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Roman Body Armour

Hilary Travis

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Roman Body Armour

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Roman Body Armour Hilary Travis
This book assesses current views of the body armour used by the Roman army and its development, melding these with the archaeological evidence available. It draws together the streams of published information of sculptural imagery and archaeological 'hard' evidence, while also looking at the component parts and how they are physically put together. This has involved a return to basics, in examining wherever possible the original material (as opposed to the published 2-D photographic images and line drawings) and attempting to reproduce the aspects of the artefacts observed through physical reconstruction. The reconstructions produced were then subjected to low-level, simulated wear, over several years, to view component inter-action, and simulated combat/ destructive testing using a range of weaponry, including archery equipment, to view which parts were more susceptible to damage, and what features may be anticipated archaeologically on artefacts as evidence of regular wear, combat damage and field repairs. Discrepancies were also noted between current reconstructions of Roman military equipment (by museums and re-enactors), which have been produced based on previous desk-based assessments, and the reality of the actual artefacts, particularly in the case of the segmented plate armour (lorica segmentata), which may cause us to re-think not only the appearance, but also the function/fighting methods of the Roman soldier.

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