ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN ARMY

“Sometime in the early period of the Republic, after the expulsion of the last King Tarquin the proud, the Romans adopted a Greek style Hoplite army. In Greece this consisted of tenant farmers, who tilled their fields and when they were called to battle would take up whatever arms their wealth allowed them to afford to fight for the city state. Rome would adopt this same model and maintain it even to the end of the conflict with Carthage in spite of the change face of its military design. These farmers who grew crops for themselves and sold them to the cities were also the militia which would defend the state, so that, as their forerunners in the Greek city-state, they had a vested interest in victory in order to preserve their families and lands. However, they were not professional soldiers and they only served when called upon to defend Rome. Once the fighting was over, they would simply lay down their arms and return to their fields.”

“The earliest Roman army was based originally on the Greek Phalanx system, and the legion continued to evolve from that origin, and from elements of Latin tribes in Italy.”

“The most significant difference between the Republican and Imperial legions dealt with its makeup of social and financial qualifications. Except for extenuating circumstances where the very survival of Rome depended on using anyone available for defense, the Republican legion maintained a strict social hierarchy. Only landowning citizens were allowed to serve under optimal circumstances, and the status of one’s total wealth along with military experience determined their place in the infantry. As each citizen prior to Marius provided weapons and equipment from their own estates, gear could vary, but there was a basic uniform code to be followed within reason. This system was devised out of necessity, but perhaps incorporating the concept of loyalty to the city and morale of the men. Since the army was made up of citizens who could afford their own armor, they were the obvious choice for service. However, in the earliest days, the common concept that only the land owners had a real stake in the outcome of the battle likely played a key role in the development of the early Roman Legion.”