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Review of *Early Medieval Militarisation* by Ellora Bennett, Guido M. Berndt, Stefan Esders and Laury Sarty (eds.)

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Ellora Bennett, Guido M. Berndt, Stefan Esders and Laury Sarty (eds.), *Early Medieval Militarisation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021. viii + 367 pp. ISBN 978-1526138620 (hardback). Price £90.00

This useful collection of essays sets out to chart the gradual transformation – here, characterised as militarisation – from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Militarisation is explained, in a lengthy introduction by the editors, as implying characteristics like 'the lack of differentiation between the military and the civil…as well as the prominent display of weapons and military training of children' (p. 10), but also as a tool used to describe and analyse what happened in a specific period or region and why society underwent specific changes without necessarily applying all the characteristics. The starting point of this militarisation is seen as the provincial societies of the late Roman Empire while its end can be found in the ninth century, 'when new tendencies of professionalisation of the military, new recruitment methods and new types of warfare are attested throughout Europe (p. 11). In short, a period spanning roughly 400 to 900.

The editors assert that early medieval militarisation can be studied through two complementary approaches: the first, considers society's external relation to the military and warfare (e.g. organisation and recruitment, military roles of the population); while the second, examines contemporary ideas, perceptions and values relating to warfare and the military (e.g., common patterns of behaviour and thought). These two approaches are reflected in the division of the collection into four parts, with parts I and II (the military and society; warfare and society) corresponding to the first approach, and parts III and IV (ethics of war; perceptions of the warrior) corresponding to the second. However, there is clearly a certain amount of overlap between some of the issues raised in individual chapters within the different parts (e.g., the contributions of Berndt and Gasparri on the Lombards), and overall, one has to wonder the extent to which either approach and the militarisation lens provide an alternative to the, now, unfashionable 'Germanisation' and 'barbarisation' terms of earlier scholarship. They all certainly beg the question as to why a specific label is needed as opposed to simply looking at the transformation of society in all its multi-faceted perspectives.

There is much to praise in this collection. The broad geographical coverage allows easy comparisons across space, and many of the best contributions are from scholars examining areas less well-explored by previous generations of scholars, such as the excellent and interesting chapter by Whately on Byzantine Arabia. Other noteworthy chapters trace trends across both time and space, including Rance's interesting essay on the division between soldier and civilian in Byzantine society between 600 and 900,

and Hamm's clear analysis of what can and cannot be concluded from European weapon burials 300-500. Some contributions make strong efforts to bring the literature on particular aspects up to date (e.g. Bourgeois on western European fortifications 750-1000, Summer on early medieval warrior images), while others highlight well the need to use our evidence with considerable caution (e.g. Coupland on the blinkers of militarisation in ninth-century Frankia, Bennett on the construction of the enemy in pre-Viking England). These are mere examples of some of the many good essays in this collection, which apart from ranging widely across time and space also manages to cover a very wide range of primary material: from poetry and narrative sources to imagery, fortifications and material culture in burials. Furthermore, this book also does what the most useful edited collections should do: frame the essays with an introduction, setting them within relevant historiographical literature(s) and conceptualising the overall idea, and with a conclusion, summarising the whole but also questioning and raising points of future research.

One issue perhaps required further consideration by both authors and editors; namely, why so many contributions focus on the sixth and seventh centuries. It could be that this is an accident of case studies picked by the authors, or the availability of surviving evidence, or there might be something specific happening in those two centuries. Whatever the reason, it would have been useful for editors/authors to have reflected and/or commented on this a bit more. Moreover, many of the chapters could usefully have cited well-known primary sources, for which several editions and/or translations exist, by books and chapters, so as to facilitate easy access to the evidence examined for students. Nevertheless, there is no question that this edited collection is a welcome contribution to the historiography on the subject, especially for the wide comparative perspective that it offers.

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Stephen M Miller (ed.), *Queen Victoria's Wars: British Military Campaigns, 1857-1902*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Xiii + 322pp. 13 maps. ISBN: 978-1108490122 (hardback). Price £29.99.

This collection of essays, edited by Stephen M. Miller, represents a useful addition to the literature on Victorian wars of empire. Miller opens the introduction to the book by referring to Brian Bond's edited volume, *Victorian Military Campaigns* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1967). The aim of *Queen Victoria's Wars* is to provide a much-