



The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great

Arther Ferrill

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When did war begin? Standard military accounts tend to start with the Graeco-Persian wars, laying undue emphasis on the preeminence of Greek heavy infantry. But, as this strikingly original and entertaining book shows, the origins of war can be traced back not to the Iron Age, or even to the Bronze Age, but to the emergence of settled life itself nearly 10,000 years ago. The military revolution that occurred then—the invention of major new weapons, the massive fortifications, the creation of strategy and tactics—ultimately gave rise to the great war machines of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia that dominated the Near East until the time of Alexander the Great. It is Arther Ferrill's thesis that in the period before Alexander there were two independent lines of military development—a Near Eastern one culminating in the expert integration of cavalry, skirmishers, and light infantry and a Greek one based on heavy infantry. When Philip and Alexander blended the two traditions in their crack Macedonian army, the result was a style of warfare that continued, despite technological changes, down to Napoleon. This newly revised edition presents detailed and copiously illustrated accounts of all the major battles on land and sea up to the fourth century b.c., analyzes weapons from the sling to the catapult, and discusses ancient strategy and tactics, making this a book for armchair historians everywhere.

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