

THE DRAWN SWORD

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This experiment was carried out to check the statements made in 1981 in 'The Pedite Gladius'¹ and subsequently discussed during the 1983 Roman Military Equipment Seminar held at Sheffield University.² Hazell had suggested that such weapons as the Fulham and Mainz pattern blades, that are in excess of 20in in length, were officers' weapons and worn on the left hip and drawn across the body, being he felt far too long to be removed from a scabbard on the right hip. In 1983 it was demonstrated by the author and members of the Ermine Street Guard that a fully reconstructed Fulham sword presented no difficulty when drawn from its scabbard on the right hip with the right hand, even with the wearer kitted out in a Corbridge B lorica segmentata.

Our experiments were expanded to tests with a spatha having a blade length of 25½in. These were carried out while wearing a reconstructed Corbridge B lorica segmentata and with the spatha suspended on the right hip with the pommel under the right armpit. The grip with the right hand was managed with ease, the sword withdrawn with at least an inch to spare and sheathed as easily.³

NOTES

1. HAZELL, 1982.
2. BISHOP, 1983.
3. Further reinforced by Connolly's experiments in the saddle, this volume.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BISHOP 1983: M.C. Bishop (ed.), Roman Military Equipment. Proceedings of a Seminar Held in the Department of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at the University of Sheffield, 21st March 1983, (Sheffield 1983)
- HAZELL 1982: P. Hazell, 'The pedite gladius', Antiquaries Journal 61, 1982, 73-82