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Victor Davis Hanson, ed. *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-691-13790-2 (cloth, \$27.95).

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Comparative studies of ancient and modern policy, strategy, diplomacy, and imperialism seem to be all the rage at the moment, with most of the impetus coming from scholars of ancient societies rather than from those concerned with the modern world.¹ The recent edited volume under review by well-known Classicist and conservative political commentator Victor Davis Hanson pays homage to two

¹ See, e.g., A.M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2006), and *Rome Enters the Greek East: From Anarchy to Hierarchy in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, 230-170 B.C.* (Malden, Ma. and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); P.J. Burton, *Friendship and Empire: Roman Diplomacy and Imperialism in the Middle Republic (353 – 146 BC)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); the former two studies apply modern International Relations (IR) Realism theory to the ancient evidence, the latter a modern IR Constructivist paradigm. The new comparative Oxford Studies in Early Empires series is emblematic of a growing interdisciplinary approach: W. Scheidel (ed.), *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); I. Morris (ed.), *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also E.H. Cline and M.W. Graham, *Ancient Empires: from Mesopotamia to the Rise of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); P.F. Bang

pathbreaking studies with similar titles,² and has a clear and unapologetic presentist editorial agenda: “to consider the relevance of [ancient] strategy to later warfare, and especially to the conflicts of our times” (4).

Hanson himself provides a short introduction outlining the book’s main concerns and methodological orientation which, to those who are familiar with his oeuvre, will cause little surprise. Hanson introduces a favorite theme, a mainstay of his work since the 1980s:³ the western way of war (derived from the Greeks) is innately superior, and its lessons can still be learned with profit, despite technological revolutions in the hardware of warfare, including today’s “so-called fourth generational warfare [with its] instantly globalized communications, asymmetrical tactics, and new manifestations of terrorism ... drones, night-vision goggles, enhanced bodily protection, and computer-guided weapons systems” (2). The notion that today’s masters of high-tech warfare can learn anything from wars fought by ancient citizen-soldier-farmers armed with little else but metal-tipped sticks and rough-hewn swords may seem a bit of a stretch, but Hanson, as in his other books, here defends his position by citing the premise of the great ancient Greek historian Thucydides that “human nature, which drives conflict, is unchanging” (3). On the other hand, the robustness of some of Hanson’s ancient-modern parallels seems forced, for example his comparison of the fortification walls of ancient Athens with the U.S.-Mexico border fence. Hanson is no Hispano-phobe, as his experience of Hispanic culture during his multifaceted career as a farmer, teacher, and writer amply shows;⁴ but it is not clear how the border fence is like the Athenian long walls, “a utility that kept Athens mostly safe from its enemies” (5)? Perhaps, in this analogy, drug lords armed to the teeth, rather than Mexicans *tout court*, are meant to be America’s “enemies” south of the border. As for ideology, Hanson’s introduction also stresses the western-ness of the

and C.A. Bayly (eds.), *Tributary Empires in Global History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). R.N. Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests and Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Lebow is unique among modern political scientists for the depth of his engagement with the ancient world.

² E.M. Earle (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943); P. Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

³ In, e.g., *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, second edition (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2000 [first ed. 1989]); *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (London: Cassell, 1999); *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 2005).

⁴ See, most importantly, his *Mexifornia: A State of Becoming* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003).

Greek and Roman (“our”) heritage, so different from and far more influential than “the venerable traditions of ancient Africa, the Americas, and Asia” (3). Significant portions of two of these land masses, however, were deeply influential on the Greeks and Romans themselves—as indeed Hanson admits only a page later.⁵ And although Hanson is right that the contributors generally “avoid inflicting overt ideological characterization of a contemporary political nature,” one wonders why he felt it necessary to employ such ideologically charged characterizations as the Huntington-esque “clash of civilizations between East and West” (4) to describe the Persian wars against Greece.⁶

The essays that follow are a bit of a mixed bag, with early career academics and amateur enthusiasts of ancient world studies rubbing shoulders with well-established scholars of great international renown. Case in point is the first essay, cheekily entitled “From Persia with Love” by the journalist, Classics enthusiast, and popularizer Tom Holland. Despite the title, Holland for the most part avoids the sort of superficial analysis that informs some of his work,⁷ but he does task the serious reader with purple patches and clichés,⁸ particularly when he applies to the Persian Wars catchphrases generated by the George W. Bush administration and parroted by journalists worldwide to characterize the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—without explaining how this adds insight to modern strategic concerns.⁹ Holland is at his most interesting when he explores the Persian ideology of kingship using the little-known (outside ancient world studies circles, at any rate) Bisitun inscription where the Persian Shah-an-shah (“King of kings”) Darius I lists his many victories. Holland describes the peculiarly Persian *Weltanschauung*, driven by their worship of Ahura Mazda and their Manichean division of the world into followers of the Lie (Drauga) and followers of Truth (Arta) (17-19). Thus the Persian Shahs did not view their conquests as motivated by profit, security-seeking, or power-hunger, but as a

⁵ “Imperial propaganda did not find its way into the later Western DNA merely through the rise of the Athenian empire or Rome’s absorption of the Mediterranean. Instead ... Greek pupils learned about the imperial ambitions of their would-be Persian masters and teachers” (4).

⁶ S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

⁷ E.g., “our fads and obsessions too, from koi to Mockney to Celebrity chefs, cannot help but inspire, in the historian of the Roman Republic, a certain sense of *déjà vu*” (T. Holland, *Rubicon: The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic* [London: Abacus, 2003], 6).

⁸ See, e.g., Cyrus’s “bag of scalps,” “the sword of such a conqueror [Cyrus] did not sleep easily in its scabbard” (13), “not everything was quiet on the western front” (16), “snuff[ing] out the alarming new cuckoo in the nest” (22), “the precise nature of the beast whose tail they [the Athenians] had opted so cavalierly to tweak,” “shooting fish in a barrel” (23), “on that fateful day,” “go nose to nose” (25) “the Greeks ... could walk that little bit taller” (26).

⁹ See, e.g., “axis of evil” (19), and “a coalition ... of the willing” (26). Further discussion below.

crusade to bring the shining light of the Truth to benighted victims of the Lie.¹⁰ Holland also astutely observes that the first Persian Shah Cyrus was the first imperialist in world history to recognize that winning hearts and minds of the conquered was at least as important as winning bloody battles: “Cyrus had succeeded in demonstrating ... that mercilessness and repression, the keynotes of all previous imperialisms in the region, might be blended with a no less imperious show of graciousness, emancipation, and patronage” (14). The liberation of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity is but a case in point. “The strategically momentous truth” (15) Cyrus intuited was that the traditions of the conquered should be respected in order to reconcile them—in particular, their ruling classes—to their subordinate status, and to get them to work willingly for him. The Ionian Greeks, however, proved “an enigma and a challenge” (16) to the Persians; with their interminable inter- and intra-polis squabbling and rivalry, the Greeks “were unsettlingly different” (20) from the other peoples the Persians conquered. For Holland, the (largely) Athenian victory over Persia represented, as it did for Herodotus, something more than a military win of “far superior Greek equipment and training” (27); it was, above all, a victory of “democracy—comradeship, equality, liberty” (25) over despotism.

The latter statement points to a considerable weakness of Holland’s analysis—his tendency, like his editor’s, to idealize the “western way of war.” This can sometimes lead to paradox. So, for example, Holland’s paean to valorous Greek hoplite battle—“the battle line at Marathon ... could not be bought” (24)—makes nonsense out of his statement, within the same paragraph, that “the exhausted and blood-streaked victors” of Marathon, “*fearful still of treachery* ... in the full heat of day ... headed straight back for Athens, ‘as fast as their legs could take them’” (25, quoting Hdt. 6.116; emphasis added). The threat of the political restoration of Hippias, Athens’ old, exiled tyrant who accompanied the Persian army, however absurd it seems to us in hindsight, was very real at the time—especially because Athens was a democracy, which, as Holland says elsewhere, “if anything, seemed only to have intensified the [innate Greek] factionalism” (23). The Marathon warriors’ patriotism is not in question, but aristocratic elements within the city itself (perhaps the family of the Alcmaeonids) sent a signal via a raised shield to the Persians as they set sail from the site of the battle that they should hasten to defenceless Athens and reinstall Hippias (Hdt. 6.115).

¹⁰ I do take issue, however, with Holland’s assertion that in the Bisitun inscription Darius proclaims that “history ... had in effect been brought to a close [and] the Persians’ empire was both its end and its summation” (19). This is not how Herodotus understood his Persian overlords, whose *nomos*—the iron customary law to which they were helplessly subject—was perpetual expansion and conquest (see, e.g., Herodotus, *Histories* [hereafter, Hdt.] 7.8). If Holland is right, why does Darius include such forward-looking advice as “You who shall be king hereafter, protect yourself vigorously from lies; punish the liars well, if thus you shall think, ‘May my country be secure!’ ... You who may be king hereafter, whosoever shall be a liar or a rebel, or shall not be friendly, punish him!” (full text and translation in L.W. King and R.C. Thompson, edd. and trans., *The sculptures and inscription of Darius the Great on the rock of Behistûn in Persia* [London: Longmans, 1907]).

The larger weakness here is one that relates to the book as a whole and its purpose. As a non-specialist work, it devotes much space to narrative at the expense of in-depth analysis. So in Holland's chapter, we are given a sketch of the Persian Wars together with potted constitutional histories of Athens and Sparta (20-22). When certain intriguing (and, one hopes, not entirely facile) suggestions are made—that the Persian regarded Athens as “a terrorist state” and a “stronghold of terrorists,” that the Greek city-states were “nests of rebels,” that the Persian Shah-an-shah Darius brought his “war on terror” to Attica (23)—no analysis follows. Does Holland intend the reader to believe that he is setting up a meaningful analogy between ancient and modern times, so that the despotic Persians (with their war on terror and coalition of the willing) are the Americans, and the democratic Athenians Al-Qaeda or its affiliates?¹¹ If so—or especially if not—then what does this teach modern strategic thinkers about how to fight terror? Despite Holland's conclusion, that the Persian loss “does not necessarily mean that the Persians and their empire have nothing of value to teach the present day—just the opposite, in fact,” the lessons we are meant to come away with are not at all clear. If “the Persian way of war” still “cast[s] its own lengthy shadow over the centuries,” does this mean in terms of propaganda, intelligence, psychological warfare, or building diverse coalitions of the willing? These are all touched upon in the chapter, but never explained in much depth, and certainly not set against the modern American experience of war.

The eminent Yale Greek historian and prominent neoconservative Donald Kagan contributes the second chapter on “Pericles, Thucydides, and the Defense of Empire.” Here the reader is in the hands of the master, who quotes copiously from the ancient sources, both literary and inscriptional. The chapter, like Holland's, does not break new ground but is designed to supply the basic narrative of the rise of Athenian power after the Persian Wars, its character, and Pericles' role in constructing it. Kagan begins by summarizing the dilemma facing Pericles—as indeed any statesman of influence presiding over an imperial polity must confront: how to avoid imperial overreach and hubris while at the same time maintaining power safely and in a morally acceptable way? Pericles' solution was novel, in terms of both policy and propaganda: “he put an end to imperial expansion and moderated Athenian ambitions. He also put forward powerful arguments, by word as well as deed, to show that the empire was both legitimate and in the common interest of *all* Greeks” (31; emphasis in the original). The basis and instrument of Athenian power was the Delian League, “a permanent offensive and defensive alliance” of around 140 Aegean coastal and island city-states, led by Athens (32), and whose original *raison d'être* was to fight the Persians and resist another invasion.

¹¹ If terrorism is defined by its unique targeting of non-combatants for the purpose of instilling the greatest amount of fear among civilians, then the Athenian attack on the Persian capital of Sardis cannot be so characterized. The Athenians were not deliberately targeting civilians but directing a blow at the heart of Persian institutional power. On the sack of Sardis, see Hdt. 5.100-102.

According to Kagan, the Delian League was an instrument of Athenian “hegemony” rather than “domination.” What is the difference? If Michael Doyle is correct, hegemony occurs when a dominant metropole seeks to control the foreign policies of its allies without seeking to control their internal political affairs; empire (domination) results when “the dominant metropole exerts political control over the internal and external policy—the effective sovereignty—of the other, subordinate periphery.”¹² Kagan appears to agree: “the term ‘imperialism’ ... requires political and military control to justify its use” (47). Because Kagan believes that from the beginning, “Athens was in the happy position of *controlling* the Delian League without the appearance of illegality or tyranny” (33; emphasis added), the alliance should be classified as an empire rather than a hegemony. After all, Athens often sought, perhaps from the very beginning, to control the internal affairs of its allies, enslaving the inhabitants of Skyros and replacing them with Athenian colonists in 475 B.C. (Thucydides, *Histories* [hereafter, Thuc.] 1.98), and imposing a democratic government at Erythrai sometime between the 470s and 450s (IG i³ 14). As Kagan shows, the Athenians habitually supported and favored democracies over oligarchies or tyrannies throughout the empire (40-41).¹³

Kagan, following Thucydides, argues that it was the allies’ wish to avoid military service that led to their own oppression since Athens accepted their cash payments in lieu of ships, and in the meanwhile expanded its own fleet until it was unchallengeable. There follows a brief history of what scholars call the *Pentekontaetia*, the “period of 50 years” between the end of the Persian Wars and the beginning of the great Peloponnesian War, the subject of Thucydides’ magisterial *Histories*. During this time, Athens overreached itself, taking on wars in Egypt and against Sparta, thus encouraging rebellion within the Delian League, resulting in crackdowns and tighter control by Athens. Kagan rightly notes how typical of ancient peoples the Athenians were in their desire to conquer others and exert power over them in order to earn glory and avoid shame—something often forgotten by modern political scientists who try to rationalize state behavior in their theoretical modelling.¹⁴ Kagan also correctly suggests how radical (and un-Greek) the Athenian claim in Thucydides’ famous Melian dialogue (Thuc. 5.84-113) was that men rule where they can for as long as they can.¹⁵ Unfortunately, Kagan does not go that one step

¹² M.W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, 1986), 12 (whence the quotation), and 30-47 for the typology of empires, and non-imperial forms of international political relations.

¹³ See, in the same volume, the essay by Berkey, who describes the Second Athenian League of the early fourth century B.C. as hegemonic rather than imperial, that is, a situation in which the effective sovereignty of allied states over their internal affairs was guaranteed by Athens.

¹⁴ The exception is Lebowwho, in *Cultural Theory* emphasizes the importance of “the spirit,” the motivational element in human behavior concerned with shame, honor, prestige, emotion, etc.

¹⁵ This is the premise of G. Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), who attributes the realist position to Thucydides and calls it “the modern simplicity,” which contrasts with the prevalent Greek view of the world (“the ancient simplicity”).

further and critique modern IR Realists who take this (contested) insight as gospel truth, attribute it to Thucydides (as opposed to the Athenian envoys to Melos), and use it as the cornerstone of their epistemology. It is becoming increasingly clear to some IR theorists and ancient historians that the Athenian position is not so much an objective description of the international political environment that transcends time and place, but is rather the worldview a small group of Athenian policymakers—one that was punished as hubristic in the sequel to the Athenian destruction of Melos in Thucydides' narrative, the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily launched in 415 B.C.¹⁶ Instead of exploring this issue, Kagan resorts to platitudes about the virtues of Greek polis-level imperialism, which, unlike the great and brutal eastern empires of the past, he argues, eschewed mass enslavement of defeated Greeks and annexation of their land (barbarians were, of course, another matter entirely). "Greeks ... were naturally free," Kagan argues, "To rule over such people, to deny them their freedom and autonomy, would clearly be wrong" (37). Although Kagan does not deny that exceptions to this rule existed, the sheer scale of the exceptions, and the ease with which one can conjure them up, betrays a deeply flawed premise. To take a few examples at random: the Dolopian Greek inhabitants of Skyros, who were enslaved *en masse* in 475, and, Kagan's most prominent exception to the rule, the tens of thousands of Messenians the Spartans enslaved and oppressed on a permanent basis as helots. Greeks did not hesitate to enslave and massacre other Greeks if it meant improving their own position relative to that of their neighbors. This is the grim reality of the intensely competitive moral and political economy of Greek city-state culture.

Kagan then turns to the balance-sheet of empire: on one side are the tangible (financial) benefits of empire flowing to Athens, and the pride Athens felt in lording it over others; on the other, the benefits that flowed to the other members of the Delian League: freedom from Persian aggression and rule, a peaceful and prosperous Aegean, and for many who saw it as a good thing, democracy. Kagan, like Thucydides, praises Pericles for his deft defense of the indefensible, especially after the *raison d'être* for the Delian League was removed in 449 B.C., when all Persian claims on Greek territory were renounced in the Peace of Callias (Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 12.4.5-6). Pericles continued to stress the ethnic bonds between Athens and the (mostly) Ionian members of the League,

¹⁶ Critique of realist (mis)appropriations of Thucydides: D. Garst, "Thucydides and Neorealism," *ISQ* 33 (1989), 3-27; P.A. Rahe, "Thucydides' Critique of Realpolitik," *Security Studies* 5 (1995/96), 105-41; Lebow, *Tragic Vision*, 65-167, and "Thucydides the Constructivist," *American Political Science Review* 93 (2001), 547-60; reassertion of Thucydides' realist credentials: M.W. Doyle, "Thucydides: A Realist?" in R.N. Lebow and B.S. Strauss, eds., *Hegemonic Rivalry: From Thucydides to the Nuclear Age* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 169-88. For a critique of political scientists' reliance on translations of Thucydides, see A.M. Eckstein, "Thucydides, the Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the Foundation of International Systems Theory," *IHS* 25 (2003), 757-74. For the idea that "Thucydidean" *Realpolitik* is an Athenian view rather than Thucydides' own, and humanitarian rather than realist: J.V. Morrison, "Historical Lessons in the Melian Episode," *TAPA* 130 (2000), 119-48 (following A.B. Bosworth, "The Humanitarian Aspect of the Melian Dialogue," *JHS* 113 [1993], 30-44; see also D. Konstan, "Altruism," *TAPA* 130 [2000], 10). For the idea that the Sicilian disaster implies Thucydidean criticism of Athenian realism, see W.R. Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 154-56; Morrison, "Historical Lessons," 121-22 n. 8.

made deals with other Athenian politicians, and surrounded League victories with propaganda and poetry. Perhaps most importantly, in 449 Pericles invited all Greeks to a congress at Athens to discuss the future of the Delian League; on the agenda: rebuilding what the Persians had destroyed (mostly in Athens itself), the ongoing need for the Greeks to repay the gods for securing their survival through continued sacrifice, and the maintenance of peaceful seas (Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 17.1). Sparta's refusal to attend the congress allowed Pericles to seize the moral high ground: the Athenian could now declare that unlike Athens, Sparta had no interest in religious piety, pan-Hellenism, or keeping the peace. In the event, the proposed congress failed to meet, and Pericles went ahead with his building program on the acropolis, financed by the imperial tribute exacted from the allies.

After this, the Delian League alliance (*symmachia*) became an empire (*archê*) and a tyranny—and was apparently admitted as such by the Athenians themselves (Thuc. 2.63.2). Pericles was undaunted by the attacks of his political enemies, such as Thucydides, son of Melesias, who branded Pericles' muscular imperial policies as morally bankrupt. It was Athens' prerogative to spend the money it earned fighting the Persians, Pericles argued, and besides, the empire had been thrust upon the Athenians after Sparta resigned the leadership of the Greeks in 478 B.C., and the allies asked the Athenians to take it up. Motivated by fear, honor, and advantage, the Athenians did what any other state would have done by taking on imperial power when it was offered; and, like others, it would not now give up what human nature compels one to hang on to (Thuc. 1.75.3-5), especially because Athens was so hated that loosening its grip in the slightest would result in widespread rebellion and destruction of Athens itself (Thuc. 2.63.1-2). Pericles' imperial vision was broader than that of other men, Kagan concludes. He saw imperial power as a means to a particular cultural end—to make Athens a “school of Hellas”—which Athens' unique naval supremacy could especially facilitate, and he advocated moderation in the exercise of power and geographical limits to its expansion.

Aside from its lack of theoretical analysis (mentioned earlier), and a tendency to apologize for Athenian imperial power (or at least Pericles' defense of it), the chapter's main flaw is, like Holland's, a failure to engage very deeply with the editorial mandate to use ancient strategic decisions to inform modern policy-making. In the introduction, Hanson says that Kagan's chapter shows how “rare individuals,” like Pericles, “occasionally do make a difference,” and that had the Athenians only produced statesmen of Pericles' calibre after his death, this empire of moderation, peace, and limited aggression would not have failed (4-5). It is unclear whether the lesson here is meant for the United States (and, therefore, whether it can be classed as an imperial power), or whether Hanson and Kagan see imperial power as a good thing—at least when wielded by responsible powers, like the U.S. Are they, like Niall Ferguson, urging the U.S. to embrace its imperial role, and perpetuate it according to Periclean tenets?¹⁷ Kagan notes the “great

¹⁷ N. Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2004) (subtitled, in the U.S. edition, *The Price of America's Empire*).

gap that separates [ancient] views [about imperialism] from the opinions of our own time,” and criticizes “tendentious attempts ... to apply the term ‘imperialism’ to any large and powerful nation that is able to influence weaker ones” (47)—presumably by left-wing critics of U.S. power¹⁸—but he nowhere suggests that American statesmen in particular have anything to learn from Pericles.

The following chapter by Hanson’s Cal State Fresno colleague David L. Berkey is more rigorously military-strategic than the first two. Its focus is the history and strategic importance of the fortification walls of Athens during the Classical period. After the destruction of the original acropolis walls by the Persians,¹⁹ and of the remainder of the city itself by the Persian general Mardonius in 479 B.C., Themistocles, the architect of the Athenian naval victory over the Persians in 480, developed a great strategic vision of the walls of Athens, and oversaw the first two phases of construction—the fortification of the “upper city”—the urban core of Athens—and the Piraeus, the port of Athens. Because the strategic success of the walls was based on the efficacy of the Athenian fleet, rowed by the *thetes*, the lowest property class in Athens, these fortifications were regarded by some as having “a new, democratic significance” (65); as Plutarch says, the effect of linking the Piraeus to the upper city in one defensive system “was to increase the influence of the people at the expense of the nobility and to fill them with confidence, since the control of policy now passed into the hands of sailors and boatswains and pilots” (*Life of Themistocles*. 19, quoted at 84 n. 28). For the Spartans and Thucydides, the walls had a more disturbing significance: it was a sign of the decline in power and influence of Sparta relative to Athens, a harbinger of the beginnings of the Athenian empire, and “the formation of a bipolar structure in the interstate system” (63). Berkey makes the intriguing suggestion that Thucydides’ characterization of the upper city’s fortifications as “show[ing] signs of the haste of its execution [with] foundations ... laid of stones of all kind, in some places not wrought or fitted, but placed just in the order in which they were brought by the different hands” (Thuc. 1.93.1-2) is a metaphor for the empire itself: “both were formed rapidly, and both marked a rupture with the past” (63).

The lynchpin of the entire strategic system, as the quotation from Plutarch indicates, and the final phase of the original Themistoclean defensive vision, was the famous Long Walls (two of them, then three), traversing 3 ¾ miles of Attic countryside and linking the Piraeus to the upper city. They were designed to provide safe access to the fleet and supplies during time of war, and also, as it would turn out in the first phase of the great

¹⁸ E.g. Chalmers Johnson, author of *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), and *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006).

¹⁹ As Berkey points out in one of a series of rich, detailed, and informative footnotes, there may have been a circuit wall around the city in addition to the acropolis wall when the Persians arrived, but no evidence for it survives.

Peloponnesian War (431-421 B.C.), a place of refuge for citizens during enemy land invasions of Attica. The effect, as Kagan notes (quoted by Berkey), was to turn Athens into an island (65), and, as David Conwell observes (also quoted by Berkey: 84 n. 32²⁰), to secure for Athens “the maritime orientation typical of cities of Classical Greece.” For all their strategic utility, however, the Long Walls eroded “traditional notions of deterrence”: the Spartans knew they could invade Attica without cost to their hoplites, with the result that invasion became “chronic rather than exceptional” (66). Athens encouraged other cities, like Sparta’s traditional rival Argos, to build long walls, which were “synonymous with the Athenian democracy and a symbol of Athenian power [but also a] reject[tion of] Sparta” (66)—which is of course why Sparta insisted on their destruction after the Athenian loss of the Peloponnesian War in 404 B.C.

The refortification of the Piraeus and reconstruction of the Long Walls a decade later was a sign of “the return of Athenian autonomy and its vibrant democracy”—as well as an expression of “soft power,” an invitation to other Greek city-states to join Athens against the Spartan empire (70). In strictly military terms, the Long Walls-Piraeus defensive system had by now become less important than it had been in the fifth century since “without a substantial fleet, there was little merit in the Athenians depending on [this system] to ensure their survival” (73). The construction of forts along the Attica-Boeotia border indicated a shift of strategic priorities from “exercis[ing] power over others [to controlling] their own territory” (73) in a newly multipolar system. Berkey concludes by arguing, persuasively, given what has come before, that the dynamic interstate system of fifth- and fourth-century Greece generated pressures that in turn compelled the Athenians to calibrate constantly their strategic priorities and objectives, which were physically expressed in a variety of defensive works: “urban walls, long walls to the sea, networks of border fortifications [offered] military utility and ... express[ed] prevailing political and economic agendas” (76).

Berkey’s analysis of the changing strategic realities facing Athens, and the Athenian response to them is lucid and insightful, but his conclusions about what the modern world can learn from his study of ancient fortifications are rather less satisfying. Aside from a few superficial and not very strategically insightful comparisons scattered throughout the chapter,²¹ his concluding comparative analysis is barely a page and a half long. He lists some examples of mural fortifications in the modern world—barriers erected by U.S. forces in Baghdad to separate rival groups, walls and barriers erected by the Israeli government against attacks from Palestinian territory, the Saudi wall

²⁰ D.H. Conwell, *Connecting a City to the Sea: The History of the Athenian Long Walls*, *Mnemosyne Supplements* vol. 293 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

²¹ The question of how to memorialize those killed in the September 11th, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York was also faced by the Athenians after the Persians destroyed their city (61); the jubilation expressed by other Greeks when that symbol of tyranny, the Athenian walls, were torn down in 404 B.C. is compared to the celebrations at the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (68).

separating Saudi Arabia from Iraq, and the U.S.-Mexico border fence—but there is too little room for meaningful analysis. Berkey concludes from these examples that “metal fences and concrete barriers worldwide continue to offer protection in a way that other high-tech alternatives cannot,” that advances in fortification technology keep pace with other technologies of war (aerial drones, satellite communications, computer-based sensors), and that mural fortifications thus continue to be effective against aggressors and terrorists, and to raise their operational costs (77). But the four examples he cites are too heterogeneous in terms of their purposes and success rates to be comparable in any meaningful way to the strategic situation facing the ancient Athenians at various points in fifth and fourth centuries B.C. So, for example, Berkey says that the U.S.-Mexico border fence has “drastically reduced illegal border crossings” (77), but in addition to providing no evidence to back up this dubious claim,²² he also fails to consider that this particular fence is not designed to separate belligerent nations, but the citizens of nations that are, in fact, friends and allies.²³ Berkey also misses an opportunity to draw a meaningful parallel when he talks about the symbolism of walls. He grants that Athenian walls were partly “symbols of power and pride,” but fails to see that the U.S.-Mexico border fence is also a symbol—of some Americans’ paranoia and xenophobia. For all that, however, Berkey has at least made a more serious attempt than either Holland or Kagan have to draw out the lessons provided by the makers of ancient strategy.

Victor Davis Hanson supplies the fourth chapter on “Epaminondas the Theban and the Doctrine of Preemptive War.” His title, of course, evokes a key component of the “Bush Doctrine,” which was later formalized in the “National Security Strategy” document published on 20 September 2002.²⁴ Epaminondas will be a new name for most non-Classicists. He was a general from the city-state of Thebes in Boeotia, traditionally a second-rank power in Greece, after Athens and Sparta, but whose fortunes rose as the latter two went into decline after the ravages of the great Peloponnesian War of 431-404 B.C. A strategic visionary, Epaminondas single-handedly engineered and presided over the unthinkable in fourth-century Greece—the defeat of Sparta in pitched battle, and the

²² “[The U.S.-Mexico border] fence ... is exposed to constant efforts by illegal crossers to bore through it or under it or to bring it down. In March, Customs and Border Protection ... reported repairing 4,037 breaches in 2010 alone” (J. Preston, “Some Cheer Border Fence as Others Ponder the Cost,” *New York Times* 19 [October 2010] [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/us/politics/border-fence-raises-cost-questions.html?_r=1&ref=borderfenceusmexico, accessed 10 July 2012]).

²³ Berkey’s analysis thus descends to the level of French journalist Olivier Perrin, who in 2007 compared the U.S.-Mexico border fence to Hadrian’s wall: O. Perrin, “Plus de 650 kilomètres de clôture,” *Le Temps* (15 May, 2007) (http://www.letemps.ch/Page/Uuid/2385a326-aco7-11dd-bf59-ad3d6140ad87/Le_mur_du_jour.Plus_de_650_kilom%C3%A8tres_de_cl%C3%B4ture, accessed October 4th, 2012).

²⁴ National Security Council, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America” (20 September 2002) (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/index.html>, accessed 10 July 2012).

destruction of the main source of Sparta's prosperity and unique lifestyle, the system of helotry—all within two years (371-369 B.C.). The Spartan-Theban conflict had its roots in the post-Peloponnesian War settlement and recalibration of powers within the Aegean interstate system. The power vacuum left by the destruction of Athenian power quickly became contested territory for Sparta and Thebes, and there followed "a near-constant state of conflict marked by pitched battles, frequent Spartan invasions of Boeotia, and brief armistices" (95). The war "assume[d] a new ideological dimension" in 379 when the Boeotian cities confederated under a democratic system (anathema to oligarchic Sparta) and Theban leadership. In 371, the Spartans broke a fragile armistice in place since 375 and invaded Boeotia, Epaminondas marched his army out to confront them at Leuctra, and routed the invading force. This had the effect, Hanson argues, of "at once redefining the strategic balance of the Greek city-states," and ended a long series of Spartan invasions north of the Peloponnese (97).

But the Boeotian victory did not end hostilities, as had usually happened after decisive Greek hoplite battles, but merely served as a prelude to a much greater conflict. In December, 370-369 B.C., Epaminondas launched a "preemptory strike" against Sparta in the Peloponnese, ostensibly to help the Arcadian Mantineians against Sparta, but actually, so alleges Hanson, to prevent another Spartan raid of Boeotia, and to export democracy to Sparta's neighbors. "The timely invitation from the Arcadians and other Peloponnesians to intervene on their behalf seems to have galvanized Epaminondas into envisioning an even larger—and final—plan to end the Spartan hegemony of the Peloponnese altogether" (97). The Boeotians and Peloponnesians cornered the Spartans in their capital, but rather than deliver the final assault, decided to cut across Mt. Taygetos in order to try to disrupt Sparta's traditional resource base, Messenia, with its tens of thousands of Spartan helots. Epaminondas' forces freed the helots and established a new democratic state of Messene. Unfortunately, the Theban success was not followed up by a lasting peace, but "a decade-long slog" (108), during which the initially vigorous Boeotian alliance with Sparta's Peloponnesian former subjects and rivals lost the initiative, and Sparta hung on. The result was the death of Epaminondas in battle, and the end of the brief Theban supremacy, in 362.

Aside from asserting his usual (and by now, unsustainable) mantra that "total war intended to destroy a relatively large state was rare among the Greeks," and that the Greeks followed a "protocol of internecine Greek warfare," which included an aversion to sneak attacks (99),²⁵ Hanson's chapter disappoints largely because he fails to prove his central thesis, that Epaminondas' invasion of the Peloponnese was truly "preemptive." Hanson is on solid ground when he lays out a typology of warfare: both preemptive and

²⁵ For a critique, see, e.g., E.L. Wheeler, "Review of *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* by Victor Davis Hanson," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21.1 (1990), 122-25. Hanson's thesis is belied by his own words a little further on: "a frequent tactic of ancient Greek armies was to attack without warning a nearby suspicious city-state and destroy its walls" (103)—thus rendering the city defenseless, which of course was the point.

preventive wars are inherently defensive, he argues, but while the former is defined by “the apparent perception—or at least claim—[usually by a weaker state] of a credibly imminent threat” (100) by an enemy threatening its very existence, the latter is an attack by a stronger power that “claims that time will increasingly favor the geopolitical status of an innately aggressive and strengthening adversary that sooner or later might strike and change the status quo” (101). The Iraq War of 2003 is a good example of a preventive war, the Israeli Six Day War of 1967, an example of a preemptive war.

The problem arises when Hanson uses “preemptive” war to describe Epaminondas’ invasion of the Peloponnese. The problem is not so much one of perception—that is, “preemption” and “prevention” tend to be “in the eye of the beholder” (102)—but rather, that the Theban general’s actions more resemble improvisational responses to the entropy of warfare and sheer opportunism than a defensive war, whether preemptive or preventive. Hanson can furnish no convincing evidence that Epaminondas had developed a grand strategic plan to preempt an inevitable Spartan attack on Boeotia before he marched into the Peloponnese in December, 370. Although Hanson at first admits as much—“the motivations and aims of Epaminondas are difficult to recover” (100)—within a few pages all such doubts are gone: “it was the plan of Epaminondas ... to preempt Sparta by invading the Peloponnese, and then ... advancing into the Laconian homeland” (104), “to reorder the Greek world in such a way as to preclude any chance of Spartan resurgence” (106). Again, Hanson asserts in the text that “at some point in early 370, if indeed not before, the invasion was envisioned as part of a larger expedition to reorder the Peloponnese by humiliating or defeating the Spartan military, assuring the new Arcadian cities of Mantinea and Megalopolis of Boeotian protection, freeing the helots of Messenia, and founding the new city of Messene on Mt. Ithome” (104). But the footnote accompanying the latter quotation says, “we don’t know at what particular point Epaminondas’s arrival in winter 369 in Mantinea to help the Arcadians evolved into a subsequent campaign south to attack the homeland of Sparta, and then ... to enter Messenia to free the helots and found Messene” (116 n. 19). But the timing of the plan is precisely the issue upon which Hanson’s thesis of Theban preemption must stand or fall.²⁶ Better to stick to the thrust of the evidence, which suggests (again, to quote Hanson), “an ad hoc method of decision making” (116 n. 19).²⁷

²⁶ Cf. also 106: “the original visions of Epaminondas, *at whatever point they were reified ...*” (emphasis added).

²⁷ Indeed, as Hanson well knows, Xenophon, Diodorus, and Plutarch all state that after freeing Mantinea from Spartan control, Epaminondas was about to return to Boeotia when his new Peloponnesian allies persuaded him to stay and attack Laconia itself (precise references in 116 n. 19). Epaminondas also apparently improvised his decision to not attack the Spartan acropolis, but rather to turn to Messene (which Hanson characterizes, without evidence, as “contingency plans” developed well in advance of Epaminondas’ invasion of the Peloponnese [107]).

Fortunately, Hanson takes his self-appointed task to outline the ancient lessons for modern strategists quite seriously, devoting several concluding pages to the topic. Although it is doubtful that the brief Theban hegemony is a good demonstration of preemptive war and its possible consequences, this does not detract from the most important insights of Hanson's analysis: that in order to be successful, preemptive war, particularly if pursued by a democratic state, must be short and decisive, and followed by a well-planned and sustainable peace (107). The Iraq War is a case in point: post-war planning was inadequate because it "was overly optimistic" (109), and the American public's toleration for occupation expenses in terms of time, blood, and treasure was overestimated. Hanson also draws a neat parallel between newly liberated, democratic Mantinea, which later switched alliances from its liberator Boeotia to its enemy Sparta, and newly liberated Iraq, whose democratic government was vocally critical of the U.S. occupation and engaged with Iran in 2008. Such ironic unintended consequences, notes Hanson, typically follow the "unleashing [of] the democratic genie" (110). But undermining the parallel somewhat is the fact that the new Iraqi government has not gone to war against the U.S. (not yet, at least), while Mantinea went to war against Boeotia almost immediately. It is unfortunate that Hanson thus stretches the evidence to fit his firm conviction that Epaminondas' invasion of the Peloponnese is a salient parallel for the 2003 Iraq War, especially because Hanson is laudably cautious and critical of other ancient-modern comparisons, such as that which commentators drew between the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the disastrous Athenian invasion of Sicily in 415 B.C.

The following chapter shifts the focus from Hanson's relatively obscure ancient military hero to one of the best known—Alexander the Great. Prominent Alexander scholar Ian Worthington explores the issues of "Nation Building, and the Creation and Maintenance of Empire." To those familiar with the Macedonian king's career of conquest (and Worthington's considerable output on the subject²⁸), there will be few surprises here. But the author highlights two areas of great relevance to makers of modern strategy—"the problems [Alexander] faced ruling a large, multicultural subject population, and ... the approaches and strategies he took to what might be called nation building" (118). Worthington emphasizes Alexander's untying (or cutting, with a sword) of the Gordian knot as emblematic of his attempt to win the hearts and minds of those he conquered and controlled (120, 124). But the stark truth, Worthington reminds us, is that "no one

²⁸ "The Chronology of the Harpalus Affair," *Symbolae Osloenses* 61 (1986), 63-76; "The Harpalus Affair and the Greek Response to the Macedonian Hegemony," in I. Worthington, ed., *Ventures Into Greek History: Essays in Honour of N.G.L. Hammond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 307-330; "How 'Great' was Alexander?," *Ancient History Bulletin* 13.2 (1999), 39-55; ed., *Alexander the Great: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); "Alexander's Destruction of Thebes," in W. Heckel and L.A. Tritle, eds., *Crossroads of History. The Age of Alexander the Great* (Claremont CA: Regina, 2003), 65-86; "Alexander, Philip, and the Macedonian Background," in J. Roisman, ed., *The Brill Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 69-98; *Alexander the Great: Man and God* (London: Pearson, 2003); "Alexander the Great and the Greeks in 336? Another Reading of IG ii² 329," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 147 (2004), 59-71.

likes to be conquered” (124, 134), regardless of the conqueror’s personal charisma, the persuasiveness of his justifications for the mission, or his attempts to reconcile the conquered—or indeed, his own men—to it. Alexander either thought it was enough or saw no other practical alternative than to use local Persian nobles as his satraps in the hope that their opposition to his usurpation of their power would be nullified, and that they could reconcile their own peoples to Alexander’s new regime (126-27). The real power, however, lay with the Macedonian financial and military officers whom Alexander placed over the native satraps. The result was disloyalty and revolt by the satraps whenever Alexander was safely distant.

Another method by which Alexander attempted to exert control (and nation build) was to establish cities—perhaps as many as seventy Alexandrias in his lifetime (the most famous being in Egypt, although Kandahar in modern Afghanistan may have been one as well), and plans for mixed-population, multicultural urban settlements scattered across his vast empire. This, too, had a command and control function: the cities were above all garrison points located in particularly troublesome spots. It was Hellenization, however, the bringing of Greek culture to non-Greeks, that became the “staple” of Alexander’s “nation building” project (130). Despite his own attempts to “go native” (wearing Persian dress and encouraging his men to perform *proskynēsis*, the full-body prostration that the Persians performed before their Shahs, for example), and his tolerance for foreign religious beliefs (which, after all, is not very difficult for a polytheist), Alexander abolished native practices that he found personally repugnant (such as the Bactrians’ custom of throwing out alive their elderly and infirm as prey for wild dogs). This was, for Worthington, a tragic mistake: shocking though they might be, such customs were traditional and local, and Alexander “had no business” putting an end to them (131).

Alexander failed to win the hearts and minds of the conquered. Worthington rightly points out that although the great conqueror did many things to foster intercultural dialogue and fusion, such as taking Afghan and Persian wives, and encouraging his officers to follow suit, he was no ideological multiculturalist, interested in promoting a “unity of mankind” for its own sake.²⁹ He was, rather, a pragmatist trying in whatever way he could to control his increasingly far-flung dominions so he could get on with the business he really cared about—further conquest. The problem was that Alexander rated no foreign potentate greater than the lowliest Macedonian—and made no attempt to disguise this; hence, no Greek or Macedonian women were sent for to marry Persian or Afghan men, native satraps were mere figureheads, and his own marriage to the Afghan princess Roxane was more political than an expression of a multicultural ideal. At the reconciliation banquet after the Opis mutiny in 324 B.C., the diners were seated around

²⁹ The great Alexander scholar W.W. Tarn once promoted the idea of Alexander as philosophically committed to the unity of mankind (*Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind* [London: Oxford University Press, 1933]), but Ernst Badian successfully exploded it twenty-five years later (“Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind,” *Historia* 7 [1958], 425-44).

Alexander in order of importance: Macedonians, then Greeks, then Persians and everyone else. “Everything [Alexander] did was for a political reason” (130). The lesson for modern strategists is clear: the conqueror’s engagement with, sensitivity towards, and perhaps even appreciation for the culture of the conquered has to appear (and perhaps be) genuine.

It is clear that the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan was uppermost in Worthington’s mind as he wrote. Alexander’s failure to respect other peoples’ cultures reminds us “how little the modern world learns from ... the past”—an allusion, perhaps, to the various indignities visited upon the Iraqi people by poorly informed U.S. military personnel. I am reminded of the famous photos (ubiquitous on the internet) of American soldiers sitting on one of Saddam Hussein’s massive thrones. Like these soldiers, Alexander, after his victory over Darius III, was said to have sat on the Shah’s throne, but because he was much shorter than the 6 ½ -foot Persian, his feet did not touch the ground (Quintus Curtius, *Life of Alexander the Great*, 5.2.13). At one point, Worthington reminds readers and policy-makers that Alexander’s nemeses “the Afghans were (and are) not conquered by anyone,” and the only break in their constant internecine squabbles came when a common enemy threatened—as Alexander, the nineteenth-century British, the late twentieth-century Soviets, and now the Americans have bitterly experienced (122-23). The conclusions are bleak—“no one wants to be conquered,” Worthington reiterates, “and in the end, only military power, not idealism, can maintain a conqueror’s power” (134). The best one can hope for after conquering a large and diverse empire is a cultural payoff, such as the great cultural centers that sprang up in Egypt (Alexandria), Syria (Antioch), and Asia Minor (Pergamum) under Alexander’s successors.

Like many of the other essays in the volume, however, this one too suffers from too little direct engagement with current affairs. Worthington is allusive and suggestive rather than explicit and prescriptive. He fails to explain, for example, how, or whether, American cultural attitudes, particularly in U.S. military personnel abroad, should be adjusted, in light of Alexander’s negative example, and translated into a practical agenda to transform areas of U.S. military involvement from breeding grounds for terrorists into stable allied communities. On the other hand, some would argue that Alexander was right to ban the Bactrian practice of throwing the elderly and infirm to the wild dogs, just as critics of radical Islam want to abolish such retrograde practices as the stoning of women and the beheading of those who insult the prophet Mohammed. Some engagement with these cultural politics would have been welcome here.

The following chapter, a study of “Urban Warfare in the Classical Greek World” by military historian John W.I. Lee reprises the military specialist focus of Berkey’s chapter on fortification walls. Lee claims that urban combat—“pitched battle within city walls” (139)—remains an understudied phenomenon in the field of classical Greek warfare, despite the fact that so many of the great Greek *poleis* (Athens and Sparta among them) experienced such battles, some with far-reaching consequences, such as that which led to the establishment of Athenian democracy in 507 B.C. Lee has identified three common

occasions for ancient urban combat: resistance fighting once city walls had been breached by an enemy (Plataea in 431, Thebes in 335, shortly before it was destroyed by Alexander the Great); *stasis*, or civil discord, within cities, which could result in running street battles, or even the formation of factional armies occupying (and sometimes walling off) portions of cities (Corcyra in the late 430s); and insurgent attempts at ejection of occupying garrisons, sometimes along with a particular faction in the city (Athens in 508-507). For the benefit of non-specialists, Lee provides a useful topography of a typical polis, with its nucleated, built up, and walled off center (the *asty*, sometimes centering around a natural high point, such as an acropolis), surrounded by the fields possessed by its citizens (*chora*). He reminds readers of how exceptional the super-polis Athens was, compared to the typical city-state, which was about the size of a mid-sized American college campus (a few hectares or so), with a comparable population (a few thousand or so).

Urban warfare was conditioned and shaped by a city's major structures and features, such as walls, gates, street grid, buildings, houses, and acropolises, sometimes complemented by internal fortresses and towers. The central open marketplace, the *agora*, was typically the destination of invading troops (its occupation being both a sign of control and a blow to the inhabitants' morale), and an instinctive rallying-point for defenders. Large buildings in the city center could also be the scene of pitched battles, but were most often seized to serve as places of refuge, arsenals, and supply dumps. Such urban entrenchments could become death traps as well; many an ancient anecdote describes an angry population climbing atop an occupied building and raining down death on those inside with roof tiles and arrows. In older cities, where street grids had grown up haphazardly, it was easy for local fighters to outwit and disorient foreign invaders, who degraded their support and communications capabilities by dividing up and dispersing their forces across the urban landscape. Aristotle remarked that the classical preference for regular, "Hippodamian" street grids improved lifestyle but compromised security (*Politics* 1330b6). Greek houses, with their inward-facing orientation, windowless exteriors, party walls, and multiple stories, often served as "fortresses of last resort" for defenders. By cutting holes in party walls, "neighbours ... could convert an entire block into a final redoubt" (148), and the resulting rabbit-warrens became for the invaders treacherous shooting-galleries. Room-to-room searches, potentially dangerous in themselves, also resulted in the breakdown in unit cohesion, as individual invaders became distracted by opportunities for looting and pillaging.

Lee then turns to a discussion of the urban combatants themselves. Typically hoplite soldiers, urban invaders found themselves at a distinct disadvantage because of their equipment, which consisted of heavy shields and long javelins too unwieldy at close quarters, and their training, which did not encompass sword-fighting at close quarters. The hoplite battle formation—the phalanx—was another problem: outside the *agora*, nothing like the battlefield phalanx formation could be maintained in an urban setting. Division into smaller units for street-to-street and house-to-house fighting was hampered by a lack of divisional commanders and subordinate officers. The lack of "specialists, such

as pioneers, specialists, [and] combat engineers” in what were essentially part-time citizen militias was a serious limitation on the ancients’ ability to conduct urban warfare. Light infantry—archers, slingers, and skirmishers—were more effective in this context, while cavalry never played a significant role (although Pyrrhus of Epirus once tried, with limited success, to deploy elephants in Argos).

Despite the modern tendency of some to valorize classical Greek open battle, as Lee reminds us, there were twice as many urban sieges and assaults as pitched battles during the Peloponnesian War, since most citizen militias would not offer battle unless numerical superiority (or at least equality) was guaranteed. The psychological importance of maintaining the integrity of strong (and expensive) fortification walls is shown in the panic that typically broke out when a breach was discovered, and by the fact that only once in the classical record did a city populace try to lure enemy forces into an ambush within the circuit wall (Thessalian Pharcedon, attacked by Philip in the mid-fourth century B.C.). Lee also notes that the Greeks were constitutionally averse to urban warfare because it involved the upsetting of strict Greek social and gender hierarchies. Urban warfare involved women, slaves, and the poor (light infantry), thus threatening to “upset the masculine dominance over war, not to mention the notion of the household as an inviolable private space” (152). The Greek aversion to urban warfare also derived from other factors: the lack of command and control, the enhanced violence and ruthlessness of urban operations (particularly if *stasis* was involved), the high incidence of non-combatant casualties, “treachery, massacres, and fights to the death” (153), the unwillingness to grant quarter or strike truces, and the enhanced desire for payback by attackers forced to endure long sieges or bloody assaults. The work of Aeneas Tacticus (fourth century B.C.) shows that although urban warfare was never the best option, and was almost always regarded as a defensive last resort, Greek military planners quickly developed and deployed a suite of strategies designed to deal with its peculiar constraints.

The lessons for modern strategists are not readily apparent, as Lee admits, though the American experience in recent years in Baghdad and Fallujah, and in Mogadishu in 1993, “where an outnumbered American assault force was bewildered by a maze of unfamiliar streets,” indicates that there are still some commonalities between ancient and modern urban counterinsurgency. Adopting a Thucydidean stance that “the details may change, but people’s responses will remain similar” (156), Lee concludes that the Greek experience manifests many lessons for modern strategists. First and most importantly, good intelligence and local knowledge, including local economic and social relationships within the urban space, are key to a successful urban warfare strategy. It is also important to head off insurgency through “repression [and] surveillance” (157), and occupation of strategic places (e.g., marketplaces, streets, and houses), in addition to central points. Lee warns that urban warfare will always be marked by vengeance and factionalism, regardless of whether intra-city divisions are along political, religious, or cultural lines. Urban warfare also tends to be holistic in the worst possible way, since not just military personnel but civilians too tend to be swept up in the action. Perhaps most important for American strategists reflecting on recent experiences in Iraq, Lee notes that foreign

garrisons and patrols are focal points for local opposition, and hired mercenaries in ancient Greece as today (“independent security contractors” such as those in the employ of Blackwater USA, now Academi) may make matters worse through “arrogant, violent, careless ... unregulated, and overaggressive” conduct (157).

There is very little to dispute here, given that Lee’s analysis consists mostly of typology, narrative, and straightforward description. However, his conclusions might have been enhanced by paying some attention to modern technological factors—GPS and night vision/infrared devices, to name just two—that have improved an army’s ability to wage urban warfare, and which thus makes the ancient evidence less helpful in this regard. Lee’s assertion that the ancient Greeks “did not have to deal with world opinion,” and so exhibited less constraint about committing atrocities than modern soldiers is the only real false note. Diodotus, in debate with the Athenian demagogue Cleon in 427 B.C. over the fate of Mytilene, which had revolted from the Athenian empire, argued that to inflict genocide on the Mytileneans would cause future rebels from Athenian power to resist more stubbornly, resulting in more expensive repressions and loss of tribute (Thuc. 3.46-47). Pragmatic this may have been, and not necessarily moral for its own sake, but it at least shows a concern for how Athenian state policy was seen by the outside world.

The final four essays in the volume are concerned primarily with Roman history. Susan Mattern, an expert on ancient Roman foreign relations, begins with a chapter on counterinsurgency. The chapter opens with a valuable discussion of the minimalist Roman approach to running an empire, emphasizing the smallness of the army, the relatively low rates of taxation, the small provincial “bureaucracy” (if it may be characterized as such)—all controlled by “a vanishingly small senatorial ruling class” (164). The tangible result of this approach, Mattern notes, is that the Romans perforce depended on social relations up and down the provincial hierarchy in order to try to control endemic problems such as banditry (which encompassed “predatory rural violence, raiding, rustling, kidnap, extortion, highway robbery, and murder”: 168), and those areas of the empire prone to upheavals, such as Judea, where insurgencies typically took on an ideological dimension. Mattern reproduces an astonishing statistic: there were “more than 120 separate instances of insurgency from the reign of Augustus, the first emperor, through 190 CE” (165)—and those are just the ones our meagrely surviving sources happen to mention (imagine if more than 1 or 2% of texts that were written in antiquity had survived).³⁰

Insurgencies often arose immediately after conquest, during the painful consolidation period (e.g., the Boudicca rebellion in Britain, which broke out within two decades of the Roman invasion under Claudius), but also in long-established provinces, especially those with contested frontiers (e.g., northern Spain), and sometimes at the instigation of

³⁰ Here Mattern depends on T. Pekáry, “*Seditio*. Unrhen und Revolten im römischen Reich von Augustus bis Commodus,” *Ancient Society* 18 (1987), 133-50.

Romanized elites when they saw a good opportunity for aggrandizement, especially during periods of Roman civil war (e.g., Julius Civilis in A.D. 69 in Gaul). The Romans typically dealt with such insurgencies via asymmetrical military responses designed to inspire terror in the local population and to deter future rebellions there and elsewhere in the empire. Such tactics could include mass expulsions, enslavement, and/or slaughter of non-combatants, outright genocide, destruction of cities, and the devastation of farmland—the proverbial desert the Romans called peace, according to one of its famous enemies.³¹ These actions were complemented by the use of a discourse of vilification against insurgents that eschewed strategic and rationalizing language in favor of a rhetoric of righteous Roman vengeance for slights to Roman honor by barbaric peoples. The Romans also employed such preventive measures as erecting road-stations with mini-garrisons detached from local legionary forces along major routes through bandit territory, waging small preventive wars against bandit communities (as Cicero did in Cilicia in 51-50 B.C.), forcibly transferring populations to places with fewer places to hide, and sometimes even negotiating interstate relationships with bandit chiefs, and incorporating bandit gangs into the legions.

But the key weapon the Romans used in the fight against insurgency, according to Mattern, was the exploitation of the local knowledge of the “big men” in restive areas, and their ability to massage their local social and political networks to secure favorable outcomes for Rome. Perhaps the most famous example is that time-server *extraordinaire*, Herod the Great of Judea, whose local expertise was exploited in turn by Julius Caesar, Caesar’s assassin Cassius, Mark Antony, and Antony’s rival and vanquisher Octavian/Augustus. Mattern describes a triangular situation whereby “foreign relations, local politics, and rivalries internal to the Roman ruling class [including civil war] worked inextricably together or against one another” in the politics of empire (178). Thus the Roman province was less a state-like territorial unit than an expression of a whole host of unique relationships between the Roman state (the senate and emperor under the empire, the senate and people of Rome under the Republic), and local individuals and groups of individuals (city-states, tribes, communities). In the Roman context, then, “insurgency, resistance, and banditry [are] attenuated areas or holes in the network of social relationships that linked the empire together and bound it to the senatorial aristocracy and to the emperor” (178).

So can the ancient evidence for insurgency and counterinsurgency enlighten modern strategic thinking? As a self-professed skeptic on ancient-modern analogies and lesson-seeking—“imagine the Romans with nuclear weapons,” she rightly warns of such endeavours (179)—Mattern exercises an admirable caution that is too often missing elsewhere in the volume. She thus argues that terrorism (“random, unpredictable violence

³¹ The British rebel chieftan Calgacus in Tacitus, *Agricola* 30.

designed to create instability and fear”: 169) is poorly attested in antiquity,³² and its nearest ancient analogue, banditry, was, in contrast to today, a rural rather than an urban phenomenon, and was motivated by economics rather than ideology or ethnicity. Because the Roman armies were polyglot in nature, moreover, often including men from the local area as well as from across the occupied empire, it is difficult to make clear distinctions between the Roman occupiers and the local occupied. Roman soldiers and civilians might also be in a place for the long haul (and indeed take up permanent residence there, as some soldiers did upon retirement), and so became deeply enmeshed in local social relationships, thus exercising a mitigating effect on local insurgent tendencies—and further complicating the picture of a simplistic occupier-occupied relationship.

On the other hand, Mattern’s reluctance to engage in comparative history causes her to ignore robust and informative parallels. Her discussion of the importance of occupiers plugging in to local networks of political and social control precisely evokes reports of American soldiers trying to broker security and intelligence-gathering agreements with local strong men in Iraq, after U.S. authorities during the initial phase of occupation ignored and disrespected such men—with tragic results. Mattern fails to draw out this parallel, instead choosing to equate ancient social institutions and the ancient ruling elite’s social networks with today’s “shared economic and cultural interests” (179). These are, in her view, telecommunications, global finance, open markets, and “the consumer tastes and interests that link international communities today” (179)—globalization, in other words. This should be the future ideological focus of U.S. foreign policy, Mattern concludes. But on the face of it, this seems a recipe for disaster rather than success for traditional societies, like those of the Middle East, portions of which are currently subject to U.S. military occupation, and much of which is subject to U.S. “soft power.”³³

Cornell classicist and military historian Barry Strauss’s contribution turns to a species of insurgency in antiquity, the slave war. He begins with a paradox: although “millions of men and women around the ancient Mediterranean lived and died in chains ... [slave] rebellion—that is, armed and collective uprisings in search of freedom—was exceptional” (185). Various security measures taken by masters—eternal vigilance, not buying strong-willed slaves, and keeping slaves of the same ethnic background separated, to name only a few—are a partial explanation as to why this was so. Between 140 and 70 B.C., however, Rome, Italy, and its Sicilian province endured at least three unprecedentedly massive

³² Exceptional are the infamous Jerusalem-based *sicarii* in the 50s B.C., who targeted local Roman collaborators, real or perceived.

³³ To say nothing of the European left, which is for the most part hostile to, as they perceive it, U.S.-led globalization: R.A. Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 135-70.

slave wars, including the most famous, that of Spartacus, the Thracian gladiator. What specific conditions account for the anomaly?³⁴

The First and Second Sicilian Slave Wars (135-132 and 104-100 B.C., respectively), and the Spartacus War (73-71 B.C.) had a profound impact of Roman Republican history, according to Strauss, leading directly to the contentious issues of agrarian reform and land redistribution, and the creation of the special and prolonged provincial commands of career generals such as Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar—both of which contributed to the fall of the Republic. The timing and location (southern Italy and Sicily) of these wars are explained by the large influx of foreign slaves as a result of Rome's overseas conquests (mostly complete by 100 B.C.), and a concentration of them as agricultural slaves in the rich farmlands of Campania and Sicily. The true causes, however, were lax security on the part of slave owners, who rashly concentrated too many slaves speaking a common language—Greek—in these relatively small areas, and failed to provide adequate policing, especially of the armed, free-roaming (and sometimes militarily experienced) slave herdsmen in pastoral areas.

Strauss notes that, despite the pious wishes of Marxist historians (and communist novelists and Hollywood screenwriters³⁵), there was very little abolitionist ideology involved in these wars. The rebel slaves wanted their freedom, of course, but were motivated almost entirely by the cruel treatment they received from their masters, and a desire to return to their homelands (especially those who had been kidnapped by pirates). Spartacus and his followers, for example, were tired of the indignity of being objects of spectacle, and so freed mostly other gladiators; rural slaves tagged along too, but the leaders of the revolt never tried to free urban, household slaves, much less discussed the abolition of all forms of slavery. Despite occasional gestures towards egalitarianism (Spartacus, for example, very pragmatically distributed plunder equally among his followers), these leaders adopted the trappings of hierarchy and rulership. Spartacus himself wielded the *fascies*, the rods and axes of Roman consular office, and the leaders of the Sicilian revolts styled themselves kings, complete with purple robes and diadems. Some slave leaders also cultivated a messianic image, and claimed divine inspiration. So, for example, Eunus, a leader in the First Sicilian Slave War, “maintained that he had divine visions in his dreams, from which he recited prophetic messages. His pièce de

³⁴ Strauss rightly distinguishes between rebellions of chattel slaves and rebellions by victims of “communal slavery” or serfdom (defined as “the collective enslavement of whole groups, either within a community or across community lines,” e.g., the helots, Messenians and Laconians enslaved to the ancient Spartans). Uprisings of communal serfs were common enough in Greek antiquity, including several by the helots. He also notes some half-dozen minor slave insurrections in Greece and Rome over three centuries, and the rather common practice of belligerent states or individuals encouraging slave uprisings in each other's cities, but these are again somewhat different from the slave wars of 140-70 B.C.

³⁵ Howard Fast, author of the novel *Spartacus*, and Dalton Trumbo, the screenwriter of the 1960 film based upon Fast's book, were both members of the Communist Party of the United States, and were jailed and blacklisted in the 1950s by Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee.

résistance was to go into a trancelike state, breathe flames from his mouth (using a trick involving hollow shells and embers), and issue yet more prophecies” (194). Secular power was important to Eunus too, however: he took the dynastic Seleucid name Antiochus and issued his own coinage. All of this was supplemented by natural charisma (as in the case of the enormously strong Spartacus), and often a strong association with the god Dionysus, god of liberation.

The slave warriors used surprise and unconventional tactics to achieve their temporary successes against Roman armies, and often targeted civilians as revenge for their poor treatment in slavery, and their property out of sheer greed. They lacked means of supply, military cohesion, coherent communications (because of their polyglot membership), fortified bases, and even proper weapons—often arming themselves with kitchen utensils and farm implements, and melting down their chains for armor. Their cause was hopeless, in other words, and their (temporary) successes explained by luck and circumstances, in the case of the Sicilian slave wars, because Rome maintained only a two-legion “constabulary” force on the island, and in the case of the Spartacus War, because the Roman governor had only poorly-trained scratch troops at first. The rebels usually adopted raiding and guerrilla tactics in rough terrain unfamiliar to the Romans. Their strategic goals were therefore limited to trying to tire out the enemy while establishing a runaway settlement in the hills (so-called “maroon communities”), preparing to escape abroad, or seeking allies nearby.

For their part, the heavily armed infantry of the Roman legions found it difficult to come to grips with the rebels because they were not equipped to deal with hit-and-run tactics, nor could they effectively adapt their chief strength—fighting in massed ranks—to the slaves’ insurgent tactics. This was asymmetrical warfare at its most frustrating. The problem was compounded by conventional Roman prejudices surrounding slave wars. Because there was no glory in fighting slaves (and absolute disgrace in losing to them), Roman soldiers thought it beneath them to change their tactics to suit those of the slaves. Victorious commanders in the slave wars could not celebrate triumphs, the only exception being Manius Aquilius, the consul of 100 B.C., who killed the rebel king Salvius/Tryphon in single combat. On the other hand, Aquilius was unable to enjoy Rome’s most prestigious military accolade given to Roman commanders who slayed their opposite numbers—the right to lay in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius the *spolia opima* (the “rich spoils,” stripped from the dead opponent’s body)—because the slave king had not been a free man.

The slave wars did not recur after 70, at least not to any significant degree, according to Strauss, because the Romans had developed a rich repertoire of terror tactics as a deterrent (e.g., the crucifixion of 6,000 of Spartacus’ followers), and began to take and prepare for the threat more seriously. The civil wars then intervened, which provided opportunities for slaves to be freed by rival generals looking for ways to boost their ranks of fighting men in the short term. After that, the wars of expansion came to a halt,

resulting in a relative decline in slave numbers in Italy and Sicily. Manumission, and the hope of being freed, probably also played a role.

Throughout, Strauss rightly keeps in view the essential source problem: the already fragmentary ancient texts, written by and for slave-owning aristocrats, downplayed the significance of slave wars for ideological reasons, and all our information comes from the masters' point of view, resulting in a tradition of overwhelming contempt for the slaves' aspirations and achievements. Occasionally, Strauss himself neglects to filter this pervasive bias, as, for example, when he describes with an undertone of amusement and mockery the tricks and trances of Eunus/Antiochus, quoted above. Perhaps he is over-correcting for what he sees as the rather too earnest, idealist (and inaccurate) reading of these revolts by Marxist scholars. Strauss also over-corrects the elite ancient sources, which downplay the significance of the slave wars, by exaggerating their significance into the main cause of the downfall of the Republic. How exactly was agrarian reform, which caused so much civil strife during the late Republic, a response to the slave wars? One of the Roman reformers, Tiberius Gracchus, was apparently moved to promulgate agrarian laws after seeing vast areas of Etruria being worked by slave gangs rather than free men. But this was in northern Italy, not Campania or Sicily, the loci of the slave wars. In addition, it is hard to see in Crassus's single year command against Spartacus in 71 B.C. the paradigm of the late Republican special command. Surely Pompey's commands against Sertorius in the 70s and against the pirates and Mithridates between 67 and 62 were the forerunners of the triumviral assignments of the 50s, out of which grew Caesar's civil war and dictatorship.

Also problematic is Strauss's analysis of the close association between ancient rebel slave movements and the god Dionysus. His analysis of this phenomenon is limited to the observation that "Dionysus was the god of liberation," and "he was unwelcome to the Romans" (194)—the latter a reference to the Roman senate's famous suppression throughout Italy of secret gatherings of Dionysus-worshippers under cover of darkness, which the senators chose to regard as a nascent political conspiracy.³⁶ Strauss might have added that Dionysus was assimilated to the god Pater Liber—"the free father"—in the Roman pantheon, which might also account for why the slaves in Italy (and perhaps Sicily), longing for "liberation," might have found Dionysus so appealing. His explanation that Dionysus appealed specifically as a "rebel" god of the "powerless" because of the suppression of his worshippers by Rome in 186 seems a bit too subtle by comparison.

Finally, Strauss' conclusion on the lesson of the slave wars for modern strategists is not very enlightening: "when it comes to war, states usually hold all the cards" (202), and will almost always overcome such insurgencies. The only example of a successful slave rebellion—the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804)—is then set against colonial and post-

³⁶ Livy 39.8-18; an inscription (*CIL* i² 2.581) records the senatorial decree suppressing the free worship of Bacchus.

colonial wars (the Algerian War, the Soviet-Afghan War), and modern wars of liberation (the Iraq War). This elision of rebellions of chattel slaves of foreign origins in an alien country with modern religiously- and politically-inspired insurgencies of free men fighting against what they see as foreign occupation of their lands seems contrived at best, and altogether unnecessary, given the subject of the previous chapter by Mattern.

The Roman military historian Adrian Goldsworthy contributes a very well-written chapter on “Julius Caesar and the General as State.” After a brief, clear-eyed summary of how Caesar gained power, and, in so doing, overthrew the Roman Republic (“However unreasonable his opponents had been, it was Caesar who crossed the Rubicon and started the civil war of 49-45 B.C.”: 206), Goldsworthy lays out the political realities of the Roman Republican system. In contrast to most western liberal democracies today, he argues, Roman military and civilian authorities were not kept separate with the latter subordinate to the former, but were combined in the same *imperium* (capacity to command armies)-wielding magistrates—the consuls and praetors. Goldsworthy also emphasizes (surely following William Harris, who, however, is not cited) that success in war was the most important path to glory and wealth for the Roman ruling aristocracy.³⁷ Finally, he reminds us that Roman foreign policy-making was haphazard and inconsistent because the men holding the chief magistracies changed every year.³⁸ The extraordinary careers of Pompey the Great (set out briefly by Goldsworthy: 210) and Julius Caesar (recounted at length throughout the chapter) substantiate these assertions. Such men directed Roman foreign policy through a combination of accident and individual temperament. To take a notorious example, had not Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer died on his way to his proconsular province of Transalpine Gaul in April, 59 B.C. (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 2.5.2), and had not Pompey the Great convinced a majority of senators to assign the province to Caesar (Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 22.1), Caesar might have been content to limit his sphere of military operations during his proconsulship to Illyricum, one of the provinces assigned him by the Roman people in 59, against the Dacian king Burebista, and the great Gallic Wars that, in the event, Caesar fought and wrote about might never have happened.

As things turned out, of course, Caesar used the migration of a Gallic tribe (the Helvetii) through Roman territory as a pretext to make war on them, and then to pursue them beyond the frontier of his province and deep into Gaul until, over the course of his eight-year command, he conquered all Gaul up to the North Sea and west to the English Channel. No move by the leaders of the inhabitants of the region was deemed too insignificant to warrant a response from Caesar, who leveraged his increasingly complex web of diplomatic entanglements among the various Celtic and Germanic tribes to launch

³⁷ See, e.g., W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327 – 70 BC* (Oxford, 1979), 9–41.

³⁸ See, e.g., A.M. Eckstein, *Senate and General: Individual Decision-Making and Roman Foreign Relations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), xvii–xxi.

a series of “aggressive and opportunistic campaigns” (213) not just within Gaul itself, but across the Rhine into Germany proper, and across the Channel into Britain. But, as Goldsworthy reminds us, a great deal of Caesar’s overall achievement was secured “not by force alone” (208, 214, 223-24), but through careful diplomacy and carefully differentiated treatment of the various tribes and tribal leaders according to where these stood with respect to Rome (i.e., whether they were Roman friends and allies of long standing or recent enemies, Celtic locals or Germanic invaders, enthusiastic providers of troops or mere vocal supporters, and so on).

Goldsworthy then turns from the Gallic Wars to a consideration of the special bond between Caesar and his private army, thus providing the author with a further opportunity to reflect on one of the most important systemic problems of the late Republic and a key cause of its fall—the professionalization of the Roman citizen militia, and the refocusing of its loyalty from the Roman state in the abstract to its individual commanders. Goldsworthy stresses the enormous increased opportunities for patronage available to commanders like Caesar in these circumstances, from providing for his recruits’ retirement and extending citizenship rights to non-Roman enlisted men, to granting commissions to centurions. A staggering sixty of these latter commissions per legion were available to a Roman commander for distribution to Rome’s junior aristocracy (219).

The discussion of personal patronage leads logically back to a consideration of Caesar’s civil war and destruction of the Republic. Goldsworthy reminds us that “in most respects, the odds were against” Caesar (220), who “had to keep attacking and had to keep winning” (220) in order to overcome his much better resourced enemies. Thus Caesar took far greater risks than Pompey and his allies. Emerging victorious, Caesar made himself “head of the republic” as dictator (222), and above all “hoped to create a regime that survived by consent as much as by force” (223), and so did not put the army in charge of civilian life in Rome itself. In retrospect, all of this seems incredibly short-sighted and naïve, especially because Caesar apparently “misunderstood the attachment of others to tradition” (223). Julius Caesar’s heir, the first emperor Augustus, by contrast, represented himself as the arch-traditionalist, while at the same time far more ruthlessly applying force to back up his regime than had the moderate Caesar. Some informed analysis of why Caesar, the arch-manipulator of men and clear-eyed strategist, failed to see what Augustus later regarded as crucial to his survival would have been very welcome here. Instead, Goldsworthy ends on a rather depressing note: Caesar, like Pompey before him, eventually fell victim to the “what have you done for me lately?” syndrome, which pitilessly judges a person only by his or her latest success. The syndrome was a function of the ancient Roman obsession with (and precariousness of) personal reputation—Caesar’s famed *dignitas*, for the sake of which he launched a bloody civil war, and the *auctoritas*, “authority,” that all senators saw themselves as possessing in greater amounts than their nearest peers and rivals. Today, the media accelerates this process, which subjects politicians to an endless drive “to stay in the headlines” lest their achievements “rapidly fade or be rapidly pushed aside by newer stories” (224).

In terms of the lessons for U.S. power that Goldsworthy seems concerned to draw out of Caesar's experience in Gaul, one of the most important is that dealing with different factions on the ground in areas of U.S. military intervention is complicated, and demands diplomatic finesse. Finding collaborators on imperial peripheries and carefully calibrating one's treatment of them is, of course, an age-old difficulty for great powers,³⁹ but Caesar, "the general as state," like modern American military personnel and policymakers, had to be especially careful in the bewilderingly complex political environment of Gaul. As Goldsworthy observes, "it is too simplistic to think of purely pro- or anti-Roman factions or leaders within each tribe, in the same way that it is mistaken to speak of a simple divide between pro- and anti-Western groups in modern conflicts" (215). And, of course, tribal leaders had their own agendas, and probably "felt that they were using Caesar as much as he was using them" (215). This is indeed a valuable lesson for modern strategists, and would have been worth pointing out to American planners before and during the early stages of the political engagement in Iraq, when there seemed to be a tragic lack of understanding of local politics on the ground among various power brokers in Iraqi society, including imams, warlords, and sheikhs.⁴⁰

Goldsworthy also contrasts the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan with Caesar's in Gaul, noting that while the former was shaped by considerable domestic political pressures to establish a stable political order and withdraw, Caesar could shape the politics of Gaul in his own image, "engaged," as he was, "in permanent conquest," ruthlessly achieved. I disagree, however, with Goldsworthy's assertion (similar to Lee's, discussed earlier) that "the Romans"—and Caesar in particular—"did not have to worry about world opinion" (215). As Goldsworthy himself recognizes, Caesar's *Commentaries* on his campaigns sent a consistent message to the political establishment in Rome that he was "always acting for the good of the Republic" (212). Cato the Younger argued, against this massive exercise in spin, that Caesar should be bound and handed over to the Germans for breaching Roman *fides* by attacking them during a period of truce (Plutarch, *Life of Cato the Younger* 51; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 24.3). Roman senators had shown similar concerns in the past, attempting, for example, to punish commanders for massacring and enslaving peoples who had surrendered to Roman *fides*.⁴¹ And while it is true that the Romans acted thus less out of altruism than for reasons of public relations

³⁹ See, e.g., R. Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in W.R. Louis, ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson-Gallagher Controversy* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 128-51; Doyle, *Empires*, 133-35. For a critique, see A.E. Atmore, "The Extra-European Foundations of British Imperialism: Towards a Reassessment," in C.C. Eldridge, ed., *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1984), 106-25.

⁴⁰ P. McGeough, "Mission Impossible: The Sheikhs, the U.S. and the Future of Iraq," *Quarterly Essay* 14 (June, 2004), 1-80.

⁴¹ Examples at Burton, *Friendship and Empire*, 323-28.

(as Goldsworthy says, “Cato’s concern was not with the slaughter [of the Germans] itself”), this was a powerful self-imposed self-restraint nevertheless, and served to limit Roman violence more than, say, the ideology of the Hellenistic kings, whose entire political economy depended on endless conquest and an aggressive and predatory foreign policy.⁴²

The final chapter of the volume focuses (appropriately enough) on the fall of the Roman empire in particular, and the phenomenon of “imperial collapse” more generally. The author, Peter Heather, is one of the world’s foremost experts on Late Antiquity, the early Middle Ages, and the so-called “barbarian” kingdoms that replaced the Roman empire in the West in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. The chapter focuses on Roman frontier defense, which has become a scholarly micro-industry all of its own thanks in large part to the first scholar mentioned by Heather—Edward Luttwak, author of the controversial *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*.⁴³ Luttwak was a strategic analyst and consultant on President Ronald Reagan’s National Security Council in the 1980s. In his book he argues that beginning around the turn of the third century A.D., Roman frontier management switched from an active, aggressive policy of frontier protection (and expansion) to a pattern of passive “defense in depth,” whereby fortifications replaced large garrisons on the frontier, and mobile strike forces were stationed well behind the perimeter line, which belatedly reacted to invasions rather than attempted to pre-empt or resist them.

As Heather points out, Luttwak’s thesis has been all but disproven (“his analysis is substantially mistaken”: 227) thanks to decades of Roman frontier studies. These have shown that “internal [i.e., Roman imperial] political agendas [rather than] rational military planning” (227) determined frontier policy, and that formulating and sticking to grand strategies probably lay beyond the ability—and will—of most Roman emperors. “Emperors liked to show the landowners ... that they were tough on barbarians” (228; also 232), and often went to war for such things as honor and prestige,⁴⁴ which often led to “irrational” outcomes on the frontiers, such as building fortresses where previous agreements with external tribes had forbidden such activity, thus provoking raids and wars. The picture painted by Luttwak of a planned defensive strategy after the second century A.D., moreover, had less to do with rational planning than with the law of diminishing returns: the costs of waging war rose to a point at which they began to outweigh the benefits to the emperor personally. Also, far from being a “Maginot Line” behind which Roman soldiers huddled, waiting for the barbarians to arrive, frontier

⁴² M.M. Austin, “Hellenistic Kings, War and the Economy,” *CQ* 36 (1986), 450-66; Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy*, 79-117.

⁴³ E.A. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

⁴⁴ See now S.P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

fortifications were, rather, only one element in a complex combined strategy of aggression and containment, which also included “a manipulative repertoire of diplomatic intrusions, backed by the periodic deployment of main force ... often led by a reigning emperor” (229). As the archaeology shows, these campaigns were slash-and-burn affairs, where the emperor set his soldiers loose on barbarian settlements to loot and destroy at will. But as the literary record shows persuasively, the diplomatic outcome was perhaps the most important: the submission of local chiefs to the Roman emperor, and the incorporation of new territory into the Roman empire. This was followed by a survey of the newly conquered territory, accompanied by a “divide and rule” policy whereby confederations were broken up, middle-level chiefs were liberated from their dependence on the great chieftains, and military support and financial subsidies were used to shore up friendly leaders. Far from being a sign of weakness, Heather argues, financial subsidies were a diplomatic tool of long standing, “in modern terms ... targeted aid, designed to shore up the power of Rome’s chosen diplomatic partners” (231).

Heather next turns to reparations demanded by Roman emperors after frontier disturbances, and the building of post-war diplomatic relationships. Retributive impositions included forced drafts of manpower into the Roman armies, the removal of rebel leaders, the imposition of financial penalties (in the form of labor, raw materials, and food supplies), and forced resettlement further away from the Roman frontier, or sometimes within the empire’s borders with strict conditions attached. After the peace was finalized, conditions designed to establish Rome’s relationship with tribal leaders on a more permanent footing were laid down. These included the aforementioned “targeted annual subsidies,” granting favourable terms of trade, as well as less benevolent actions like hostage taking, and kidnapping and/or assassination of troublesome elements. What all this suggests is that, contrary to Luttwak’s view of the late Roman empire being permanently on the defensive, “the later empire turned its immediate neighbors into junior client members of a Roman world system, exerting military power to order their affairs [in Rome’s best interests]” (234). Post-war peace arrangements typically lasted a generation—20 to 25 years or so—which, “for a pre-modern state operating at such slow speeds over such vast distances ... represents a decent return on its military investments” (234). A side-effect of these interactions with Rome was equally significant: the centripetal political forces generated within the barbarian tribal regions through contact with Rome resulted in “a multiplicity of smaller units [giving] way to a much smaller number of larger ones.” On Heather’s estimate, German tribal territory was occupied by roughly fifty such units in the late first century A.D, and only a dozen or so by the end of the fourth (235). This transformation occurred as a result of Roman political and diplomatic arrangements; the transfer of new technologies and technical know-how, especially having to do with agriculture; and the injection of large amounts of wealth into traditional Germanic economies. Consolidated rule by “overkings” resulted in greater long-term internal cohesion, durability, and stability in the kingdoms themselves, and what were formerly non-hereditary kingships became hereditary through enhanced military professionalization in tribal societies.

So if all of these developments were achieved at Rome's instigation, and with Rome's blessing, how did it all go terribly, terribly wrong in the West? Heather argues that the trouble began not so much as a result of the overkings' consolidation of power on the frontiers of the Roman empire as "when an outside force"—and here Heather means specifically the late fourth- and early-fifth century migration of the Huns—"imparted an involuntary unity to a substantial number of these new and larger Germanic sociopolitical units" (238). The Hunnic migrations pushed across the Danubian and Rhine frontiers the Roman client overkings of, at first, the Gothic Tervingi and Greuthungi, among others, and then two groups of Vandals, the Alans, the Suevi, and the Burgundians. The Roman military response to these invasions only served to redouble the forces of unification among the overkings. The unity of purpose of so many barbarian groups, and their breaching of the frontiers all at once in response to the stimulus of the great migrations of the Huns was an unforeseeable tragedy for the Roman empire. Had they not come all at once, Rome's militarily and diplomatically aggressive approach to dealing with frontier threats (rather than the purported passive, defensive methods of Luttwak's thesis) would have been successful. As it happened, however, by seizing some territories and raiding and damaging others, the new arrivals ate away at the traditional Roman tax base (agricultural surplus production), which was the necessary means of funding the Roman armies, leading to "a vicious cycle of decline" whereby "losses of land and revenue undermined the capacity of the state to maintain its armed forces and hence its capacity to resist the further demands of barbarian intruders, whether those already on Roman soil or new ones from outside" (240). But in a larger, more meaningful sense, the Roman empire fell because "new farming techniques" crossing the frontiers into northern Europe from the Mediterranean "generated much larger populations, which were then mobilized by much more sophisticated political structures. The result was a fundamental shift in the strategic balance of power" (241). The timing of the fall was dictated by the "accident of Hunnic intrusion," but the effects of Roman political, economic, and technology transfer across the frontiers had already done the work of "unleashing the forces of development in barbarian Europe" (241). The initiative—and the locus of world power—shifted north into Europe, and the Mediterranean, with its relatively narrow resource base, would never be a source of global power again.

How convincing an explanation is this? Like all such big-picture explanations for major phenomena like the fall of the Roman empire (of which at least 210 different causes had been proffered by 1984⁴⁵), Heather's lacks nuance and must downplay other factors, such as the fact that most late-Roman emperors, including precisely those Heather discusses, expended an excessive amount of their blood and treasure in fighting civil wars against pretenders.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Heather's explanation would seem to have significant

⁴⁵ A. Demandt, *Der Fall Roms: die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1984), 695.

⁴⁶ See now A. Goldsworthy, *The Fall of the West: The Slow Death of the Roman Superpower* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2009) (published by Yale University Press in the U.S. as *How Rome Fell: Death of a Superpower*).

modern-day analogues, which in turn can teach us something about the future of American power. Thankfully, Heather avoids the usual journalistic conclusion about what Rome's fall portends for the U.S.—that imperial overstretch will inevitably lead to a fall.⁴⁷ He instead offers an intuitively reasonable scenario: that as outsiders react “with intelligence and determination to the opportunities and dangers that imperial policies present,” they “often display a marked tendency to develop and reorganize themselves in such a way as to overturn the original inequalities of power.” This results in what Heather calls “a kind of Newton's Third Law of Empires”: domination and exploitation stimulate reactions that transform dominated and exploited societies into ones “much more capable of resisting or even overturning the aggressive imperialism that set those reactions in train” (242). Heather cites the experience of the Slavic societies on the periphery of Frankish Europe between 500 and 1000 A.D., but what immediately comes to mind is the example of that current economic powerhouse, China, which has recently stimulated a reorientation of U.S. security attention and priorities to the Asia-Pacific region.

Overall, *Makers of Ancient Strategy* is an entertaining and informative volume, worthy of the studies that inspired it by Earle and Paret. But as the preceding commentary has indicated, the quality of the individual contributions is variable. This is largely due to the fact that the contributors are a mixture of prestigious professional historians with long experience of their subjects (Hanson, Goldsworthy, Heather, Kagan, Strauss, Worthington), early career academics just cutting their teeth (Berkey), and non-academic writers (Holland). The political orientation of a number of the contributions occasionally grates, and, as has been seen, results in unacceptable distortion of the evidence, as when Hanson tries to attribute to Epaminondas a strategy of preemption in 370 B.C.

As has also been noted earlier, the usefulness of the volume is limited by its (commendable) desire to reach two separate audiences: academic specialists in ancient history, and non-specialist military strategists. For the sake of the latter, a great deal of space is taken up sketching in the basic background information about particular topics and periods, so often the payoff—the lessons the ancient experiences are meant to teach—are too brief or too general to be of much use to intelligence and military professionals. Ancient historians, on the other hand, do not feel that they have learned very much since the volume is decidedly light on theory—military, strategic, or political. It is fairly obvious that most of the authors share a vaguely Realist vision on international politics, for example; so Berkey mentions “a bipolar structure in the interstate system” in the post-Persian Wars Aegean (63), and characterizes the period between 404 and 387-386 as “a transition of the structure of the interstate system from bipolarity to multipolarity” (86 n. 43), “the years 404-395 [as having] produced an uneasy transition from bipolarity to multipolarity” (69), and the period after 386 as “a highly competitive

⁴⁷ P.J. Burton, “*Pax Romana/Pax Americana: Perceptions of Rome in American Political Culture, 2000-2010*,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18.1 (2011), 85.

multipolar environment” (73). But nowhere are the premises that underpin IR Realism questioned, criticized, or backed up by discussion of the theoretical issues and scholarship. Such discussions would have enhanced Peter Heather’s contribution (to take one example), especially when he argues that Rome’s strategic and security interests were better served by having a smaller number of more powerful barbarian kingdoms on its frontier than a large number of smaller units. This seems to indicate, in political science terms, that a reduction in multipolarity leads to greater security for all. But when did the number of units become too small and too powerful for Roman comfort? The political science literature may have helped Heather think through this problem.

The volume is attractive overall and well-produced with relatively few typographical errors.⁴⁸ Perhaps a firmer editorial hand could have been exercised in order to achieve consistency in terms of the purpose and scope of footnotes and bibliographic material. Some contributions (Holland’s, for example) have relatively few and very brief notes, often no more than references to ancient source material. Others have long and numerous notes dealing with side-issues and reproducing reams of text from primary and secondary sources. Berkey is the standout example here, whose notes fill more pages than his main text. It is also not clear why one essayist (Lee) was alone given the option of providing a full bibliographical listing in addition to a “Further Reading” section.

None of these technical issues overshadows the considerable achievement of the volume, which is to show that the more things change, the more they stay the same. Like Thucydides, I suppose we can take grim comfort in the fact that some of our own experiences are not terribly dissimilar, in some respects, from those of the ancients.

Paul Burton is a Roman historian in the Classics and Ancient History program at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia, and is the author of *Friendship and Empire: Roman Diplomacy and Imperialism in the Middle Republic (353 - 146 BC)* (Cambridge UP, 2011). He has published on topics as diverse as ancient international law, the influence of the Classics on George Orwell, and the influence of Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* on Alfred Hitchcock’s film, *The Birds*. Dr Burton’s most recent article (in the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*) is a comprehensive study of comparisons of Rome with the United States as global powers in English-language print journalism and current affairs literature in the first decade of the twenty-first century. He has just

⁴⁸ Typos: “when” s/b “won” in line 1 p. 84; “461” s/b “46i” in n. 30 l. 2 p. 84; “Justine” s/b “Justin” in n. 41, l. 7, p. 86; “*opinion*” s/b “*opinio*” at n. 65, l. 6, p. 90; “None” s/b “No” at n. 26, l. 2, p. 117; strike “i” on l. 2, n. 41, p. 184; strike “Thucydides” on p. 204 n. 6; add space after “Caesar,” on p. 226 n. 10; strike “see” before “Caesar *Gallic War*” at n. 20, l. 3, p. 226. There are a few howlers: at one point, in mid-sentence, Ian Worthington refers to Alexander the Great as “He” (123)—a typo, one hopes, rather than an indication that Worthington accepts Alexander’s claims to divinity! A particularly egregious Microsoft Word “auto-correct” error on appears in Adrian Goldsworthy’s essay on p. 219: *nostril* (vs. what the author clearly intended to say, *nostris*, “our men”).

completed a companion piece covering the same issues in western European media, and has contributed a chapter to the forthcoming Brill Companion to Roman Imperialism on responses to Roman imperialism in early Republican Latin literature. In addition to the ANU, Dr Burton has taught at Wake Forest University (Winston-Salem, NC, USA), Allegheny College (Meadville, PA, USA), and The University of Tasmania (Hobart).

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