

Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor: Unraveling the Linothorax Mystery

By Gregory S. Aldrete, Scott M. Bartell, Alicia Aldrete

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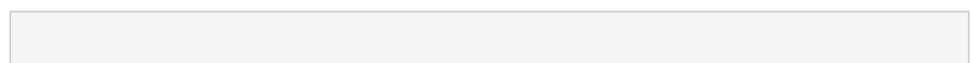
Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor: Unraveling the Linothorax Mystery By Gregory S. Aldrete, Scott M. Bartell, Alicia Aldrete

Alexander the Great led one of the most successful armies in history and conquered nearly the entirety of the known world while wearing armor made of cloth. How is that possible? In *Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor*, Gregory S. Aldrete, Scott Bartell, and Alicia Aldrete provide the answer.

An extensive multiyear project in experimental archaeology, this pioneering study presents a thorough investigation of the linothorax, linen armor worn by the Greeks, Macedonians, and other ancient Mediterranean warriors. Because the linothorax was made of cloth, no examples of it have survived. As a result, even though there are dozens of references to the linothorax in ancient literature and nearly a thousand images of it in ancient art, this linen armor remains relatively ignored and misunderstood by scholars.

Combining traditional textual and archaeological analysis with hands-on reconstruction and experimentation, the authors unravel the mysteries surrounding the linothorax. They have collected and examined all of the literary, visual, historical, and archaeological evidence for the armor and detail their efforts to replicate the armor using materials and techniques that are as close as possible to those employed in antiquity. By reconstructing actual examples using authentic materials, the authors were able to scientifically assess the true qualities of linen armor for the first time in 1,500 years. The tests reveal that the linothorax provided surprisingly effective protection for ancient warriors, that it had several advantages over bronze armor, and that it even shared qualities with modern-day Kevlar.

Previously featured in documentaries on the Discovery Channel and the Canadian History Channel, as well as in *U.S. News and World Report*, MSNBC Online, and other international venues, this groundbreaking work will be a landmark in the study of ancient warfare.



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Editorial Review

Review

Aldrete, Bartell, and Aldrete present innovative, fascinating research that reshapes our understanding of ancient Greek warfare.

(John W. I. Lee, University of California, Santa Barbara)

Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor is essential for anyone interested in ancient warfare and/or experimental archaeology, from academic to layman, and is a defining and valuable contribution to our understanding of the ancient world.

(Christopher Matthew Bryn Mawr Classical Review)

Anyone interested in archeological textiles, historical textiles, historical reenactment, military history, costume construction, or flax and linen should consider this fascinating and unique book.

(Joanne Robbins Hicken *The Complex Weaver*)

Reconstructing Ancient Linen Body Armor is a model example of the benefits that can come from creative engagement with historical re-enactors.

(Peter Thonemann *Times Literary Supplement*)

In introducing the developing disciplines of experimental and reconstructive archaeology alongside the traditional approaches of textual and visual analysis, the authors provide a challenging and illuminating exploration of a poorly understood piece of ancient body armour that will satisfy both academic scholars and military history aficionados alike

(*Hermathena*)

About the Author

Gregory S. Aldrete is a professor of humanistic studies and history at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. He is the author of *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* and *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, both published by Johns Hopkins. **Scott Bartell** is an independent scholar who has published and presented on linen body armor and Alexander the Great. **Alicia Aldrete** is coauthor (with Gregory S. Aldrete) of *The Long Shadow of Antiquity: What Have the Greeks and Romans Done for Us?*

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