

Principales

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Centvrio

Profile description

Centvrio is the most important soldier and, at the same time, the commander of the unit known as a **Centvria**. Chosen from among the most distinguished and bravest men, he serves as a field commander fighting in the front line, inspiring the soldiers under his command, indicating the direction of attack, and personally taking part in combat.

Centvrones were distinguished by a transverse cresta, that is, a plume of feathers of various colors. Due to their high pay, ranging from two to five times the pay of an ordinary miles, and sometimes even more depending on their position in the Legion, they were also marked by richer equipment and by the insignia and decorations they wore.

The high mortality rate among **Centvrones** made this a high-risk position, but also one of exceptional prestige. In the event of the death of the **Centvrio**, command was assumed by the commander of the rear guard, namely the **Optio**, and if he too fell, the unit was taken over by the **Centvrio** of a neighboring unit from the same manipule.

Tasks and duties

Centvrio is responsible for the overall functioning of his unit during preparations for a campaign, throughout camp life, and on the battlefield. His duties include the proper allocation of roles, organization of work, supervision of the camp's condition, creation of military action plans, and ongoing command of the soldiers under him.

Officer and functional assignments

Before each campaign, **Centvrio** determines which specific soldiers will assemble under the legionary standards. On this basis, he organizes the command structure, tent assignments, and the staffing of the most important functions within and outside the camp.

1. Before each campaign, he determines which specific soldiers will assemble under the legionary standards.
2. In the absence of regular officers and non-commissioned officers, he appoints soldiers at his own discretion to the following posts:
 - **Optio**
 - **Signiferi**
 - **Tesserarivs**

3. He places the appointed officers and non-commissioned officers in the staff tent.
4. From among the remaining soldiers, he selects the most experienced to serve as senior rank-and-file soldiers responsible for a tent, namely **Decanvsi**.
5. In consultation with the Decanvsi appointed for the duration of the campaign, he assigns specific soldiers to their tents.
6. Guided by his knowledge of the training of the registered soldiers, he also appoints other important functional posts, such as:
 - **Specvlatores**
 - **Frvmentarivs**
 - **Magister Campi**
 - **Cvstos Castrorvm**
 - **Medicvs**
 - **Magister Latinae**
7. Priority for the above functions is given to soldiers who hold them permanently and have the greatest experience in them.

Attention!!! Every effort should be made to ensure that the persons concerned can be informed of all the above assignments before the event.

Attention!!! Some positions may be combined. In particular, there is no objection to Decanvsi also performing other functional roles. However, roles and tasks in the camp must be divided in such a way that the selected soldiers are not overburdened with an excessive number of duties.

On the battlefield, **Centvrio** decides on:

1. Dividing the unit into smaller parts and assigning temporary commanders to selected sections of the front.
2. Calling a council of war, namely **Consillivm**, during which he discusses the battle plan, appoints temporary commanders, and defines the actions they are to undertake.
3. Drafting the tactical battle plan for the entire Legion, based on intelligence information.

In the camp, **Centvrio**:

1. Ensures the proper allocation of human resources to tasks necessary for the functioning of the **Castrvm**.
2. Upon seeing shortcomings or problems, immediately orders the necessary actions to be carried out by the appropriate cell specializing in the selected work.
3. Rebukes the lazy, motivates the discouraged, and rewards the diligent.
4. Ensures that every day in the **Praetorivm** there is a written list of tasks to be completed that day by the functional personnel, who later mark them as completed.

5. Ensures that, upon returning to the staff tent, he has immediate insight into the status of completed assignments and executed orders.

Assigning missions to the **Specvlatores**:

1. Scouting and reconnaissance of the area in terms of threats from the local population.
2. Spreading propaganda.
3. Assessing the enemy's numbers and weaknesses, as well as obtaining information from prisoners by various methods.
4. Reconnoitering the marching route, if a march is to take place on that day, and removing obstacles.

Additional activities:

1. He has the right to organize simulated incidents in order to make soldiers alert to threats and to develop an appropriate response to them.
2. He has the right to order a march, raid, reconnaissance, and other military actions in consultation with the **Tribvnvs**.

Full cooperation with **Optio**

Because of the broad range of duties that **Centvrio** has in and outside the camp, he appoints his direct deputy in the person of the **Optio**. His task is to be fully engaged in service on the assumption that at any moment he may have to become **Centvrio** himself and effectively replace him in the full scope of his duties.

1. He agrees with **Optio** on the division of his own duties in order to improve command.
2. He ensures, where possible, that they exchange various tasks with one another every day, so that **Optio** gains experience across many areas of activity.
3. He shares with him all information on the condition of the camp and all reports received from soldiers.
4. He expects the same from **Optio**, especially if the deputy receives reports during the absence of **Centvrio** from the staff or the camp.

Attention!!! Cooperation between **Centvrio** and **Optio** must be complete and continuous, so that command can be smoothly taken over at any moment without loss of control over the situation.

Camp construction

The scope of **Centvrio**'s duties with regard to camp construction still requires full elaboration. It should be assumed, however, that he is responsible for supervising the entire organization of work and for the proper distribution of tasks among functional personnel and ordinary soldiers.

Creating battle and demonstration plans

Centvrio, as the commander-in-chief of the unit, bears full responsibility for the course of the battle. At the council of war, he agrees with the remaining **Principales** and **Decanvsi** on the tactical outline of military operations, assignments to designated units, and their temporary commanders.

On the basis of intelligence data from the **Specvlatores**, he has a full situational and terrain picture, which he should use in every possible way to the army's advantage.

1. He is responsible for preparing the tactical plan of military operations.
2. In consultation with the command staff, he determines the deployment of forces, assignments, and the manner in which the assumed objectives are to be achieved.
3. He uses intelligence information to assess the terrain, the enemy, and possible threats.
4. He bears responsibility for the success or failure of the actions, which are then subject to the assessment of the **Tribvnvs**.

Daily running of the camp

Centvrio is responsible for the ongoing functioning of the camp, the organization of work, receiving reports, and directing the activities of functional personnel. His duties include both planning and supervising the execution of assigned tasks.

Staff meetings

Centvrio organizes a briefing around 8:00, after warm-up and a visit to the latrine, but before breakfast and washing. The briefing takes place in the **Praetorium** tent.

All functional personnel report to the **Praetorium** immediately after assembly, warm-up, and a visit to the latrine, in order to submit to the commanders a report on the personnel status of the people under them, completed work, and comments regarding further tasks. If the activities require the presence of **Decanvsi**, selected members from among them are also summoned.

1. He receives a report from **Centvrio Castrorum** on the camp's readiness in terms of:
 - cleanliness;
 - stability of living quarters;
 - condition of the fortifications;
 - preparation of the camp and the men for emergency situations, for example natural disasters;
 - his own comments concerning work necessary to secure the functioning of the camp.
2. The office of Centvrio cooperates with **Medicvs** in order to know the current status of soldiers capable and incapable of combat, demonstrations, marching, or other duties.
3. He assigns field missions for the **Specvlatores** unit for the given day, as well as other tasks arising from the current situation.

Receiving reports

One of the basic duties of Centurio is to receive regular reports from functional personnel and to maintain a complete picture of the situation in the camp.

1. He receives a report from **Cvstos Castrorum** on the camp's readiness for inspection in terms of cleanliness.
2. He cooperates with **Medicvs** in order to know the current status of soldiers capable and incapable of combat, demonstrations, and marching out of the camp.
3. He analyzes reports submitted by other functional personnel and, on their basis, issues further orders.

Attention!!! Centurio should constantly strive to ensure that no significant problem in the camp remains without a report, a decision, and the appointment of a person responsible for solving it.

For discussion and development

Determine whether councils and briefings should be treated as the same thing or as two separate types of staff meetings.

Define precisely who is required to attend such briefings, in particular whether all functional personnel should always participate, including Frumentarivs and Specvlatores, or whether some of them should be informed individually of their tasks.

Complete the full scope of Centurio's duties during camp construction and specify in greater detail the procedure for daily reporting.

External links

- <http://www.academia.edu/6339769/Centurion>

Optio

Profile description

Optio is the second most important person immediately after the [Centurio](#). Polybius describes him as the commander of the rear guard, where he occupies a position from which he can see the entire condition of the unit and control its actions when the **Centurio** is unable to do so. This position was intended to prepare him for the future full assumption of the duties of the **Centurio** in the event of his incapacity or death.

Tasks and duties

1. Optio supports the **Centurio** in all decisions affecting the functioning of the unit in the following areas:
 - organisation and transport
 - training and tactics
 - discipline
 - management of human resources and Legion equipment
2. Inspections by day and by night:
 - Correctness of completed construction works
 - Together with the [Tesserarivs](#) and [Specvlatores](#), he establishes security measures and a defence plan for the camp in the event of natural disasters or an unexpected attack (see the duties of the **Tesserarivs** concerning security)
 - Whether the guards perform their duties in the required and expected manner, and he enforces punishments in the event of insufficient commitment.
 - He assigns and directs men to tasks where additional manpower is needed, whether in the kitchen, transport work, construction work, guard duty, and so on.
3. He conducts additional training if he considers it appropriate, when the soldiers show deficiencies or discipline has become too lax.

Duties during battles and displays

Optio has varied tasks depending on the type of display being conducted. During drill and combat training, most Principales take positions outside the unit for presentation purposes. He supports the [Centurio](#) by standing beside the operating unit, always opposite the **Centurio** on the other side, and by repeating the commands issued by him in a loud voice so that all training milites can hear the order despite disturbances such as music played in the background or ongoing narration. He moves extensively together with the group of soldiers, detects all irregularities and corrects them, whether by drawing attention to them, issuing an additional command, or applying force or physical punishment, without shying away from brutality.

During simulated clashes and battles, all commanders and **Principales** take an active part as the main core of the fighting Centvria, around which the soldiers gather and assume the appropriate formation. **Optio**, as commander of the rear guard, moves during intense fighting along the rear ranks of the Centvria, carrying out the following actions:

- he urges the soldiers on to fight, supports their morale and motivates them to act
- he ensures that the formation remains coherent and does not break apart during the course of the battle, reminding the fighters where their place is and that they must fill gaps in the line
- he indicates the men who are to drag the wounded to the rear for treatment
- in the event of the death of the **Centvrio**, he assumes command by moving to his position and continuing the fight; from that moment onward, the scope of duties presented in the description of the function of the **Centvrio** during battle applies to him.
- in the event of danger, he selects available soldiers and directs them to a given section of the fighting
- if the need or necessity arises, he may personally join the fighting (for example, in the event of a threat to the sacred standards)
- as during combat drill, so too on the battlefield he repeats the orders of the **Centvrio**, enforcing and ensuring the execution of their provisions

Daily running of the camp

Optio, before dusk, together with the **Tesserarivs**, inspects the soldiers' tents, looking for any breaches of discipline, order and organisation. Throughout the entire day, they carefully observe the behaviour of the legionaries, looking for the disobedient and troublesome, to whom he will assign punitive work or guard duties at the evening assembly. If all **Contubernia** perform their duties exemplarily and there are no visible shortcomings, a competition is held for the best-maintained tent in the Legion in terms of hygiene, order and preparation of equipment, taking care not to select men who have recently performed guard duty.

Staff meetings

Optio takes an active part in all councils, reports and briefings. He has a strong mandate and the right to influence decisions made within the group in every aspect, from the ordinary organisation of the day in the Legion to a military court over the disobedient. Together with the **Centvrio**, he receives statements and reports from functionaries and **Decanvi**, on the basis of which they issue orders and instructions to be carried out.

For discussion and development

External links

Signiferi

Profile description

Signiferi are a group of standard-bearers carrying the legionary standards, important from the point of view of morale, prestige and religious belief. Chosen from among the bravest men in the unit, they form the core of the Centuria together with its commander, positioned in the second line behind him, where they mark the rallying point and the direction of attack.

Within the group of legionaries, we distinguish the following standard-bearers by order of importance :

1. **Aquilifer** - bearer of the legionary eagle - aquila,
2. **Imaginifer** - bearer of the image of the emperor - imago,
3. **Signifer** - bearer of the Centuria standard - signum,
4. **Vexillarius**- bearer of the banner indicating which legion our detachment belongs to - vexillum.
5. **Cornicen**, Tubicen - trumpeters who transmit orders through sound signals, for example to march, attack, or retreat

Tasks and duties in the camp

Duties of those carrying the standards (Vexillum, Signum, Aquila):

1. Maintaining formation - the soldiers oriented themselves according to their position in relation to the *Signum*, followed it and moved in the direction it indicated. If the Signifer advanced, the line pressed forward; when he stopped, the position was held.
2. Because the standards signalled the commander's intentions, all basic signals given by the standards, which informed the soldiers about specific manoeuvres, must be known:
 - rallying point
 - lowering the signum - signal for the legionaries to lower their shields
 - raising the signum - readiness to march / act, raising of shields by the legionaries
 - direction of march/attack
 - turning in the designated direction
 - signalling the commander's intentions
- Caring for all symbols and legionary standards, maintaining them so that, always properly polished, they present themselves with dignity and majesty because of the great religious reverence surrounding them

- Care of the **Sacellvm** in the camp, where the standards were kept, as in a sanctuary, with proper religious reverence. In cooperation with the priests, they perform ceremonies in their honour (offerings, ritual decoration of the standards)
- their display during the day at the designated place, and at night their storage to protect them from bad weather or potential theft (for example during an attack or an attempted theft)
- Managing the soldiers' savings and the physical payment of their wages
- Managing each soldier's funeral fund (transport of the ashes and a dignified burial)

Duties of the trumpeters:

Cornicen gives orders in the form of sound signals not only on the battlefield, but also during camp work. He signalled and regulated the cycle of work being carried out.

1. In the camp
 - setting up/rolling up the battle standards
 - waking the camp
 - assembly of the soldiers
 - changing the guards (Excvbia)
 - meal time
 - regulating movement during the review of the army
 - announcing the moment of a command address or an assembly of the army
 - participating in sacrifices and during military ceremonies
2. In battle (trumpets and horns play together)
 - signalling the beginning of a march / halt
 - signalling attack / withdrawal
 - execution of a special task (by soldiers operating away from the standards)
 - regrouping
 - rallying point after the formation has been broken
3. On the march
 - beginning the process of breaking camp
 - forming the column and marching out of the camp
 - helping to maintain pace and order in the marching column
 - transmitting commands such as "forward" (*procedite*), "halt" (*consistite*) or "rest"
 - raising the alarm about an approaching enemy
 - signalling arrival at the destination and designating the place for building the camp

Tesserarivs

Profile description

Tesserarivs is one of the most important functional positions in the Centvria. He is responsible not only for the security of the military camp, but also for personal property, assets, and the people staying there by day and by night.

Tasks and duties

Contrary to appearances, this function is not limited merely to assigning night guards. Below is the full scope of tasks that this functional soldier must undertake :

Excuvia Nocta - Night Guard

Tesserarivs designates two contubernium tents (in special cases fewer or more) that will perform night guard duty. Taking their course into account, it is recommended that these tents should have at least four men. He passes this information to the appropriate [decanvi](#) in the middle of the day, giving them the password for that day - tessera. A soldier serving in the camp as a Latin teacher - [magister latinae](#) - may be helpful in preparing the password.

Guard's attire

At the evening assembly, the **Tesserarivs** informs the soldiers about the required minimum equipment that must be carried during guard duty. Customarily, this is full equipment (including helmet and armour), although night guards are exempt from carrying pilum and scutum, though these must be within the guard's "reach" in the event of an unexpected attack on the camp (see below).

Duties of the guard

Tesserarivs reminds the guards each time of the duties incumbent upon them and personally supervises their performance.

The guard :

1. Walks around the camp more often than he sits in one place, patrolling the area.
2. On the order of the command, patrols the designated area near the castrum.
3. Ensures the safety of the people and equipment located in the camp.
4. Guards the entrance to the camp and does not admit outsiders who do not know the password. In the event of special guests appearing, he asks the **Tesserarivs** or other

higher-ranking officers to make a decision on the matter.

5. In the event of detecting a sudden or approaching external threat to the camp, he immediately informs the **Tesserarivs** or another higher-ranking officer.
6. Supervises lighting in the camp - fires, oil lamps and tallow lamps.

Additional duties :

1. The guard of the first shift must ensure that lighting in the camp is prepared sufficiently in advance (about 2 hours before the night guard begins) and that the camp lighting is maintained at full strength.
2. The guards of the second and third shifts maintain the amount of camp lighting at their own discretion, so that the most important points of the camp remain visible.
3. The guard of the last shift must ensure that the camp is cleaned, especially around the kitchen. He must also chop wood and light the fire in the kitchen. At the end of his service, he wakes the **Centvrio** or another officer according to earlier instructions from the **Tesserarivs**.

Warning !!! The guard is under a categorical **prohibition on consuming alcoholic beverages** both during his service and before his service on the designated day

Division of guard shifts :

1. Within each selected **contvbernivm** assigned to night service, the highest-ranking soldier, that is the **decanvs**, distributes the individual guard shifts at his own discretion, assigning **one soldier to each guard shift** from his own tent.
2. The guards are divided into 4 shifts. They begin at about 23:00 and end at about 7:00. However, time during guard duty is measured "by eye" until water clocks are brought from Rome, which will make this procedure easier for us.
3. In particular :
 - o Excvbia Prima - from 23:00 to 1:00
 - o Excvbia Secvnda - from 1:00 to 3:00
 - o Excvbia Tertia - from 3:00 to 5:00
 - o Excvbia Qvarta - from 5:00 to 7:00

Warning !!! 15 minutes before the end of a guard shift, the replacements must be woken so that they have time to put on armour and prepare for their duties. **No pairing of guards other than that designated by the Tesserarivs is permitted.**

Excvbia Qvotidiana - Day Guard

1. **Tesserarivs** is also responsible for protecting the camp from dawn until dusk.

- The camp remains closed at all times except for designated short periods during the day when it is open to visitors.
 - To maintain this state of affairs, the **Tesserarivs** assigns guards at his own discretion.
2. Guards are particularly important when the unit leaves the camp for a longer period of time, for example for : battle, a march, drill displays, etc.
 - **Tesserarivs** ensures that the soldiers and/or civilians left in the camp are able to provide proper protection and discusses with them the places where they are to remain during the absence of the main vexilatio.
 3. It is important that the **Tesserarivs** make good reconnaissance in the camp ahead of time, so that he does not have to look for suitable people at the last minute, nor appoint people who have other important duties that could conflict with the above. Full cooperation with the staff officers in this area is recommended.

Defence of the camp against threat

The legion's camp must be protected by the army 24 hours a day. For this reason as well, the role of the **Tesserarivs** is invaluable. He identifies possible threats (also using information obtained by the **specvlatores**) and carefully prepares, in consultation with the **Optio** or the **Centurio**, a plan for defending the camp against an unexpected attack, which is highly probable especially at night.

For this purpose :

1. He discusses the action plan with the guards. Whom are they to call ? When are they to raise the whole camp ? Which places are they to defend and not abandon at any cost ? etc.
2. At the evening roll call, he announces the initial defence plan for the camp, according to which, in the middle of the night, each soldier will know where he is to run first after leaving the tent and wait for orders.
3. During an immediate threat, he is the first to run to the designated place in the middle of the camp. He gathers the soldiers and sends them to various defensive sections of the camp until command is handed over to higher-ranking officers, for example the **optio** or **centurio** .

Warning !!! It is important that everyone understand the seriousness of the situation and report as quickly as possible, with full commitment, to the designated sections, holding at least a sword (gladius) and a shield (scutum) in their hands.

Warning !!! In the event of a sudden attack, if equipment is not at hand, instead of wasting time looking for weapons, a soldier grabs anything that can be used for fighting, whether: a shovel, dolabra, stick, or even a helmet/pot/pan for beating the aggressor!

Assigning kitchen duties - cvlina

Tesserarivs, having full knowledge of which soldiers have day or night guard duties, also assigns individual soldiers to all-day kitchen duty (if possible, preferably an entire *contubernium* or *contubernia*)

1. For this purpose, he works directly with the **Medicvs**, who knows the condition of sick legionaries who, as unable to participate in training / displays / marches / battles, will be assigned permanently to the kitchen, perhaps even for the entire duration of the camp.
2. He informs the **Frvmentarivs** of his decision, responding to the quantitative needs reported by the aforementioned.
3. In exceptional situations, for example: a large evening feast in the camp, he may assign additional soldiers only for that occasion (or even an entirely new shift for that evening to serve during the feast).

Reporting

1. **Tesserarivs** meets with the staff officers at least twice a day (first and foremost with the **Centvrio**) in order to present a report on the duties assigned to him and to consult the following matters :
 - what day and night guards will be assigned ? According to what principle will night guards be assigned on that day (for example as punishment or as a reward).
 - the list of guards should be available on a separate wax tablet (*tabula cerata*) and left in the headquarters.
 - what tessera has been designated ? The **Centvrio** should receive a copy of the tessera on a scrap of papyrus.
 - what is the plan for the night defence of the camp ?
 - how have the assigned soldiers fulfilled their tasks so far ?
 - when will an unannounced inspection of the night guards be carried out ? At least once per event.
 - is cooperation with the **Frvmentarivs** proceeding without disruption ?
2. **Tesserarivs** takes part in staff councils and briefings in the morning and/or evening, which customarily take place in the tent of the **Centvrio**.

Warning !!! Tesserarivs may not leave the camp without first making sure that all duties assigned to him have been delegated to the appropriate soldiers and that centvrio has full knowledge of this matter.

For discussion and development

Prepare graphic guidelines concerning the defence of the camp during night attacks

External links

Legatus Legionis

Tribunus Laticlavus

Tribvns Angvsticlavivs

The position of **Tribvns Militvm Angvsticlavivs** (lit. “military tribune of the narrow stripe”) was one of the pillars of legionary command during the imperial period. He was an officer of the equestrian order (ordo equester), belonging to the main staff of the legion, subordinate to the Legatvs Legionis ([Legatvs Legionis](#)) and cooperating with the [Tribvns Laticlavivs](#) (a representative of the patrician families serving an internship) and with the camp prefect ([Praefectvs Castrorvm](#)).

In practice, the **Tribvns Angvsticlavivs** was a professional officer whose experience and knowledge of military life were of key importance for the functioning of the legion.

Authority in the Roman army was based on the so-called **“Imperium” (from Lat. “imperare” ‘to command; to rule’)**, which by definition was the highest and sovereign scope of military, civil and religious power of higher officials in ancient Rome, formally granted by the people (in the Republic) or by the Emperor (in the Principate).

It included:

- military command (imperium militiae)
- supreme criminal jurisdiction, including the right to issue death sentences
- the right to issue orders binding all citizens
- the right of coercion (coercitio maior)

Every person holding imperium could decide over life and death and impose the highest penalties.

Officers below the Legatvs, such as the Tribvns or the [camp prefect](#), did not possess authority at the level of “Imperium”, because they performed functions at the level of a military official, not at the level of a magistrate. Every action of theirs was subdelegated by the [Legatvs](#) to whom they were subordinate.

Instead of imperium, they held the so-called **Potestas**.

The Potestas of the Tribvns included:

- command over detached units (cohorts, vexillatio)
- administrative and disciplinary supervision
- the right to issue orders to soldiers on behalf of the [Legatvs](#)
- limited coercitio minor (e.g. disciplinary penalties), since the highest penalties (such as the death penalty) lay in the decision of the person holding “Imperium”

MAIN DUTIES:

Tribvns Angvsticlavivs performed administrative and disciplinary functions, which included:

1. supervising fortifications and guards (cvstodiae),
2. issuing night passwords (signa nocturna),
3. control of drill and punishments (disciplina militaris),
4. preparing reports (tabvlae divrnae),
5. enforcing sentences

The main tasks of the Tribvns included:

- supervision over training and soldiers' discipline
- order in the camp and, in cooperation with **Praefectvs Castrorvm**, the necessary logistics
- direct command over part of the legion during tactical operations
- **keeping records** and lists of the legion's strength (tabvlae legionis),
- **control of pay disbursements (stipendium)** and bonuses (praemia militiae),
- **accounting for supplies and armament**,
- **coordination of communication** within the legion – receiving and transmitting the orders of the Legatvs,
- **issuing and receiving night passwords (signa nocturna)** – a communication system which, according to Polybius (VI.34), consisted in passing a tablet with an order from manipulus to manipulus,
- **keeping daily reports (relationes diurnae)** and reports on health, readiness and discipline,
- **participation in the council of war (consilivm militare)** together with the **Legatvs**, **Praefectvs Castrorvm** and senior **Centvriones** (primipilares).

TACTICAL DUTIES:

In military operations, the **Tribvni Angvsticlavii** served as **sector commanders** or **cohort coordinators**, and were an essential link in the command structure. They did not command independently like the **Legati**, but their decisions often determined the tactical effectiveness of the entire legion.

Their tasks included:

- supervision over maintaining the Legion's order and formation (e.g. acies triplex or acies duplex),
- command over a cohort or a group of cohorts,
- responding to local threats and the orders of the Legatvs,
- maintaining morale and discipline during combat,
- controlling the rotation of soldiers and reserves,
- signalling manoeuvres through signa and tvbae.

Each Tribvns, as a middle-ranking officer, had under his command:

- at least one cohort
- 2 cohorts in the legion's formation on the battlefield (~1000 men), or one cohortes milliariae, e.g. the first cohort of the Legion
- an auxiliary cohort (avxilia), including mixed mounted and infantry units (cohors eqvitata)
- or a detached unit of several cohorts assigned to various tasks which, because of their scale (often much smaller than a Legion), did not require appointing a [Legatvs](#) to command them.

DUTIES IN THE CAMP (CASTRVM):

In the camp (castrum), which formed the heart of legionary life, the tribunes had their quarters near the praetorium - the commander's tent. The main role of an officer in a Roman camp was to supervise assigned work. Soldiers under the supervision of [Centvriones](#) competed with one another between their units in a race to carry out orders. Soldiers tried to please their immediate superiors, the **Centvriones** tried to please their Tribvni, and the Tribvni tried to please the [Legati](#).

Within the Castrvm, the Tribvnvs also dealt with:

- assigning guards and patrols (stationarii, vigiliae),
- conducting recruitment into the army
- inspecting fortifications and gates (porta praetoria, porta decumana etc),
- supervising storehouses (horrea, armamentaria),
- and organising daily briefings (contiones).
- **inspection and control of cohorts** - daily at dawn (prima vigilia),
- **supervision over combat training and drill** (disciplina militaris),
- **participation in councils of war** (consilium),
- **assessment of reports from Centvriones** and verification of pay, equipment and supply lists,
- **maintenance of morale** and organisation of the reading of orders (edicta).

The Tribvnvs performed a public function - he recruited soldiers for the army, conducted recruitment into the army from among citizens and non-citizens, supervised the process of incorporating them into army corps and the formation of new units. On behalf of the [Legatvs](#), he presided over inspections of the units (recognitio) and verified their state of readiness.

As guardian of order and discipline, the Tribvnvs, when a newly formed unit (Legion or Auxilia) first established camp or before the beginning of a campaign, received an oath from each participant.

In order to maintain quality and motivation, the army had to be provided with proper food, care and training. All these aspects had to be coordinated by the Tribvni, because the success of military expeditions depended on the efficiency of the legionaries. The soldier not only faced the enemy and the potential wounds he might suffer in combat, but also had to cope with disease, difficult weather conditions, crises and the collapse of morale.

The Tribvns was also responsible for **the proper placement of guards** (stationes) and **the security of the camp at night**. In cooperation with [Centurio](#) and [Optio](#), they established the camp defence plan and the rules for the functioning of the guards, and all these arrangements were put into practice through the [Tesserarius](#).

Discipline and judicial authority

The Tribvns was the representative of the [Legatus](#) in matters of discipline: he had the right to convene military courts and issue sentences for cowardice, insubordination, drunkenness or desertion.

In this sense, Tribvns Militvm was both an officer and a military judge, which shows how closely the legal and military aspects of service were then connected.

Punishments, however, did not concern only soldiers, but also included junior officers:

[Centuriones](#), [Optiones](#) and those subordinate to them, as persons responsible for the functioning and discipline of the unit. All imposed penalties were based on "potestas" of the Tribvns, who administered them by authorisation of the [Legatus](#) or the [Praefectus](#).

The gravest offences included desertion, loss of standards or signs, or the flight of an entire unit from the battlefield, regardless of circumstances and the enemy's advantage, if there was no commander's permission to withdraw. Often the only proper punishment for this was death and disgrace through oblivion. This approach meant that the steadfastness of legionaries depended not only on discipline, their iron will and desire to win, but also on fear of their own commanders and the severe punishments associated with such offences. Soldiers feared their commanders more than the enemy on the other side of the battlefield.

Apart from punishments, however, there were also obligations to reward deeds worthy of praise, ranging from public verbal commendations and the recognition of comrades to material or monetary rewards.

Praefectvs Castrorvm

Cornicvlarivs

Profile description

Cornicularius - senior military and administrative official serving as the chief assistant to a legion commander, governor, or high-ranking officer. He belonged to the group of the most important staff non-commissioned officers (**principales**) and was responsible for organising the work of the office and supervising administrative personnel.

The duties of the **cornicularius** included maintaining military documentation, controlling orders and reports, supervising scribes, and coordinating the administrative affairs of the unit. This function was of great importance in the daily operation of the Roman army, whose efficiency was based on an extensive military bureaucracy.

The position was often entrusted to experienced soldiers with strong organisational and writing skills. **Cornicularii** could serve both under legion commanders and in provincial administration, where they acted as trusted military officials.

For discussion and development

External links