

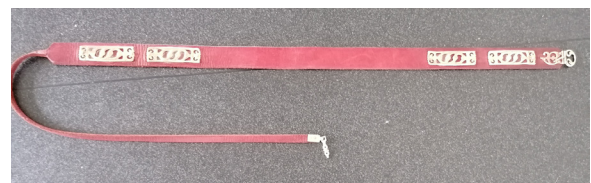
What did infantry Auxiliary soldiers wear at the time of Emperor Hadrian?

There was no such thing as a Roman 'uniform'. Everything from tunic to armour was produced in small workshops or homes and would not look exactly the same as the next one. As long as the soldiers had all the correct items they did not have to look identical.

The infantry soldiers wore a soft kit under their armour which consisted of a tunic (which hung just above the knee), a scarf (to stop their armour and helmet rubbing against their neck), trousers, a belt, socks and boots with hobnails.



The most important item was the military belt, that identified a man as a soldier even when not wearing armour. Civilians at this time did not use leather belts decorated with metal plates.



Soldiers sometimes wore a cloak (a rectangular piece of cloth fastened on one shoulder using a metal brooch) when the weather was cold or wet (but never when fighting as it would have got in the way).

They also wore armour consisting of a padded top, ring-mail and a helmet. Essential characteristics of the helmet were a bowl and broad, ribbed neck-guard, a browguard and large hinged cheek-pieces. They also had cut outs on the side of the bowl for ears.



Auxiliary soldiers used flat oval shaped shields.

They had bosses, a bulge on the front made out of iron or bronze to protect the hand holding the shield. Whether you were left or right-handed, shields were always held in the left hand when the soldier was fighting.

Weapons

Spear and javelins

Javelins were small spears designed to be thrown at a distance; a soldier would be armed with a number of these (held in a quiver, or a smaller number held in the hand beside the shield).

Then as the enemy got closer the soldiers used their spears. Spears were also sometimes thrown but only when the soldiers were ready to move onto their next weapon (the sword) as they only had one spear and once they had thrown it they did not have another.



Sword (spatha)

The auxiliaries fought in smaller units than legionaries and had a much more flexible fighting style. They used a long sword with a slashing motion.



Dagger (Pugio)

An important weapon to have as a back-up should the sword be lost or damaged. It was used for fighting at close range and was carried on the belt on the right-hand side of the body.