



# The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History

*Pat Southern*

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## **The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History** Pat Southern

Written by a leading authority on Roman military history, this fascinating volume spans over a thousand years as it offers a memorable picture of one of the world's most noted fighting forces, paying special attention to the life of the common soldier.

Southern here illuminates the Roman army's history, culture, and organization, providing fascinating details on topics such as military music, holidays, strategy, the construction of Roman fortresses and forts, the most common battle formations, and the many tools of war, from spears, bows and arrows, swords, and slingshots, to the large *catapulta* (which fired giant arrows and bolts) and the *ballista* (which hurled huge stones).

Perhaps most interesting are the details Southern provides about everyday life in the Roman army, everything from the soldiers pay (they were paid three times per year, but money was deducted for such items as food, clothing, weapons, the burial club, the pension scheme, and so on) to their often brutal life--if whole units turned and ran, about one-tenth of the men concerned were chosen by lot and clubbed to death and the rest were put on barley rations instead of wheat. Moreover, soldiers who lost weapons or their shields would fight savagely to get them back or would die in the process, rather than suffer the shame that attached to throwing weapons away or running from the battle.

Attractively illustrated, this book offers a fascinating look at the life of the Roman soldier, drawing on everything from Rome's rich historical and archaeological record to soldier's personal correspondence to depictions of military subjects in literature and art.

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