

Helmets

With the exception of the centurion, the legionaries of III ITALICA are equipped with the Niedermoermter helmet. Only two examples of this helmet have been found so far (sadly both without their cheek-pieces). One was made entirely of brass, the other one consisted of iron and brass. The latter one (until recently in the Axel Guttman collection) was found somewhere at the middle Danube together with a *dolabra* (pick axe), a Lauricaum-Hromovka type *spatha* and a Künzing type *pugio*. The brass version suggests an introduction of this helmet before 197 AD, but it is unknown how long Niedermoermters stayed in use after that. It seems they were gradually replaced by helmets like the Heddernheim or the Niederbieber (fragments of helmets belonging to this later series were found at Dura-Europos).



(image by Dave Michaels from legio VI)

The Niedermoermter helmet has an unusually large neckshield and some kind of complex deflector on the forehead which might have worked like a deformable zone due to its rhomboid 'netting'. Both versions of the Niedermoermter (brass and iron/brass) have a handle fixed to the neckshield, but only the iron/brass Version has a ring on top of the calotte.



(image by Dave Michaels from leg VI)

The Niedermoermter provides good protection but is relatively unwieldy. Despite its higher-than-average size, it could still be carried attached to the right shoulder plate of the armour, just as Trajan's column suggests for older helmet types.



In order to keep the helmet in place and prevent it from clanging against the armour, a lace or thong was used which ran from to the ring on the calotte to one of the brass loops of the cuirass. The thin rope displayed here was an improvisation (a leather lace with a slipknot for a quick release in emergency situations works better).

The brass version lacks this calotte ring, but it would be possible to fix the second thong to the 'deflector' on the forehead.

A cruder method was to sling the helmet over the right shoulder and carry it under the right arm.

Carrying the helmet around the neck was very uncomfortable. One of the legionaries tried to attach it to his lance as a counterbalance to the luggage, but while this unconventional method was basically not a bad idea, it did not work well in practice. Hanging it to the front turnkey of the Newstead armour also proved to be unsatisfactory (the key turned under the weight and the 'deflector' was involuntarily put to the test).



Three of the archers were equipped with replicas of Syrian archer helmets, but these replicas turned out to be so bad-fitting and cumbersome they were seldom carried:

