The West Point Atlas for Ancient and Medieval Warfare

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Introduction

Military history courses at West Point have a long tradition of integrating maps with text to enhance cadets' understanding of warfare at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The Atlases created in the past have been designed for use in the core "History of the Military Art" course. This *Atlas for Ancient and Medieval Warfare* is the first one created to support an elective history course. HI370, the course for which the Atlas was prepared, uses a variety of reading assignments, including both primary and secondary sources. Many of the works in both those categories have been published with ample maps. For example, cadets in HI370 read substantial portions of the *Landmark Thucydides*, which is richly furnished with maps, so that there is no need to include maps on the Peloponnesian War in this Atlas, except for a sequence on the complicated moves and counter-moves of the siege of Syracuse. Most of the maps that are included here are intended to accompany primary source texts assigned for the course, including Herodotus on the battle of Plataea; Diodorus Siculus on the battle of the Granicus; Polybius on Cynoscephalae; Livy on Cannae; Sallust on the Jugurthan war and the battle of the Muthul River; and (most extensively) Caesar on his campaigns in Gaul and against Pompey in Greece. In general, the particular translation of the ancient or medieval texts used for the course had significantly impacted the final form of the maps. For example, cadets in HI370 use the translation of Caesar's *Gallic Wars* by John Warrington. Since Warrington often refers to regions of France by their modern names (e.g. Berry or Auvergne) rather than using phrases like "in the territory of the Bituriges" or "in the land of the Arverni," the maps in the corresponding section of this Atlas show both these regional appellations and also the rough locations of the various Celtic or Belgic tribes who have roles in the narrative.

Some of the maps are fairly close adaptations of maps prepared by other historians and cartographers. The majority, however, are quite different from any previous maps, created drawing on a variety of sources, including satellite imagery (which, for example, was used in creating Map 53 to identify the location of Caesar's old camp south of Durazzo, the remains of which are still visible from above) and, of course, the texts themselves. It is important for users of the map to recognize that the creation of each map involved a substantial amount of guesswork. For example, on Map 54, we do not know that Calvinus' march south followed the Aliakmon river for much of its course, but it very likely did, since river valleys allow for easier marching and for access to drinking water, and tend to be more densely populated, facilitating logistics in general.

On the tactical-level maps, unusually for battle maps relating to the period covered in this Atlas, great care has been taken to depict the units involved in a way that corresponds to the space on the ground that they might actually have occupied. However, to estimate (for example) the frontage occupied by a Roman legion at a given battle, we need to estimate its numerical strength (unlikely to be equal or even close to its full "table of organization" manpower unless the battle comes early in a campaign) and to guess whether its maniples or cohorts were drawn up in eight ranks (as was most common) or in four or six ranks or sixteen ranks (as particular tactical circumstances might call for). Sometimes our sources require less guesswork, sometimes more. For the battle of Pharsalus, for example, Caesar tells us the number of legions on each side and also the corresponding number of soldiers, so, assuming we are willing to accept his veracity (and he certainly could have known quite closely what the truth was) we have more to go on than usual.   We do not know the exact site of the battle from textual, epigraphic, or archaeological evidence, but we can make a good guess on the subject, because of the nature of the terrain. The battle was almost certainly fought northwest of Pharsalus (modern Farsala) on the relatively level ground between the river Enipeus and the high ground which runs parallel to it some distance farther north. Since Pompey easily had enough men to stretch his line from the river to the hills, thus anchoring his flanks, it can reasonably be presumed that he did so. It is likely that Pompey drew up his forces, as the Romans commonly did, in eight ranks: he would not have used a thinner formation, both because he had the advantage in numbers (with more legions, at closer to full strength) and because there was not enough space on the battlefield for the line that would have resulted.   Knowing his total strength and his probable formation, we can calculate the total length of his line with reasonable precision and reasonable accuracy, and use this measurement—along with the knowledge that he would have wanted some high ground on which to make his camp, and some reflection on what locations are likely to have been preferable from the point of view of the logistical support of his forces—to help us determine which point along the river he is likely to have occupied. Caesar, on the other hand, would have needed to match his enemy's line, at least approximately, in order to reach the hills that would give at least make it difficult for Pompey to envelop his right flank. To do so, given his inferior numbers, he would have had to draw up his lines with thinner ranks—very likely four ranks deep. Maps 51-55 of this Atlas reflect these considerations, and various others not explained here. The crucial point is that each map is presented to facilitate understanding of the text it is designed to accompany, and represents only one possible interpretation of the available source material. On Map 52, for example, the placement of Pompey's line essentially constitutes the editor's assertion that Pompey *may* have occupied that position, and indeed that the position shown seems more likely than any other, but it does not constitute an assertion that Pompey *did* draw up his army in the precise place, or even the near vicinity, of where it is shown.

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