



Invaders and Settlers: Romans



Learning Objective:

To find out why and how the Romans successfully invaded Britain



Who were the Romans?

Where did they come from?

When did they invade Britain?

See how many of these questions
you can answer with a partner.

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The Romans were a group of people who belonged to the Roman Empire. The city of Rome, in Italy, was the centre of this empire. The Roman Empire was very powerful, with a huge army, which they used to fight people and increase the amount of land over which they ruled. They invaded Britain in 43 AD.



Why do you think they decided to invade Britain?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

In the year 55 BC, Julius Caesar was **emperor** of Rome. The Romans wanted to expand their empire and gain more lands for themselves. Julius Caesar and the Roman army had conquered France not long before. The Britons (the people of Britain) had helped France to fight against the Romans. Caesar decided to try and conquer Britain too. He invaded Britain twice but both times was forced to retreat.

The ruler of the Roman Empire was called the **emperor**.



Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor in 55 BC.



It wasn't until the year 43 AD (nearly a hundred years after Caesar's first attempt) that the Romans managed to conquer Britain. By this time, Claudius was emperor and he was keen to show everyone how strong and powerful he was. He took an army of 40,000 men to invade Britain and this time was successful.

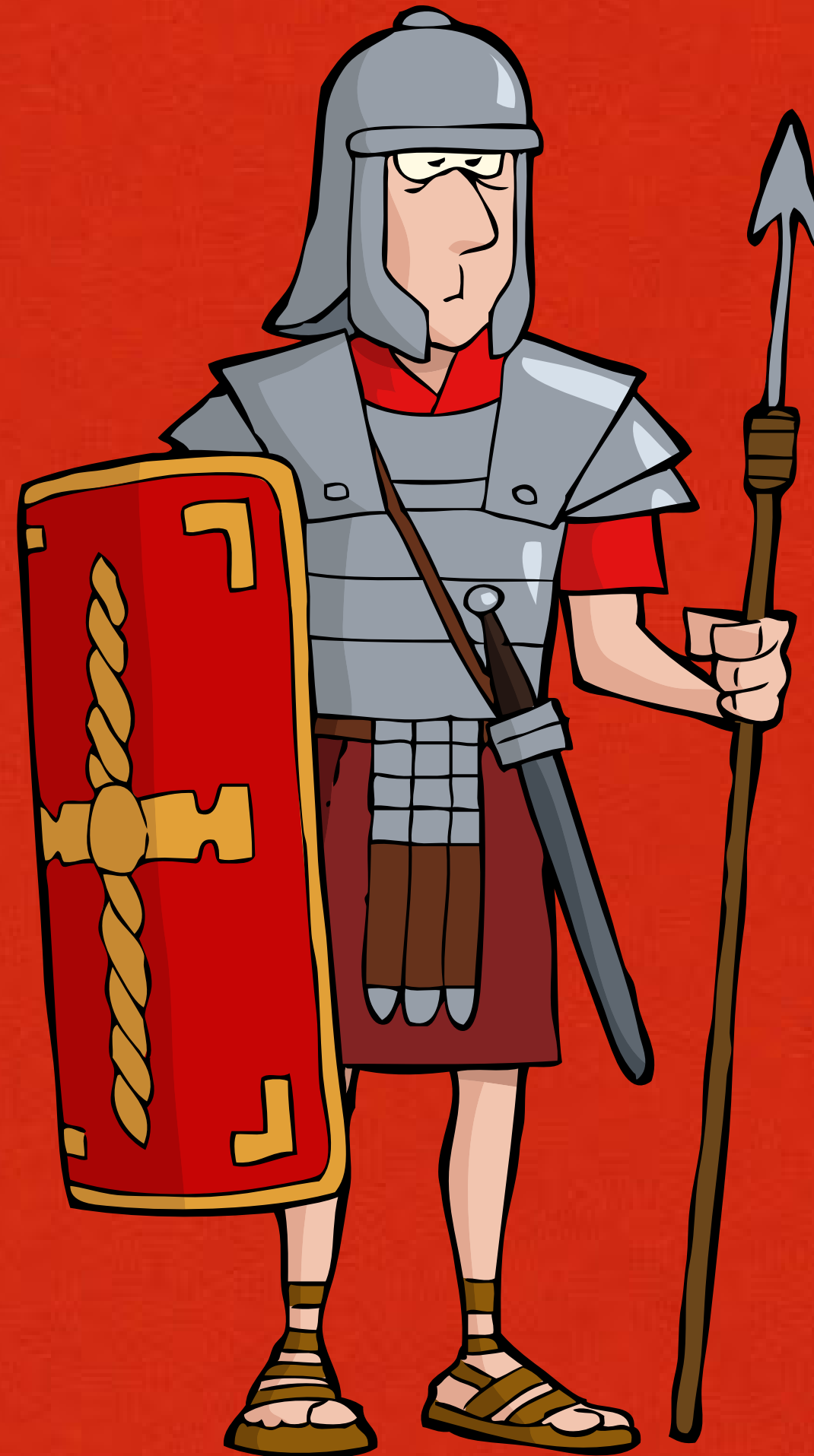
What do you think the Romans thought about Claudius after the successful invasion of Britain?



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One of the reasons that the Romans were able to conquer lots of different lands like Britain was because their army was so large, strong and well-organised.



Do you know anything else about the Roman army?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

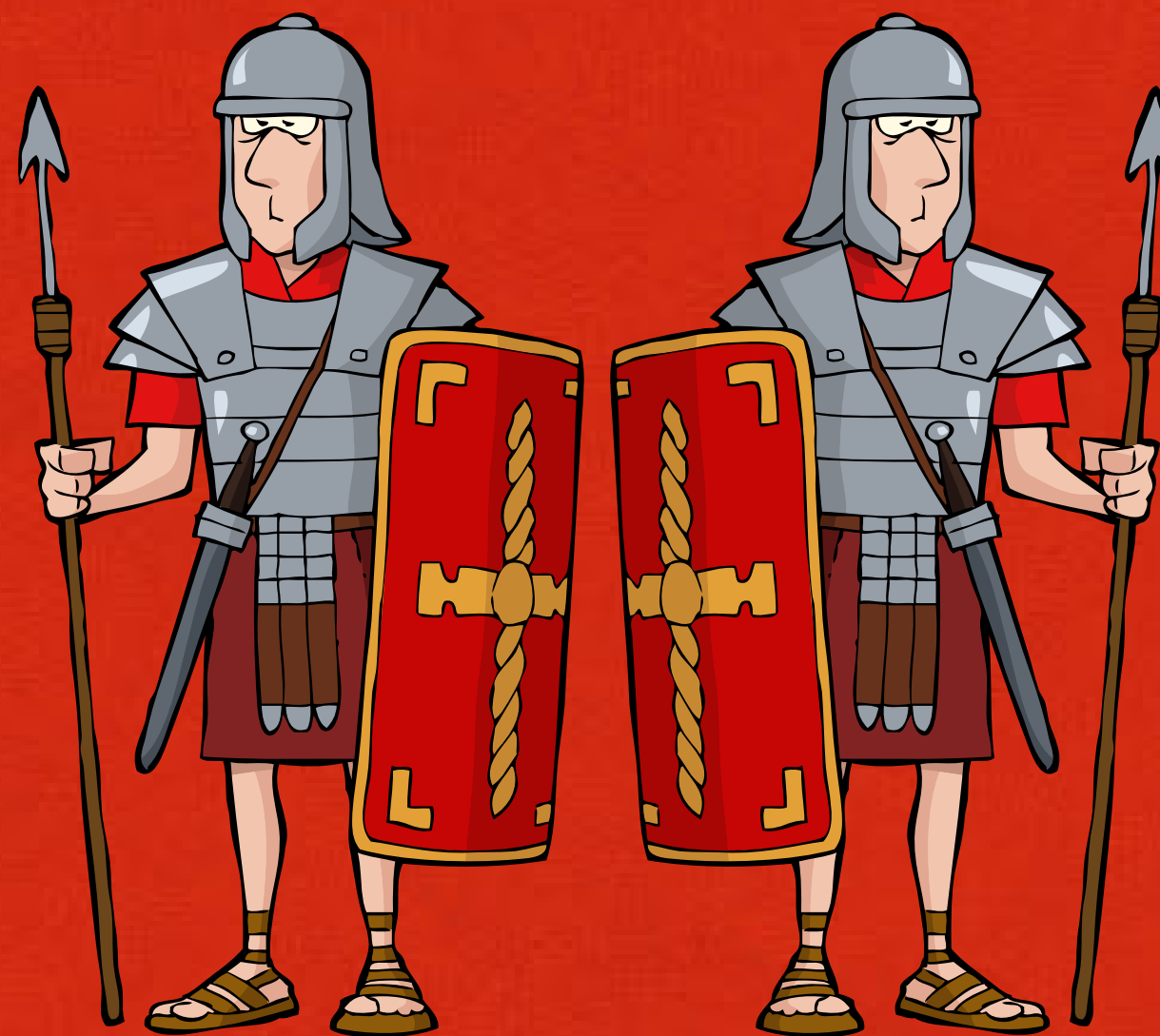
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No women were allowed in the Roman army. There were two main types of soldiers:

Legionaries

These were Roman citizens over 17 years of age. They had to be extremely fit to join - anyone considered too weak or too short was rejected.



Auxiliaries

These were non-Roman citizens from countries that the Romans had conquered. There were only paid one third of the wage of a legionary soldier.

There were strict punishments for any soldier who didn't follow orders. If you fell asleep on duty, you could be sentenced to death!

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The Roman army was made up of **legions** which had around 5000 men. Legions were organised in a very specific way:

Eight men were put into a group called a **tent**.

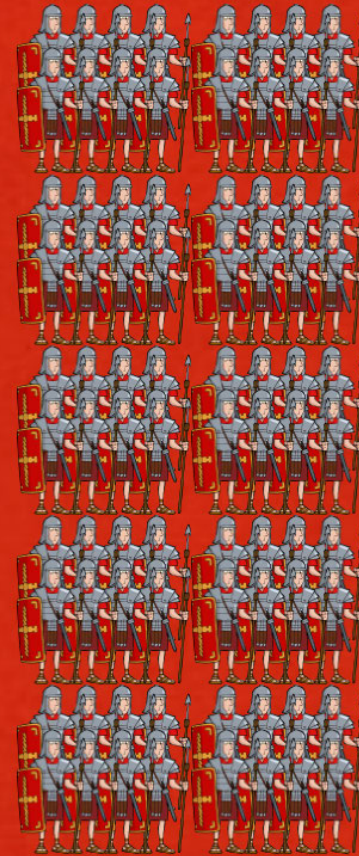
Ten tents were put together to form a **century** of 80 men.

Six centuries were put together to form a **cohort** of 480 men.

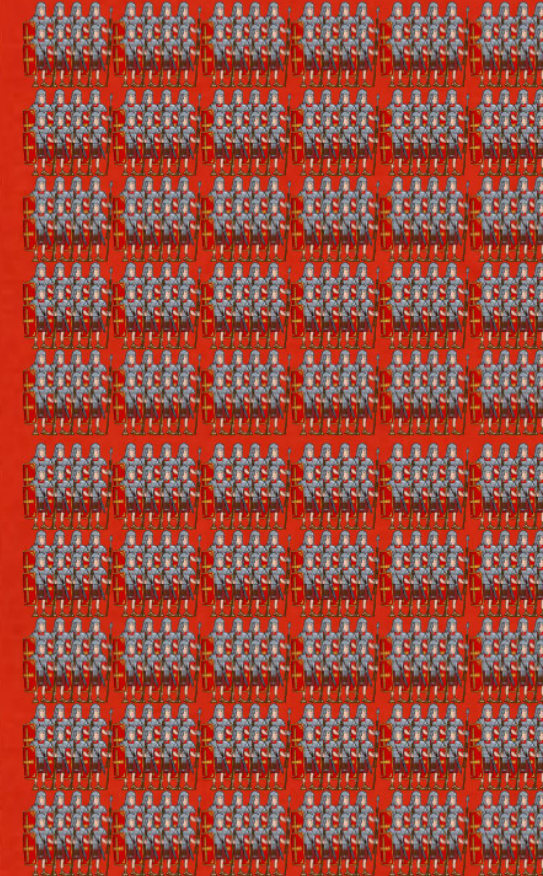
Ten cohorts were put together to form a **legion**.



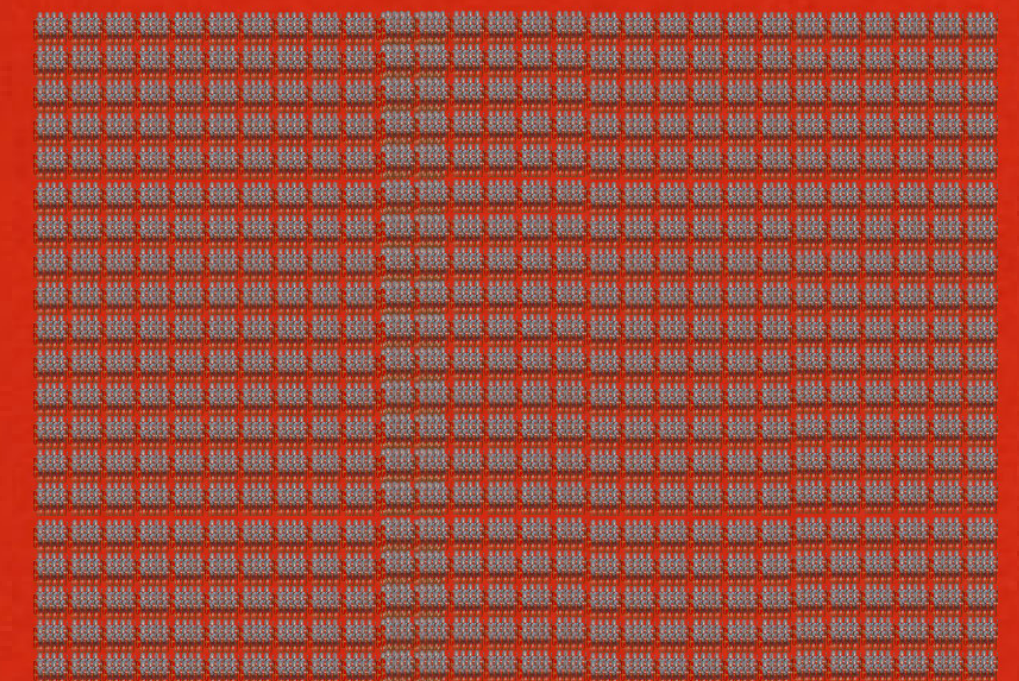
x 10



x 6



x 10



A **centurion** was in charge of the century.

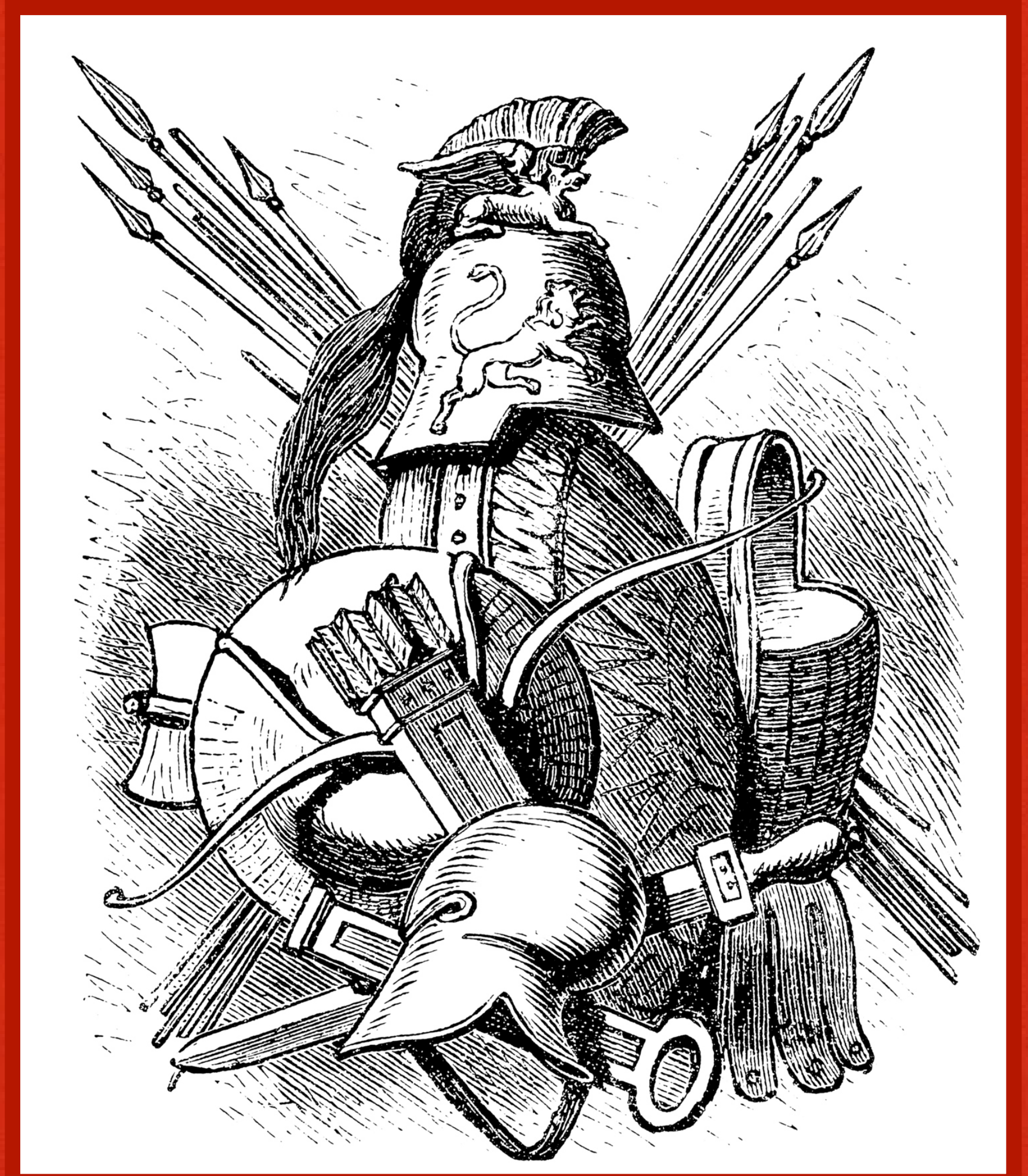
A **legate** was in charge of the legion.

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The Roman army's training techniques were constant and rigorous, so that they were ready for action at any time. They had to march 20 miles in five hours, carrying all of their equipment (including tents, food, cooking pots and weapons) and wearing their armour.

The soldiers had daily weapons training with wooden swords and shields which were deliberately heavier than their real weapons.



A Roman soldier's equipment



Why do you think their training weapons were deliberately heavier?

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A Roman soldier's main equipment:

Scutum

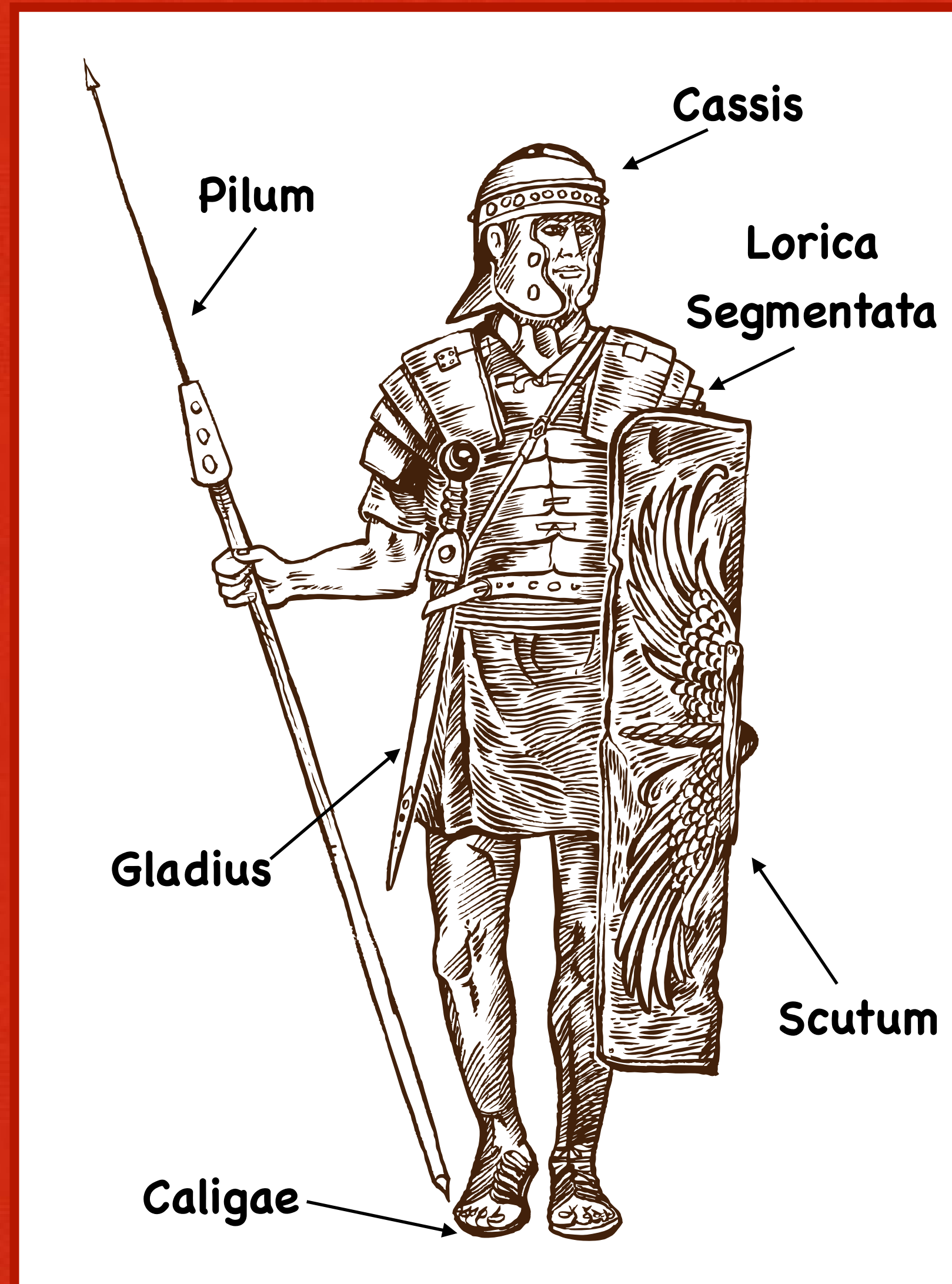
This was a semi-circular **shield**. The curved surface helped to deflect weapons or objects thrown at the soldier. He carried it on his left-hand side.

Gladius

This was a light, short **sword**, around 50cm long. It was carried on the right-hand side of the body. A small dagger, called a pugio, was carried on the left-hand side.

Pilum

This was a throwing **spear**, around two metres long. It was designed to bend and stick in the enemies' shields. They were hard to pull out, so couldn't be thrown back.



Cassis

This was a helmet. It had a rim which protected the forehead. The back of the helmet had a guard to protect the neck from sword blows.

Lorica Segmentata

This was flexible, protective body armour made from overlapping pieces of iron. They were fastened together with leather strips.

Caligae

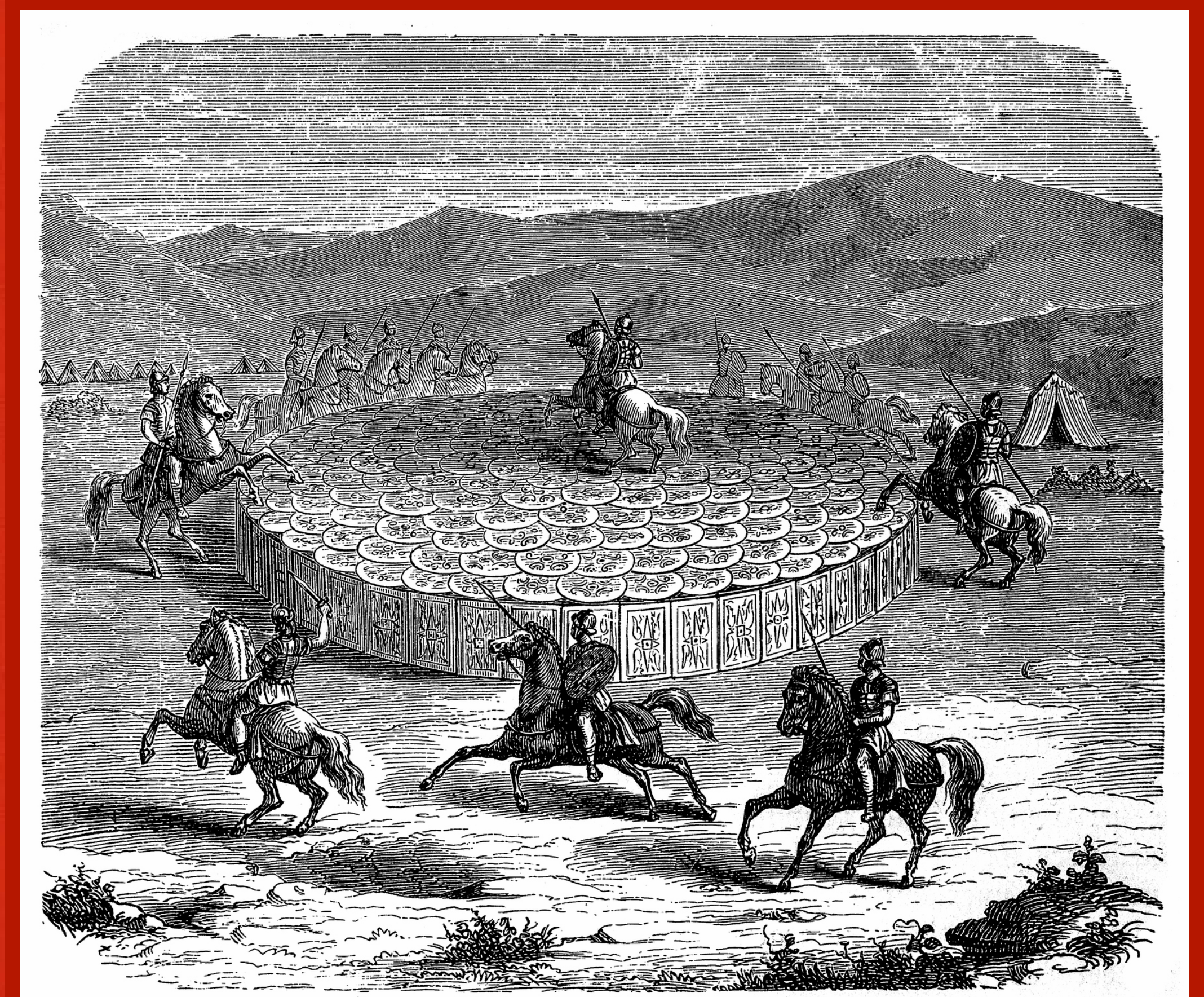
These were thick leather **sandals**. They were studded with hobnails along the bottom for marching long distances over rough ground.

Roman soldiers were very skilled at using certain techniques and manoeuvres to ensure they succeeded in battle. They believed that by keeping troops in order and working as a unit they would be able to fight more effectively.

One of the most effective defensive formations was the **tortoise** (or 'testudo'). Soldiers would use their shields to create a roof and wall around themselves (a shell). This meant that it was virtually impossible for the enemy to cause injury.



Can you see why it was called the tortoise?!



An illustration of what a testudo may have looked like

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When Roman soldiers were not at war, they helped to improve and increase the size of the towns they had conquered. They also built the first roads in Britain. This was so that the army could move their soldiers and equipment all



around the country. Roman roads were usually straight, so that they could get to where they needed to go as quickly as possible. They were so well-built that you can still see the remains of some of them today, almost 2000 years later!



The Romans built around 5600 miles of roads in Britain!

The remains of a Roman road in Bainbridge, Wensleydale

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Now it is time for
you to put what you
have learnt about
the Roman army
into practice!

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Plenary:

Do you think you would have liked to have been a Roman soldier?



Explain your answer to a partner.