

‘Ancient Landscapes of Conflict’

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Battles and sieges were a prime interest of ancient writers and at least from the Renaissance onwards there has been a concern to identify actual locations, for example of the formal encounters of the Persian, Peloponnesian and Punic Wars, or of the Teutoburg Forest defeat of Varus. However, a new wave of techniques and practices for remote sensing, disciplined site recording and proper publication, building on the example of the 1980s Little Big Horn project, have not only transformed the study of ‘gunpowder’ landscapes, but also redirected studies for earlier periods. This paper will review these developments as they pertain to ancient world conflicts. As specialised work has progressed it has often been drawn into contexts not previously known from the literary sources and not constituting the ‘big battles’ of the historical record, just as has happened for other conflicts, such as the American Civil War. A prime case of this is the Harzhorn landscape. The salient features of ancient conflict archaeology will be examined, particularly site formation processes. Despite the lack of gunpowder projectiles, ancient missiles have to be studied as the class of artefact most likely to have been deposited. Moreover, *post eventum* site processes prove to be just as crucial to interpretation as they are in later periods. Mortuary evidence also plays a crucial role, mass-graves helping to locate and identify conflict contexts, as well as to provide the usual data on health, trauma and ritual observance.