



The Praetorian Guard: A History of Rome's Elite Special Forces

By Sandra Bingham

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No other special force in history has a mystique equal to that of ancient Rome's thoroughbred protection and counter-insurgency squadron—the renowned Praetorian Guard. Originally conceived as a personal army for the emperor, the Guard assumed a much greater role than simple bodyguard, taking over a wide range of powers in the city and operating for more than 300 years. Inseparable from the machinery of the Roman state, the Praetorians had the power to make or break individual emperors.

In *The Praetorian Guard*, Sandra Bingham offers a comprehensive and timely history of this elite military unit, from its foundation by Augustus in 27 BCE to its disbandment by Constantine in 312 CE. Exploring the multifaceted nature of the Guard, she discusses and describes its arms and insignia, size and recruitment tactics, and command structure and individual duties, as well as Guard members' family and religious lives. Bingham provides readers with a unique view of how others in antiquity portrayed these special forces and includes detailed illustrations, maps, and plans to paint a clear picture of this politically mighty military institution.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Bingham has performed a valuable service in providing an up-to-date and detailed discussion in English of the history, structure and development of the Praetorian Guard. Her treatment of the relationship between the emperor and his elite regiment offers an important insight into the crucial relationship between the imperial office and the military force that was essential to its survival and effectiveness."?Michael M. Sage, Professor Emeritus, University of Cincinnati

"Bingham's fast-paced and carefully constructed narrative, backed up by sound analysis of crucial issues, expertly conveys the reader through this blood-thirsty and exciting tale, which highlights important issues in the wider history of the Roman world. Readers will welcome its crisp and clear style and eye for intriguing details of life in the guard."?Brian Campbell, Professor of Roman History, Queen's University, Belfast, UK

" Bingham has written what will be the standard book in English on the subject in a style that should endear it to a wider audience."?Conor Whately, University of Winnipeg, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*

"...an original mind at work. This is an exceptionally clear-headed and hard-working volume."?Steve Donoghue, *Open Letters Monthly*

"*The Praetorian Guard* is a valuable contribution to Roman history generally and specifically to Roman imperial rule, the household of the emperor, and the person of the emperor himself."?R. Alden Smith, Professor of Classics, Baylor University

"*The Praetorian Guard* is a much-needed and valuable history of the Praetorian Guard from its origins to its disbandment by the emperor Constantine the Great in AD 312. Clear and concise in style, supported by ancient and current secondary sources, Bingham's study is balanced in its treatment of an often partisan subject."?Sara Elise Phang, author of *Roman Military Service: Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate*

"In short, Bingham's book is important if not essential reading for students of Roman imperial history; future work on the Praetorian Guard will depend in large part on the impressive efforts on display here."?Lee Fratantuono

, Ohio Wesleyan University, *The Historian*

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"Through meticulous research and innovative interpretations, Sandra Bingham masterfully navigates the Praetorian Guard's meager data bringing this clandestine group to the historical light."?Shane J. Wood, Ozark Christian College, *Stone-Campbell Journal*

About the Author

Sandra Bingham is Teaching Fellow in Classics, University of Edinburgh. She resides in Edinburgh, Scotland.

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