



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 42, the Battles of Constantine, 1 of 4: Turin and Verona (Wikipedia)

TURIN

The Battle of Turin was fought in 312 between Roman Emperor Constantine the Great and the troops of his rival Augustus Maxentius. Constantine won the battle, showing an early example of the tactical skill which was to characterise his later military career.

Prelude

Although they were brothers-in-law, relations between Constantine and Maxentius had become strained. Both emperors originally achieved power unconstitutionally, through acclamation by their troops; however, Constantine had been recognised as legitimate within the Tetrachic system and Maxentius had not.

This allowed Constantine, when he finally moved against Maxentius, to pose as a legitimate emperor suppressing a rebellious usurper.

Constantine advanced from his portion of the Roman Empire, and crossed the Alps with less than 40,000 veterans at Mont Cenis pass. Constantine faced the first resistance to his invasion at the city of Segusium (Susa, Italy). He ordered his men to set fire to its gates and scale its walls. Constantine took the town quickly, ordered his troops not to loot the town, and advanced into northern Italy.

The battle

On approaching the important city of Augusta Taurinorum (Turin), Constantine encountered a Maxentian army which prominently included a force of heavily armoured cavalry, called *clibanarii* or *cataphractarii* in the ancient sources.

The Maxentian cataphracts were drawn up for battle in a deep wedge formation. In response, Constantine extended the frontage of his battle line, allowing Maxentius' cavalry to ride into the middle of his array.

As his army outflanked that of the enemy, Constantine's more lightly armoured and mobile cavalry were able to make repeated charges on the exposed flanks of the Maxentian cataphracts.

Constantine's cavalry were equipped with iron-tipped clubs, ideal weapons for dealing with heavily armoured foes. Some Maxentian cavalymen were unhorsed, while many others were incapacitated or killed by the blows of clubs.

Constantine then commanded his foot soldiers to advance against the surviving Maxentian infantry, cutting them down as they fled.

Contemporary panegyrics relate that victory was easily gained by Constantine's forces. The people of Turin refused to give refuge to the retreating forces of Maxentius, and closed the city gates against them. The citizens reportedly cheered Constantine's troops as they slaughtered those of Maxentius' soldiers trapped against the city walls.

Following the battle, Constantine entered the city to the acclamations of its populace. Other cities of the north Italian plain, recognising Constantine's military prowess and his favourable treatment of the civil population, sent him embassies of congratulation for his victory.

Aftermath

The victory at Turin opened Italy to Constantine. He moved on to Milan, where he was met with open gates and jubilant rejoicing. He resided there until the middle of the summer of 312 before moving on.

VERONA

The Battle of Verona was fought in 312 between the forces of the Roman Emperors Constantine the Great and Maxentius. Maxentius' forces were defeated, and Ruricius Pompeianus, the most senior Maxentian commander, was killed in the fighting.

The battle

Following the defection of Milan to Constantine, the city of Verona became Maxentius' most important military stronghold in the northern part of Italy. Verona was naturally strong as it sat in a loop of the River Adige; also its fortifications formed a formidable barrier to attack.

Maxentius' most able general, the praetorian prefect Ruricius Pompeianus, had gathered a large army from the forces in the region of Venetia and concentrated it at Verona.

Constantine arrayed his troops to begin a formal siege of Verona; however, Pompeianus led his army out to offer battle, whereupon Constantine's troops defeated them and forced them back into the city. Constantine then proceeded with his investment of Verona.

Pompeianus managed to escape from the city before this was completed and rode east to gather reinforcements. He soon returned with a considerable army and placed Constantine in the difficult position of fighting on two fronts. Constantine responded by taking the offensive, he left a portion of his army to contain the garrison of the city, and with the remainder attacked Pompeianus' reinforcements.

Constantine led this attack personally and his fearless example inspired a heroic effort from his soldiers. Pompeianus was killed in the resulting melee and his forces were swiftly routed.

Maxentius' troops within the city were demoralised by the fate of the relieving army and soon capitulated.

Aftermath

After the surrender of Verona all opposition to Constantine in the north of Italy collapsed. Furthermore, the cities in Etruria and Umbria declared for Constantine allowing him to march directly on Rome itself.

