Roman army tactics pdf

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The Roman army was the backbone of the empire's power, and the Romans managed to conquer so many tribes, clans, confederations, and empire's economic and political strength, ensuring domestic peace so that trade could flourish. However, this peace was often
coterminous with subjugation. The Emperor used the Roman army to protect the city and to control the people it had conquered. The Roman army was also a tool of cultural assimilation. Some soldiers were away from their families for long periods of time, loosening their clan loyalties and replacing them with loyalty to Roman army was a
means by which a barbarian could become a citizen, but the process was not fast. Only when a soldier had served in the Roman Army The
Roman army was organised in a very simple way: 5000 Legionaries (Roman Citizens who were in the army) would form a Legion. The Legion would be split into centuries (80 men) controlled by a Centurion. The centuries would then be divided into smaller groups with different jobs to perform. A Roman Soldier Roman soldiers had to be physically
vigorous. They were expected to march up to 20 miles per day in line, wearing all their armor and carrying their food and tents. Roman soldiers were trained to fight well and to defend themselves. If the enemy shot arrows at them they would use their shields to surround their bodies and protect themselves. This formation was know as 'the turtle'.
They fought with short swords, daggers for stabbing and a long spear for throwing. They also carried a shield for protection as well as wearing armor. The tactics were simple but versatile enough to face different enemies in multiple terrains: From the forests of Germania to the rocky planes of the Greek peninsula. For these and many other reasons
the Roman army was the reason for the Empire's existence for several centuries. This article is part of our larger resource on the Romans culture, society, economics, and warfare. Click here for our comprehensive article on the Romans culture, society, economics, and warfare.
2022 < More Citation Information. Roman infantry tactics refers to the theoretical and historical deployment, formation and maneuvers of the Roman Empire. The article first presents a short overview of Roman training. Roman performance against different types of
enemies is then analyzed. Finally a summation of what made the Roman tactics and strategy militarily effective through their long history is given below, as is a discussion of how and why this effectiveness eventually disappeared. The focus below is primarily on Roman tactics - the "how" of their approach to battle, and how it stacked up against a
variety of opponents over time. It does not attempt detailed coverage of things like army structure or equipment. Various battles are summarized to illustrate Roman methods with links to detailed articles on individual encounters. For in depth background on the historical structure of the infantry relevant to this article, see Structure of the Roman
military. For a history of Rome's military campaigns see Campaign history of the Roman military tactics and strategy evolved from that typical of a small tribal host seeking local hegemony, to massive
operations encompassing a world empire. This advance was affected by changing trends in Roman political, social and economic life, and that of the larger Mediterranean world, but it was also undergirded by a distinctive "Roman way" of war. This approach included a tendency towards standardization and systematization, practical borrowing,
copying and adapting from outsiders, flexibility in tactics and methods, a strong sense of discipline, a ruthless persistence that sought comprehensive victory, and a cohesion brought about by the ideal of Roman citizenship under arms - embodied in the Legion.[1] These elements waxed and waned over time, but they form a distinct basis underlying
Rome's rise. Some key phases of this evolution throughout Rome's military history would include:[2] Military forces based primarily on heavy citizen infantry with tribal beginnings and early use of phalanx type elements (see Military establishment of the Roman kingdom) Growing sophistication as Roman hegemony expanded outside Italy into North
Africa, Greece and the Middle East (see Military establishment of the Roman Republic) Continued refinement, standardization and streamlining in the period associated with Gaius Marius including a broader based incorporation of more citizenry into the army, and more professionalism and permanence in army service. Continued expansion,
flexibility and sophistication from the end of the Republic into the time of the Republic into the Republic into the Republic into the Republic into the time of the Republic into the Rep
included the reversal of status of cavalry and infantry in the Eastern Empire. Cataphract forces formed an elite, with infantry being reduced to auxiliaries Equipment and training Over time the military system changed its equipment and roles, but
throughout the course of Roman history, it always remained a disciplined and professional war machine. Soldiers carried out training common to every army, from initial muster, arms and weapons drill, formation marching and tactical exercises. The typical training regime consisted of gymnastics and swimming, to build physical strength and fitness
fighting with armatura (which were wooden weapons), to learn and master combat techniques and long route marches with full battle gear and equipment to build stamina, endurance and to accustom them to the hardships of campaigns.[3] Combat training exercises consisted of thrusting with a wooden gladius into a quintain (wooden dummy) while
wearing full armor, and sparring with one another. Legionaries were trained to thrust with their gladii because they could defend themselves behind their large shields (scuta) while stabbing the enemy. The Romans were well aware that a wound of only 3 cm or 4 cm could cause death, so they emphasized quick, stabbing techniques to vital areas or
between gaps in armor. Contemporary artistic depictions of Roman soldiers fighting, including Trajan's Column in Rome, depict them as standing with their right foot back and turned outwards ninety degrees. Some believe this indicates a boxing-like style of fighting where the shield in the left is used to jab and
harass the enemy while the sword in the right is used to deliver the final blow. In fact the shield wall was the key. The legionary would put his studded left boot behind, braced his body, and he was supported by two further ranks. The braver the enemy, and the more they were pushed forward, the more
those in front were pinned helpless and defenceless against the Roman shield wall, and easily stabbed to death with the short sword. In all likelihood however it is probably designed to allow for attacking with a passing motion similar to later medieval European Martial Arts which use a similar stance for armoured combat. The benefit of attacking on
what would later be dubbed the half pass is that the unit could remain in formation with each motion, as breaking formation was a great risk this along with their stance suggests such footwork is more likely than the boxing style suggested by some. Other training exercises taught the legionary to obey commands and assume battle formations.[4] At
the end of training the legionary had to swear an oath of loyalty to the SPQR (Senatus Populusque Romanus, or the Senate and the glory and honor of Rome.[4] Equipment Individual weapons, personal equipment and haulage A
legionary typically carried around 27 kilograms (60 pounds) of armour, weapons, and equipment. This load consisted of armour, sword, shield, two pila (one heavy, one light) and 15 days' food rations. There were also tools for digging and constructing a castra, the legions' fortified base camp. One writer recreates the following as to Caesar's army in
Gaul:[5] Each soldier arranged his heavy pack on a T or Y-shaped rod, borne on his left shoulder. Shields were protected on the march with a dish, cup, and utensil. Personal items might include a dyed horsehair crest for the
helmet, a semi-water resistant oiled woolen cloak, socks and breeches for cold weather and a blanket. Entrenchment equipment included a shallow wicker basket for moving earth, a spade and/or pick-axe like dolabra, or turf cutter, and two wooden staves to construct the next camp palisade. All these were arranged in the marching pack toted by
each infantryman. Fighters travelled in groups of 8, and each octet was sometimes assigned a mule. The mule carried a variety of equipment and supplies, including a mill for grinding grain, a small clay oven for baking bread, cooking pots, spare weapons, waterskins, and tents. A Roman century had a complement of 10 mules, each attended by two
non-combatants who handled foraging and water supply. A century might be supported by wagons in the rear, each drawn by 6 mules, and carrying tools, nails, water barrels, extra food and the tent and possessions of the centurion- commanding officer of the unit. Artillery package The legion also carried an artillery detachment with 30 pieces of
artillery. This firepower package consisted of 10 stone throwing Onagers and 20 bolt-shooting Ballistas, in addition each of the legion's centuries had its own Scorpion bolt thrower (60 total), together with supporting wagons to carry ammunition and spare parts. Bolts were used for targeted fire on human opponents, while stones were used against
fortifications or as an area saturation weapon. The catapults were powered by rope and sinew, tightened by ratchet and released, powered by the stored torsion energy. Caesar was to mount these in boats on some operations in Britain, striking fear in the heart of the native opponents according to his writings. His placement of siege engines and bolt
throwers in the towers and along the wall of his enclosing fortifications at Alesia were critical to turning back the enormous tide of Gauls. These defensive measures, used in concert with the cavalry charge led by Caesar himself, broke the Gauls and won the battle - and therefore the war - for good. Bolt throwers like the scorpion were mobile and
could be deployed in defence of camps, field entrenchments and even in the open field by no more than two or three men.[6] Organization, leadership and logistics Command, control and structure Once the soldier had finished his training he was typically assigned to a legion, the basic mass fighting force. The legion was split into ten sub-units called
cohorts, roughly comparable to a modern infantry battalion. The cohorts were further sub-divided into three maniples, which in turn were split into two centuries of about 60-100 men each. The first cohort in a legion was usually the strongest, with the fullest personnel complement and with the most skilled, experienced men. Several legions grouped
together made up a distinctive field force or "army".[4] Fighting strength could vary but generally a legion was made up of 4,800 soldiers, 60 centurions, 300 artillerymen, and 100 engineers and around 1,600 non-combatants. Each legion was supported by a unit of 300 cavalry, the equites. Supreme command of either legion or army
was by consul or proconsul or a praetor, or in cases of emergency in the Republican era, a dictator. A praetor or a propraetor could only command a single legion and not a consular army, which normally consisted of two legions plus the allies. In the early Republican period it was customary for an army to have dual commands, with different consuls
holding the office on alternate days. In later centuries this was phased out in favor of one overall army commander. Tribunes were young men of aristocratic rank who assisted the supreme commander. Tribunes were young men of aristocratic rank who assisted the supreme commander. Tribunes were young men of aristocratic rank who assisted the supreme commander. Tribunes were young men of aristocratic rank who assisted the supreme commander.
to today's non-commissioned or junior officers, but functioning as modern captains in field operations) commanded cohorts, maniples and centuries. Specialist groups like engineers and artificers were also used. Military structure and ranks An in-depth analysis of ranks, types, and historical units including their evolution over time is beyond the scope
of this article. See Structural history of the Roman military and Roman Legion for a detailed breakdown. Below is a very basic summary of the legion's structure and ranks.[7] Force structure and ranks.[8] Force struc
officers. The first cohort was double strength in terms of manpower, and generally held the best fighting men Legion: made up of 10 cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions and auxiliary cohorts Field army: a grouping of several legions are grou
light infantry and specialist fighting services, like archers, slingers or javelin men. They were usually formed into the light infantry or velites. Auxilia in the Republican period also formed allied heavy legions to complement Roman citizen formations. Non-combatant support: generally the men who tended the mules, forage, watering and sundries of
the baggage train Rank summary Consul - elected official with military commander of a legion or grouping of legions, also a government official Legatus legionis - the legate or overall legion commander, usually filled by a senator
Tribune - young officers, second in command of the legion. Other lesser tribunes served as junior officers Prefect - third in commanding centurion for the first cohort - the senior centurion of the entire legion Centurion - basic
commander of the century. Prestige varied based on the cohort they supervised Decurio - commander of the cavalry unit or turma Aquilifer - standard bearer of each legion - a position of much prestige Signifer - one for each century, handled financial matters and decorations Optio - equivalent to a sergeant, second in command for the centurion
Cornicen - horn blower or signaler Imaginifer - carried standard bearing the emperor's image Decanus - equivalent to a corporal, commanded 8-man tent party Munifex - basic legionary - the lowest of the trained rank and file Tirones - new recruit to the legions, a novice Logistics Roman logistics were among some of the best in the ancient world over
the centuries- from the deployment of purchasing agents to systematically buy provisions during a campaign, to the construction of roads and supply caches, to the rental of shipping if the troops had to move by water. Heavy equipment and material (tents, artillery, extra weapons and equipment, millstones etc.) were moved by pack animal and cart,
while troops carried weighty individual packs with them, including staves and shovels for constructing the fortified camps. Typical of all armies, local opportunities were also exploited by troops on the spot, and the fields of peasant farmers unlucky enough to be near the zone of conflict might be stripped to meet army needs. As with most armed
forces, an assortment of traders, hucksters, prostitutes and other miscellaneous service providers trailed in the wake of the Roman fighting men.[8] Battle Initial preparation, the marching began. The approach to the battlefield was made in several columns,
enhancing maneuverability. Typically a strong vanguard to survey the terrain for possible camp locations. Flank and reconnaissance elements were also deployed to provide the usual covering security. Behind the
vanguard came the main body of heavy infantry. Each legion marched as a distinct formation and was accompanied by its own baggage train. The last legion usually provided the rear force, although several recently raised units might occupy this final echelon. Construction of fortified camps. Legions on a campaign typically established a strong field
camp, complete with palisade and a deep ditch, providing a basis for supply storage, troop marshaling and defense. Camps were recreated each time the army moved, and were constructed by two main criss-crossing streets, with the
intersection at a concentration of command tents in the center. Space was also made for an altar and religious gathering area. Everything was standardized, from the positioning of baggage, equipment and specific army units, to the duties of officers who were to set up sentries, pickets and orders for the next day's march. Construction could take
between 2 to 5 hours with part of the army laboring, while the rest stood quard, depending on the tactical situation. A distance of about 60 meters was left clear between the entrenchments and the first row of troop tents. This gap provided
space for marshaling the legionnaires for battle and kept the troop area out of enemy missile range. [9] No other ancient army persisted over such a long period in systematic camp construction like the Romans, even if the army rested for only a single day. [10] Breaking camp and marching. After a regimented breakfast at the allocated time, trumpets
were sounded and the camp's tents and huts were dismantled and preparations made for departure. The trumpet then sounded again with the signal for "stand by to march". Mules and wagons of the baggage train would be loaded and units formed up. The camp would then be burned to the ground to prevent its later occupation and use by the
enemy. The trumpets would then be sounded for a final time and then the troops asked three times whether they were expected to shout together "Ready!", before marching off. [11] Intelligence. Good Roman commanders did not hesitate to exploit useful intelligence, particularly where a siege situation or impending clash in
the field was developing. Information was gathered from spies, collaborators, diplomats and envoys, and allies. Intercepted messages during the Second Punic War for example were an intelligence coup for the Romans, and enabled them to dispatch two armies to find and destroy Hasdrubal's Carthaginian force, preventing his reinforcement of
Hannibal. Commanders also kept an eye on the situation in Rome since political enemies and rivals could use an unsuccessful campaign to inflict painful career and personal damage. During this initial phase the usual field reconnaissance was also conducted - patrols might be sent out, raids mounted to probe for weaknesses, prisoners snatched, and
local inhabitants intimidated.[8] Morale. If the field of potential battle were near, movement became more careful and more tentative. Several days might be spent in a location studying the terrain and opposition, while the troops were prepared mentally and physically for battle. Pep talks, sacrifices to the gods and the announcements of good omens
might be carried out. A number of practical demonstrations might also be undertaken to test enemy refused to come out and at least make a demonstration, the commander could claim a morale
advantage for his men, contrasting the timidity of the opposition with the resolution of his fighting forces.[8] Historian Adrian Goldsworthy notes that such tentative pre-battle maneuvering was typical of ancient armies as each side sought to gain maximum advantage before the encounter.[12] During this period, some ancient writers paint a picture of
meetings between opposing commanders for negotiation or general discussion, as with the famous pre-clash conversation between Hannibal and Scipio at Zama. But whatever the truth of these discussions, or the flowery speeches allegedly made, the only encounter that ultimately mattered was battle. Deployment for combat Pre-battle maneuver
 launch, as at the Battle of the Trebia River.[8] Layout of the triple line Once the machinery was in motion however, the Roman infantry typically was deployed, as the maniples were commonly arranged in triplex acies (triple battle order): that is, in three ranks, with the
a checkered formation called quincunx when deployed for battle but not yet engaged. In the first line, the hastati left gaps equal in size to their cross-sectional area between each maniple. The second line consisting of principes followed in a similar manner, lining up behind the gaps left by the first line. This was also done by the third line, standing
positioned from column into line, with each unit taking its designated place, along with light troops and cavalry. The fortified camps were laid out and organized to facilitate deployment. It might take some time for the final array of the host, but when accomplished the army's grouping of legions represented a formidable fighting force, typically
arranged in three lines with a frontage as long as one mile (1.6 km).[15] A general three line deployment was to remain over the centuries, although the legions into bigger maneuver units like cohorts. The overall size of the legion, and length
own armies ranks, causing confusion, or else flee around either flank of their own army. After the velites had retreated through the hastati, the 'posterior' century would march to the left and then forward so that they presented a solid line, creating a solid line of soldiers. The same procedure would be employed as they passed through the second and then forward so that they presented a solid line of soldiers.
third ranks or turned to the side to channel down the gap between the first and second rows on route to help guard the legion's flanks.[17] At this point, the legion then presented a solid line to the enemy and the legion was in the correct formation for engagement. When the enemy closed, the hastati would charge. If they were losing the fight, the
According to some writers, the triarii formed a continuous line when they deployed, and their forward movement allowed engaging every kind of enemy even in rough terrain, because the legion had both flexibility and toughness according
to the deployment of its lines. Lack of a strong cavalry corps however, was a major flaw of the Roman forces. In the later imperial army, the general deployment was very similar, with the cohorts deploying in quincunx pattern. In a reflection of the earlier placement of the veteran triarii in the rear, the less experienced cohorts - usually the 2nd, 3rd,
of alternative formations known to have been used is shown below: File:Mpl-frm-variations.png Combat Hand-to-hand engagement after release of missile weapons. Once the deployment and initial skirmishing described above took place, the main body of heavy infantry closed the gap and attacked on the double. The front ranks usually cast their pilater release of missile weapons.
and the following ranks hurled theirs over the heads of the front-line fighters. If a cast pilum did not cause direct death or injury, they were designed to bend on contact, rendering the enemy. Emphasis was on using the shield to provide
maximum body coverage, while attacking that exposed by the enemy. In the combat that ensued, Roman discipline, heavy shield, armor and training were to give them important advantages. The acute shock of combat that the contenders
did not simply hack at one another continuously until one dropped. Instead there were short periods of intense, vicious fighting. If indecisive, the contenders might fall back a short distance to recuperate, and then surge forward to renew the struggle. Others behind them would be stepping up into the fray meanwhile, engaging new foes or covering
their colleagues. The individual warrior could thus count on temporary relief, rather than endless fighting until death or crippling injury. As the battle progressed, the massive physical and mental stress intensified. The stamina and willpower demanded to make yet one more charge, to make yet one more surge grew even greater. [12] Eventually one
side began to break down, and it is then that the greatest slaughter began. Use of war machines and covering fire. Many Roman battles, especially during the late empire, were fought with the preparatory fire from Ballistas and Onagers. These war machines and covering fire.
historians question the battlefield effectiveness of such weapons). Following this barrage, the Roman infantry advanced, in four lines, until they came within 30 meters of the enemy, another line would rapidly resume the attack. Often this rapid sequence of
deadly attacks proved the key of victory. Another common tactic was to taunt the enemy into an ambush where they would be counterattacked by Roman heavy infantry and cavalry. 3-line system
advantages Flexibility Some ancient sources seem to admit that more usually a line would form into a solid front. Various approaches have been taken to reconcile these possibilities with the ancient writings. [20] The advantages of gaps are obvious
when a formation is on the move- it can more easily flow around obstacles and maneuver and control are enhanced and, as the Romans did in the pre-Marius republic, place baggage between the lines meaning that the cargo cannot be easily captured and that the army can quickly get ready for a battle by using it as cover. After the approach marching
was complete, it would be extremely difficult to deploy an unbroken army of men for combat across any but the flattest ground without some sort of intervals. Many ancient armies used gaps of some sort, even the Carthaginians, who typically withdrew their initial skirmishing troops between the spaces before the main event. Even more loosely
organized enemies like the Germanic hosts typically charged in distinct groups with small gaps between them, rather than marching up in a neat line. [21] Fighting with gaps is thus feasible as writers like Polybius assert. According to those who support that the quincunx formation view, what made the Roman approach stand out is that their intervals
were generally larger and more systematically organized than those of other ancient armies. Each gap was covered by maniples or cohorts from lines farther back. A penetration of any significance could not just slip in unmolested. It would not only be mauled as it fought past the gauntlet of the first line, but would also clash with aggressive units
moving up to plug the space. [22] From a larger standpoint, as the battle waxed and waned, fresh units might be deployed through the intervals to relieve the men of the first line, allowing continuous from twith interval fighting. One scenario for not using gaps is deployment in a limited space, such
as the top of a hill or ravine, where extensive spreading out would not be feasible. Another is a particular attack formation, such as the wedge discussed above, or an encirclement as at the battle of Zama. During the maelstrom of
battle it is also possible that as the units merged into line, the general checkerboard spacing became more compressed or even disappeared, and the fighting would see a more or less solid line engaged with the enemy. Thus gaps at the beginning of the struggle might tend to vanish in the closing phases. [23] Some historians view the intervals as
primarily useful in maneuver. Before the legionaries closed with the enemy each echelon moved up- again forming a continuous front. Should they be discomfited, there still remained the veterans of the triarii who let the
survivors retreat through the preset gaps. The veterans then formed a continuous front to engage the enemy or provided cover for the army as a whole. The same procedure was followed when the triarii was phased out - intervals for maneuver, reforming and recovery- solid line to engage. [24] Some writers maintain that in Caesar's
armies the use of the quincunx and its gaps seems to have declined, and his legions generally deployed in three unbroken lines as shown above, with four cohorts in front, and three apiece in the echeloned order. Relief was provided by the second and third lines 'filtering' forward to relieve their comrades in small groups, while the exhausted and
wounded eased back from the front.[25] The Romans still remained flexible however, using gaps and deploying four or sometimes two lines based on the tactical situation.[26] Line spacing and combat stamina Another unique feature of the Roman infantry was the depth of its spacing. Most ancient armies deployed in shallower formations, particularly
phalanx-type forces. Phalanxes might deepen their ranks heavily to add both stamina and shock power, but their general approach still favored one massive line, as opposed to the deep three-layer Roman arrangement. The advantage of the Roman system is that it allowed the continual funneling or metering of combat power forward over a longer
period—massive, steadily renewed pressure to the front—until the enemy broke. Deployment of the second and third lines required careful consideration by the Roman commander. Deployed too late, and they might be swept away in a rout if the first lines required.
began to break. Tight control had to be maintained, hence the 3rd line triari were sometimes made to squat or kneel, effectively discouraging premature movement to the front. The Roman commander was thus generally mobile, constantly moving from spot to spot, and often riding back in person to fetch reserves, if there was no time for standard
messenger service. The large number of officers in the typical Roman army, and the flexible breakdown into sub-units like cohorts or maniples greatly aided coordination of such moves. [27] Whatever the actual formation taken however, the ominous funneling or surge of combat power up to the first line as a wholesomer than the first line as a wholesomer 
had done its best and become weakened and exhausted by losses, it gave way to the relief of fresh men from the second line who, passing through it gradually, pressed forward one by one, or in single file, and worked their way into the fight in the same way. Meanwhile the tired men of the original first line, when sufficiently rested, reformed and re-
entered the fight. This continued until all men of the first and second lines had been engaged. This does not presuppose an actual withdrawal of the first line, but rather a merging, a blending or a coalescing of both lines. Thus the enemy was given no rest and was continually opposed by fresh troops until, exhausted and demoralized, he yielded to
repeated attacks." [28] Post-deployment commands Roman re-enactors demonstrate a variant of the Roman testudo formation. Different formations were assumed according to different tactical situations. Repellere equites ("repel
horsemen/knights") was the formation used to resist cavalry. The legionaries would assume a square formation, holding their pila as spears in the space between their shields and strung together shoulder. At the command cuneum formate, the infantry formed a
wedge to charge and break enemy lines. This formation was used as a shock tactic. At the command orbem formate, the legionaries assumed an aggressive stance and attacked every opponent they faced. At the command orbem formate, the legionaries assumed an aggressive stance and attacked every opponent they faced in the midst of and behind the
legionaries providing missile fire support. This tactic was used mainly when a small number of legionaries had to hold a position. At the command frontem allargate, a scattered formation was adopted. At the command testudinem formate, the
legionaries assumed the testudo (tortoise) formation. This was slow moving but almost impenetrable to enemy fire, and thus very effective during sieges and/or when facing off against enemy were far enough away so as the legionaries could
get into another formation before being attacked. At the command Agmen formate, the legionaries assumed a square formation, which was also the typical shape of a century in battle. Siegecraft and fortifications Besieging cities. Under the typical shape of a century in battle. Siegecraft and fortifications Besieging cities. It was divided into three phases: Modern reconstruction of
a Ballista. In the first phase, engineers (the cohors fabrorum) built a fortified camp near the city with walls of circumvallation and at the command 'turres extruere' built watch towers to prevent the enemy from bringing in reinforcements. Siege towers were built, trenches were dug and traps set all around the city. Also second, exterior line of walls
(contravallation) was built around the city facing the enemy, as Caesar did at the Battle of Alesia. Sometimes the Romans would mine the enemy's walls. The second phase began with onager and ballista fire to cover the approach of the siege towers, which were full of legionaries ready to assault the wall's defenders. Meanwhile, other cohorts
approached the city's wall in testudo formation, bringing up battering rams and ladders to break through or scale the walls. The third phase included opening of the city's main gate by the cohorts which had managed to break through or scale the walls. The third phase included opening of the city's main gate was opened or the walls.
breached, the cavalry and other cohorts entered the city to finish off the remaining defenders. Field fortifications. While strong cities/forts and elaborate sieges to capture them were common throughout the ancient world, the Romans were unique among ancient armies in their extensive use of field fortifications. In campaign after campaign,
well known. The Gallic city was surrounded by massive double walls penning in defenders, and keeping out relieving attackers. A network of camps and forts were included in these works. The inner trench alone was 20 feet (6.1 m) deep, and Caesar diverted a river to fill it with water. The ground was also sown with caltrops of iron barbs at various
places to discourage assault. Surprisingly for such an infantry centered battle, Caesar relied heavily on cavalry forces to counter Gallic sorties. Ironically, many of these were from Germanic tribes who had come to terms earlier, but in other actions, the Romans sometimes used trenches to
secure their flanks against envelopment when they were outnumbered, as Caesar did during operations in Belgaic Gaul. In the Brittany region of France, moles and breakwaters were constructed at enormous effort to assault the estuarine strongholds of the Gauls. Internal Roman fighting between Caesar and Pompey also saw the frequent
employment of trenches, counter-trenches, counter-trenches, dug-in strong points, and other works as the contenders maneuvered against each other in field combat. [29] In the latter stages of the empire, the extensive use of such field fortifications declined as the heavy infantry itself was phased down. Nevertheless they are an integral part of the relentless Roman
rise to dominance over large parts of the ancient world.[30] Resource tactics As with any military organization, training soldiers/armies require a number of things and could prove to be quite costly in the long run. The Romans understood this concept very well and realized that training soldiers could include paying for his rations [food], his salary,
his armor, his armaments [weapons], and a soldier's honorarium [which was paid to those who received honorable discharges]. With all this in perspective, the Romans realized each individual soldier was a far too valuable resource to waste. The Romans knew the costs they were incurring for each soldier had to be quite similar on their enemy's side
So the Romans developed a tactic that could cause a significant setback or even defeat to their enemy; while only creating a limited risk to their equipment, and both require regular supplies. The idea of "Resource Tactics" could ultimately cut
off their opponents from resources in one of three ways: The first way the Romans conducted this tactic was to attack the resource location themselves. Once they conquered a territory they would secure as much resources from falling into
their opponents hands.[31] The second way the Romans conducted this tactic was to actually intercept the supplies while in transit. The Romans would ransack the supply, which would drastically reduce the amount of supplies
that would reach the enemy.[31] The final approach, and quite possibly the most famous way the Romans conducted this tactic was a "siege" [siege - a military operation in which troops surround a place and cut off all outside access to force surrender]. While conducting the siege, the Romans would typically build a wall around the existing city to
help control the enemy. This wall would be built out of reach of the archers and would prevent the enemy from escaping. Once the Romans completed the wall, they would use catapults, ballistas and onagers, to hurl rocks, spears, and other objects from safe distances. The ongoing siege would eventually cause the city/fort to run out of resources, thus
causing the opponents to die off or surrender; giving the Romans an easy victory.[31] The basic principle behind this tactic was to disrupt their enemies resources while increase their own personal resources. Without a regular supply of food, water, and other supplies, armies will begin to starve or dehydrate, which lead to low morale or killing of
fellow soldiers. This in turn would cause the opposing Army to fail its overarching goal and fall apart.[31] Infantry effectiveness Roman infantry versus the Macedonian phalanx. Prior to the rise of Rome, the Macedonian phalanx was the premiere infantry force in the Western World. It had proven itself on the battlefields of
southern Europe- from Sparta to Macedonia, and had met and overcome several strong non-European armies beyond - from Persia to India. Packed into a dense armored mass, and equipped with massive pikes 12 to 21 feet (6.4 m) in length, the phalanx was
most effective when it was moving forward in attack, either in a frontal charge or in "oblique" or echeloned order against an opposing flank, as the victories of Alexander the Great and Theban innovator Epaminondas attest. When working with other formations—light infantry and cavalry—it was, at its height under Alexander, without peer.[32]
Weaknesses of the Macedonian phalanx. Nevertheless the Macedonian phalanx had key weaknesses. It had some maneuverability, but once a clash was joined this decreased, particularly on rough ground. Its "dense pack" approach also made it rigid. Compressed in the heat of battle, its troops could only primarily fight facing forward. The diversity of
troops gave the phalanx great flexibility, but this diversity was a double-edged sword- relying on a mix of units that was complicated to control and position. These included not only the usual heavy infantrymen, cavalry and light infantry- but also various elite units, medium armed groups, foreign contingents with their own styles and shock units of
war-elephants.[33] Such "mixed" forces presented additional command and control problems. If properly organized and fighting together a long time under capable leaders, they could be very proficient. The campaigns of Alexander, and Pyrrhus (a Hellenic-style formation of mixed contingents) show this. Without such long term cohesion and
leadership however, their performance was uneven. By the time the Romans were engaging against Hellenistic armies the Greeks had ceased to use strong flank guards and cavalry contingents, and their system had degenerated into a mere clash of phalanxes. This was the formation overcome by the Romans at Cynoscephalae. Advantages of Roman
short sword, shield and pilum, and deployed in the distinctive Roman tactical system, which provided more standardization and cohesion in the legion were vulnerable to the more flexible Roman "checkerboard" deployment, which provided each fighting man a good chunk of personal
space to engage in close order fighting. The manipular system also allowed entire Roman sub-units to maneuver more widely, freed from the need to always remain tightly packed in rigid formation. The deep three-line deployment of the Romans allowed combat pressure to be steadily applied forward. Most phalanxes favored one huge line several
ranks deep. This might do well in the initial stages, but as the battle entangled more and more men, the stacked Roman formation allowed fresh pressure to be imposed over a more extended time. As combat lengthened and the battlefield compressed, the phalanx might thus become exhausted or rendered immobile, while the Romans still had enough
left to not only maneuver but to make the final surges forward. [15] Hannibal's deployment at Zama appears to recognize this—hence the Carthaginian also used a deep three-layer approach, sacrificing his first two lower quality lines and holding back his combat-hardened veterans of Italy for the final encounter. Hannibal's arrangement had much to
recommend it given his weakness in cavalry and infantry, but he made no provision for one line relieving the other as the Romans reorganized for a final surge. The legions also drilled and trained together over a more extended time, and were more uniform
and streamlined, (unlike Hannibal's final force and others) enabling even less than brilliant army commanders to maneuver and position their forces proficiently. These qualities, among others, made them more than a match for the phalanx versus the Roman
system: ".. Whereas the phalanx requires one time and one type of ground.. Its use requires flat and level ground.. Its use requires to come down to [meet it on level ground].. what purpose can the phalanx serve? .. [Also] the phalanx soldier cannot operate in either smaller units or singly, whereas the
Roman formation is highly flexible. Every Roman soldier.. can adapt himself equally well to any place of time and meet an attack from any quarter.. Accordingly since the effective use of parts of the Roman army is so much superior, their plans are much more likely to achieve success." [32] Versus Pyrrhus See detailed article Pyrrhus of Epirus The
Greek king Pyrrhus' phalangical system was to prove a tough trial for the Romans. Despite several defeats the Romans inflicted such losses on the Epirote army that the phrase "Pyrrhic victory" has become a byword for a victory won at a terrible cost. A skillful and experienced commander, Pyrrhus deployed a typically mixed phalanx system, including
shock units of war-elephants, and formations of light infantry (peltasts), elite units, and cavalry to support his infantry. Using these he was able to defeat the Romans twice, with a third battle deemed inconclusive or a limited Roman tactical success by many scholars. The battles below (see individual articles for detailed accounts) illustrate the
                                 halanx forces. If well led and deployed (compare Pyrrhus to the fleeing Perseus at Pydna below), they presented a credible infantry alternative to the Pyrrhic wars, they showed themselves masters of the Hellenian from their mistakes. In subsequent battles after the Pyrrhic wars, they showed themselves masters of the Hellenian from their mistakes.
phalanx. Battle of Heraclea Battle of Asculum Battle of Beneventum Notable triumphs Battle of Cynoscephalae (See more detailed article) In this battle the Macedonian phalanx originally held the high ground but all of its units had not been properly positioned due to earlier skirmishing. Nevertheless, an advance by its left wing drove back the
Romans, who counterattacked on the right flank and made some progress against a somewhat disorganized Macedonian left. However the issue was still in doubt, until an unknown tribune (officer) detached 20 maniples from the Roman line and made an encircling attack against the Macedonian rear. This caused the enemy phalanx to collapse,
securing a rout for the Romans. The more flexible, streamlined legionary organization had exploited the weaknesses of the densely packed phalanx. Such triumphs secured Roman hegemony in Greece and adjoining lands. Battle of Pydna (See more detailed article) At Pydna the contenders deployed on a relatively flat plain, and the Macedonians had
augmented the infantry with a sizeable cavalry contingent. At the hour of decision, the enemy phalanx advanced in formidable array against the Roman line, and made some initial progress. However, the ground it had to advance over was rough, and the powerful phalangial formation lost its tight cohesion. The Romans absorbed the initial shock and
came on into the fray, where their more spacious formation and continuously applied pressure proved decisive in hand to hand combat on the rough ground. Shield and sword at close quarters on such terrain neutralized the long pike, and supplementary Macedonian weapons (lighter armor and a dagger-like short sword) made an indifferent showing
against the skillful and aggressive assault of the heavy Roman infantrymen. The opposition also failed to deploy supporting forces effectively to help the situation deteriorating, seems to have fled without even bringing his cavalry into the engagement. The affair
was decided in less than two hours, with a comprehensive defeat for the Macedonians. Other anti-phalanx tactics "Breaking phalanxes" illustrates more of the Roman army's flexibility. When the Roman army's flexibility. When the Roman army's flexibility armies, the legions often deployed the velites in front of the enemy with the command to contendite vestra sponte, to cause
confusion and panic into the solid blocks of the phalanxes. Meanwhile, auxilia archers were deployed on the wings of the legion in front of the cavalry, in order to defend their withdrawal. These archers were deployed on the wings of the legion in front of the cavalry, in order to defend their withdrawal. These archers were deployed on the wings of the legion in front of the cavalry, in order to defend their withdrawal.
and auxiliaries' fire, and charged into the phalanx at a single point, breaking it, then flanking it with the cavalry to seal the victory. See the Battle of Beneventum for evidence of fire-arrows being used. Versus Hannibal's Carthage Tactical superiority of Hannibal's forces. While not a classic phalanx force, Hannibal's army was composed of "mixed"
contingents and elements common to Hellenic formations, and it is told that towards the end of his life, Hannibal reportedly named Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome however had blunted Pyrrhus as the commander of the past that he most admired [34] Rome
why did they not make a better showing in the field against the Carthaginian, who throughout most of his campaign in Italy suffered from numerical inferiority and lack of support from his homeland? Hannibal's individual genius, the steadiness of his cavelry
arm seem to be the decisive factors. Time after time Hannibal exploited the tendencies of the Romans, particularly their eagerness to close and achieve a decisive victory. The cold, tired, wet legionnaires that slogged out of the Romans into
fighting on his terms, and on the ground of his own choosing. The later debacles at Lake Trasimene and Cannae, forced the proud Romans to avoid battle, shadowing the Carthaginians from the high ground of the Apennines, unwilling to risk a significant engagement on the glains where the enemy cavalry held sway. [21] Growing Roman tactical
sophistication and ability to adapt overcomes earlier disasters. But while the case of Hannibal underscored that the Romans were far from invincible, it also demonstrated their long-term strengths. They isolated and eventually bottled up the Carthaginians and hastened their withdrawal from Italy with constant maneuver. More importantly, they
began a counterattack into Spain and Africa. They were willing to absorb the humiliation in Italy and remain on the strategic defensive, but with typical relentless persistence they struck elsewhere, to finally crush their foes. [21] They also learned from those enemies. The operations of Scipio were an improvement on some of those who had previously
faced Hannibal, showing a higher level of advance thinking, preparation and organization. (Compare with Sempronius at the Battle of the Straight-ahead, three-line grind favored by some contemporaries. He also made
better use of cavalry, traditionally an arm in which the Romans were lacking. His operations also included pincer movements, a consolidated battle line, and "reverse Cannae" formations and cavalry movements. His victories in Spain and the African campaign demonstrated a new sophistication in Roman warfare and reaffirmed the Roman capacity to
adapt, persist and overcome.[35] See detailed battles: Battle of Baecula Battle of Ilipa Battle of Ilipa Battle of Rome have varied widely. Some older histories consider them to be backward savages, ruthlessly destroying the civilization and "grandeur that
was Rome." Some modernist views see them in a proto-nationalist light, ancient freedom fighters resisting the iron boot of empire. Often their bravery is celebrated as worthy adversaries of Rome. See the Dying Gaul for an example. The Gallic opposition was also composed of a large number of different peoples and tribes, geographically ranging from
the mountains of Switzerland, to the lowlands of France, to the forests of the Rhineland, and thus are not easy to categorize. The term "Gaul" has also been used interchangeably to describe Celtic peoples farther afield in Britain adding even more to the diversity of peoples lumped together under this name. From a military standpoint however, they
seem to have shared certain general characteristics: tribal polities with a relatively small and lesser elaborated state structure, light weaponry, fairly unsophisticated tactics and organization, a high degree of mobility, and inability to sustain combat power in their field forces over a lengthy period. [36] Roman sources reflect on the prejudices of their
times, but nevertheless testify to the Gauls fierceness and bravery. "Their chief weapons were long, two-edged swords of soft iron.. For defense they carried small wicker shields. Their armies were undisciplined mobs, greedy for plunder.. Brave to the point of recklessness, they were formidable warriors, and the ferocity of their first assault inspired
terror even in the ranks of veteran armies."[37] Early Gallic victories Though popular accounts celebrate the legions and an assortment of charismatic commanders quickly vanquishing massive hosts of "wild barbarians",[38] Rome suffered a number of early defeats against such tribal armies. As early as the Republican period (circa 390–387 BC), they
had sacked Rome under Brennus, and had won several other victories such as the Battle of Arausio. The foremost Gallic triumph in this early period was "The Day of Allia"- July 18 was considered an unlucky date on the Roman Calendar.[39]
Some writers suggest that as a result of such debacles, the expanding Roman power began to adjust to this vigorous, fast-moving new enemy. [40] The Romans began to phase out the monolithic phalanx they formerly fought in, and adopted the more flexible manipular formation. The circular hoplite shield was also enlarged and eventually replaced
with the rectangular scutum for better protection. The heavy phalanx spear was replaced by the pila, suitable for throwing. Only the veterans of the triarrii retained the long spear- vestige of the former phalanx. Such early reforms also aided the Romans in their conquest of the rest of Italy over such foes as the Samnites, Latins and Greeks.[41] As
time went on Roman arms saw increasing triumph over the Gallics, particularly in the campaigns of Caesar. In the early imperial period however, Germanic warbands inflicted one of Rome's greatest military defeats, (the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest) which saw the liquidation of three imperial legions, and was to spark a limit on Roman expansion in
the West. And it was these Germanic tribes in part (most having some familiarity with Rome and its culture, and becoming more Romanized themselves) that were to eventually bring about the Roman military's final demise in the West. Ironically, in the final days, the bulk of the fighting was between forces composed mostly of barbarians on either
side.[42] Tactical problems versus tribes Tribal strengths Whatever their particular culture, the Gallic and Germanic tribes generally proved themselves to be tough opponents, racking up several victories over their enemies. Some historians show that they sometimes used massed fighting in tightly packed phalanx-type formations with overlapping
shields, and employed shield coverage during sieges. In open battle, they sometimes used a triangular "wedge" style formation in attack. Their greatest hope of success lay in 4 factors: (a) numerical superiority, (b) surprising the Romans over heavily
covered or difficult terrain where units of the fighting horde could shelter within striking distance until the hour of decision, or if possible, withdraw and regroup between successive charges.[43] Most significant Gallic and Germanic victories show two or more of these characteristics. The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest contains all four: surprise, a
treacherous defection by Arminius and his contingent, numerical superiority, quick charges to close rapidly, and favorable terrain and environmental conditions (thick forest and pounding rainstorms) that hindered Roman movement and gave the warriors enough cover to conceal their movements and mount successive attacks against the Roman line
[44] Tribal weaknesses Weaknesses in organization and equipment. Against the fighting men from the legion however, the Gauls, Iberians and Germanic forces faced a daunting task. The barbarians' rudimentary organization and tactics fared poorly against the well oiled machinery that was the Legion. The fierceness of the Gallic and Germanic
charges is often commented upon by some writers, and in certain circumstances they could overwhelm Roman lines. Nevertheless the in-depth Roman formation allowed adjustments to be made, and the continual application of forward pressure made long-term combat a hazardous proposition for the Gauls. Flank attacks were always possible, but the
legion was flexible enough to pivot to meet this, either through sub-unit maneuver or through deployment of lines farther back. The Gauls and Germans also fought with little or no armor and with weaker shields, putting them at a
disadvantage against the legion. Other items of Roman equipment from studded sandals, to body armor, to metal helmets added to Roman advantages. Generally speaking, the Gauls and Germans needed to get into good initial position against the Romans and to overwhelm them in the early phases of the battle. An extended set-piece slogging match
between the lightly armed tribesmen and the well organized heavy legionaries usually spelled doom for the tribal disadvantage against the well-organized Romans, [45] as is the victory of Germanicus at the Weser River and Agricola against the Celtic
tribesmen of Caledonia (Scotland) circa 84 A.D.[46] Weaknesses in logistics. Roman logistics also provided a trump card against fermanic foes as it had against so many previous foes. Tacitus in his Annals reports that the Roman commander Germanic foes as it had against so many previous foes. Tacitus in his Annals reports that the Roman commander Germanic foes as it had against so many previous foes.
come overland, where they would be subject to attack as they traversed the forests and swamps. He therefore opened sea and river routes, moving large quantities of supplies and reinforcements relatively close to the zone of battle, bypassing the dangerous land routes. In addition, the Roman fortified camps provided secure staging areas for
offensive, defensive and logistical operations, once their troops were deployed. Assault roads and causeways were constructed on marshy ground to facilitate maneuver, sometimes under direct Gallic attack. These Roman techniques repeatedly defeated their Germanic adversaries.[47] While Germanic leaders and fighters influenced by Roman
methods sometimes adapted them, most tribes did not have the strong organization of the Romans. As German scholar Hans Delbruck notes in his "History of the Art of War": ".. the superiority of the Roman art of warfare was based on the army organization.. a system that permitted very large masses of men to be concentrated at a given point, to
move in an orderly fashion, to be fed, to be kept together. The Gallic horse and chariot warfare for example, showed a high degree of integration and coordination with infantry, and Gallic horse and chariot assaults sometimes
threatened Roman forces in the field with annihilation. At the Battle of Sentinum for example, c. 295 BC, the Roman infantry by the unexpected appearance of the fast-moving Gallic assault. The discipline of the Roman infantry restored
the line however, and a counterattack eventually defeated the Gallic forces and their allies. [49] The accounts of Polybius leading up to the Battle of Telamon, c. 225 BC mention chariot warfare, but it was ultimately unsuccessful. The Gauls met comprehensive defeat by the Roman legions under Papus and Regulus. Chariot forces also attacked the
legions as they were disembarking from ships during Caesar's invasion of Britain, but the Roman commander drove off the fast-moving assailants using covering fire (slings, arrows and engines of war) from his ships, and reinforcing his shore party of infantry to charge and drive off the attack. In the open field against Caesar, the Gallic/Celtics
apparently deployed chariots with a driver and an infantry fighter armed with javelins. During the clash, the chariots would drop off their warriors to attack the enemy and retire a short distance away, massed in reserve. From this position they could retrieve the assault troops if the enemy and retire a short distance away, massed in reserve.
elsewhere. Caesar's troops were discomfited by one such attack, and he met it by withdrawing into his fortified redoubt. A later Gallic fighters were, chariots were already declining as an effective weapon of war in the ancient world with the rise of
mounted cavalry.[51] At the battle of Mons Grapius in Caledonia (circa 84AD), Celtic chariots made an appearance. However they were no longer used in an offensive role but primarily for pre-battle show - riding back and forth and hurling insults. The main encounter was decided by infantry and mounted cavalry.[46] Tribal guerrillas The Iberian
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zone of struggle. The Gallic-Celtic-Iberian peoples, like many other tribes descended from the general "Celtic" race, put up an obstinate fight against Roman hegemony. Based in what is now Spain and Portugal, they fought continuously, with varying levels of intensity, for almost two centuries, beginning around 218 BC. The initial hegemons of Spain were the Carthaginians who struggled against various tribes to carve out colonies and a commercial empire, primarily in coastal enclaves. Carthaginian defeats by Rome brought struggle against various tribes such as the Cusitanian was not achieved until the time of Augustus. The vicious long-term fighting made Hispania a place of dread for the Roman soldier. Historian Sir Edward Creasy, in his "The Fifteen

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Decisive Battles of the World" had this to say about the Iberian conflicts. [52] "The war against the Spaniards, who, of all the nations subdued by the Romans in both provinces were so often beaten, that nothing was more dreaded by the soldiers at home than to be sent there... Roman
tactics. Rome deployed its standard methods, with greater emphasis on blended units of light troops, cavalry and heavy infantry when confronting the troops and providing bases of operation. While combat results were mixed in the open field
the Romans did comparatively well when besieging Iberian cities, systematically eliminating enemy leaders, supply bases and centers of resistance. Destruction of Iberian resources by burning grain fields or demolishing villages also put the native resistance.
methods, including a crackdown on lax practices and tightening of legionary discipline. [53] Other Roman tactics touched on the massacres of tribal leaders by Lucullus and Galba under guise of negotiation. Rome frequently capitalized on divisions
among the tribes. A "divide and conquer" policy was in use, with competing (and sometimes insincere) treaties being used to subdue others.[54] Celtic-Iberian tribes used fortified cities or strongpoints to defend against their
enemies, and mixed this with mobile warfare in formations ranging from small guerrilla bands, to large units numbering thousands of men. The Celtic/Iberian horsemen in particular appear to be more than a match for those of Rome, a fact proved in earlier years by the key role such allied cavalry played in Hannibal's victories. Favorable mobility and
knowledge of the local terrain were to help the tribes immensely. One of the most successful ambushes was pulled off by a chieftain named Carus, who liquidated around 6,000 Romans in a combined cavalry-infantry strike. Another was executed by one Caesarus, who took advantage of a disorderly Roman pursuit under Mummius, to lay a trap that
resulted in Roman losses of around 9,000 men. A similar Iberian "turn and fight" gambit is also recorded as being successful against Galba. Roman arms however triumphed over two grinding centuries of conflict. See "Appian's History of Rome: The Spanish Wars" for a more detailed discussion of individual battles, leaders and engagements.[53]
Superior tactical organization: victory of Caesar at the Sambre River Superior Gallic mobile or guerrilla warfare or in a decisive field engagement. The near defeat of Caesar in his Gallic campaign confirms this latter pattern, but also shows the strengths of Roman
tactical organization and discipline. At the Battle of the Sabis river, (see more detailed article) contingents of the Nervii, Atrebates, Veromandui and Aduatuci tribes massed secretly in the surrounding forests as the main Roman force was busy making camp on the opposite side of the river. Some distance away behind them, slogged two slow moving
legions with the baggage train. Engaged in foraging and camp construction the Roman forces were somewhat scattered. As camp building commenced, the barbarian forces launched a ferocious attack, streaming across the shallow water and quickly assaulting the distracted Romans. This incident is discussed in Caesar's Gallic War Commentaries.
[55] So far the situation looked promising for the warrior host. [36] The 4 conditions above were in their favor: (a) numerical superiority, (b) the element of surprise, (c) a quick advance/assault, and (d) favorable terrain that masked their movements until the last minute. Early progress was spectacular as the initial Roman dispositions were driven
back. A rout looked possible. Caesar himself rallied sections of his endangered army, impressing resolve upon the troops. With their customary discipline and cohesion, the Romans then began to drive back the barbarian assault. A charge by the Nervi tribe through a gap between the legions however almost turned the tide again, as the onrushing
warriors seized the Roman camp and tried to outflank the other army units engaged with the rest of the tribal host. The initial phase of the tash had been guarding the baggage reinforced the Roman lines. Led by the 10th Legion, a counterattack was mounted
with these reinforcements that broke the back of the barbarian effort and sent the tribal forces, and the steady, disciplined cohesion of the Romans. Ultimately, the latter was to prove decisive in Rome's long fought conquest of Gaul. Persisting logistics
strategy: Gallic victory at Gergovia As noted above, the fierce charge of the Gauls and their individual prowess is frequently acknowledged by several ancient Roman writers. [56] The Battle of Gergovia however demonstrates that the Gallic were capable of a level of strategic insight and operation beyond merely mustering warriors for an open field
clash. Under their war leader Vercingetorix, the Gallics pursued what some modern historians have termed a "persisting" or "logistics strategy" - a mobile approach relying not on direct open field clashes, but avoidance of major battle, "scorched earth" denial of resources, and the isolation and piecemeal destruction of Roman detachments and
smaller unit groupings.[57] When implemented consistently, this strategy saw some success against Roman operations. According to Caesar himself, during the siege of the town of Bourges, the lurking warbands of Gauls were: "on the watch for our foraging and grain-gatherer parties, when necessarily scattered far afield he attacked them and
inflicted serious losses... This imposed such scarcity opon the army that for several days they were without grain and staved off starvation only by driving cattle from remote villages."[58] Caesar countered with a strategy of enticing the Gallic forces out into open battle, or of blockading them into submission. At the town of Gergovia, resource denial
was combined with concentration of superior force, and multiple threats from more than one direction. This caused the opposing Roman forces to divide, and ultimately fail. Gergovia was situated on the slope, positioning allied tribes in designated places. He
drilled his men and skirmished daily with the Romans, who had overrun a hilltop position, and had created a small camp some distance from Caesar's agents) created a threat in Caesar's rear, including a threat to a supply convoy promised by
the allied Aeudans, and he diverted four legions to meet this danger.[59] This however gave Vercingetorix's forces the chance to concentrate in superior strength against the rear threat, turned around and by ruthless forced marching once again
consolidated his forces at town. A feint using bogus cavalry by the Romans drew off part of the Gallic assault, and the Romans advanced to capture three more enemy outposts on the slope, and proceeded towards the walls of the Romans lost
700 men, including 46 centurions. Caesar commenced a retreat from the town with the victorious Gallic warriors in pursuit. The Roman commander however mobilized his 10th Legion as a blocking force to cover his withdrawal and after some fighting, the tribesmen themselves withdraw back to Gergovia, taking several captured legion standards.
The vicious fighting around Gergovia was the first time Caesar had suffered a military reverse, demonstrating the Gallic martial valor noted by the Averni people showing visitors a sword in one of their temples, a weapon that reputedly belonged to
Caesar himself. According to Plutarch, the Roman general was shown the sword in the temple at Gergovia some years after the battle, but he refused to reclaim it, saying that it was consecrated, and to leave it where it was [60] The Gallic were unable to sustain their strategy however, and Vercingetorix was to become trapped in Alesia, facing not
divided sections or detachments of the Roman Army but Caesar's full force of approximately 70,000 men (50,000 legionnaires plus numerous additional auxiliary cavalry and infantry). This massive concentration of Romans was able to besiege the fortress in detail and repulse Gallic relief forces, and it fell in little more than a month.[60] Vercingetorix
overall persisting logistics policy however, demonstrates a significant level of strategic thinking. As historian A. Goldsworthy (2006) notes: "His [Vercingetorix's] strategy was considerably more sophisticated than that employed by Caesar's earlier opponents.."[61] At Alesia this mobile approach became overly static. The Gauls gave battle at a place
where they were inadequately provisioned for an extended siege, and where Caesar could bring his entire field force to bear on a single point without them being dissipated, and where his lines of supply were not effectively interdicted. [62] At Gergovia by contrast, Caesar's strength was divided by the appearance of another Gallic force in his rear
(the Aeudans)- threatening his sources and lines of supply. Together with a strong defensive anvil, (the town) supported by an offensive hammer (the open field forces), and coupled with previous resource denial pressure over time, the Romans were forced to retreat, and the Gallic secured a victory. As one historian notes about the persisting strategy
"But before the defeat at Alesia, Vercingetorix's strategy had driven Cesar from central Gaul.. In finding and overwhelming Roman foragers as Fabius had done to Hannibal's men, the Gauls concentrated against weakness to win many small victories. Their strength in cavalry helped them concentrate rapidly, facilitating the application of the combat
element in their strategy, though attacking foragers and grain gatherers was also intrinsic to the logistic aspect of their campaign." [63] Victory through attrition In their battles against a wide variety of opponents over time. [64] In Spain, resources
were thrown at the problem until it yielded over 150 years later- a slow, harsh grind of endless marching, constant sieges and fighting, broken treaties, burning villages and enslaved captives. As long as the Roman Senate and its successors were willing to replace and expend more men and material decade after decade, victory could be bought
through a strategy of exhaustion.[65] The systematic wastage and destruction of enemy economic and human resources was called vastatio by the Romans. Crops and animals were destroyed or carried off, and local populaces which had
performed raids across the border. In the campaigns of Germanicus, Roman troops in the combat area carried out a "scorched earth" approach against their Germanic foes, devastating the land they depended on for supplies. "The country was wasted by fire and sword fifty miles round; nor sex nor age found mercy; places sacred and profane had the
equal lot of destruction, all razed to the ground.." (Tacitus, Annals). The Roman "grind down" approach is also seen in the Bar Kokba Jewish revolt against the Romans. The Roman commander Severus, avoided meeting the hard-fighting Jewish revolt against the Romans. The Roman "grind down" approach is also seen in the Bar Kokba Jewish revolt against the Romans.
of conflict in a methodical campaign.[66] This "attritional" aspect of the Roman approach to combat contrasts with the notion of brilliant generalship or tactics sometimes seen in popular depictions of the Roman infantry. Some historians note however that Rome often balanced brutal attrition with shrewd diplomacy, as demonstrated by Caesar's
harsh treatment of Gallic tribes that opposed him, but his sometimes conciliatory handling of those that submitted. Rome also used a variety of incentives to encourage cooperation by the elites of conquered peoples, co-opting opposition and incorporating them into the structure of the empire. This carrot and stick approach forms an integral part of
"the Roman way" of war.[67] Roman infantry versus cavalry Tactical problems of fighting cavalry Cavalry opponents were one of if not the toughest challenges faced by the Roman infantry versus cavalry Tactical problems of fighting cavalry exploited the inherent weakness of the legion- its relatively slow movement and
deployment. Defeat by strong cavalry forces is a recurring event in Roman military history. The campaigns of Hannibal illustrate this well, as Numidian and Spanish/Gallic horsemen repeatedly outflanked Roman formations, dealing devastating blows in the sides and rear. Hannibal's great victory at Cannae (considered one of the greatest Roman
defeats ever) was primarily an infantry struggle, but the key role was played by his cavalry, as in his other victories. An even more dramatic demonstration of Roman vulnerability is shown in the numerous wars against Parthian heavy cavalry. The Parthians and their successors used large numbers of fast-moving light riders to harass and skirmish,
and delivered the coup de grâce with heavily armored lancers called "cataphracts". Both types of troops used powerful composite bows that shot arrows of sufficient strength to penetrate Roman armor. The cataphracts extended combat power by serving as shock troops, engaging opposing forces with their heavy lances in thundering charges after
they had been "softened up" by swarms of arrows. The Parthians also conducted a "scorched earth" policy against the Romans, refusing major set-piece encounters, while luring them deeper on to unfavorable ground, where they would lack water supplies and a secure line of retreat. The debacle of the Battle of Carrhae saw a devastating defeat of
Roman arms by the Parthian cavalry.[68] Against such foes the Romans faced a difficult task. How could they be defeated? Successful tactics Clues exist in the earlier campaigns of Alexander the Great against mounted Asiatic warriors—engaging the horsemen with strong detachments of light infantry and missile troops, and driving them off with
charges by Alexander's heavy cavalry units. The Roman variant continued the same "combined arms" approach, with a larger role for cavalry as the empire went on. The Eastern half of the Roman commander Publius Ventidius
Bassus illustrate three general tactics used by the infantry to fight their mounted foes. These drew on Caesar's veteran legions, and made Ventidius one of the Roman generals to celebrate a triumph against the Parthians. In three separate battles, he not only managed to defeat the Parthian armies and drive them out of Roman territory, but also
managed to kill Parthia's three top military commanders during the battles.[69] The adjustments of Ventidius were as follows:[69] Increase in firepower. Ventidius sought to neutralize the Parthian advantage in firepower. Ventidius sought to neutralize the Parthian advantage in firepower.
horsemen during several battles. In subsequent engagements, other Roman commanders increased cavalry units and slingers, with the latter being supplied with leaden bullets which gave more range and killing power.[69] Securing the high ground and other terrain features. In his three victories over the horsemen, Ventidius had his infantry secure
the high ground, bolstering defensive positions and maneuvers with withering covering fire by the slingers. Seizure of key terrain features also obstructed avenues of attack and provided anchor points that allowed maneuvering detachments to counterattack, or to fall back if unfavorable conditions developed. Against the horsemen, heavy infantry
units had to work closely with cavalry and light troops, and be mutually supporting, or they could be quickly isolated and destroyed. [69] Aggressive operations from a stable base. During movement against the horsemen, special care had to be
redeployed to provide covering and blocking forces until the army had safely navigated the route. [70] Once entering the zone of battle, Ventidius generally operated from a defensive base and did not prematurely venture on to flat terrain or allow his forces to lose cohesion as at Carrhae. He let the Parthian forces come to him after taking a strong
position, and aggressively counterattacked. In two victories the Parthians were induced to attack the army camp, where they were mauled by the corps of slingers. The legions then counterattacked from this defensive anvil, light and heavy units working together to smash opposition. [71] In a third triumph, Ventidius dispatched a strong vanguard of
cavalry against a Parthian concentration at tha Syrian Gates, or narrow pass over Mount Amanus, leading from Cilicia into Syria. As the Parthians moved in for the kill, Ventidius quickly brought up his main force behind the vanguard, defeating his opponents in detail, and killing Pharnapates the Parthian commander. Throughout these maneuvers
deadly sling fire was continuous and victory for the Romans was secured.[71] Combined arms and quick advance. In the later Roman empire, cavalry forces played a larger role, with the infantry in support. The campaign of the Emperor Julian II against the Persians is instructive in this regard. On June 22, 363 a large-scale clash occurred near the
town of Maranga. Facing an enemy that threatened to blanket his troops with a hail of arrows, and in danger of envelopment, Julian deployed his force in a crescent formation, and ordered an advance by both infantry and cavalry on the double, thwarting both dangers by closing quickly. The gambit was successful. After a long battle, the Persians
withdrew- a tactical victory (albeit a costly one for the Romans according to some historians).[72] The work of Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus offers a detailed description of the Persian campaign, including the quick charge by the heavy Roman infantry under Julian. "To prevent the preliminary volleys of the archers from disrupting our ranks
he (Julian) advanced at the double and so ruined the effect of their fire ... Roman foot in close order made a mighty push and drove the serried ranks of the enemy before them ... " Marcellinus's commentary also sharply contrasts the fighting spirit of the Persian infantrymen with those of Rome, stating that they had "aversion to pitched infantry
battles."[73] In an earlier engagement outside the walls of Ctesiphon, Marcellinus again notes the value of the quicker our men forced themselves into the enemy's line the less they were exposed to danger from arrows."[74] Mixed results against major
cavalry enemies. Rome's overall record against the Parthian swas mixed, as it was against the horsemen of Hannibal, and some Gallic opponents. Subsequent Roman leaders like Severus and Trajan saw some success, but could never hold the Parthian area
permanently, and also pulled out.[69] Nevertheless, the battles of Ventidius and Julian show that the Roman infantry, when properly handled and maneuvered, and when working in conjunction with other supporting arms like slingers, could, at least partially, meet the challenge of the cavalryman.[69] Assessment of the Roman infantry Central factors arms like slingers, could, at least partially, meet the challenge of the cavalryman.[69] Assessment of the Roman infantry Central factors are supported by the cavalryman infantry central factors are supported by the 
in Roman success Some elements that made the Romans an effective military force, both tactically and at higher levels, were: The Romans were adopted outright by the legionaries. Publius asserts that the pilum was of
Samnite origin, and the shield was based on Greek design.[75] In other cases, especially formidable units of enemy forces were invited to serve in the Roman army as auxiliaries after peace was made. In the naval sphere, the Roman army as auxiliaries after peace was made. In the naval sphere, the Roman army as auxiliaries after peace was made. In the naval sphere, the Roman army as auxiliaries after peace was made.
adapting and improving on Punic warships, and introducing heavier marine contingents (infantry fighters) on to their ships.[76] Roman organization was more flexible than those of many opponents. Compared to the tightly packed spearmen of the phalanx, the Roman heavy infantry, through their training and discipline, and operating in conjunction
with light foot and cavalry, could quickly adopt a number of methods and formation during siege warfare, to a hollow square against cavalry attack, to mixed units of heavy foot, horse and light infantry against guerrillas in Spain, to the classic "triple line" or checkerboard patterns.
Against more sophisticated opponents the Romans also showed great flexibility at times, such as the brilliant adjustments Scipio made against Hannibal at Zama. These included leaving huge gaps in the ranks to trap the charging elephants, and the recall, reposition and consolidation of a single battle line that advanced to the final death struggle
against the Carthaginian veterans of Italy. [77] Roman discipline, organization and logistical systemization sustained combat effectiveness over a longer period. Notably, the Roman discipline, organization and logistical systemization sustained combat effectiveness over a longer period. Notably, the Roman discipline, organization and logistical systemization sustained combat effectiveness over a longer period.
sustained combat power, from routine resupply and storage, to the construction of military roads, to state run arsenals and weapons factories, to well organized naval convoys that helped stave off defeat by Carthage. The death of a leader generally did not cause the legions to lose heart in battle. Others stepped to the fore and carried on. In the
defeat by Hannibal at the River Trebia, 10,000 Romans cut their way through the debacle to safety, maintaining unit cohesion when all around was rout, a testimony to their tactical organization and discipline. [76] The Romans were more persistent and more willing to absorb and replace losses over time than their opponents. Unlike other
civilizations, the Romans kept going relentlessly until typically their enemies had been completely crushed or neutralized. The army acted to implement policy and were not allowed to stop unless they received a command from the emperor or a decree from the senate. Against the tribal polities of Europe, particularly in Hispania, Roman tenacity and
material weight eventually wore down most opposition. The tribes of Europe did not have a state or economic structure able to support lengthy campaigns and therefore could often (but not always) be made to change their minds about opposing Roman hegemony. The defeat in the Teutoburg Forest might seem like an exception, but even here, the
Romans were back on the warpath 5 years later with major forces against their Germanic opponents. That there is an obvious limit to endless persistence does not negate the general pattern. Where the Romans faced another large state structure, such as the Parthian Empire, they found the military road rocky indeed and were sometimes forced to an
impasse. Nevertheless the distinct pattern of Roman tenacity holds. Rome suffered its greatest defeats against sophisticated Carthage, notably at Cannae, and was forced to avoid battle for a lengthy period. Yet in time, it rebuilt its forces on land and at sea, and persisted in the struggle, astonishing the Punics who expected it to sue for peace. Against
the Parthians, crushing defeats did not stop the Romans, for they invaded Parthian territory several times afterwards, and though Parthia proper was never totally conquered, Rome ultimately secured a rough hegemony in the area. Roman leadership was mixed, but over time it was often effective in securing Roman military success. Leadership
debacles are common in Roman military history, from the routs against Hannibal, to the demise of the unlucky Crassus against the Parthians. The Roman polity's structuring however produced a steady supply of men willing and able to lead troops in battle- men that were held accountable for defeat or malfeasance. It was not unusual for a losing
general to be prosecuted by political enemies in Rome, with some having their property confiscated and barely escaping death. The senatorial oligarchy, for all its political maneuvering, interference and other faults, provided the functions of oversight and audit over military matters, that over the course of time, shaped final results. The record is a
mixed one, but whether under boisterous Republic or Imperial emperor, Rome produced enough competent leaders to secure its military dominance for over a millennium. Some of the best leaders come from both eras, including Marius, Sulla, Scipio, Caesar, Trajan and others. Note should be taken here of the large number of junior officers the
Romans typically used to assure coordination and guidance. The initiative of such men played a key part in Roman success. Effective leadership was also bound up with the famous Roman centurions, the backbone of the legionary organization. While not all such men could be considered models of perfection, they commanded substantial respect. The
influence of Roman military and civic culture, as embodied particularly in the heavy infantry legion, gave the Roman military consistent motivation and cohesion. Such culture included but was not limited to: (a) the valuing of Roman citizenship, (b) the broad-based muster of free males into mass infantry units (as opposed to widespread use of foreign
contingents, slaves or mercenaries), and (c) loyalty to those fighting units (the Legion) which remained characteristically Roman in outlook and discipline. Citizenship conveyed certain valuable rights in Roman society, and was another element that helped to promote the standardization and integration of the infantry.[78] The citizen under arms - the
legion soldier - was supposed to reflect and practice the Roman ideal of virtus, pietas, fides, - self-discipline, respect and faithfulness to engagements. Implementation of such ideals could be mixed according to some writers, but it was a strong force for
cohesion among Rome's infantrymen. Decline Any history of the Roman infantry must grapple with the decline of course is closely linked with the decay of other facets of Rome's economy, society and political scene. Nevertheless some historians
emphasize that the final demise of Rome was due to military defeat, however plausible (or implausible) the plethora of the major factors that have occupied scholars of the military will be discussed here: barbarization and the
adaptation of a "mobile reserve" strategy. There are a number of controversies in the legions To combat the more frequent raids and advances of their hostile neighbors the legions were changed from slow and heavy to much lighter troops, and cavalry was introduced as a
serious concept. This meant that the new subdivided infantry lost the awesome power that the earlier legions had, meaning that whilst they were more likely to see a battle they were actually much too weak to cope with the very cavalry
based invasions of the Huns, Goths, Vandals and Sassanids. Their ineffectiveness was demonstrated at Cannae and Adrianople; in both instances the cavalry was completely destroyed by a vastly more powerful enemy horse. "Barbarization" of the heavy infantry "Barbarization" is a common theme in many works on Rome (See Gibbon, Mommsen,
Delbrück, et al.), and thus cannot be excluded from any analysis of its infantry forces. Essentially it is argued that the increasing barbarization of the heavy legions weakened weaponry, training, morale and military effectiveness in the long run. The weapons changes described above are but one example.[81] It could be argued that the use of
barbarian personnel was nothing new. This is accurate, however such use was clearly governed by "the Roman way." It was the barbarian personnel who had to adapt to Roman standards and organization, not the other way around. In the twilight of the empire, this was not the case. Such practices as permitting the settlement of massive, armed
barbarian populations on Roman territory, the watering down of the privilege of citizenship, increasing use of alien contributed to the decline of the heavy infantry.[82] The settlement of the foederati for example, saw large
barbarian contingents ushered on to Roman territory, with their own organization, under their own leaders. Such groupings showed a tendency to neglect "the Roman way" in organization, training, logistics etc., in favor of their own ideas, practices and agendas. These settlements may have bought short term political peace for imperial elites, but
their long term effect was negative, weakening the traditional strengths of the heavy infantry in discipline, training and deployment. They also seemed to have lessened the incentive for remaining "old Guard" troops to adhere to such strengths, since the barbarians received equal or more favor with less effort. Indeed such "allied" barbarian
contingents were at times to turn on the Romans, devastating wide areas with sack and pillage and even attacking imperial army formations. [83] Other writers argue that while some ancient Romans did view the world in terms of barbarians versus civilized Romans (epitomized in Hadrian's Wall of separation), the reality of Roman frontiers was a
fuzzy set of interlocking zones - political, military, iudicial and financial, rather than a neat linear boundary. Changes to the Roman forces that moved away from the old fighting organization order were thus the outcome of several influences, rather than simply the appearance of more, allegedly uncivilized non-Romans. [84] Growth of the mobile forces
approach Some scholars challenge the notion that a "mobile reserve" in the Roman Empire, and instead argue that the shifts in organization represent a series of field armies deployed in various areas as needed, particularly in the East. Others point to the heavy fiscal difficulties and political turmoil of the later
Empire that made it difficult to continue traditional policy. Controversy on the topic is lively. Advantages of the mobile reserve strategy The "mobile reserve" strategy, traditional policy of strong frontier fortifications backed by legions stationed near likely zones of conflict.
Instead, it is argued that the best troops were pulled back into a type of "mobile reserve" closer to the center that could be deployed to trouble areas throughout the empire. Some scholars claim this was a positive development, (Luttwak, Delbruck, et al.) given growing difficulties with governing the vast empire, where political turmoil and severe
financial difficulties had made the old preclusive security system untenable. Some writers such as Luttwak condemn the old style "forward" policy Ancient writers like Zosimus in the 5th
century AD condemned the "reserve" policy as a major weakening of the military force. Other modern scholars (Ferrill et al.) also see the pullback as a strategic mistake, arguing that it left lower quality did not happen immediately, it is
argued that over time, the limitanei declined into lightly armed, static watchman type troops that were of dubious value against increasing barbarian marauders on the frontiers. The pullback of the emperors and various elites) rather than on military reality. In
addition it is claimed, the "forward" policy was not at all a static "Maginot" approach, but that traditional heavy legions and supporting cavalry could still move to a trouble spot by redeploying them from fortifications elsewhere along a particular frontier. [86] Twilight of the hard-core infantry There are numerous other facets to the controversy, but
whatever the school of thought, all agree that the traditional strengths and weaponry of the heavy infantry legion declined from the standards of earlier eras. The 4th century writer Vegetius, in one of the most influential Western military works, highlighted this decline as the key factor in military weakness, noting that the core legions always fought
as part of an integrated team of cavalry and light foot. In the latter years, this formula that had brought so much success petered out. Caught between the growth of lighter armed/less organized foot soldiers, and the increasing cavalry formations of the mobile forces, the "heavies" as the dominant force, withered on the vine. This does not mean that
heavy units disappeared entirely, but that their mass recruitment, formation, organization and deployment as the dominant part of the Roman military was greatly reduced. Ironically, in Rome's final battles (the Western half of the empire) the defeats suffered were substantially inflicted by infantry forces (many fighting dismounted). [86] Speaking of
the decline of the heavy infantry, the Roman historian Vegetius lauded the old fighting units, and lamented how the heavy armor of the early days had been discarded by the weaker, less disciplined, barbarized forces: "Those who find the old arms so burdensome, must either receive wounds upon their naked bodies and die, or what is worse still, run
the risk of being made prisoners, or of betraying the country by their flight. Thus, to avoid fatigue, they allow themselves to be butchered shamefully, like cattle."[87] Historian Arther Ferrill notes that even towards the end, some of the old infantry formations were still in use. Such grouping was increasingly ineffective however, without the severe
close order discipline, drill and organization of old times.[86] At the Battle of Châlons (circa 451 AD) Attila the Hun rallied his troops by mocking the once vaunted Roman infantry, alleging that they merely huddled under a screen of protective shields in close formation. He ordered his troops to ignore them and to attack the powerful Alans and
Visigoths instead. It was a sad commentary on the force that had once dominated Europe, the Mediterranean and much of the battlefield's high ground. Nevertheless its day had already passed in favor of the mass levies of the barbarian
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