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Macedonian Armies After Alexander 323–168 BC (Men-at-Arms)



Synopsis

The death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC threw the Macedonians into confusion; there was no capable heir, and no clear successor among the senior figures in Alexander's circle. Initial attempts to preserve the unity of Alexander's conquests gave way to a period of bloody and prolonged warfare (322-275 BC), and the break-up of this glittering but momentary empire. Macedonia, the heartland of Alexander's dominions, was ruled first by the heirs of Antipater, Alexander's regent, and then by the descendants of Alexander's general Antigonus I Monophthalmus ('the One-Eyed'). For well over a century the largely mercenary armies of Alexander's successors imposed their influence in matters of military costume, kit, doctrine and tactics over the whole of the Near East, while absorbing local military practices. After Rome's decisive defeat of Carthage in 202 BC and the subsequent Roman dominance over the Western Mediterranean, Macedonia came under increasing pressure from the Romans. Three wars between the two powers culminated in the Roman victory at Pydna in 168 BC, which marked the final destruction of Alexander's empire and established Roman authority over the Near East. Drawing upon a wide array of archaeological and written sources and written by a noted authority on the Hellenistic period, this survey of the organisation, battle history and appearance of the armies of Alexander's successors is lavishly illustrated with specially commissioned full-colour artwork. It is an essential resource for all those interested in the development of warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East in the turbulent centuries following the death of Alexander.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[...] The book is a good one, I'd recommend it to anyone who is interested. - Miniature Wargames

Nicholas Sekunda was born in 1953. After studying Ancient History and Archaeology at Manchester University, he went on to take his PhD in 1981. He has taken part in archaeological excavations in Poland, Iran and Greece, and participated in a research project on ancient Persian warfare for the British institute of Persian Studies. He has published numerous books and academic articles, and is currently teaching at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology in Torun, Poland.

Well, at first I was disappointed in this offering, but I have come to like it a bit more, even if I disagree with some of the author's conclusions, and how he projects them. Part of this is the format- which is an Osprey guide to arms and uniforms, and as such cannot be judged as 'history' book by any means. Sadly the few lines dedicated to explaining historical background negates room to thoroughly discuss the artifacts that are the basis of the reconstructions- that are the selling point of this and most all Osprey guides. First off I would have given this volume a three star for the number of historical arguments presented by the author that are not precisely explained-- again given the limits of format. For example the author completely divests himself of the notion that there is a white shielded phalanx in the Macedonian army from Sellasia onward... and this goes against other source evidence, so I feel he needs to explain his position as to why he disregards direct statements in source such as in Plutarch's Cleomenes where the Spartans outfitted 2000 of their troops to match the white shielded Macedonian phalanx. Instead the author prefer to make the white shields into Thracians and other thureophoroi type troops based on an application of descriptions of Roman trophies. But again, such a thorough discussion would probably need to fill the whole book, which is a uniform guide, not a discourse in a Hellenistic History Journal. The pluses here are the excellent plates by Peter Dennis who has reconstructed the various monuments with clarity, brilliant color, and precision. Some will argue with the hue of the purple cloaks, but that is yet another layer of pedantry, in the pedantic world of what color murex dye would have been. The reconstructions are linked to many of the actual extant source artwork and reliefs, so that is an excellent side by side presentation-- since if your opinion differs then at least these disparate items are linked together in one useful volume. Again, one can ponder if the author's conclusion that Lyson or Kallikles were infantry or cavalry officers with a grain of salt, whether I agree with that point is no real matter, since the reconstruction art is quite well done. The author does include some of his good thoughts on the nature of Ash and Cornell wood for various weapons, and I think he slams the nail

in the coffin of Cornell wood being used as a pike, especially given that Hammond long ago pointed out how the vast Ash forests of Macedon was her key export, and why Athens wished to control them. So as a uniform guide this is an excellent book, which is why it is an Osprey format. As an introduction to Macedonian Successor history and military tactics-- sorry not here. (Remember that is what an Osprey is- a uniform guide mostly for hobbieists).. so if you are looking for a complete guide to Antigonid military history- this is not the place. What this will do is give hobbieists and some military historians something new to chew on, in an area where there are few similar volumes in print.

I got this book for info on a Macedonian army I'm painting up for a punic wars campaign. Unfortunately, even though the book has enough history involved, there were only a couple color illustrations depicting macedonian soldiers

As a fan of ancient history for this time period, this help to understand things as they transit from Greek to Roman dominance in the Mediterranean area. I really enjoy this kindle version.

Es un buen libro, aunque sÃfÂ lo se centra en los ejÃfÂrcitos macedonios, no esperes encontrar algo sobre otros ejÃfÂrcitos del perÃfÂdo helenÃfÂstico.

Osprey Series products that cover ancient history are about pictures and reconstructions with just enough text to tie the book together. N. Sekunda is a well-known expert on Hellenistic arms and clothing and here, he produces an excellent picture essay on the Macedonian army during the Roman wars. Tapping new information and recently discovered artifacts, Sekunda presents the clearest image of this important ancient army yet available.

The book is somewhat disappointing. Not only it is thinner than most in this series, It only has a brief reference to the armies of the diadochi period

This is an interesting introduction to an obscure (in archaeological terms) subject. The author has written extensively on this period, and appears to keep up with current archaeological developments. The colour plates are not very lively so only four stars. Bearing in mind the sources as given in the Plate Commentaries, that is hardly surprising, though some of the other Osprey series do manage to put a lot of life into their reconstruction. The Contents are -P03: The Historical

Background. The struggle for power following Alexander's death: the Diadochi - the Argeads - the Antipatrids - the Antigonids - Rome's decisive victory - the final revolts

P06: Historical Sources

P07: Army Staff. Bodyguards - hypaspistai - royal pages

P08: Cavalry. clothing and equipment - recruitment- regiments. Organization and strength

P13 Infantry. The Macedonian pike - Macedonian shields - helmets - cuirasses. Recruitment - organization - officers - chiliarchia - pay. The phalanx regiments: peltastai - agema - chalkaspides - leukaspides. Artillery

P38: Select Bibliography

P41: Plate Commentaries

P48: Index

The Colour Plates, pages 25-32:

A: Cavalry Inspection, c.325-300 BC: This shows three figures and a horse in front of some buildings, with another small figure of a man and a horse in the background - "figures A1 and A3 are based (sic) two similar Pompeian frescos from the 'House of Jason' and the 'House of the Golden Cupids', reproducing a painting of the 4th century BC."

B: Guard Cavalry, c.325-300 BC: This shows three figures lounging against a very colourfully-decorated wall - "Nearly all the figures in our Plates B- are based on the Agios Athanasios Tomb, dating to the last quarter of the 4th century BC. This tomb, discovered in 1994, lies close to Thessaloniki at the site of the ancient Herakleia on Axos."

C: Royal Page & Heavy Cavalrymen, c.325-300 BC: This shows three figures standing in front of a plain wall, but with three decorated shields on it.

D: Light Cavalry, c.325-300 BC: This shows two mounted figures in a landscape - "This plate reconstructs the two figures flanking the entrance to the Agios Athanasios Tomb."

E: Infantrymen of the Guard, c.325-300 BC: This shows three figures in front of some steps and big columns - "All three figures shown in this plate probably belong to the Macedonian regiment of foot-guards, given the prevalence of purple..."

F: The Macedonian Army, c.280 BC: This shows three figures in a highly-decorated room - "F1 is based on the Lefkadia Tomb... F2 and F3 are based on a Pompeian fresco from the 'House of the Meander', which copies a painting originally produced for Macedonian court in around 280 BC."

G: Lyson and Kallikles, c.222 BC: This shows two figures shaking hands in front of a architecturally interesting wall - "The tomb of Lyson and Kallikles was discovered in 1942... The tomb paintings include very detailed depictions of two sets of war-gear, which we reconstruct here on the two figures."

H: King Philip V and Amyntas, so of Alexander, 197 BC: This shows two mounted figures in a misty landscape, but with nicely painted grass - "H1 is based on two images of Philip V. The first is his equestrian portrait... Philip V's likeness is also preserved on a series of busts, derived from an original prototype. H2 is based on the funerary stele of Amyntas."

There are numerous monochrome illustrations, including coins, artefacts and photographs of wall-paintings, including many of those referred to in the Plate Commentaries.

Further Reading: Andrea Palladio and the Architecture of Battle with the Unpublished Edition of Polybius' Histories

Alexander the Great Failure: The Collapse of the Macedonian Empire

(Hambledon Continuum)Hellenistic Infantry Reform in the 160s BC (Studies in the Ancient and Medieval Art of Warfare)Philip V of Macedon

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