Upper Euphrates. My contribution will provide a contextualized historical overview of scholarship on Hittite warfare since the dawn of Hittite studies to the present day. It will also survey the scholarly literature on one of the key aspects of the Hittite imperial endeavour: warfare and military organization. Hittite warfare has generated a considerable body of scholarship that illuminates both military practice and organization as well as broader ideological and religious aspects. Studies have focused on the composition of the Hittite army, including chariotry, various infantry units, and auxiliaries. Considerable attention has been devoted to chariot warfare, including tactics and equipment, particularly in comparison with rivalling powers. Other major research areas include recruitment and campaign logistics, weaponry, battlefield tactics, and siege warfare. Scholars have also explored the judicial, ideological, and religious dimensions of warfare, studying royal inscriptions, state treaties, divinatory and ritual texts.

The Emerging Historiography of Achaemenid Persian Warfare – John Hyland (Christopher Newport University, john.hyland@cnu.edu)

The historiography of Achaemenid Persian warfare began with the study of the Persian-Greek Wars and the conquests of Alexander, known from ancient Greek and Roman accounts without corresponding Persian narrative sources. The rise of 19th-century German *Quellenkritik* produced the first revisionist studies of these campaigns and the numbers reported for Persian

armies, but did not yet translate into a broader field of Achaemenid military history. The decipherment of the Bisotun inscription did not lead to further discoveries of Persian campaign annals, and the palace artwork of Susa and Persepolis included soldiers but no scenes of battle. As a result, scholarly retellings of Xerxes' and Alexander's wars between the 1870s and the 1990s – even in narrative histories of the Persian empire – based their summaries of Persian military organization, strategy, and tactics on Greco-Roman accounts. Attempts at systemic description attempted to make the best of scattered documentary fragments, in texts from Babylonia and Egypt that dealt with soldiers' recruitment or garrison life in provincial contexts. Yet the most important cache of internal evidence, the Persepolis Fortification Tablets (partially published in 1969), appeared to lack significant military content.

Due to these evidentiary limitations, and a wish to overturn Hellenocentric tropes of Oriental decadence and decline, the emerging discipline of Achaemenid Studies in the 1980s-1990s placed little emphasis on warfare. But this situation has changed in the 21st century due to new evidence and a resurgent scholarly interest in war and imperial studies. Increasing publication and scholarship on Babylonian archival collections, and comparative attention to expanding Assyrian military studies, have empowered systemic studies of the Achaemenid military to move beyond Greek sources. Advances in interpretation of Persepolis Fortification tablets have revealed the presence of soldiers after all, and studies of battle scenes on Achaemenid seals offer new glimpses into imperial visualizations of war.

The Historiography of Roman Warfare in the Republic: An Overview – François Gauthier (University of British Columbia, francois.gauthier@ubc.ca)

Roman warfare studies began in late 19th century German academia. It has been dominated by the study of literary sources, with the gradual incorporation of archaeological and numismatic evidence over the course of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. There is a certain degree of overlap with Greek warfare studies for the early Roman Republican period as it has been argued that the Romans originally adopted the hoplite phalanx. Although this has recently been challenged, it remains a matter of debate among Roman historians (Armstrong 2016, Taylor 2022).

Some very influential early works were written in collaboration with army officers such as *Heerwesen und Kriegführung der Griechen und Römer* (1928) by Kromayer and Veith. This resulted in presenting the army of the Roman Republic like a modern military, or at least evolving towards that direction, an approach that would cast a long shadow. One notable persistent research trend has been to explain the evolution of the army of the Roman Republic. Working with the knowledge that the Roman army would become a standing professional force in the imperial period, several historians tried to identify pivotal steps towards that development.

The most influential and enduring theory in the historiography of Roman Republican warfare in that regard has been that of the 'Marian reform'. According to this view, Gaius Marius dispensed with previous military institutions and created a new, professional force, foreshadowing the imperial army. This theory played a central role in establishing a demarcation line in research between the Republican and the Imperial army. For example, Parker's 1928 monograph on the Roman legions begins with the 'Marian reform'. This approach continued with Webster's 1969 and Goldsworthy's 1996 study on the Roman imperial army. Although occasionally questioned, this model has dominated scholarship until very recently, when it was thoroughly dismantled by a seminal monograph by François Cadiou.

Recent studies have tended to focus on the army of the Republic as an institution itself, rather than the mere primitive precursor to the better-known imperial army.

Decoding the Military of Ancient Egypt: Abu Simbel as *fons* et *origo* – Anthony Spalinger (University of Auckland, a.spalinger@auckland.ac.nz)

It may be less ironic but yet more accurate to claim that the origins of the continual interest in ancient Egyptian warfare by the interested public as well as the practitioners of Egyptology commenced in earnest with two greats: Ramesses II and Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823). It is fair to state that the showman-explorer opened the modern phase of Egyptian studies with his breathtaking explorations at Abu Simbel in Lower Nubia in 1816. Jean-François Champollion travelled in 1822 and commenced to copy the inscriptions. To be sure, he also encountered the major reliefs of the famous battle that Ramesses II faced outside the Syrian citadel of Kadesh. Needless to say, it was Champollion who, posthumously however (1835 onwards), gave the first edition of the hieroglyphic account of the battle. We thus wind up with Ramesses II, ironically or not, once more as the primal mover, and his "fame" seems to have become omnipresent in the first year of the great new Egyptian Museum.

But the development of ancient Egyptian warfare studies has developed equally in other direction, and contemporary research has concentrated upon imperialism as an underlying topic as well as the issues of sieges, armour, and now violence. Hence, the field has evolved into a multi-faceted specialist domain in which issues concerning forced population movements, the role of captives, and purposeful mutilation have been expressly emphasized, unlike in earlier years.

Wednesday, 10 June – Room 02

Thematic Panel: The Reception of Ancient Greece and Latin Military Literature, Knowledge, Text and Language – organized by Immolata Eramo (immacolata.eramo@uniba.it) and Philip Rance (philip.r.rance@gmail.com)

This panel investigates the late antique and medieval reception of Greek and Latin military literature in diverse periods, cultures and contexts, presenting case studies that elucidate interrelationships in the cultural transfer, literary traditions and textual transmission of ancient military knowledge, within a broad conceptual framework of historical, literary and philological perspectives. Insofar as 'reception', embracing diffusion, adaptation and response, is an early and continuous feature of Classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman military writing, the extension of inquiry to late antiquity and the Middle Ages is seen here in terms of a literary-cultural continuum, which recognises especially the role of Byzantine literature and book culture as a conduit of ancient written heritage.

The panel seeks to address three interconnected strands of reception. First, while the efforts of late antique and medieval authors to rewrite, modify and apply ancient military thought and practices clearly entailed the functional transfer of technical knowledge, of particular interest are inherent assumptions about the past and present, most obviously conscious deference to antique precedent, manifest in content, style and/or language, and operating at different literary, rhetorical and cultural levels. In this regard, all four papers differently touch on shifting perceptions of 'Romanness', empire, authority and antiquity, which underlie authorial motivations, readers' responses, and literary-cultural settings. Second, the generic conventions of ancient military treatises – and sometimes the reputation and transmission of particular 'classics'– variously influenced the conception, format, substance and/or wording of late antique and medieval compositions, in both Greek and Latin traditions.

The contributions to this panel explore examples of diverse adaptive strategies, including citation, epitome, paraphrase and excerption, whereby authors sought to revise, edit, condense or supplement ancient works in order to meet the requirements and expectations of new audiences, and where the authorial agenda for reworking a classical text ranges from sophisticated allusive literary mimesis to a practical need for a compositional template. Correspondingly, the interests and tastes of Byzantine authors, editor-copyists and patron-readers profoundly shaped the circulation and preservation of ancient Greek military treatises, to the extent that the surviving corpus can be properly viewed only through the prism of its Byzantine reception. Third, investigation of the sociolinguistic dimension of Greek and Latin military literature, including classicising vocabulary, *termini technici*, antiquarianism, semantic development, neologising and loanwords, clarifies the lexical and stylistic choices available in textual adaptation, while recognising processes of redaction, paraphrase and metaphrasis as crucial dynamics in the diffusion of this genre and a significant factor governing its varying readership.

Urbicius' *Taktikon* and the Reception of Arrian's *Technē taktikē*: Military Texts, Erudition and Antiquarianism in Late Antique Constantinople – Philip Rance (Freie Universität Berlin, philip.r.rance@gmail.com)

Composed to celebrate Hadrian's *vicennalia* (136/7), Arrian's *Technē taktikē* adapted and partly 'Romanised' a late Hellenistic tactical tradition. Now transmitted in a single mutilated and

lacunose copy (*Laur. gr.* 55.4), Arrian's work ostensibly drew little interest from late antique and Byzantine readers, at least compared to recognised military 'classics': Aelian, Onasander, Polyaenus. A notable exception is Urbicius' *Taktikon*, part of a composite treatise addressed to Anastasius I (r. 491-518), comprising a grandiose prefatory epigram, a selective epitome of Arrian's text, and Urbicius' own technological appendix. This paper considers Urbicius' choice of source-text and his purpose in creating a 'lexicon of the phalanx', as a guide to arcane military vocabulary for soldier-savants in an court-centred literary-antiquarian milieu, and the role played by ancient military-scientific texts, especially those with imperial associations, in conceiving and expressing '*romanitas*' in the eastern Roman empire. Investigation of the unique manuscript prototype of the *Taktikon* (*Ambr.* B 119 sup) elucidates its transmission and addresses the implications of Urbicius' access to a more complete text of Arrian's work than survives today. A brief concluding survey of Byzantine literature shows the wider influence of Arrian's *Technē taktikē*, both explicit (Leo VI) and unacknowledged (Nikephoros Ouranos, John Tzetzes).

The Reception of Polyaenus' *Strategemata*: Witnesses, Circumstances and Forms – Immacolata Eramo (Università degli Studi di Bari, immacolata.eramo@uniba.it)

Polyaenus composed his collection of *Strategemata* on the occasion of Lucius Verus' war against the Parthians (162), to offer the emperor "a supply of strategic knowledge" useful for the campaign he was about to undertake. References to this work in Leo VI's *Taktika* and Nikephoros Ouranos' *Taktika*, and above all the survival of anonymous anthologies and paraphrases of the *Strategemata* in the early and middle Byzantine periods (6th–10th centuries), testify to the significance of this *corpus* beyond the specific occasion for which it was conceived, but at the same time show how it underwent a process of elaboration, especially in the form of paraphrases, which ultimately led to a loss of interest in the original complete collection, insofar as these paraphrases served the interests of contemporary readers, both men of culture and military élites. Alphonse Dain's essay ('Les cinq adaptations byzantines des «Stratagèmes» de Polyen', *Revue des Études Anciennes* 33, 1931) set out the terms of inquiry, by first drawing attention to the existence of these collections, which have remained almost completely neglected by scholars, to the extent that two of them are still unpublished. Nevertheless, these texts are noteworthy, as they highlight the fundamental features of the reception of Polyaenus and, more generally, of stratagem literature in the Byzantine era and thence into modern times. The circumstances and forms in which this reception took place, and also the intricate relationships between the surviving witnesses, are the focus of this paper.

Rabanus Maurus' *De procinctu Romanae militiae*: Adapting Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* for a Carolingian King – David Paniagua (Universidad de Salamanca, dav_paniagua@usal.es)

In line with the idea of providing rulers with the most appropriate instruction, Rabanus Maurus sent a short text to Lothair II (r. 855–869), the newly crowned king of Lotharingia, on how the Romans used to select new soldiers for their army. However, as Rabanus lacked expertise in military discipline, he turned to the foremost Roman authority on the subject: Vegetius. From Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* he extracted the most relevant elements, avoiding whatever had become obsolete and seeking to offer a balanced text that was pleasant to read. This presentation will address three key aspects: i) the critical pattern applied by Rabanus to select and discard content from Vegetius' treatise; ii) the linguistic and stylistic procedures employed by Rabanus

to give the text coherence and an autonomous identity, and iii) Rabanus' doctrinal and formal contributions to updating Vegetius' text.

Technical Terminology in Medieval Greek Military Treatises: Language, Style, and Function – Ugo Mondini (University of Oxford, ugo.mondini@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk)

The military lexicon is particularly interesting from a sociolinguistic perspective on learned Medieval Greek. It is technical and, like much of learned Greek, may appear largely derived from ancient treatises and their commentaries. Yet, on closer examination, the distinction between 'derivation' and 'creative reuse' proves to be a fine one. Such a lexicon had to describe contemporary military practice in a meaningful and precise way. This required not only adapting received terminology and usage to current realities, within the 'grammar' of learned medieval Greek, through the interpretive lens of medieval educated readers, but also progressively incorporating new weapons, tactics and concepts. Medieval literary sources of varying refinement further attest to the easy, full integration of new terms – from spoken Greek or other languages – into the domain of learned Greek. Innovation, mostly lexical, is therefore permitted within this specialised vocabulary but, as in other areas of learned Greek, even those similarly connected to lived experience, such as ceremonial language, it does not occur systematically in the same way. This intricate relationship between received 'ancient' terminology, the 'registers' of learned Greek, and technical military innovation and practice – thus navigating between literary language, spoken language, and reality – is the central concern of this paper.

Thematic Panel: The Aftermath of Conflict: War, Memory, and Emotions In Late Antique Iberia (5th-7th Centuries) – organized by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda (pubric@ugr.es) and Esther Sánchez Medina (esther.sanchezm@uam.es)

This international thematic panel, a collaborative output from experts from various universities in the ROMEX research project (https://www.ugr.es/~romex/index-en.html), transcends traditional military history to offer a multidimensional analysis of the consequences of warfare in Late Antique Iberia (5th–7th centuries). Applying the lens of Peace and Conflict Research Studies, we propose a holistic study of warfare in Late Antique Iberia, analysing not only its destructive forces but also its political, ideological, emotional and narrative repercussions. Understanding the lived experience of war, we investigate how conflicts restructured the peninsula's political organization, social fabric, and collective identity.

The research integrates evidence across three interconnected axes: 1. Ideology and Memory: We investigate how post-conflict elites (ecclesiastical writers and royal courts) selectively remembered and framed war and the violence through their narratives to construct a usable collective memory, thereby legitimizing the new forms of Visigothic Court and Church dominance. 2. Gender: We specifically integrate a gender perspective, contrasting the increased vulnerability of women to violence with their strategic agency in elite alliances, resource management and mediation. 3. Emotional and Identity: We retrieve the "emotional traces" of violence through a critical reading of textual sources, interpreting the lived experience of

trauma, suffering, and emotional distress. This analysis tracks the fluidity of *Romanitas* and the formation of new post-imperial identities.

This panel argues that conflicts of Late Antique Iberia were a primary agent of transformation. By prioritizing the experiential, emotional, and ideological effects of war alongside institutional change, we offer a richer, more human-centred narrative of the region's transition into the early medieval world.

Visigothic Crusaders? The Religious Dimension of War In Early Medieval Spain – Andrew Fear (University or Manchester, andrew.fear@manchester.ac.uk)

A major concern of combatants in the early medieval period was to demonstrate the righteousness, and divine support, for their cause and thus the corresponding wickedness of that of their opponents. This paper examines this process in the Visigothic period. Centring on Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae Regis*, our longest Visigothic narrative of warfare, it examines how Wamba chose to present himself to his people and troops in a military crisis, the role of the church in supporting the opposing parties, and the way that Christian notions such as mercy were handled or ignored in the field. It also looks the nature of Julian's account itself, arguing that by his continued use of ancient and Biblical parallels and *topoi,* the bishop was endeavouring to present his ruler both as a worthy successor to the heroes of the classical world and also as following in the footsteps of the early kings of Israel and hence the authentic representative of the truth faith.

Victims, Mediators, and Protagonists: Women and War Narratives in Late Roman-Iberian Historiography – Henar Gallego Franco (Universidad de Valladolid, henarg@uva.es)

The most significant works of Late Roman Iberia historiography—namely Orosius' *Histories Against the Pagans* and Hydatius's *Chronicle* (5th century AD)—dedicate considerable space to war narratives. This focus aligns with the turbulent times experienced by their authors, a period in which the calamitous effects of war were felt acutely across broad sectors of Hispanic society. As products of an androcentric society, written by men and often shaped by their private and political interests, these texts reproduce the orthodox cultural model in which the historical protagonist is male—primarily defined by his outward projection and actions (political, public, military, and religious). Consequently, women are relegated to a secondary role.

Nevertheless, an analysis of these war narratives from a gender perspective reveals that this female subalternity is by no means homogeneous. Instead, it is articulated through various profiles: victims, mediators, and protagonists. It is therefore necessary to delve into the origins and construction of these roles, as well as the influence of the historical and personal contexts of each author. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the feminine occupies a distinct space within war narratives, even though warfare was, a priori, an activity reserved for men within the gender order characteristic of ancient societies.

Emotional Expressions of War and Violence in Post-Roman Iberia – Pablo Poveda Arias (Universidad de Valladolid, pablo.poveda@uva.es)

One of the defining phenomena of the Late Antique period in the Iberian Peninsula was the military incursion of barbarian peoples, which precipitated the gradual dissolution of Roman imperial authority in the region and ultimately led to the establishment of two kingdoms: the

Suevic and the Visigothic. Given its historical significance, it is unsurprising that historians have long sought to examine the various dimensions of barbarian military activity in Iberia, considering its political, social, religious, and even identity-related implications. Nevertheless, new avenues of research continue to emerge, particularly those informed by cultural history. In this regard, we argue that the history of emotions offers a valuable framework for achieving a more nuanced understanding of the military contexts of post-Roman Iberia, as well as for elucidating the motivations and underlying logic of certain military actions. This study therefore aims to identify, through literary sources, the emotions expressed by different social actors—both active and passive participants—in military settings, while also analysing the social responses elicited by such emotional manifestations. Among the emotions examined are courage, cowardice, fear, and anguish, together with their broader social implications.

Peace After the Storm: Post-Conflict Consensus and Internal Violence in the Visigothic Kingdom – Jesus Huertas Gomez (Universitat de Girona, jesus.huertas@udg.edu)

The political dynamics of the Visigothic kingdom were generally shaped by persistent tension between the monarchy and competing aristocratic factions. Throughout its existence, this tension gave rise to recurrent episodes of internal conflict, often manifesting in open rebellions against central authority that had to be suppressed and managed by the king. Yet the mere repression of dissent was insufficient to ensure long-term stability. In order to preserve social balance within the kingdom, it was essential to reconstruct consensus and concord as a means of guaranteeing the survival and continuity of the political order. This paper argues that the Church played a fundamental role in the management of post-conflict situations in the Visigothic kingdom. Acting as a mediator between the monarchy and aristocratic factions, ecclesiastical elites sought to smooth existing tensions and to foster reconciliation, thereby contributing to the restoration of political and social stability. Ultimately, the preservation of the kingdom's stability was also perceived as crucial for the well-being and security of the Church itself. The paper will examine several episodes of internal violence that occurred within the Visigothic kingdom, paying particular attention to the mechanisms, discourses, and institutional channels through which consensus was rebuilt after periods of unrest. Special emphasis will be placed on the gradual formalization and regularization of these practices, which aimed to manage the return to a relative state of social calm and political cohesion in the aftermath of internal conflict.

Thematic Panel: Blurring Boundaries: Rethinking the War-Diplomacy Binary in Antiquity – organized by Borja Vertedor Ballestros (bvertedor@posta.unizar.es) and Gregor Diez (gregor.diez@uni-graz.at)

The conventional binary between war and diplomacy—as discrete, successive stages of conflict, negotiation, and resolution—obscures the complex realities of ancient political practice. Rather than existing as clearly demarcated domains, war and diplomacy often formed a continuum in which coercion, negotiation, and symbolic performance coexisted and interacted dynamically. This panel proposes to interrogate this conceptual boundary by examining the "grey zones" where diplomatic and military action overlapped, blurred, or were strategically conflated. Drawing on case studies from the Classical Greek world, Republican and Imperial Rome, and non-Roman contexts, the panel aims to reassess how ancient actors structured and represented power at moments of transition between war and diplomacy. Pre-battle

negotiations, coercive diplomacy, itinerant embassies, and rituals of surrender offer privileged vantage points to analyse the discursive, performative, and institutional mechanisms through which political legitimacy was constructed. By foregrounding these transitional spaces, the panel seeks to challenge teleological narratives of war and peace, emphasising instead the fluidity of political action and the permeability of categories traditionally treated as distinct. A comparative and interdisciplinary approach will highlight common patterns and strategic uses of ambiguity across different cultures and periods, inviting a critical rethinking of the analytical frameworks through which we study ancient diplomacy and warfare.

Sphacteria and Athens. Negotiating a Losing Battle – Jan Trosien (Universität Hamburg, trosien.jan@gmail.com)

In many ways, the Peloponnesian War expanded the scope of warfare in the Greek world. The dominant alliances at the time, the Athenian Delian League and the Peloponnesian League, clashed over wide-reaching theatres of war, utilising numerous fleets and armies over the course of several years. This brought with it an expansion of the strategic implications for the fate of individual combat groups or member city-states of the respective alliances, who sometimes found themselves fighting losing battles that threatened their destruction.

Throughout the conflicts, it was precisely such losing battles that led to last-ditch efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the engagement, putting both the imminent victor and the imminent vanquished in a unique negotiating position. The stakes of the respective engagement could be leveraged for concessions in the larger war of which it was a part. Furthermore, the negotiations could be hastened by the imminent victor through the decision not to halt their military progress towards victory. In the latter case, in particular, the distinction between diplomacy and war can be difficult to discern from a historical perspective.

This paper will examine case studies of last-ditch diplomatic efforts in the Peloponnesian War, focusing on the Battle of Sphacteria (425 BC) and the Siege of Athens (405 BC). This aims to establish a chronological starting point for the panel and demonstrate the permeability of the categories of peace and war at the intersection of diplomacy and battle.

πρεσβευταί αὐτοκράτορες in the Hellenistic Period – Gregor Diez (University of Graz, gregor.diez@uni-graz.at)

This paper examines the phenomenon of πρεσβευταί αυτοκράτορες (envoys with full powers) in the Hellenistic-Roman period. These envoys generally functioned at the conclusion of wars, consequently finding themselves in a conventional diplomatic grey area. While the phenomenon has been the subject of a great deal of research for the Classical and Roman Republican periods, studies for Hellenism and their role between war and peace remain a desideratum.

Of particular significance is an inscription that has received minimal attention in the literature, likely due to its suboptimal state of preservation. This inscription was published by Vassa Kontorini in 1983 in the Journal of Roman Studies (SEG 33, 637) and deals with some sort of πρεσβευταί αυτοκράτορες in the 3rd century BC and might offer us valuable insights on their behaviour. In conjunction with other epigraphic sources that explicitly mention πρεσβευταί αυτοκράτορες, the paper will - aligning to the panel topic of blurring boundaries - examine the extent to which Hellenistic πρεσβευταί αυτοκράτορες had opportunities to act in the tense situation between war and peace. At the same time, although there is no corresponding parallel

term in Latin, the question of whether the Romans nevertheless had corresponding equivalents will be put up for discussion and their scope of action will be outlined.

Diplomacy under Constraint: Restricted Councils and Coercive Negotiation in Carthaginian Political Practice – Gabriel Rosselló Calafell (Universitat de les Illes Balears, gabriel.rossello@uib.cat)

Some Greco-Roman sources refer to the intervention of a restricted council operating within the Carthaginian senate. This body, composed of thirty individuals of high sociopolitical standing in Carthage, appears in historical narratives in connection with diplomatic missions of exceptional significance, often linked to moments of acute crisis and to the survival of the city itself. Its recurrent association with high-stakes negotiations suggests the possible existence of a specialised institutional mechanism designed to manage sensitive diplomatic affairs under conditions of political and military pressure.

This paper investigates the nature and plausibility of such a council by analysing the literary evidence that attests to its activity, with particular attention to its composition, functions, and spheres of action. Rather than assuming the straightforward existence of a formally defined institution, the study examines how Greco-Roman authors conceptualised and represented Carthaginian decision-making processes, and how these representations shaped later interpretations of Punic political structures.

By situating the alleged council within the broader framework of Carthaginian governance and diplomatic practice, this study also addresses the methodological challenges inherent in reconstructing non-Roman political institutions through external, often polemical, sources. In doing so, it aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Carthaginian political culture and to reassess the relationship between institutional practice, elite authority, and diplomacy in a context where war, negotiation, and survival were closely intertwined.

Grey Zones of Power: Military Camps and the Blurring of War and Diplomacy – Borja Vertedor Ballesteros (Universidad de Zaragoza, bvertedor@posta.unizar.es)

The conventional separation between war and diplomacy as distinct and successive spheres of political action obscures the complex realities of ancient power relations. This paper argues that the military camp constituted a diplomatic agent in its own right, operating within the “grey zones” where coercion, negotiation, and political representation converged. Far from being a purely logistical or tactical installation, the camp functioned as a hybrid space, simultaneously civil and military, through which authority was exercised, negotiated, and displayed.

Anchored in the command structure of military leadership, the camp concentrated decision-making power while remaining open to a wide range of interactions. Envoys, allied forces, local elites, subject populations, and enemy negotiators circulated through its boundaries, transforming the camp into a node of multilevel diplomatic engagement. Within this setting, pre-battle negotiations, coercive diplomacy, treaty-making, hostage exchange, and rituals of submission were conducted under the implicit or explicit threat of violence, blurring the distinction between battlefield and negotiating table.

By examining the camp as an institutionalised space of political interaction rather than a transient backdrop to warfare, this study highlights its role in structuring political legitimacy and managing asymmetrical power relations at moments of crisis and transition. Through a comparative perspective encompassing different ancient contexts, the paper contributes to a

reassessment of ancient diplomacy and warfare as interconnected practices, challenging teleological narratives of war and peace and foregrounding the spatial and performative dimensions of political authority in antiquity.

Diplomacy under the Shadow of War: Coercion, Compellence, and Roman Statecraft – Enrique García Riaza (Universitat de les Illes Balears, gabriel.rossello@uib.cat)

Roman diplomacy cannot be adequately understood if detached from the persistent presence of military force that underpinned its effectiveness. Rather than functioning as a discrete alternative to warfare, diplomatic engagement in the Roman world operated within a spectrum of pressure in which negotiation, threat, and limited violence were deliberately combined. This paper approaches Roman diplomacy through the lens of compellence, analysing how Roman authorities sought not merely to persuade, but to oblige political actors to comply with Roman demands.

Drawing on episodes of *ultimata*, enforced negotiations, and managed submissions, the study explores how diplomatic interaction was structured by asymmetrical power relations and by the calculated anticipation of military intervention. Embassies and negotiations were frequently framed by the physical proximity of Roman forces, the mobilisation of armies, or the public articulation of punitive consequences. In this context, diplomacy functioned as an instrument for transforming military superiority into political outcomes without necessarily resorting to full-scale warfare.

By situating Roman diplomatic practice within the grey zones between negotiation and armed conflict, this paper challenges linear models that treat war and diplomacy as sequential or mutually exclusive phases. Instead, it argues that Roman statecraft relied on the strategic modulation of coercion, where the credible threat of violence was central to the construction of legitimacy, obedience, and imperial order. Roman diplomacy thus emerges as a practice deeply embedded in the logic of power, rather than a suspension of it.

Thursday, June 11 – Room 014

Thematic Panel: Hold your Fire! Agents and Strategies in Scenarios of Halted Hostilities in Ancient Rome – organized by: Denis Álvarez Perez-Sostoa (denis.alvarez@ehu.eus) and Leire Lizarzategui Elu (leire.lizarzategui@ehu.eus)

Ancient warfare followed a certain rhythm. There were seasons for war and seasons for peace. Periods of reflection accompanied declarations of war, and ceasefires or truces were often granted even when reconciliation was far from certain. These were moments of respite when hostilities ceased, even if peace had not yet been agreed. These transitional moments were commonly used to gather provisions, tend to the wounded and honour the fallen. However, they also presented opportunities to gather intelligence through espionage, force internal political changes, or even seek alliances with third parties capable of altering the course of the conflict. As these strategic actions occurred when a community's sovereignty was being contested by both external and internal forces, they raise compelling questions about the intersection of agency and legitimacy in warfare and diplomacy.

This panel will examine the rationale behind agents, strategies, and symbolic actions that emerged during these pauses, aiming to answer some key questions: Were all forms of temporary peace used in the same way? Were there established procedures, oaths, rites or symbolic actions to be followed in each case? Who had the agency and/or legitimacy to intervene during such times? Were there deliberate strategies designed to undermine the fragile peace? Or, conversely, did the actions of illegitimate actors sometimes provoke renewed respect for shared codes of wartime conduct? Through these inquiries, the panel seeks to contribute to expand our knowledge about the tactical and ideological significance of the provisional cessations of hostilities in ancient Roman warfare.

Breakdown of the Truce during the Punic Wars – Denis Álvarez Pérez-Sostoa (Universidad del País Vasco, denis.alvarez@ehu.eus)

Roman expansion across the Mediterranean between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC resulted from a combination of military effort and intense diplomatic activity. During a conflict, periods of warfare were interspersed with pauses, which were sometimes motivated by a truce that aimed to facilitate a temporary or permanent cessation of hostilities. However, these truces were not always effective, and could be broken for multiple reasons, such as misunderstandings, the resumption of hostilities, or even deception. This paper aims to analyse the rupture of the truce and its consequences during the Punic Wars.

Declaring Truce and Halting Hostilities during Roman Civil Wars – Lee L. Brice (Western Illinois University, ll-brice@wiu.edu)

Declaring a truce between warring parties is a normal part of war, whether to give both sides an opportunity to consider peace overtures, collect their dead, or just catch their breath. It is usually a topic historians discuss in terms as between two polities (e.g., Athens and Sparta, Macedon and Athens, Roman and Carthage). Civil War has long been recognized as the kind of intracultural conflict that breeds particularly bitter fighting. And yet truces occur. This paper will examine the issue of declaring a truce or simply halting hostilities through the lens of

Roman Civil Wars. In particular, it will examine the role soldiers could play in the process. Truces tend to be hierarchical - top-down, but Roman civil wars give us an opportunity to consider some cases where truces were imposed by soldiers - bottom-up - a reverse of the norm. Two of the best examples emerge during the Second Triumvirate when soldiers of opposing sides negotiated a truce before the siege of Perusia which then fell apart when the leadership did not accept it and then at Brundisium where it did succeed in avoiding the war between Octavian and Antonius. These are not the only examples from Civil Wars in the late Republic and early Principate. Cases such as these are a reminder that soldiers could peacefully band together to protect their interests - something that probably happened more often than we hear about from our elite authors.

Agency vs. Legitimacy to Act. The Diverse Roles of Women in Scenarios of Halted Hostilities – Leire Lizarzategui Elu (Universidad del País Vasco, leire.lizarzategui@ehu.eus) / Elena Torregaray Pagola (Universidad del País Vasco, elena.torregaray@ehu.eus)

Moments of peace during wartime were periods of crisis in which the established social order was often questioned. Ancient sources describing instances of suspended hostilities in the Italian peninsula from the 5th century BCE to the civil war of 68 CE record some sixty occasions in which women from warring communities intervened, either to support the preparations for war or to negotiate a lasting peace. These episodes gave rise to peculiar situations in which individuals who were not recognized as having full capacity to represent themselves temporarily assumed the responsibility of representing their entire community. Sometimes in front of attackers who were threatening the autonomy or even the very existence of their city. It has been previously posited by scholars that such moments of conflict provided Italian women with greater opportunities to exercise agency. However, it should be noted that not all female interventions were received equally. While some women were depicted as the preferred negotiating partners, others were accused of exceeding their prescribed roles. The objective of this study is to ascertain which forms of female action were recognised as legitimate by their contemporaries, and which were not.

Regulating Bodies: Sovereignty over Persons in the Roman Settlement in Greece – Alyson Roy (University of Idaho, aroy@uidaho.edu)

After famously proclaiming the “freedom of the Greeks” at the Isthmian Games in 196 BCE, T. Quinctius Flamininus quietly oversaw the return of 1,200 Romans who had been captured by Hannibal, enslaved, and sold before ultimately ending up in Greece. Plutarch reports that the Achaeans ransomed these Italians and presented them as a gift to Flamininus just before he set sail for Italy, where the freed men shaved their heads and walked behind his chariot in his triumph (Flam. 13.5-9). Recent scholarship has emphasized either the Roman problem of reintegrating captives (postliminium; Leigh 2004), or the Greek political idioms that made liberation a persuasive diplomatic gesture (Dmitriev 2011). The recovery of enslaved Italians illustrates how Roman authority could be consolidated through the regulation of persons during a pause in hostilities. Diodorus Siculus, however, preserves a rival account in which the repatriation of Italians appears as a required element of the settlement itself (28.13). Taken together, these narratives suggest a third reading of the episode: postwar settlement in Greece depended on controlling the movement and status of persons, whether articulated as reciprocal benefaction or enforced compliance.

Thematic Panel: War Crimes in Antiquity? – organized by Michael Zerjadtke (zerjadtke@uni-trier.de) and Christian Barthel (christian.barthel@uni-greifswald.de)

Warfare in the Ancient World is often described as boundless, sometimes even referred to as "Total War". Nevertheless, there were numerous instances where the use of physical violence was perceived as excessive and treated as a punishable offence. The efforts in restraining the armed forces and establishing rule-based conflicts have traditionally been viewed as the preliminary stages of international law or *ius gentium*. The panel seeks to add a new perspective to the legal dimension of ancient warfare by exploring the question if the modern concept of "war crime" can be successfully adapted and applied to our sources. To this end the participants will discuss various cases of transgressive behaviour, such as massacres, piracy or mistreatment of prisoners, that range chronologically from Classical Greece to the Roman Principate. Based on these perceived breaches against the (acceptable) conduct of war the participants will also attempt to identify certain key components and characteristics that would allow us to define what constitutes a "war crime" in antiquity.

War Crimes in Classical Greece – Michael Zerjadtke (Universität Trier/HSU Hamburg, zerjadtke@uni-trier.de)

The term "war crimes" implies a violation of legal provisions that can be punished by appropriate criminal measures. A look at sources from Classical times shows that trials were indeed held against combatants and military leaders in particular in response to their conduct during war. However, the offences for which they were convicted rarely correspond to today's concept of war crimes. Instead, they were mostly actions that harmed their own state or people, or religious sacrilege. By looking at the trials for offenses committed in the context of military operations, it is possible to show which written or customary rules could not be broken with impunity in Classical times.

The Incorporated Honor of the Citizen as Regulatory Force for War Violence in Classical Greece – Lennart Gilhaus (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, lennart.gilhaus@hu-berlin.de)

In Classical Greece, norms of honour and bodily integrity acted as powerful restraints on wartime violence. Practices such as mutilation, desecration of corpses, or physical humiliation of enemies were widely condemned as acts of hybris that violated not only religious, but also civic order. Respect for the dead and the prohibition of excessive cruelty reflected a broader moral framework linking bodily inviolability to citizenship, freedom, and communal identity. The citizen's embodied honour thus served as a moral boundary distinguishing Greeks from "barbarians," while regulating acceptable forms of violence and preserving the ethical and political integrity of the polis in war and peace alike.

Illegal Peace and Legal Massacres? War Crimes in the Roman Republic – Theresia Raum (Freie Universität Berlin, theresia.raum@fu-berlin.de)

The Imperium Romanum did not have a codified law of war. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to describe the wars fought during the Roman republic as an area without rules. The mos maiorum formed a canon of norms and values that was generally accepted and provided

orientation for military decisions. This also applied to the individual freedom of decision of the commander on the ground. This mos maiorum becomes particularly apparent when it was not obeyed. Selected case studies from the wars in Spain in the 2nd century BC show where red lines were drawn and crossed: massacres of the local population were not necessarily perceived as war crimes. Conversely, agreements to end military conflicts peacefully could be brought to trial. The paper examines the extent to which the issue of war crimes was linked to the political circumstances and social norms in Republican Rome.

War Crimes and Punishment in the Early Roman Empire – Christian Barthel (Universität Greifswald/Universität Passau, christian.barthel@uni-greifswald.de)

For scholars of international law, Roman Principate largely remains a blind spot. Unlimited authority combined with a system of friends and allies curtailed the necessity for elaborate treaties. But even though the Romans viewed themselves as "peerless" from a legal perspective, they continuously adhered to a strict set of values and practices in their wars against foreign gentes. These included an array of punishments, and even instances of social shaming, against transgressions in the field. Based on a selection of Roman laws and historiographical case studies from the Empire's Eastern Front, the paper will discuss how the sanctioning of war crimes can add to our understanding of Roman warfare and international relations.

Thematic Panel: The Many Faces of the Snake's Head: The Multifaceted Nature of Ancient Greek Military Leadership – organized by Alessandro Carli (alessandro.carli.96@gmail.com), Davide Morassi (davide.morassi@otago.ac.nz) and Han Pedazzini (han.pedazzini@unito.it)

As Socrates observes in *Memorabilia* (3.1.6; cf. 3.4), lining up soldiers for battle was only one of a commander's many tasks. Greek military leaders bore extensive responsibilities encompassing nearly every aspect of a campaign, from personally leading troops in combat to managing organisational challenges, all while attending to soldiers' needs and morale. Although in less explicit terms, Thucydides (6.20–21) and Isocrates (2.24; 8.136) likewise emphasise the importance of efficient campaign organisation, confirming how essential the non-combat aspects of leadership were deemed in the Classical period.

This panel seeks to draw attention to the multifaceted nature of military leadership by fostering discussion of the less overtly military dimensions of command. Six carefully selected scholars, ranging from early-career researchers to more established figures in the field, will present thematic case studies addressing different facets of generalship. Together, these contributions will examine the characteristic practicalities and idiosyncrasies of Greek military leadership in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of what it meant to be a commander in the field.

Particular attention will be paid to the essential managerial aspects of the role, including the importance of securing and administering the necessary financial resources – especially for naval operations – and of maintaining discipline among poorly trained, wilful soldiers. The latter issue will be complemented by reflections on the management of soldiers' emotions and its growing importance in Classical leadership. Political and diplomatic functions will also be discussed, highlighting the role of Athenian commanders in negotiating with foreign communities. At the same time, the cultural specificity of the Greek commander will not be overlooked: the panel will address how commanders engaged with sacred and religious beliefs,

and how these shaped the everyday management of the army. Finally, the discussion will consider how ideal models of leadership influenced both commanders' conduct in the field and their subsequent representation.

The proposed panel aims to generate a stimulating and substantial debate on ancient military leadership, promoting a more nuanced and realistic approach to the study of Greek leaders and leadership. It will build on recent scholarly interest in the topic (e.g. Roisman 2017, 2025; Thonher 2022; Tamiolaki 2025), adding a fresh perspective to a field currently undergoing redefinition. By underscoring the complexity and multifaceted nature of military leadership, the ensuing discussion will highlight the need for a broader and more holistic approach to the subject—one that we hope will inspire further research and analysis.

Models of Command in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* – Lynette Mitchell (University of Exeter, L.G.Mitchell@exeter.ac.uk)

Xenophon's Cyropaeideia was a pseudo-history of Cyrus 'the Great'. At the courts of his father and grandfather he learns the art of leadership. He rewards those who do well in order to encourage them in the pursuit of virtue, but he also punishes those who are disobedient. In this way he seeks 'willing obedience' from those under his command. He himself provides a positive example of leadership through his own personal pursuit of virtue, which includes submitting willingly to the negative model of leadership provided by his uncle in his war against the Assyrians.

The Cyrus of Xenophon is the 'complete' leader: he takes care of his soldiers and is attentive to their needs. He realises that being a leader means not just paying attention to battlefield logistics, but also being willing to reward and to punish, so that his men will love and trust him, and be willing to follow his example, on the battlefield and in their daily living.

Contextualising this paper within both political theorising and warfare of the mid fourth-century, this paper will ask why Xenophon constructed his ideal leader in this way. What were the contemporary military, political and theoretical issues to which he was responding, especially in Athens, Sparta, Persia, and perhaps even Macedon?

Strategy and Sustainment in Ancient Greek Warfare – Jonathan Reeves (McMaster University, reevesjm@mcmaster.ca)

Thucydides famously asserts that war depends upon money, and the literary evidence of classical warfare is replete with commanders constrained by limited resources and logistical challenges that bear out this observation. Indeed, no small part of the art of command in classical Greek warfare was the ability to assemble resources (χρήματα συλλέγειν: Xen. Mem. 3.4.1) and an effective general was necessarily παρασκευαστικός for military supplies and πoριστικός of supplies for his troops (3.1.6). Yet for all his emphasis on revenues and financial reserves Thucydides and other historiographical sources rarely explain how financial resources were actually deployed. In this paper, I interrogate fifth- and early fourth-century literary and documentary sources for evidence of the processes by which revenue and reserves were transformed into the available coin that sustained military operations. I demonstrate that (often overlooked) sustainment operations were a fundamental part of the financial ecology of war that developed in classical Greece and that the Athenians' nautical *technē* consisted at least partly in their innovative approaches to financial sustainment of their military forces in operational theatres. I argue, furthermore, that the importance of financial disbursements and

deliveries to military commanders in theatre in order to allow flexibility and dynamism in command-decisions, once appreciated, provides a clue to a long-standing interpretive puzzle in Thucydidean naval history: namely, the apparent strategic conservatism and episodic ineffectiveness of the Peloponnesian fleet and its commanders in the Archidamian War. I argue, building on Roisman (1987) and Falkner (1999), that rather than simply a cultural contrast to Athenian dynamism, the hesitancy of Spartan admirals reflects structural material constraints.

While Sparta and its naval allies possessed a sizable fleet already in the 420s, the Peloponnesian League was deficient not only in the reliable resource generation and deep financial reserves enjoyed by its enemies, but also, and just as importantly, it lacked the means to securely deliver what funds it had in order to sustain naval warfare on Athenian terms.

Can the Strict Schoolmaster Always Achieve Discipline? Lights and Shadows in the Generalship of the Spartan Clearchus – Alessandro Carli (Università di Siena, alessandro.carli.96@gmail.com)

When Tissaphernes outfoxed the unscrupulous Clearchus, Xenophon and the other Greek mercenaries were compelled to confront the situation without a leader. Prior to the treacherous slaughter of the commanders and their attendants, the exiled Spartan Clearchus had guided the Greek contingents, and his memory remained firmly rooted in the soldiers' experience even after his death. Unlike the other commanders, Clearchus received from Xenophon a particularly detailed obituary, which sheds light on his personality and shows how his unpleasant character shaped his generalship. Always grim in his face and speaking with a rasping voice, Clearchus treated his soldiers with extreme harshness and was accustomed to beating them with a stick. At the same time, the Spartan general displayed a marked inclination toward danger and, by leading by personal example, offered the mercenaries an exemplary model to emulate. In the most challenging circumstances, his men recognised him as the only leader they trusted.

This complex portrait has raised several questions about how Xenophon chose to depict Clearchus. In addition to those who sought to define his psychological profile, it has been suggested that the Athenian historian depicted a positive figure with some shortcomings, or, conversely, that Clearchus represented a contrasting negative figure to the role Xenophon would later assume in the continuation of the expedition. By reviewing the current scholarship on this general, our paper proposes a comparative reading of the obituary and the preceding sections of the first two books of the Anabasis, with the aim of reassessing Clearchus' behaviour from a different perspective. If we take his Spartan background into account, we can clarify certain facets of his methods of conducting soldiers and explain why Xenophon chose to highlight some episodes at the expense of others. Was Clearchus unequivocally portrayed as a negative, harsh general, or should he rather be understood as a proficient commander only under specific circumstances?

Homeric Models and Historical Practice: Emotion and Authority in Greek Command Speeches – Davide Morassi (University of Otago, davide.morassi@otago.ac.nz)

Scholarship has long recognised the importance of emotion in ancient warfare, yet it remains uncertain to what extent historical commanders themselves were consciously aware of emotional dynamics and their effects on soldiers. Complicating this issue is the distorted lens of reported speeches, which makes it difficult to distinguish historical practice—and commanders' emotional awareness—from literary convention.

This paper addresses the problem through a comparison of commanders' speeches in the Iliad and those preserved in historiography. Although Homer devotes considerable attention to narrating the emotions of heroes, his leaders tend to encourage their men through highly formulaic speeches, offering little evidence of a conscious understanding of the emotional patterns typical of warfare. By contrast, despite Homer's undeniable influence on customs, tropes, and practices, historiographical speeches reveal a more sophisticated appreciation of emotional triggers and effects.

Thucydides (2.88.3; 4.11.1) presents speeches not as ritualised formalities, but as deliberate interventions aimed at soothing anxiety, reinforcing cohesion, and strengthening soldiers' confidence in both their leader and the prospects of the impending engagement. This approach aligns with numerous references to the strategic exploitation of emotional dynamics to influence both allies and enemies on the eve of battle, suggesting a heightened level of emotional awareness rather than a merely conventional gesture.

By comparing these two bodies of evidence, this paper explores the subtle balance between imitation and innovation in Greek leadership models. While the Homeric ideal continued to exert significant influence (Thuc. 7.69.2; Pl. *Ion* 540d; Xen. *Sym*. 3.5, 4.6-7), lending credibility to commanders in the eyes of their troops, leadership practices nevertheless evolved, adapting traditional frameworks and incorporating new approaches to emotional management in warfare.

Armed Diplomacy: Military Commanders and Diplomacy in Classical Greece (5th-4th centuries BCE) – Han Pedazzini (Università di Torino, han.pedazzini@unito.it)

Diplomacy represents the set of procedures and institutions through which an independent state manages its relations with other political entities, pursuing objectives aimed at ensuring prosperity and security for its citizens through negotiations with other states. Sources from the Classical period attest to how the Greek poleis understood the importance of establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations to safeguard their interests. Ambassadors endowed with specific prerogatives and sacred protections, were sent to present grievances, negotiate the release of prisoners, represent the intentions of their people, or conclude peace treaties with enemy states.

Alongside these traditional figures, other actors also conducted diplomatic activities: among them, perhaps the least investigated is that of the military commanders. Military offices as such could confer a peculiar negotiating authority, substantially different from the political one. This is far from a secondary issue: if one of the principles of diplomacy is free choice, a proposal advanced by a commander with an army deployed or under threat of attack carries a different weight compared to that of a politician lacking armed support.

This paper analyses the diplomatic agency of Greek military commanders through a twofold perspective: the "institutional" diplomacy, linked to formal procedures such as oaths and treaty propositions; and the "field" diplomacy, concerning negotiations and the daily management of interstate relations in a wartime context. Focusing on the period between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, with particular attention to the Spartan and Athenian cases, the study traces alternative modes of warfare conduct, demonstrating how diplomacy constituted a strategic weapon in the hands of skilled and aware military commanders.

The Sacred Responsibilities of Classical Greek Military Leaders – Sonya Nevin (University of Cambridge, sn239@cam.ac.uk)

Amongst the many decisions facing ancient Greek military leaders were decisions regarding the sacred. The conduct of sacrifices, reading of omens and portents, and offering of prayer were frequent features of army life, all requiring judgement on the part of the military leadership. Armies frequently encamped in sacred spaces within enemy or disputed territory – this was a practical and convenient option, yet one that demanded further decisions about the conduct of rites and the recognition of heroes and minor deities. Decisions relating to these concerns throw light on the nature of military leadership in this period. This talk examines the role of the general as a religious figure – how they came to develop their judgement and how they were in turn judged.

Thursday, June 11– Room 02

Open Panel: Instruments and Practices of War – Chair: Jonas Ortel

Put to the Sword: Questions About the Existence of a Single-Edged Sword in the Greek World During the Archaic and Classical Periods – Raphaël Vaubourdolle (Sorbonne Université / École Normale Supérieure, raphael.vaubourdolle@ens.psl.eu)

What kind of swords were used by the Tyrannicides to stab Hipparchus? Was it the same as that used by the hoplites who fought at Marathon or Leuctra? According to ancient warfare historians, they were two types of swords used at that time: the double-edged *xiphos* and the single-edged *machaira* or *kopis*. This seemingly clear distinction is based on the study of iconography and the misidentification of several Iberian falcatas. But it hides a drastic lack of studies of this weapon by historians, who often prefer the spear and defensive weapons (shield, helmet, armour), which often seem more representative of "hoplite reforms". However, the study of the Greek sword is essential for theorising the tactical formation that is the hoplite phalanx. Indeed, the *kopis*, as a single-edged weapon, is almost necessarily a weapon for delivering lateral blows (slashes). But this type of blow is dangerous within a tight formation, then a more spaced-out hoplite phalanx would seem more likely. The existence of the *kopis* should therefore lead us to reconsider the classical conception of the hoplite phalanx as a tight formation. Its existence is a matter of debate, though. Indeed, the distinction between the *xiphos* and the *kopis* is questioned by Quesada Sanz, who sees it as an essentially symbolic weapon, depicted in scenes of barbarism or carried by non-Greeks, but whose existence is not supported by archaeological finds in the heart of the Greek world (only in its peripheries). A more in-depth study in the field of the anthropology of images could lead us to a better understanding of the potential symbolic dimension of the *kopis*. But a few discoveries, particularly in Hellenised Italy, encourage us to qualify this hypothesis. The question therefore remains open: did the *kopis* really exist? And if so, how was it used by hoplites?

Chariots on Clay Imagery Contexts and Social Memory in Early Greek Pottery – Myrto Kokkalia (Université Libre de Bruxelles, myrto.kokkalia@ulb.be) / Antonio Bianco (Università di Pisa, antonio.bianco@phd.unipi.it)

The study of chariot imagery on Greek pottery has long been anchored in a small number of foundational but now dated works, most notably those of Vermeule and Karageorghis (1982) for the prehistoric period and Manakidou (1994) for the historical period. While these studies have established chariot scenes as a central point of reference for discussions on Early Iron Age warfare depictions, they predate more than three decades of archaeological discoveries and methodological advances. As a result, a substantial corpus of newly excavated ceramic material remains insufficiently integrated into a broader, contextually informed interpretative framework. This study aims to offer a re-evaluation of chariot scenes on Greek pottery from the Early Geometric through the Late Archaic periods, situating these images within their archaeological, social, and material contexts. Chariot imagery itself is far from uniform: variations in chariot type, composition, and accompanying figures have led scholars to interpret these scenes variously as races, ritual or civic processions, and episodes of martial confrontation (Rombos 1988). Despite their iconographic diversity, chariot motifs function as a medium of cultural memory, evoking heroic models of warfare closely associated with elite identity and aristocratic self-representation.

Moving beyond the traditional focus on Attic fine wares, this analysis also incorporates coarse ware material from across the Aegean, including Crete, the Cyclades, and Euboea, highlighting regional variation and local visual traditions. Particular attention is given to large-scale vases, such as pithoi and other coarse vessels, such as braziers, *louteria*, and *perirrhanteria*, whose communal, static, or ritual character challenges prevailing assumptions about the display of chariot imagery. By situating ceramics decorated with chariots within their archaeological contexts (domestic, funerary, ritual) and reconstructing their life histories, this study moves beyond an art-historical reading of decorated pottery to demonstrate that chariot motifs were not intrinsically funerary, but their meanings shifted according to their context. Ultimately, it aims to demonstrate that chariot scenes serve as a key analytical lens for examining social transformation in the Greek world, from post-palatial societies to the emergence of the polis.

The Training and Physical Capabilities of a Roman Legionary – Paul Ionescu (University of Toronto, paul.ionescu@mail.utoronto.ca)

The basic, smallest scale unit of the Roman army was the legionary. It is through each individual soldier's physical capabilities that Roman armies were able to win battles, construct temporary and permanent camps, lay roads, and march tremendous distances, often doing these tasks within the same campaigning season. Clearly, the physical fitness of the Roman soldier was quite high and well-suited for the demands of the occupation. This paper sets out to examine the training modalities and general physical preparedness of Roman soldiers during the Principate using a combination of ancient textual sources such as military texts and papyri as well as archaeological data. This will be further supplemented by research from the fields of kinesiology and sports science that are directly applicable to Roman soldiers. This includes, but is not limited to, posterior chain development from carrying heavy objects, the fitness benefits of rucking (weighted marches), and the reduction of traumatic brain injuries by training the musculature of the neck. Furthermore, it is also imperative to highlight the recovery modalities employed by Roman soldiers, including their sleep schedules, diet, micronutrient consumption, and passive modalities such as heat and cold exposure. The main questions that will be tackled in this paper are; what types of training did Roman soldiers receive, how did their duties affect their fitness, what kind of bodies and physiques would legionary training build, and lastly how does the fitness and training of these legionaries relate to the broader picture of Roman imperialism?

Killed in the Fort by the Enemy: Ballistic Revelations at the Roman Fort of Ambleside – John H. Reid (Trimontium Trust, mail@john-reid.co.uk) / Manuel Fernandez-Götz (University of Oxford) / Stuart Campbell (University of Manchester)

Lead sling bullets (*glandes*) have been found for over a century at and around the isolated Roman fort in Ambleside (Lake District, UK). The ballistic scatter of these missiles, together with the discovery of a remarkable inscription on a nearby Roman tombstone, strongly suggests the possibility of a conflict scenario, probably in the second or third century AD. This paper summarises the previous evidence and presents the results from a new research project that comprised two fieldwork campaigns (2021 and 2023) in the environs of the fort. The results confirm the hypothesis of a scatter of glandes to the north and east of the defences, and when taken in conjunction with morphological and lead isotope analysis, the data can be plausibly interpreted as a Roman fort undergoing an external attack, during which the garrison troops defend themselves by shooting missiles outwards. Comparisons are drawn with findings from

two other Roman fortifications that seem to have come under attack: Andagoste in Spain and Velsen in the Netherlands.

Open Panel: Aspects of Warfare in Ancient Greece (Chair: Isabell Tscheinig)

The Other Greeks. Reinterpreting Ionia in Classical Greek Warfare – Ethan Coulson-Haggins (University of Liverpool, E.Coulson-Haggins@liverpool.ac.uk)

The heavily armed 'Greek' infantryman – the hoplite – has long stood at the centre of significant scholarly debate. Disputes over his origin(s), his methods of war, and his impact on the then still-nascent *polis* have produced one of the most enduring controversies in the study of ancient Greek history. Whether one is a hoplite 'traditionalist' or a 'revisionist', this longstanding debate has remained heavily centred on a small number of mainland Greek *poleis*: Athens, Sparta, Olympia, and Corinth. Such a narrow lens has obscured the wider Mediterranean context within which hoplite warfare was fought.

This paper seeks to shift the spotlight away from the Greek mainland to Ionia, or 'East Greece', in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. After the failure of the Ionian Revolt (499-493 BC), the region has traditionally been viewed as economically 'stagnant' and militarily insignificant until the Hellenistic period. This scholarly perception of 'Classical Ionia' is reinforced by certain mainland Greek sources (namely Herodotus) that characterise the Ionians as weak, cowardly, and dependent on mainland Greek powers for their defence against external threats. As a result, Ionia has long been written out of the military history of the Classical period.

This paper challenges these entrenched views by offering a fresh reassessment of 'Classical Ionia' in the literary record. It argues that the Ionians were neither passive nor peripheral, but important players in the conflicts of the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Ionian *poleis* quickly emerged as significant allies to major powers of the ancient Mediterranean, with contributions that ultimately helped shape the history of the Classical period. By (re)situating Ionia's place on the battlefield, this paper highlights the need to look beyond the few canonical mainland *poleis* (above) and reconsider the broader networks of allies that fought together on the Classical Greek battlefield.

Becoming a Naval Power: The Syracusan Navy in the 5th Century BCE – Roberto Russo (University of Edinburgh, roberto.russo997@gmail.com)

During the early 5th century BCE, the Deinomenid dynasty laid the structural and strategic foundations for Syracuse to emerge as a dominant maritime force. Their hegemonic ambitions in Sicily and the Tyrrhenian Sea necessitated the construction of advanced harbour infrastructures and a permanent fleet whose scale became proverbial in ancient historiography. Syracusan naval warfare capabilities did not decline with the fall of the tyranny; instead, they were gradually consolidated during the subsequent democratic period. This process culminated during the Peloponnesian War, when the Syracusan navy achieved a historical victory over the Athenian expeditionary force, successfully challenging the most renowned thalassocracy of the period. Under the subsequent rule of Dionysius the Elder, Syracusan shipbuilding reached unprecedented heights, redefining the standards of Hellenistic shipbuilding and naval tactics.

This contribution explores the evolution of Syracusan maritime power through two primary analytical lenses. First, it examines the dialectical relationship between naval mobilization and

socio-political change, investigating how the logistics of naval warfare acted as a catalyst for internal institutional transformations. Second, it reconstructs the technical and economic processes that enabled such significant technological advancements in warship design throughout the 5th century. The study argues that the practice of naval combat was not merely a military necessity, but a phenomenon deeply shaped by, and shaping, the specific socio-economic fabric of the polis.

While the paradigm of the 'naval crowd' and the impact of maritime supremacy have been extensively studied for Athens, Syracuse offers a crucial yet neglected comparative model. By analysing the Syracusan case, this paper provides new insights into the diversified trajectories of naval power and the broader impact of maritime conflict in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Opening the Gates to the Enemy Fifth Columns in Thucydides and Xenophon – Maurizio Ravallese (Sapienza Università di Roma)

Through implicit reasoning, Pseudo-Xenophon suggests that opening the gates of Athens to the enemy is the only way to overthrow the despicable democratic rule. Furthermore, since the democratic system cannot be changed except marginally, and the δῆμος is consistent in jealously maintaining control of the city, the good guys, the oligarchs, must rely on the help of other cities, including Sparta. That is, they must turn to those notables of other poleis who hate the democratic regime imposed by Athens. To do so, they employ fifth columns. Through an analysis of Thucydides and the first book of Xenophon's Hellenica, this paper explores some examples of collaborators acting in concert with an external power to overthrow the existing government. Among these events, particular attention is paid to the case of Critias, perhaps the author of the *Athenaion politeia*, and his attempt to hand over the city to the Spartans by facilitating their landing at Eëtioneia.

Thematic Panel: Beyond Rome and Carthage: Third Actors in the Second Punic War – organized by Miguel Esteban-Payno (miguel.esteban@uam.es), Diego Suárez-Martínez (diego.suarez@uam.es) and Gerard Ventós (gerard.ventos@usc.es)

The Second Punic War was one of the most decisive conflicts in the history of the Euro-Mediterranean region and marked a turning point in Roman expansion and in its early consolidation as hegemonic power. The scale of this struggle involved a huge number of states, polities and communities, surpassing any precedent in the Mediterranean basin. This conflict was much more than a mere fight between Rome and Carthage, both of which largely depend on the support of a plethora of third actors whose importance has been persistently undervalued.

The goal of this panel is to bring together some analysis of the role played by third actors during the Second Punic War, focusing on their internal qualities as well as in their military contribution to the warring factions. The aim is to examine how such third actors influence a multipolar scenario conditioning the development of this war. The aim is to do so not just attending to their impact on Roman or Carthaginian 'sides', but also how the conflict intertwined with their own histories.

Following Eckstein, the Mediterranean of the second half of the third century should be considered a clear case of multipolar system. On that basis, we understand third actors as those

polities that coexist alongside the so-called 'great powers' and that inevitably had a decisive impact on the balance (and unbalance of power) whose military (and diplomatic) capacities should not be diminished. This panel also considers the various secondary conflicts and regional rivalries that occurred during the Second Punic War, underneath the central clash and beyond the two main protagonists. The gathered contributions shed light on the co-dependency of polities with divergent agendas in a high-tension context, a topic that is directly connected with our present.

Portraits in Chiaroscuro, Tales from the Margins: Local Powers and Regional Networks in the Crucial Phase of the Second Punic War in Iberia (209–206 BC) – Eduardo Sánchez-Moreno (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, eduardo.sanchez@uam.es)

Certainly, the Second Punic War is much more than a struggle between Rome and Carthage. The role played by third parties on the successive fronts and phases of the conflict (Hispania, Italy, North Africa…) was not only key to the genesis and outcome of the events covered by our sources, but also and this is a challenge for research, invites us to reconsider the narratives (both ancient and current) surrounding multilateral, complex and geographically extensive conflicts such as the one in question. Based on theoretical premises such as multipolarity, connectivity and the capacity for agency of a plethora of political actors who appear more or less obscured – in chiaroscuro, from the margins – in the historiographical narrative, our communication focuses on the relevance that certain local powers (kinglets, military commanders, urban aristocracies…) had in the decisive years of the conflict in the Iberian Peninsula, between the capture of Carthago Nova and the battle of Ilipa (209-206 BC).

Specifically, four case studies are presented which, based on the role played by leaders from the Ilergetes, Edetani, Turdetani and Oretani regions, provide a glimpse of the different political strategies and regional alliances forged by peninsular actors at the crossroads of Carthaginian and Roman imperialisms, but who were also participants and shapers of a multifaceted and globalising scenario. (1) Indibilis: the difficult construction of an Ilergetean hegemony. (2) Edeco: loyalty as a strategy of replicated rewards. (3) Culchas: the pragmatism of the urban network in Turdetania. (4) Cerdubelus: the political capital of negotiation in contexts of crisis.

Γαλάται and Galli: The Bravest Ones – Alberto Pérez Rubio (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Alberto_Perez@despertaferro-ediciones.com)

The communities of continental Europe that classical sources refer to as Gauls or Galatians played an important role during the wars between Rome and Carthage, either as mercenaries in the service of the Carthaginians or directly as combatants against Rome. It was only from the second quarter of the third century BC onwards that Greek written sources began to refer to Γαλάται instead of Κελτοὶ, when speaking about these peoples. War played a fundamental role in the network of relations woven between groups in continental Europe within the La Tène cultural sphere, as suggested by Greco-Roman written sources and reflected archaeologically in the spread of a homogeneous panoply. These relationships were forged through phenomena such as long-distance military expeditions –as the sacks of Rome in 387 BC and the attack against Delphi in 279 BC–, migrations –as the Tectosages, Trocmi and Tolistobogi settlement in Anatolia–, and the movement of mercenaries –as during the First Punic War–, which allows us to suggest that, in the intricate debate on Celtic identity, the ethnonym *Galatai*/*Galli* would reflect the name that the warrior bands that led the Celtic expansion gave themselves, later adapted by Greek and Roman authors. This paper will focus specifically on the period of the

Second Punic War and will frame this debate through the analysis of material and archaeological evidence, placing particular emphasis on the relationship between warfare, mobility, and the construction of identity within the La Tène cultural sphere.

Coins and Their Role in the Legitimacy of Power in the Second Punic War –Kieran Blewitt (Cardiff University, BlewittKD@cardiff.ac.uk)

This paper examines how the production, design and distribution of coins during the Second Punic War enabled limited cooperation between Italian states. The importance behind local politics and pre-Roman hegemonic structures across southern Italy has been highlighted (Fronda 2010) as key to understanding why Hannibal failed to elicit widespread revolt from Rome. However, the discourse has remained on power as a physical and violent force (Eckstein 2006, 2008). This idea, known as hard power, is necessary to understanding the ancient Mediterranean, but the influence of realism from international relations has gone largely unchecked in Roman history. Burton (2019) has criticised the realist paradigm, using a constructivist approach to Roman foreign policy making. However, the ability for states to influence the behaviour and actions of other states through non-coercive force has not been explored fully. This is known as soft power (Nye 2004). Soft power is manifested in several ways, and for this paper soft power will be explored in the context of coins minted during the rebellions of the Second Punic War in Capua, Tarentum and Syracuse. The use of a Punic mint, Semitic language and Greco-Roman / Carthaginian imagery will be used as examples. This will demonstrate that the creation of coins minimised distrust between potentially conflictual states. The use of soft power in coins provided legitimacy to new diplomatic relations between states like Capua and Carthage, and was part of both a soft and hard power (Nye 2009) strategy for states across southern Italy.

Beyond the *socii navales*: Captives, Mercenaries and Conscripts as Actors in Rome's Naval War - Mark C. Davies (University of Southampton, mcd1e20@soton.ac.uk)

The composition and roles of Rome's naval personnel remain poorly understood. Traditional scholarship treats the *socii navales* as Rome's 'naval allies', or crews supplied by Greco-Italiot cities through treaty obligations. This interpretation is doubly mistaken. First, Livy applies the term *socii navales* to Carthaginian, Rhodian, and Seleucid crews, revealing it as a functional, euphemistic term for naval manpower, and not an ethnic or political designation. Second, these personnel were combatants and not merely rowers, as they routinely fought on land. This paper examines three categories of naval labour, namely captives, mercenaries and conscripted allies, whose labour sustained Rome's naval wars, but whose resistance through desertion and effectiveness in combat reveal them as actors with interests distinct from Rome.

Acute manpower shortages during the Second Punic War forced Rome to exploit coerced labour. Slaves were recruited to crew the fleet in 214 and 210 BCE (Livy 24.11.7-9, 26.35.1-10). In 209 BCE, Scipio Africanus promised enslaved captives from New Carthage their freedom in exchange for naval service (Polybius 10.17.6-16, Livy 26.47.3). Yet coercion generated resistance, for example in 214 BCE there is a reference to desertion among the *socii navales* in Sicily (Livy 24.23.10). Far from merely rowing, these personnel were also deployed as combatants. Roman commanders routinely used crews for land operations, for example raiding coastal territories (218, 217 BCE) and assaulting fortified cities such as Utica (204 BCE). At New Carthage (210 BCE) a *socius navalis* competed for the mural crown alongside legionaries. Whether rowing or fighting, they were military labour whose cooperation Rome

could not take for granted. By disaggregating the *socii navales* into categories of coerced service, this paper reveals actors whose resistance, agency, and military contributions fundamentally shaped Rome's naval wars.

Massinissa's Long Game: How a Numidian King Leveraged Roman Power in and after the Second Punic War – Jacopo Napoli (University of Kent, jacopo.napoli@gmail.com)

This paper examines the rise to power of Massinissa and his kingdom of Numidia during the 3rd and 2nd century BCE, arguing that his rise to dominance cannot be understood without analysing how he actively engaged with, rather than passively submitted to, Roman influence and soft power. While Rome's post-war posture is often portrayed as coercive or hegemonic, this study shows that Massinissa voluntarily entered (and consistently benefited from) the Roman network of power, using it as a strategic resource to consolidate his authority and expand his kingdom through many wars against Carthage.

By reassessing Massinissa's political decisions from his early contacts with Scipio Africanus to his repeated appeals to Roman arbitration after the Second Punic War, the paper demonstrates that he recognised early on the value of Roman support for his personal and dynastic ambitions. After the Second Punic War, Romans offered him legitimacy, diplomatic protection, and asymmetric advantages in his conflict with Carthage, enabling him to pursue territorial expansion without risking direct confrontation with a superior state. Far from being a puppet, Massinissa manipulated Roman norms of fides, their desire to appear impartial, and their reluctance to destabilise Africa, turning these features into instruments of his own advancement.

However, the same relationship that empowered Massinissa also created long-term dependency: by relying on Rome to validate his claims and shield him from Carthaginian retaliation, he ultimately accepted a form of client kingship. Yet this dependency was the price of extraordinary success. Through his calculated use of the Romans, Massinissa transformed Numidia into the most powerful regional state in the Western Mediterranean after Rome, reshaping the political landscape of North Africa.

By focusing on agency rather than subordination, this paper shows that ambitious local rulers—often dismissed as peripheral or derivative—could use Rome to achieve unprecedented levels of authority.

Attalus I's Strategic Autonomy during the Second Punic War – Emiliano Panciera (Newcastle University, E.A.Panciera2@newcastle.ac.uk)

The present paper analyses the role played by Attalus I Soter, ruler of Pergamon, as an independent actor in the political struggle for power in the Aegean Sea, with particular attention to the geopolitical context of the Second Punic War. The aim is to show how an autonomous political entity, such as the Kingdom of Pergamon, could enable the comprehension of the multipolar complexity that characterised the Mediterranean at the inception of Roman hegemony.

Traditionally considered as a mere ally of Rome in the East, when analysed separately, Attalus I emerges instead as driven by an independent political agenda and personal ambition, expressed through a pragmatic world view, unscrupulous tactical skills, and the exploitation of the fragmentated nature of the Eastern Mediterranean.

By means of an innovative prospective to analysis our sources, this contribution sets out to reconstruct the phases of consolidation of Attalid power in the Aegean and Asia Minor, with

particular attention to its rivalries with the Antigonid crown. The aforementioned military and diplomatic confrontation will be prerequisite for the Attalid behaviour and strategies during the course of the Second Punic War.

From this perspective, the alliance with Rome during the Second Punic War will be contextualised as the result of a conscious choice by Attalus I, aimed at containing King Philip V's ambition and laying the foundations for the rise of his own principality. Thus, Attalus's involvement in what is often considered a minor front will be presented as a case study to show how the conscious choices of "third parties" could have had actively influenced the subsequent Roman campaigns for the Hellenistic East in the third century BCE.