

## The Roman army

The success of the Roman Empire was largely due to the size and power of its army. It was made up of professional soldiers who were fit, well-equipped with armour and weapons, and trained in military tactics.

### **Lorica segmentata (body armour)**

Armour was worn over a padded tunic. Lorica segmentata consisted of curved plates of iron or sheet attached underneath with leather straps. There were usually separate sections for the front and rear torso and one for each shoulder. The segments provided protection against weapons but were often flexible. Soldiers' caligae (sandals) were light and comfortable to walk in. The soles contained metal studs, used for stamping on rough ground, and on the enemy. Red cloaks were worn in battle.

### **Cassula or gallo (cloak)**

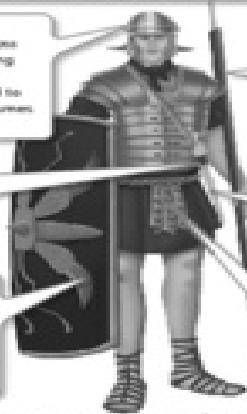
Himationa were skillfully draped from iron, bronze or bronze. They contained sections protecting the forehead, neck and cheeks. The top set several centimetres above the soldier's head to protect him and make him appear taller. Plumes were worn only for ceremonial purposes.

### **Glaucus (sword)**

This short sword was around 60cm in length and 5cm wide. It was carried on a shoulder strap. Its handle was made of corrugated bone or ivory to ensure a firm grip.

### **Scutum (shield)**

Scutums were usually semi-cylindrical in shape, curving round the body. This helped deflect objects. They were made from wood with a layer of iron or bronze, which could be used as a weapon.



### **Pilum (spear)**

The pilum was around 2m long and consisted of an iron shaft with an arrow-shaped tip attached to a wooden pole. After being thrown, the shaft would bend, preventing the enemy from using it.

### **Pugio (dagger)**

The pugio was not only a weapon, but also used as an everyday knife. It was made from iron or bronze and was extremely sharp.

### **Cingulum (belt)**

The cingulum was made from leather with decorated metal segments, designed to hold the pugio. Shouldered leather straps hung in an apex above the front for protection and decoration.

## Other weapons and tactics

### **Catapult**

Originally a Greek weapon, this wooden machine was basically a massive slingshot, designed to hurl objects at the enemy. These missiles were usually heavy stones, but sometimes diseased cattle were used to try to infect the enemy. There were many different types of catapult, one of the most successful being the onager or mangonel.

### **Tortoise**

Have you ever seen a tortoise retreat into its shell to protect itself from danger? The Romans used the same strategy on the battlefield. A group of soldiers would form lines. Soldiers on the edge would hold their shields outwards and those in the middle would lift them above their heads. Shields would overlap so that no gaps could be weaponised through.

### **Ballista**

The ballista resembled a giant crossbow. It was often used in Britain because larger catapults, like the catapult, were too difficult to move. It used the coil of a twisted rope to release an iron-tipped spear. It could kill the weapon at around 160mph and was surprisingly accurate. Great... unless you were on the receiving end!