Justinian's Balkan Wars

Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thace and the Northern World A.D. 527-65

By Alexander Sarantis

Justinian's Balkan Wars is the first history of military and diplomatic affairs in the Roman provinces south of the River Danube during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-65). The Emperor's policies in this region have received little attention from modern historians, who have focussed on his struggles with the Sassanian Persian empire in the East, and, in the West, his glorious reconquests of Italy from the Goths and Africa from the Vandals. This comparative neglect reflects the influence of the contemporary historian Procopius, who (following his own bias) viewed the Balkans under Justinian as a backwater denuded of manpower and left vulnerable to the depredations of barbarian raiders. In contrast Justinian's Balkan Wars argues that the Emperor was fully aware of the region's vital strategic importance, and frequently committed more effort and resources there than in other theatres of operation. Justinian's Balkan Wars offers a detailed reconstruction of military and diplomatic relations between the Germanic, Hunnic and Slavic peoples north of the Danube frontier and Justinian's eastern Roman Empire. It uses a variety of contemporary histories and chronicles to chart barbarian raids, imperial campaigns and the receptions of barbarian leaders in the glittering halls of the imperial capital, Constantinople. In doing so it sketches the contours of Justinian's Balkan strategy and its relationship to other theatres of operation such as the Italian Peninsula and the Transcaucasus. The book draws on administrative reforms, epigraphic and numismatic evidence, and the archaeology of settlement patterns to place these historical events in a wider socio-economic and physical context. It shows the importance of infrastructure, logistical preparation, political control and the support of local hearts and minds for successful campaigning in Late Antiquity. Justinian's energetic military, diplomatic, and development policies in the Balkans ensured that the eastern Roman Empire in general prevailed against its barbarian opponents. Hence the eventual loss of Roman control over the majority of the Balkan provinces and their colonisation by Slavic tribes in the 7th c. was by no means inevitable when Justinian died in 565.

About the Author:
Alexander Sarantis is currently Lecturer in Early Medieval European History at Aberystwyth University and Honorary Research Fellow of the Centre for Late Antique Archaeology at the University of Kent. His research interests include war and warfare across the period of Late Antiquity (3rd-7th c. A.D), Roman-barbarian relations, and barbarian migrations and settlements in the Roman provinces, with particular concentration on the East Roman empire in the reign of Justinian. Since finishing his D.Phil at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford in 2006 on The Balkans in the Reign of Justinian he has authored articles on barbarian groups such as the Gepids, Heruls, Sarmatians, Quadi and Lombards. He recently co-edited and contributed seven papers to War and Warfare in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives (two volumes, Leiden 2013).
Roman Crete: New Perspectives
Edited by Jane E. Francis and Anna Kouremenos

Key Features:
· Inter-disciplinary studies into the artefacts, history, inscriptions and archaeological evidence for Crete as a Roman province
· Develops a number of themes to demonstrate the economic, cultural and iconographic integration of the island into the Roman Empire
· Papers contribute to current academic issues including Romanisation/acculturation, climate and landscape studies, regional production and distribution and domestic housing, economy and trade

The last several decades have seen a dramatic increase in interest in the Roman period on the island of Crete. Ongoing and some long-standing excavations and investigations of Roman sites and buildings, intensive archaeological survey of Roman areas, and intensive research on artefacts, history, and inscriptions of the island now provide abundant data for assessing Crete alongside other Roman provinces. New research has also meant a re-evaluation of old data in light of new discoveries, and the history and archaeology of Crete is now being rewritten.

The breadth of topics addressed by the papers in this volume is an indication of Crete's vast archaeological potential for contributing to current academic issues such as Romanisation/acculturation, climate and landscape studies, regional production and distribution, iconographic trends, domestic housing, economy and trade, and the transition to the late-Antique era. These papers confirm Crete's place as a fully realised participant in the Roman world over the course of many centuries but also position it as a newly discovered source of academic inquiry.
Spinning Fates and Songs of the Loom
The Use of Textiles, Clothing and Cloth Production as Metaphor, Symbol and Narrative Device in Greek and Latin Literature
Edited by Giovanni Fanfani, Mary Harlow and Marie Louise Nosch

Textile imagery is pervasive in classical literature. An awareness of the craft and technology of weaving and spinning, of the production and consumption of clothing items, and of the social and religious significance of garments is key to the appreciation of how textile and cloth metaphors work as literary devices, their suitability to conceptualise human activities and represent cosmic realities, and their potential to evoke symbolic associations and generic expectations. Spanning mainly Greek and Latin poetic genres, yet encompassing comparative evidence from other Indo-European languages and literatures, these 18 chapters draw a various yet consistent picture of the literary exploitation of the imagery, concepts and symbolism of ancient textiles and clothing. Topics include refreshing readings of tragic instances of deadly peploi and fatal fabrics situate them within a Near Eastern tradition of curse as garment, explore female agency in the narrative of their production, and argue for broader symbolic implications of textile-making within the sphere of natural wealth. The concepts and technological principles of ancient weaving emerge as cognitive patterns that, by means of analogy rather than metaphor, are reflected in early Greek mathematical and logical thinking, and in archaic poetics. The significance of weaving technology in early philosophical conceptions of cosmic order is revived by Lucretius’ account of atomic compound structure, where he makes extensive use of textile imagery, whilst clothing imagery is at the centre of the sustained intertextual strategy built by Statius in his epic poem, where recurrent cloaks activate a multi-layered poetic memory.

About the Author:
Mary Harlow is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Leicester.
The regular representation of the built environment on coins was a purely Roman phenomenon among the ancients. In the Greek world, architectural representation on coinage was very uncommon; when it did appear it referred directly to the local identity of the issuing state. Coins of the Persian satrapies only rarely depicted fortifications in conjunction with traditional Persian emblems of royalty, power, and shrines of the chief deities in the minting city. The Roman use of the iconography of building was fundamentally different. From the first occurrence in 135 BC through the late Roman Empire, the architectural images on coins from Rome commemorated or politicized the monument in question. By the mid-first century BC and into the Imperial period, architecture had become commonplace in the repertoire of Roman coin iconography. Representation of monuments is one of the most beloved (and belabored) topics in studies of Roman coin iconography. It is also a theme in dire need of re-exploration. This comprehensive and chronological approach to architectural coin types conveys the complexity of the subject and underscores how the designs were symptomatic of, and sensitive to, the underlying social, cultural and historical trends that affected both Roman art and Roman society at large.
Entre Aidos y Peitho
La iconografía del gesto del velo en la antigua Grecia
By Pablo Aparicio Resco

Is there anything more mysterious than a piece of fabric covering something? Since the author of this book started noticing classical images with its young figures holding a veil while working in Pompeii, the study of this iconography has become his passion. This volume will focus only on Ancient Greece, but it explores a fascinating topic with strong connexions in current societies. The book will delve into the iconography of the veil gesture, but will also explore other topics closely related to it from an anthropological perspective.
Sabores de Roma
Actas del I Simposio Internacional Sobre Gastronomía Antigua Romana
Edited by Pedro Carretero

Since ERA Cultura Extremadura started experimenting with Apicio's receipts, a meeting on Roman cooking and food production became crucial. This is how the first international conference "Sabores de Roma" (flavours of Rome) took place in Zafra on July 2013. This book collects some of the works presented on that conference, in a range of topics from food production and manipulation to experimental recipes and new products commercialized in the last couple of years (garum, oil, wine…). Some of the main Spanish experts in Roman cooking participate in this volume, that is a great approach to the topic.