

# A History of the Roman Equestrian Order

---

CAILLAN DAVENPORT

Macquarie University, Sydney



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Contents

*List of Figures* [page xi]  
*List of Tables* [xv]  
*Acknowledgements* [xvi]  
*A Note on Translations* [xix]  
*List of Abbreviations* [xx]

## Introduction: Charting the History of the Equestrian Order [1]

Aims and Rationale [1]  
The Equestrian Order in Historical Context [4]  
Monarchy and Aristocracy [5]  
The *Res Publica* [8]  
The Monarchical *Res Publica* [15]  
Military and Civilian Identities [19]  
Monarchy and Aristocracy (Reprise) [21]  
A New Equestrian Order [23]  
Structure of the Book [24]

## PART I: THE REPUBLIC [27]

1. Riding for Rome [29]
  - Introduction: Uncle Pliny's History [29]
  - Aristocrats on Horseback [30]
  - The Equestrian Census [34]
  - The Composition and Cohesion of the *Equites* [38]
  - Political Conflict and Status Differentiation [42]
  - The Decline of Cavalry Service [50]
  - Two Tribunes, Two Laws [58]
  - Conclusion: From Warriors to Jurors [67]
2. Cicero's Equestrian Order [70]
  - Introduction: The Trial of C. Verres [70]
  - Equites* and the Criminal Courts [75]
  - The Power of the *Publicani* [84]
  - The Good Governor [93]
  - Otium* and *Officium* [96]

Conclusion: An Elusive Order [103]  
 Addendum: The *Tribuni Aerarii* [106]

3. Questions of Status [109]
  - Introduction: A Statue for L. Antonius [109]
  - Status Symbols and Collective Identity [112]
  - Cicero's Italy [124]
  - The Lives of Others [133]
  - The Triumviral Period: Turbulence or Status Quo? [142]
  - Conclusion: A Complementary Perspective [151]

PART II: THE EMPIRE [155]

4. Pathways to the Principate [157]
  - Introduction: The Return of Monarchy to Rome [157]
  - The Friends of Caesar [160]
  - The Great Prefectures [170]
  - Managing the Empire [179]
  - In the Camp of Augustus [183]
  - Jurors and *Publicani* in the New Order [192]
  - Conclusion: Imperial Opportunities [201]
5. An Imperial Order [204]
  - Introduction: A Poet's Pride [204]
  - Defining the Imperial Order [206]
  - Imperial Benefaction [220]
  - Provincial Perspectives [226]
  - Pride and Prejudice [242]
  - Conclusion: Status and the Individual [251]
6. *Cursus* and *Vita* (I): Officers [253]
  - Introduction: Pliny's Less Successful Friend [253]
  - The Inscribed *Cursus* [256]
  - The *Militiae Equestres* [260]
  - Patronage and Promotion [264]
  - Military Careers and Self-Representation: Regional Dynamics [278]
  - Virtus* and *Arete* [289]
  - Conclusion: Statues and Letters [295]
7. *Cursus* and *Vita* (II): Administrators [299]
  - Introduction: The Commission of Marsianus [299]
  - The Development of the Equestrian Career [302]
  - Cultures of Service and Competition [318]
  - Advancement, Seniority and Patronage [336]
  - Quies* and *Sinecures*: Alternatives to Careers [349]
  - Honour among Greeks [358]
  - Conclusion: The Benefits of Imperial Office [366]

## PART III: EQUESTRIANS ON DISPLAY [371]

8. Ceremonies and Consensus [373]  
 Introduction: The Organisation of Opinion [373]  
 Collective Action [375]  
 Morality on Parade [380]  
 Youth, *Virtus* and the Imperial Succession [395]  
 Regimented Grief [408]  
 Conclusion: Patterns of Consensus [414]

9. Spectators and Performers [418]  
 Introduction: A Problem at Perugia [418]  
 Seats with a View [420]  
 Beyond the *Sacra Urbs* [424]  
*Equites* as Performers and Gladiators: Ideology and Regulation [428]  
 Rhetoric and Reality [436]  
 Conclusion: Status Boundaries [443]

10. Religion and the *Res Publica* [446]  
 Introduction: Germanus' Triumph [446]  
 Initiation and Ideology [450]  
 A City of Priests [461]  
 The Sacred Periphery [470]  
 Conclusion: Religion and Prestige [479]

## PART IV: THE LATE EMPIRE [483]

11. Governors and Generals [485]  
 Introduction: A Dedication to Gallienus [485]  
 Pragmatic Administration and Status Hierarchies [487]  
 The Ambitions of Soldiers [509]  
 The Imperial High Command [520]  
 The Gallienic Transformation [533]  
 Conclusion: The Remaking of the Roman State [549]
12. The Last *Equites Romani* [553]  
 Introduction: The Edict of Licinius [553]  
 The End of the Census Qualification [558]  
 The Structure and Privileges of Equestrian Status [563]  
 The Government Made New [575]  
 Senators and Soldiers [591]  
 The Survival of Equestrian Rank [599]  
 Conclusion: The More Things Change . . . [604]

Conclusion	[607]
Roles and Functions	[608]
Articulating Status	[612]
The Endurance of the <i>Ordo Equester</i>	[617]

<i>Glossary</i>	[622]
<i>Bibliography</i>	[631]
<i>Index</i>	[687]