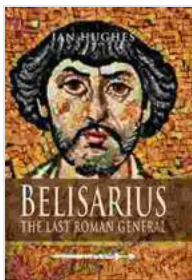


# Belisarius: The Last Roman General



## Belisarius: The Last Roman General

by Laurence Le Diagon-Jacquin

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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In the annals of history, few generals have left a legacy as enduring as Belisarius. As the supreme commander of the Byzantine Empire during the tumultuous 6th century, he played a pivotal role in safeguarding the empire's frontiers, suppressing internal rebellions, and reconquering lost territories. His military prowess, strategic brilliance, and unwavering loyalty to the emperor Justinian made him a legend in his own lifetime and an object of fascination for centuries after.

## **Early Life and Military Beginnings**

Belisarius was born around 505 AD in Germanicia, a city on the eastern frontier of the Byzantine Empire. His father, Flavius Belisarius, was an Illyrian officer, while his mother's identity remains unknown. Little is known about Belisarius' early life and education, but his natural military abilities became apparent from a young age.

In 525 AD, Belisarius joined the imperial army under Emperor Justin I. He quickly distinguished himself in battles against the Persians, demonstrating exceptional skill in cavalry tactics and siege warfare. His rise through the ranks was meteoric, and by 530 AD, he had become one of Justinian's most trusted generals.

## **The Nika Riots and the Vandalic War**

Belisarius' first major test came in 532 AD, when Constantinople was engulfed in the Nika Riots. These riots, sparked by the government's attempt to raise taxes, spiraled out of control and threatened to overthrow

the empire. Justinian initially hesitated to use force against his own people, but Belisarius urged decisive action.

Leading a small contingent of the imperial guard, Belisarius stormed the Hippodrome, the epicenter of the riots. In a bloody and ruthless battle, his troops crushed the rebellion, killing tens of thousands of rioters. Belisarius' swift and decisive response not only saved Justinian's throne but also earned him the emperor's undying gratitude.

In 533 AD, Justinian launched an ambitious campaign to reconquer the Vandalic Kingdom of North Africa. The Vandals, a Germanic tribe, had seized North Africa from the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century. Belisarius was appointed commander of the expeditionary force, consisting of 15,000 men and a large fleet.

Belisarius landed in North Africa in September 533 AD and marched inland towards Carthage, the Vandal capital. He outmaneuvered the Vandal army under King Gelimer and defeated them in a decisive battle at Ad Decimum. Carthage fell to Belisarius without a fight, and the Vandalic Kingdom collapsed.

## **The Gothic Wars**

Belisarius' next major challenge was the Gothic Wars, a series of conflicts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ostrogoths, who had established a kingdom in Italy. The Goths, led by their able king Totila, had conquered much of Italy and were threatening to march on Constantinople.

In 535 AD, Justinian dispatched Belisarius to Italy to confront the Gothic threat. With a small army of only 7,500 men, Belisarius managed to defeat

Totila's forces in several battles and recapture Rome. In 540 AD, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Goths at the Battle of Ravenna, securing the Byzantine reconquest of Italy.

However, Belisarius' triumph was short-lived. Justinian's growing paranoia and jealousy led him to recall Belisarius to Constantinople and replace him with a less competent general. The Goths, seizing on this opportunity, recaptured much of Italy.

### **Later Campaigns and Legacy**

In 544 AD, Belisarius was sent to the East to defend the empire against the Sassanid Persians. He defeated the Persians and captured their capital, Ctesiphon, before being forced to withdraw due to Justinian's Free Downloads.

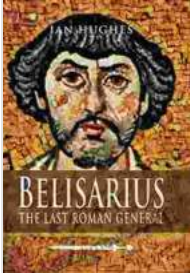
Belisarius spent his later years in Constantinople, where he was accused of treason and imprisoned by Justinian. He was later released and reconciled with the emperor, but his reputation was forever tarnished.

Belisarius died in Constantinople in 565 AD, at the age of 60. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, a church that he had founded.

Belisarius was one of the most extraordinary military commanders in history. His military prowess, strategic brilliance, and unwavering loyalty to the emperor Justinian made him a legend in his own lifetime and an object of fascination for centuries after.

Belisarius' legacy extends far beyond his military achievements. He was a man of integrity and compassion, who refused to compromise his principles

even in the face of adversity. His story is a timeless tale of courage, strategy, and betrayal, a story that continues to inspire and fascinate people to this day.



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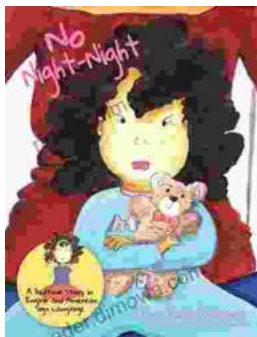
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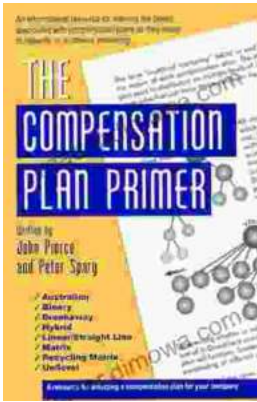
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