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Cavalry Operations in the Ancient Greek World (review)

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The primary focus of the work, that the Kushites saved Jerusalem from the Assyrians, is presented in an interesting and often thought-provoking manner. It is easy to see how the hypothesis developed and it makes sense. Unfortunately, the supporting evidence is mostly a reinterpretation of existing material. The author asks readers to accept his interpretation of the limited source material rather than previous interpretations, while offering no compelling reasons to make the switch. Can his interpretation be correct? Certainly, but more evidence is required if it is to supplant previous interpretations. Still, the book is worth reading and debating.

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Cavalry Operations in the Ancient Greek World. By Robert E. Gaebel. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8061-3365-1. Maps. Figures. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 345. \$34.95.

Robert E. Gaebel has provided a complete history of the use of cavalry in ancient warfare from the first appearance of the horse in the Ancient Near East and Greece until the Second Punic War. The most valuable aspects of the book are its author's experience as a classical historian and an equestrian. His sources include literary accounts of battles and such archaeological evidence as vase painting and sculpture. Although he provides maps and battle plans, the selection of the latter includes only two battles of the fifty-five discussed. Neither include any of the victories of Alexander the Great.

Gaebel fuses his knowledge of the horse with its capacities and limitations in actual use. Here he makes his most valuable contribution to any understanding of the horse in the military history of antiquity. He successfully argues that the lack of stirrups did not impede the effectiveness of horsemen. Even if they could not use lances as did the mediaeval knights, they could still wield hand-held spears to strike at the enemy. This conclusion amounts almost to heresy, but the author amply proves his case by discussing the capability of Greek horses and the nature of their equipment.

In the narrative proper Gaebel conservatively and carefully follows the findings of previous scholars, while drawing his own conclusions. He concentrates on giving a general account of various battles, laying particular emphasis on the functioning of cavalry. For the most part, before the days of Alexander it found its primary function in protecting the flanks of the phalanx and pursuing the defeated enemy. Three fourth-century battles, however, illustrated the offensive capability of well-trained horses and men. At Tegyra in 375 BC, Leuktra in 371, and Mantinea in 362 Theban generals employed cavalry to penetrate enemy lines. Philip II of Macedonia and his son Alexander proved the most ardent students of these developments. They first systematically concentrated on turning cavalry from a supporting arm into an offensive force. Philip used his Thessalian cavalry at the Crocus Plain

in 353 to crush the Phokian flank, the first example of the new Macedonian tactics. Although Philip deployed no cavalry at his masterpiece of Chaeroneia in 338, Alexander transformed the arm into a formidable part of the army that he led to India. Hannibal in the west learned Alexander's eastern lessons, which he used in a string of victories against Rome. Only Scipio Africanus, himself a member of this equestrian tradition, overcame the Carthaginians at Zama in 202.

In sum, Gaebel has traced the evolution of a scouting and secondary branch of service into an effective arm of attack. The coverage is complete and for the most part sound.

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Roman Military Signalling. By D. J. Woolliscroft. Charleston, S.C.: Tempus Publishing, 2001. ISBN 0-7524-1938-2. Maps. Photographs. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 191. \$29.99.

David Woolliscroft is a specialist on Hadrian's Wall and an experienced aerial photographer. He is also Director of the Roman Gask Project, which studies the Roman frontier around the Gask Ridge in Perthshire, Scotland. These qualifications make him just the author to enlighten readers on the theories of Roman frontier defense in the British Isles and comparative material from other provinces. This particular book will be of interest to intelligence scholars since his main focus is on signalling and the transmission of intelligence on the borders of the empire.

His thesis is a simple one: Roman frontiers could have been equipped with a comprehensive signalling system. He explains in layman's terms how he believed it worked. But he does not stop there. He also tries to make the case that signalling was of such high priority on the frontiers that other aspects of frontier design could be compromised to enhance it. In other words, the requirements of intelligence gathering on the frontiers influenced the overall design of such defences as Hadrian's Wall, and its surrounding supportive structures.

There have been previous attempts to identify signalling systems on Rome's borders, but they have usually been hampered by a lack of solid archaeological evidence. If the installations from which the Romans signalled on a particular frontier have not been excavated, then it is very difficult, if not impossible, to talk about how their signalling system worked. Even in provinces such as Britain where more excavation and systematic study has been done and the installations are still visible, we are still hampered by the fact that signalling leaves little evidence. Unless a signalling tower was built in stone, or a wooden structure was surrounded by a ditch, little trace of it may remain.

Woolliscroft has taken three of the best-studied stretches of the Roman