

# AD 316

DEATH FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF ROME



by Gregor Hutton

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME BASED ON  
3:16 CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS





## THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

When you think of the Roman Empire you perhaps think of rectangular shields and the sharp blade of the Gladius. This was true of the Roman Republic and the early Roman Empire, but not of AD 316.

Now legionaries carry round shields, wear mail shirts, fight with spears and a longer sword called a Spatha. Many ride horses in battle and their helmets would not look unlike the one from Sutton Hoo.

There are also more Legions and the Empire is spit into more regions, however each Legion is smaller in number – perhaps a fifth of the size of the classical Roman Legion at around a thousand men.



## RECENT EMPERORS

The Emperor Diocletian changed Roman government when he came to power in AD 284. In AD 286 he appointed a former comrade in arms, Maximian, as his joint ruler to facilitate effective government of the Empire. This gave the Empire two Emperors, each holding the title Augustus. And both Diocletian and Maximian appointed deputies, who are recognized by the title Caesar.

So, Rome had four rulers in what is known as the Tetrarchy. Diocletian became Augustus of the Eastern Empire, with Galerius as his Caesar. In the Western Empire Maximian was Augustus, with Constantius as his Caesar.

Constantius divorced his first wife, Helena, with whom he already had a son, Constantine and in AD 293 he married Theodora, Maximian's stepdaughter. He was appointed Caesar and had great success in recovering Britannia in AD 296 after its loss from the Empire ten years before.

## CONSTANTINE

*"It is frequently forgotten that Constantine, the most successful Emperor of the period, spent half of his reign as a usurper."* – **Roman Warfare**, Adrian Goldsworthy (p.166)

Constantine spent a long time away from his father and served in the army as he grew older. He also received a formidable education at the court of Diocletian. He learned all the classics: Latin literature, Greek, and philosophy. Here he rubbed shoulders with the brightest intellectuals in the Empire both pagan and Christian.

However, between the years AD 303 and 311 Christians were bloodily tormented by the so-called Diocletian Persecution. These were dark days for the Empire and they ended with a civil war between the sons of Maximian and Constantius: Maxentius and Constantine, respectively.

## THE BATTLE OF THE MILVIAN BRIDGE

The Battle of the Milvian Bridge took place between the armies of two Roman Emperors: Constantine and Maxentius in late October AD 312. Constantine won the battle decisively and this led to the end of the Tetrarchy. Constantine will become the sole ruler of the Roman Empire in AD 324. Maxentius drowned in the river Tiber during the battle.

So within 10 years of the Diocletian Persecution beginning it would end. The Edict of Milan in AD 313 allowed religious tolerance throughout the Empire and Constantine was on his way to greatness. Death for the greater glory of Rome would follow under his steady hand and shrewd mind.

## LATIN PHRASES

|                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Bufo!</i>                       | Toad                            |
| <i>Canis filius</i>                | Son of a bitch                  |
| <i>Cepe indicum</i>                | Take a hint                     |
| <i>Cogito sumere potum alterum</i> | I think I'll have another drink |
| <i>Gero rem imperialem!</i>        | I am on imperial business       |
| <i>Obesus porcus</i>               | Fat pig                         |
| <i>Qui vales?</i>                  | How are you?                    |
| <i>Recedite, plebes!</i>           | Stand aside plebeians           |
| <i>Salve!</i>                      | Hello                           |
| <i>Spurius</i>                     | Bastard (to an unknown father)  |
| <i>Unde es?</i>                    | Where are you from?             |
| <i>Ut si!</i>                      | As if                           |
| <i>Vale!</i>                       | Goodbye                         |

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## HOW TO PLAY

### GAME SESSIONS

AD 316 is played in a series of game sessions. Typically a session will be 4 hours long or so, though it can be as short as an hour or much longer. A session usually encompasses an entire mission for the Legion against a single threat, perhaps a barbarian tribe or a rogue Legion. Or it can cover two missions if they are both short enough to fit into the one session.

The first session is a good opportunity for everyone to learn the rules and see how it all fits together. Further sessions are more missions against other threats, some new and some old. The GM picks enemies from a list, and the rules allow defeated enemies to be brought back into play once at least 5 missions have passed from their initial use. Play continues in this episodic fashion as time goes on and more missions are completed.

### CAMPAIGN

The whole series of game sessions is referred to as a campaign. In a campaign you may play through 20 or more sessions and face at least as many threats. The campaign ends when the story determines it. One of the great things about a campaign of AD 316 is that you can stop and start it as you need to, you can take breaks in between arcs of the campaign, and you can have players drop in and out over time.

