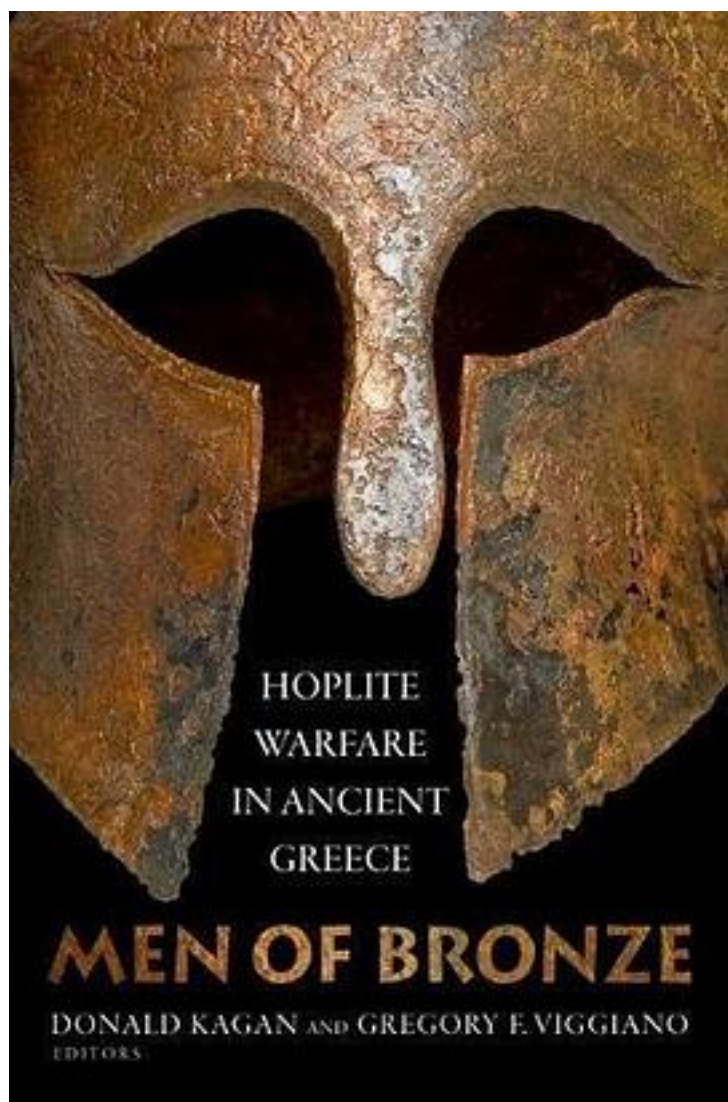


Men of Bronze



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著者:Oden, Scott

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It is 526 B.C. and the empire of the Pharaohs is dying, crushed by the weight of its own antiquity. Decay riddles its cities, infects its aristocracy, and weakens its armies. While across the expanse of Sinai, like jackals drawn to carrion, the forces of the King of Persia watch and wait. Leading the fight to preserve the soul of Egypt is Hasdrabal Barca, Pharaoh's deadliest killer. Possessed of a rage few men can fathom and fewer can withstand, Barca struggles each day to preserve the last sliver of his humanity. But, when one of Egypt's most celebrated generals, a Greek mercenary called Phanes, defects to the Persians, it triggers a savage war that will tax Barca's skills, and his humanity, to the limit. From the political wasteland of Palestine, to the searing deserts east of the Nile, to the streets of ancient Memphis, Barca and Phanes play a desperate game of cat-and-mouse -- a game culminating in the bloodiest battle of Egypt's history. Caught in the midst of this violence is Jauharah, a slave in the House of Life. She is Arabian, dark-haired and proud -- a healer with gifts her blood, her station, and her gender overshadow. Though her hands tend to Barca's countless wounds, it is her spirit that heals and changes him. Once a fearsome demigod of war, Hasdrabal Barca becomes human again. A man now motivated as much by love as anger. Nevertheless honor and duty have bound Barca to the fate of Egypt. A final conflict remains, a reckoning set to unfold in the dusty hills east of Pelusium. There, over the dead of two nations, Hasdrabal Barca will face the same choice as the heroes of old: Death and eternal fame or obscurity and long life.

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