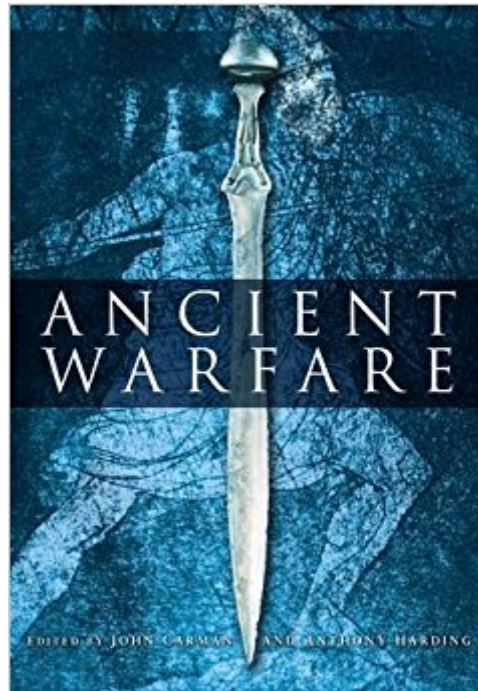




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Ancient Warfare



Synopsis

The authors examine the evidence of warfare in prehistoric times and in the early historical period in order to throw fresh light on the motives and methods of the combatants. Their study marks a significant new step in this fascinating and neglected subject, and creates the agenda for many years to come. By integrating archaeological and documentary research, the contributors seek to explain why some sides gained and others lost in battle. They also examine the impact of warfare on the social and political developments of early chiefdoms and states. Taking a crucial look at the nature and quality of the material evidence for warfare in prehistoric times, they look at weaponry and defensive structures. Their conclusions suggest a new interpretation of the evolution of warfare from the stone age and the bronze age, through the military practice of the Ancient Greeks and the Romans, to the conflicts of the Anglo-Saxons and of medieval Europe.

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Customer Reviews

"A significant review of the current evidence." — Cambridge Archaeological Journal

John Carman is a research fellow at Birmingham University who has made a special study of the archaeology of violence. Anthony Harding is professor of archaeology at Exeter University and an expert on the archaeological evidence for warfare.

Ancient Warfare edited by John Carman and Anthony Harding explores not only warfare in prehistoric cultures but why it is important that we study it and how we study it. The fifteen chapters

dive into the question about the very nature of war. Can people armed with stone weapons and defending their towns with dirt walls carry out what we would call war? When a ditch can be used to keep out invaders and keep in cattle, is it a sign of warfare? When a tool can be used as a weapon and a weapon can be used as a tool how can researchers prove if fighting existed in a society thousands of years ago? When is an arrow head just a piece of trash and when it is sign of a warrior culture? How important was trade to fighting or did fighting fuel trade? The book takes a close look at the material evidence, the bones, the ruins, from the stone age, up to the bronze age and into the iron age. Most of the chapters deal with Europe, but one chapter does focus on North America. The origins of violence is examined and so is warfare as a larger part of human civilization. It asks us the hard questions: Do our modern views twist what we see in the past? Do our ideas of gender, our need for a peaceful or warlike past depending on our modern theories of human evolution, our seeing the sword as a warrior's weapon and ONLY a warrior's weapon make us blind to some of the clues needed to make a complete picture? Do we put too much weight on human aggression or is military conflict just a minor piece in the story of our ancient world? The perfect book, new or used, for any library on military history or history in general.

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