

OSPREY . MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

# *The Roman Army from Caesar to Trajan*

*Text by* MICHAEL SIMKINS

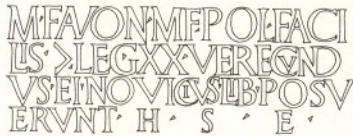
*Colour plates by* MICHAEL YOUENS





# The Roman Army from Caesar to Trajan

## Chronology

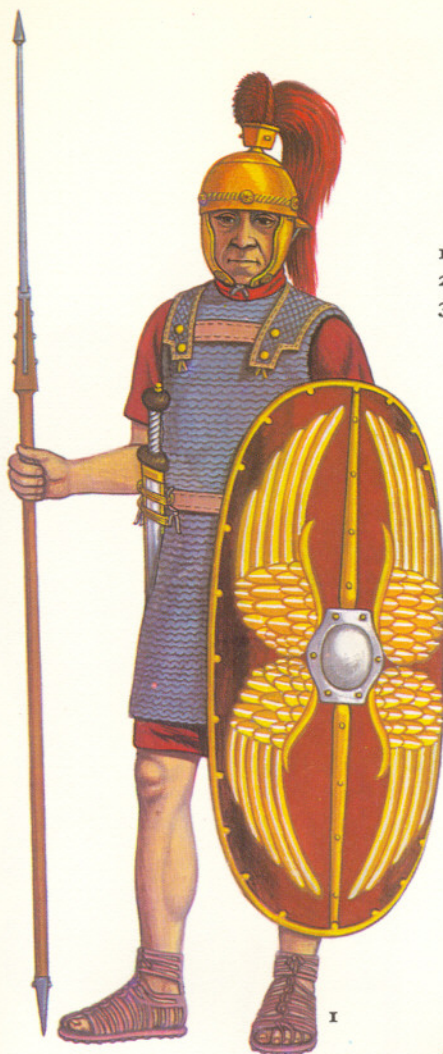


SOME PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN ROMAN  
MILITARY HISTORY, FROM THE DEATH OF  
CAESAR TO THE REIGN OF TRAJAN

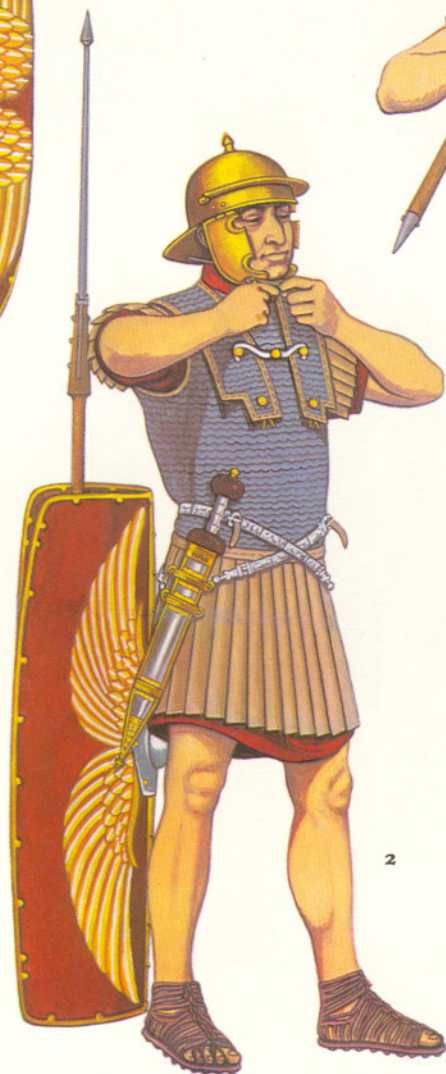
- 44 B.C. The Dictator, Gaius **Julius Caesar** is assassinated. The civil war which Caesar had begun in 49 B.C. continues.
- 29 B.C. Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, great-nephew of the Dictator, succeeds in establishing himself as ruler of the Roman world.
- 27 B.C. Octavianus takes the titles of 'Imperator' and '**Augustus**' and becomes the first Roman Emperor.
- A.D. 9. Three legions under P. Quinctilius Varus – the XVIIth, XVIIIth and XIXth – are destroyed in the Teutoburg Forest; a loss of one-tenth of Rome's legionary strength.
- A.D. 14. Augustus Caesar dies and the Rhine legions mutiny. His successor, **Tiberius Claudius Nero**, quells the revolt and army conditions are improved to avoid further trouble.
- A.D. 37. Tiberius dies and is succeeded by the insane Gaius Caesar, nicknamed '**Caligula**'.
- A.D. 41. Gaius is assassinated by the Praetorian Guard at the age of twenty-nine and is succeeded by Tiberius **Claudius Drusus**.
- A.D. 43. Four legions invade Britain under the command of Aulus Plautius.
- A.D. 54. Claudius is murdered by his wife Agrippina the Younger, who secures the succession for her son **Nero** Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus, who in turn assassinates her in A.D. 59.
- A.D. 60. The Druids on Mona Insulis are massacred by Suetonius Paulinus, followed by a serious revolt in south-east Britain led by the implacable Queen Boudicca.
- A.D. 61. Paulinus crushes the Boudiccan Revolt.
- A.D. 68. Galba, Governor of Spain, marches on Rome and Nero commits suicide. **Galba** succeeds.
- A.D. 69. Galba's harshness is resented by the soldiers and he is assassinated at the age of sixty-three. Marcus Salvius **Otho** is proclaimed Emperor at the same time as Aulus **Vitellius** and civil war breaks out. Otho commits suicide after Vitellius defeats him in battle; he reigned for three months. Flavius Vespasianus marches on Italy from the east and defeats Vitellius. Flavius Sabinus **Vespasianus** now becomes Emperor and the civil war ends.
- A.D. 79. Vespasianus dies after a stable reign and is succeeded by his son **Titus**.
- A.D. 81. Titus dies. He completed the building of the great Flavian amphitheatre, the Colosseum, begun by his father in A.D. 72. Titus is succeeded by his brother Titus Flavius **Domitianus**.
- A.D. 96. Domitianus is murdered, an unworthy son of a great father. Marcus Cocceius **Nerva** becomes Emperor and the Flavian dynasty is at an end.
- A.D. 98. Nerva dies at the age of sixty-six. Marcus Ulpius Trajanus succeeds. **Trajan** was possibly the finest Roman Emperor and extended the Empire to its largest geographical size.



- 1 Legionary, battle order, late Republic
- 2 Legionary, battle order, late Augustan
- 3 Legionary, marching order, late Augustan



1

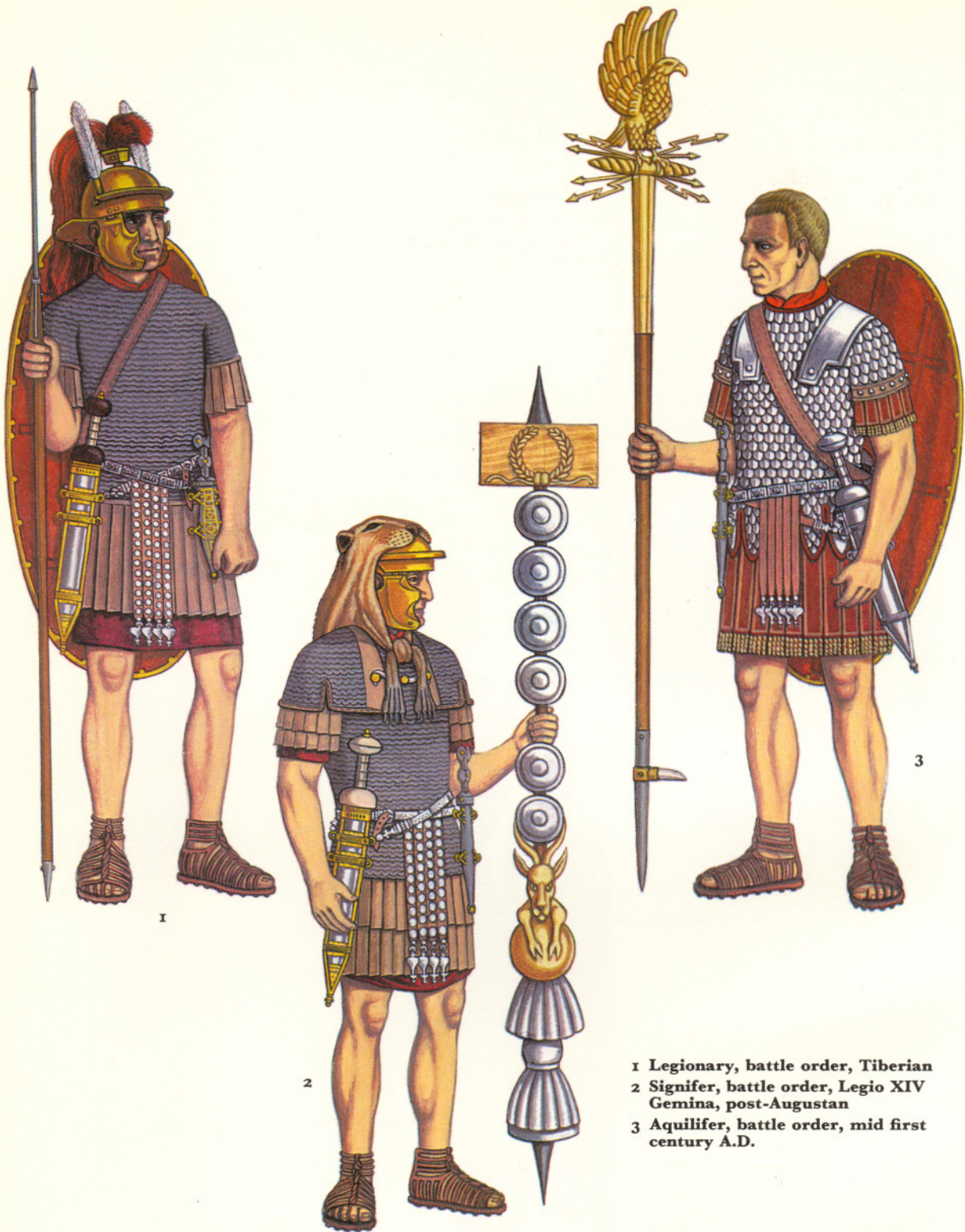


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1

2

3

1 Legionary, battle order, Tiberian  
 2 Signifer, battle order, Legio XIV Gemina, post-Augustan  
 3 Aquilifer, battle order, mid first century A.D.





1 Legionary, battle order, first half of the first century A.D.  
2 Aquilifer, battle order, first half of the first century A.D.  
3 Centurio, parade order, Legio XI Claudia Pia Fidelis, Claudian



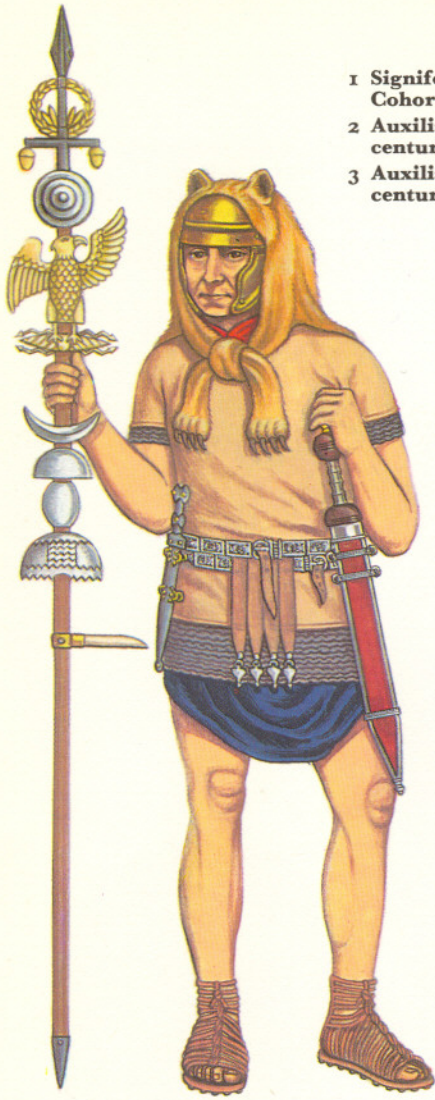
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- 1 Signifer, battle order, Auxilia Cohors V Asturum, first century A.D.
- 2 Auxiliary, battle order, first century A.D.
- 3 Auxiliary, battle order, first century A.D.



1



2

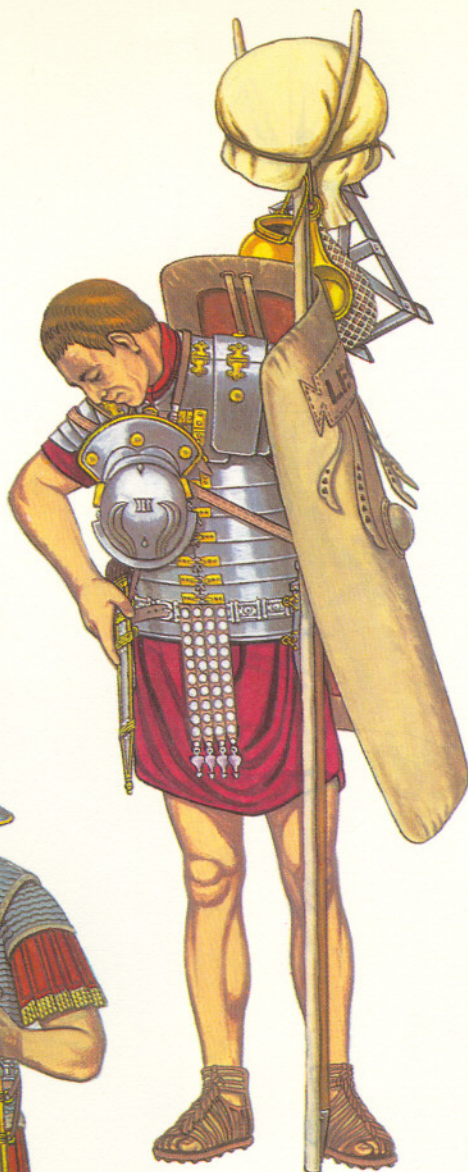


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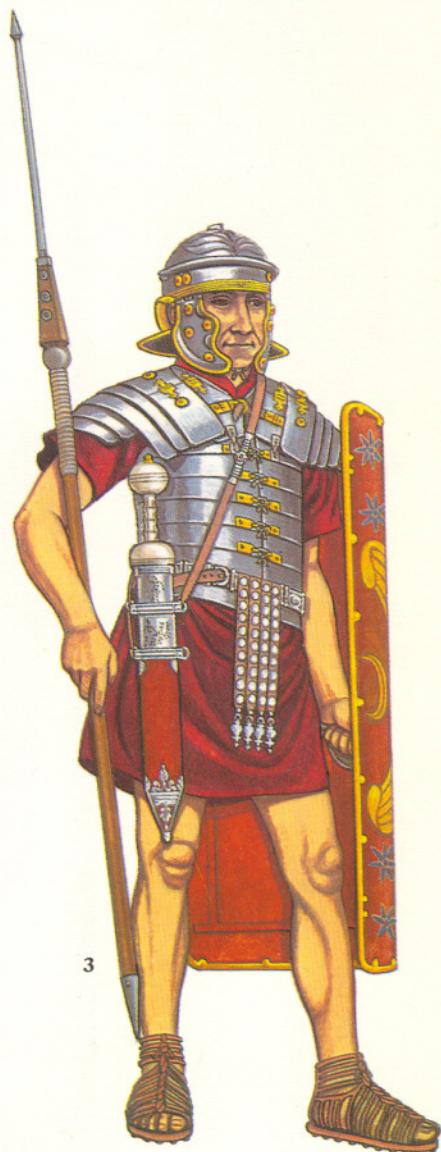




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- 1 Centurio, battle order, Legio XX Valeria, Claudio-Neronian
- 2 Legionary, marching order, mid first century A.D.
- 3 Legionary, battle order, second half of the first century, Flavian





I



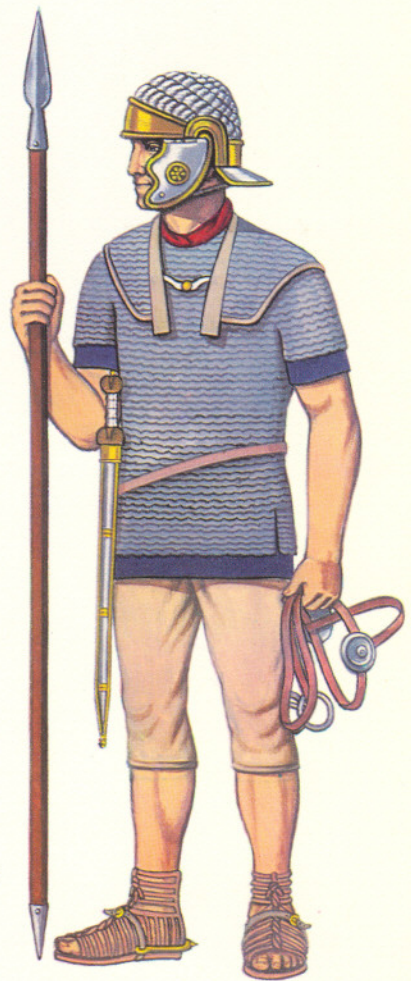
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- 1 Levantine Sagittarius, battle order, Trajanic
- 2 Auxiliary, cold climate order, applicable to most dates
- 3 Legionary, battle order, Trajanic





- 1 Cornucen, battle order, Trajanic
- 2 Army commander, applicable with slight variations to all dates
- 3 Auxiliary cavalry, battle order, first century A.D.





Officer, perhaps a *tribunis militaris*,  
Trajanic



## Conclusion

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Through their army the Romans not only conquered new lands, but also brought the benefits of their civilization and order to countries where internal wars had become a way of life.

Though at times the hand of Rome was responsible for some astounding cruelties – largely the result of highly placed single individuals or the demands of lesser mortals – generally speaking the advantages to be gained from belonging to the

Roman world were very great. A man could work his land secure in the knowledge that a marauding band from neighbouring tribes would not be permitted to carry off the results of his efforts and probably kill him and his family into the bargain. He could travel from Palmyra in Syria to Eburacum in north Britain without a passport and without ever feeling entirely out of place.

Wherever he went Rome had established miniature versions of the mother city with baths, temples, markets and all the other complexities of the 'Roman Way'. For these good things, the legions were directly responsible, making this a world in which a man could profit from worthy labour and find contentment.

Thus, the great *Pax Romana* or Roman Peace must surely rank among the highest of human endeavours in history.

A section of Trajan's Column relief

