



An Invincible Beast: Understanding the Hellenistic Pike Phalanx in Action

By Christopher Matthew

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The Hellenistic pike-phalanx was a true military innovation, transforming the face of warfare in the ancient world. For nearly 200 years, from the rise of the Macedonians as a military power in the mid-fourth century BC, to their defeat at the hands of the Romans at Pydna in 168BC, the pike-wielding heavy infantryman (the phalangite) formed the basis of nearly every Hellenistic army to deploy on battlefields stretching from Italy to India. And yet, despite this dominance, and the vast literature dedicated to detailing the history of the Hellenistic world, there remains fierce debate among modern scholars about how infantry combat in this age was actually conducted.

Christopher Matthews critically examines phalanx combat by using techniques such as physical re-creation, experimental archaeology, and ballistics testing, and then comparing the findings of this testing to the ancient literary, artistic and archaeological evidence, as well as modern theories. The result is the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of what heavy infantry combat was like in the age of Alexander the Great and his Successors.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Christopher Matthew completed his doctoral thesis on hoplite warfare at MacQuarie University. This research formed the basis of *A Storm of Spears*, published by Pen & Sword in 2012. Since then he has also completed a new translation of Aelian's *Tactics* (also Pen & Sword, 2012) and co-edited a collection of new international research on the Battle of Thermopylae (*Beyond the Gates of Fire*, Pen & Sword, 2013). He has also written numerous articles for specialist journals and magazines. He is a keen reenactor, an activity that provides insights that inform his academic research. He lives in Warrimoo, New South Wales, Australia.

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