

49-31 B.C.

End of the Republic

Beginning as a small kingdom and flowering as a republic, Rome matures under imperial might. Republican rule crumbles in 49 B.C. when Julius Caesar returns with his army from Gaul. After a struggle for control, he is proclaimed dictator for life in February 44, only to be assassinated a month later.

Octavian and Mark Antony share power after defeating the army of Brutus and Cassius Caesar's killers. Antony marries Cleopatra of Egypt, which eventually prompts Octavian to declare war. He defeats them in 31 B.C.



A.D. 43 Conquest of Britain

Under Claudius, four Roman legions invade Britain. In 51 the native leader Caratacus is taken captive to Rome; later a slave captive to Rome, later a slave captive to Rome, later a slave captive to Rome.

A.D. 64 Rome Burns

Ten years into his youthful reign Nero watches as Rome burns—happily, many thought. Over its ashes he builds his massive Golden House, an extravagance deepening his unpopularity and prefiguring his forced suicide at 30.



A.D. 79 Eruption of Vesuvius

In one of the empire's worst natural disasters, Vesuvius erupts on August 24, snuffing out Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. The new emperor, Titus, is praised for his relief efforts for the survivors.

A.D. 117-138 Hadrian's Architecture

Artist, poet, and avid builder, Trajan's adopted son, Hadrian, adorns Rome with monuments, including the wholly rebuilt Parthenon. Its enormous dome is the largest ever seen.



A.D. 212 Citizens of Rome

After killing his brother Geta in a struggle for rule, Caracalla grants citizenship to almost all free male inhabitants of the empire. Capping three centuries of massive Roman building projects, the Afro-Syrian warrior completes the great Baths of Caracalla, which covered 26 acres.

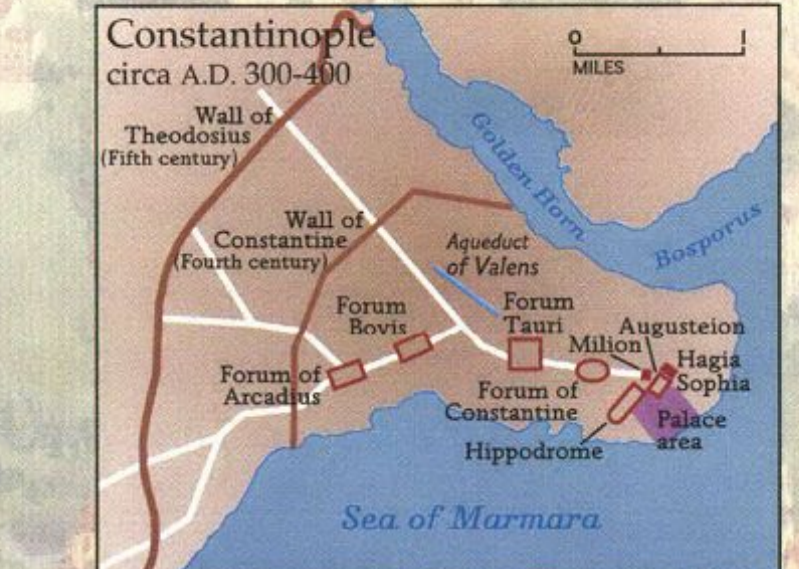
A.D. 218-235 Women Run the Empire

Following the death of Macrinus, an African usurper, in the midst of the Severan dynasty, rule reverts to Syrian in laws of the late Septimius Severus. Youths unfit for governing, first Elagabalus and then his cousin Severus Alexander rule under the regency of their grandmother Julia Maesa and their mothers.



A.D. 235-305 Diocletian and the Tetrarchy

After restoring the might of the emperor's office, Diocletian, from his eastern capital of Nicomedia, picks Maximian as co-emperor to rule the western empire from Milan. Later, power is split again as two deputy caesars, Constantius and Galerius, are appointed to help rule, each from his own capital.



A.D. 330 The Founding of Constantinople

After reuniting the empire under his rule and embracing Christianity, Constantine selects Byzantium, a Greek city on the Bosphorus, for his new capital. Not only is it closer than Rome to the empire's most troublesome frontiers, but also it is an easily defended port strategically situated for control

of the Black Sea and commerce with the rich East. Before his death in 337, Constantine set the stage for the suppression of the west by founding a city that would rival Rome. A lavish builder, he endows his capital, re-named Constantinople, with the buildings and monuments of an imperial city.

Timeline bar with years from 50 B.C. to 400 A.D.

27 B.C.-A.D. 14 The Age of Augustus
Octavian becomes absolute ruler after the senate bestows on him the title Augustus. He preserves a republican face by acting as *princeps*, first citizen. An enlightened leader, he establishes the forms of rule followed by his successors. During his reign—longest of all the caesars—Rome's domain reaches the Danube.

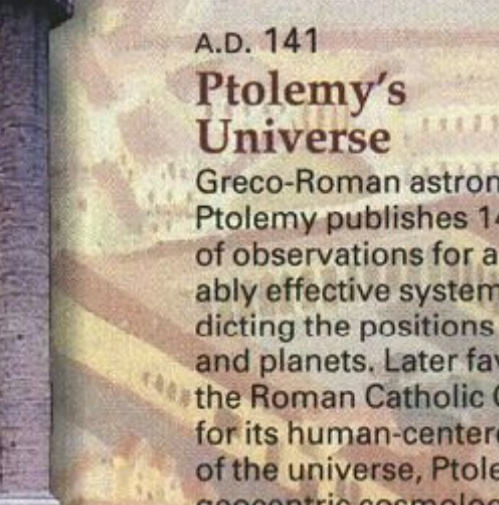
19 B.C. Virgil's Aeneid
Based on the Greek model of Homer, Virgil's monumental epic, the *Aeneid*, attributes the origin of the Roman people to Aeneas, a hero of the Trojan War. The first century A.D. produces a flourishing of letters, with such writers as Petronius and Seneca drawing on the legacy of late republican writers Virgil, Catullus, and Cicero.



A.D. 66-73 Siege of Jerusalem
Nero dispatches Vespasian to quell a rebellion in Judaea. Midway through the war Nero is overthrown, and three senators rule before the army proclaims Vespasian emperor. In 70 his son Titus takes Jerusalem, burns its temple, and massacres thousands. In 73, Zealots at Masada commit suicide rather than submit.



A.D. 101-106 Conquest of Dacia
Rome's major conquest after Britain, the kingdom of Dacia is first subdued, then conquered by the Spanish-born emperor Trajan. With the overthrow of the Dacian king, Decebalus, in 106, the region north of the Danube becomes a Roman province.



A.D. 141 Ptolemy's Universe
Greco-Roman astronomer Ptolemy publishes 14 years of observations for a remarkably effective system of predicting the positions of stars and planets, later favored by the Roman Catholic Church for its human-centered view of the universe. Ptolemy's geocentric cosmology endures as the scientific model for more than 1,400 years.

A.D. 138-192 Age of the Antonines
Only minor wars mark the long reign of Hadrian's adopted son, Antoninus Pius. Less fortunate were his successors, the adoptive brothers Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, who were challenged first by Parthians in the east and then Germans to the north. When the latter invaded Italy in 167, the empire's vulnerability became

all too clear. After Lucius's death, Marcus Aurelius, known as Rome's philosopher-king, spent his final years on the Danubian frontier. Ending the pattern of adoption, which had served so well, Aurelius was succeeded by his vainglorious son, Commodus, whose assassination in 192 marked the end of the Antonine dynasty.



A.D. 235-284 Military Anarchy
The five decades following the murder of Severus Alexander are a period of anarchy during which a series of soldier-emperors try desperately to hold the empire together. In 251, Decius is killed trying to stop the Goths from overrunning Dacia. In 260 Valerian is taken prisoner by the Sassanid Persians and dies in captivity.



A.D. 312 A Christian Emperor
The tetrarchy crumbles into the civil wars soon after Diocletian retires in 305. During his struggle with western rival Maxentius in 312, Constantine—son of Constantius—has a vision of a cross with the words "in this sign you will conquer" and takes up the cause of Christianity. In 324 he wrests control of the east from his co-emperor Licinius.

4th-6th Centuries A.D. Fall of the Roman Empire
Following the death of the last sole emperor, Theodosius I, in 395, the empire once again falls under divided rule. Soon great tribal migrations put unrelenting pressure on the northern borders. In 401 the Visigoths enter northern Italy. The western emperor, Honorius, flees his capital of Milan for Ravenna in 476, the same

year Rome itself is invaded. Soon other tribes—Vandals, Alans, and Suebi—overrun much of Europe and North Africa. After the forced abdication of the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, in 476, Italy eventually becomes an Ostrogoth kingdom. As the west withers, the east grows strong as a power called the Byzantine Empire.

- 1. Temple of Juno Minerva
- 2. Statue of Trajan
- 3. Temple of Venus Genetrix
- 4. Temple of Apollo
- 5. Temple of Bellona
- 6. Forum Holitorium
- 7. Temple of Mars Ultor
- 8. Forum of Augustus
- 9. Forum of Caesar
- 10. Tabularium (archives)
- 11. Temple of Castor and Pollux
- 12. Temple of the Divine Vespasian and Titus
- 13. Temple of Saturn
- 14. Arch of Septimius Severus
- 15. Curia (senate house)
- 16. Forum of Nerva
- 17. Temple of Minerva
- 18. Temple of Peace (Forum of Vespasian)
- 19. Temple of Antoninus and Faustina
- 20. Temple of the Divine Romulus
- 21. Temple of the Divine Julius
- 22. Temple of Castor and Pollux
- 23. Temple of Vesta
- 24. House of the Vestal Virgins
- 25. Temple of Portunus
- 26. Arch of Janus
- 27. Temple of Gybele
- 28. Arch of Titus
- 29. Baths of Trajan
- 30. Meta Sudans (fountain)
- 31. Arch of Constantine
- 32. Temple of Apollo Palatinus
- 33. School of the gladiators
- 34. Temple of the Divine Claudius
- 35. Sebasteion (monument built by Septimius Severus)

KEY TO NUMBERED SITES



THE GLORY OF A MILLENNIUM covers the Palatine Hill, home of Rome's emperors, in this depiction of the imperial city in the early fourth century. From the colonnaded Imperial Palace the emperors could see the Circus Maximus, where Romans gathered to watch chariot races. For gladiator fights they assembled in the Colosseum, still standing today because of the superior stonework and concrete used by Roman engineers. Between it and the Temple of Jupiter—the steps of which Julius Caesar is said to have climbed on his knees in a politically motivated act of supplication in 45 B.C.—were six forums, or public gathering places. Most of Rome's million or so people lived in blocks of cramped tenements and frequented taverns.

The Romans

GREAT PEOPLES OF THE PAST

Produced by National Geographic Maps for National Geographic Magazine



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

GILBERT M. GROSVENOR, CHAIRMAN
REG MURPHY, PRESIDENT AND CEO
WILLIAM L. ALLEN, EDITOR, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE
ALLEN CARROLL, DIRECTOR OF CARTOGRAPHY
JOHN F. SHUPE, CHIEF CARTOGRAPHER

Washington, D.C., July 1997

The Roman Empire

Produced by National Geographic Maps for National Geographic Magazine



GILBERT M. GROSVENOR, CHAIRMAN
REG MURPHY, PRESIDENT AND CEO
WILLIAM L. ALLEN, EDITOR
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE
ALLEN CARROLL, DIRECTOR OF CARTOGRAPHY
JOHN F. SHUPE, CHIEF CARTOGRAPHER
Washington, D.C., July 1997

FROM ITS LEGENDARY FOUNDING in 753 B.C. by the wolf-suckled twins Romulus and Remus, Rome evolved through two centuries of kingship to emerge in 509 B.C. as a republican oligarchy. Even before the age of emperors commenced in 27 B.C., republican Rome had amassed formidable dominions, much of the territory coming as spoils in more than a century of wars against Macedonia and Carthage. By the time of its fall in A.D. 476 to bands of invading barbarians, Rome had reigned over a polyglot empire far longer than any government before or since.

Rome's territories, though usually seized by force, were governed with a degree of justice rare in that time. Roman citizenship became a prize open to all males deemed worthy, from every niche of the empire and regardless of ethnic origin, as attested by the African senator Septimius Severus, founder of the Severan dynasty in A.D. 193.



The golden eagle which glittered in the front of the legion was the object of their fondest devotion. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

1 49 B.C. - A.D. 14 CAESAR AND AUGUSTUS Consolidation of the Empire

When Julius Caesar, flush with power after subduing Gaul, marched his army through northern Italy, across the Rubicon River, and into the Roman homeland, a tradition was breached. Generals, supposedly subservient to the republican senate, could come home but not with their armies. Seizing control of the government in Rome, Caesar then took four years to defeat his arch-rival, Pompey, in a series of land battles throughout the realm. Caesar's assassination on the ides of March in 44 B.C. by conspirators led by Brutus and Cassius was a protest against Rome's sudden turn to dictatorship.

But the republic could not be revived. Two powerful leaders, Mark Antony and Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, shared power for ten years before the latter declared war on Antony's consort, the Egyptian queen Cleopatra—who Romans had come to believe was wielding undue influence over affairs of state. A brief war ended when Caesar's sudden turn to dictatorship was destroyed at the Greek port of Actium, and Octavian assumed control of the empire.

Imperial Rome was instituted in 27 B.C. when Octavian was given the formal title Augustus, a name denoting majesty and dignity. Augustus legitimized his power under a facade of constitutional authority. "It was on the dignity of the senate," wrote 18th-century English historian Edward Gibbon, "that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire." The result, he noted, was "an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth." While Augustus expanded Rome's reach to the Danube and east into Asia, the emasculated senate functioned as a subordinate power.



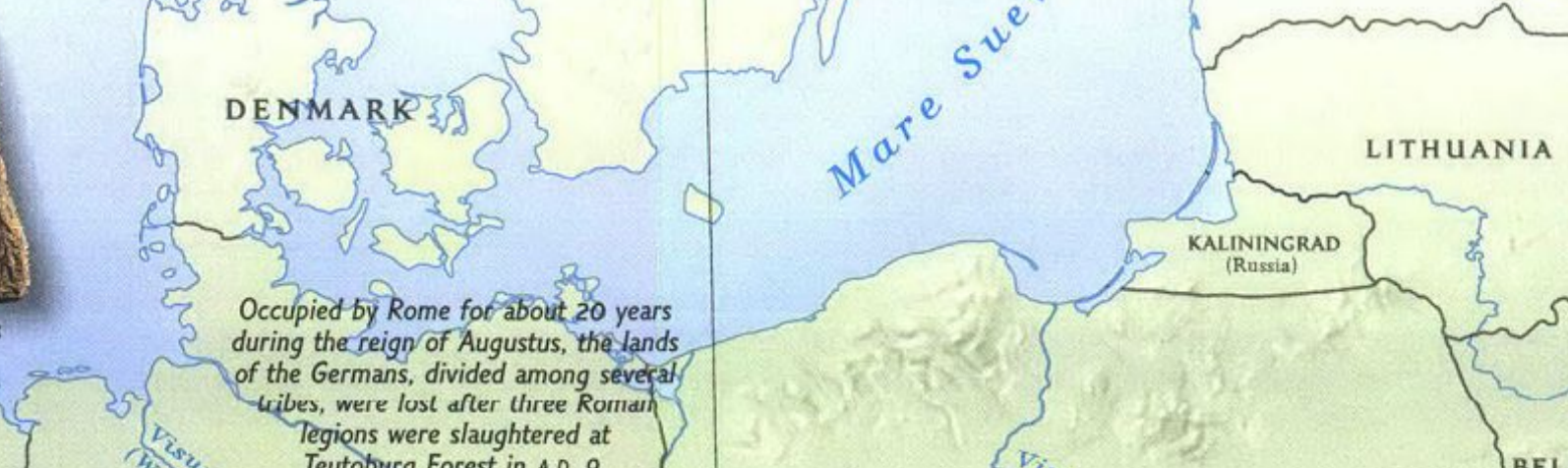
MAP LEGEND
Area ruled by Rome at Caesar's death, 44 B.C.
Territories lost to invading tribes, 260-71
Roman Empire boundary circa 280
Route of invading tribes
Major battle
Provincial capital
Imperial capital

Celebrated remnant of Rome's border defenses, Hadrian's Wall was built to control restive British territories and guard them from the fierce Caledonians. Extending about 70 miles, the stone and earth structure was testimony to the engineering skills of the Roman army.



Occupied by Rome for about 20 years during the reign of Augustus, the lands of the Germans, divided among several tribes, were lost after three Roman legions were slaughtered at Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9.

Evidence of the 20th legion, a charging bear decorates a roof plaque of baked clay. Traditions of all the building crafts, Roman soldiers constructed sturdy bridges, and aqueducts.



After Trajan's conquest of Dacia in A.D. 106, the major focus of Rome's frontier defenses shifted from the Rhine to the Danube, which was heavily fortified along its length.



Gothic tribes began menacing Rome's Black Sea provinces in the third century. Between 250 and 270, Gothic pirates raided several ports, disrupting critical shipments of grain from one of Rome's breadbaskets.



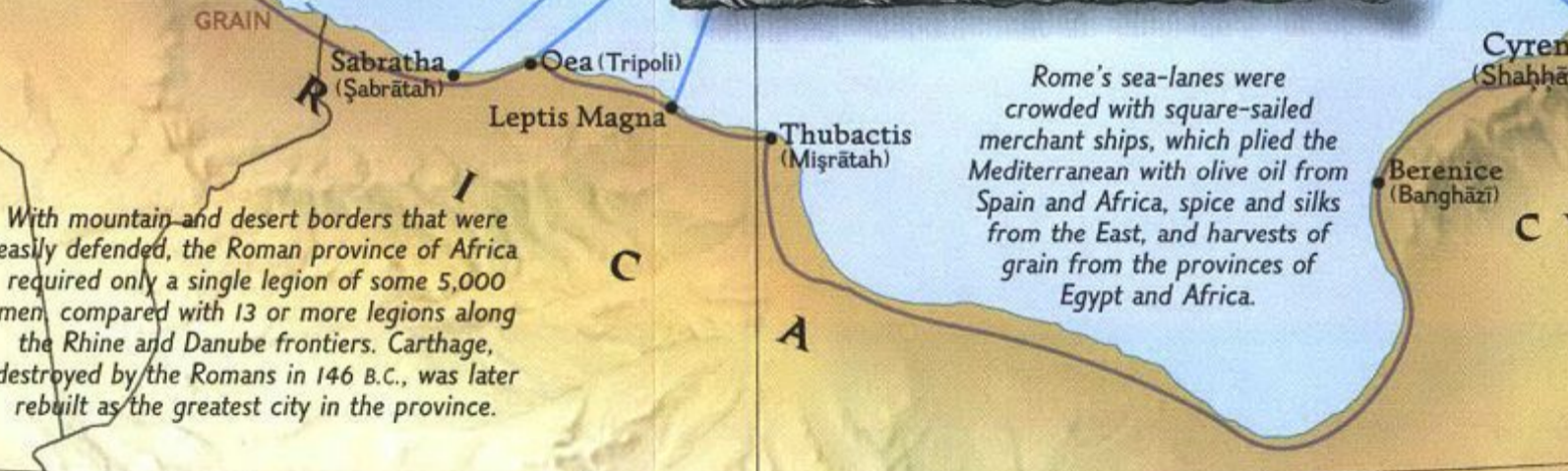
Rome made Sicily its first province in 227 B.C. After defeating the Carthaginians there, Quinctius Cincinnatus led a single legion of some 5,000 men, compared with 12 or more legions along the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Carthage destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., was later rebuilt by the great city in the province.



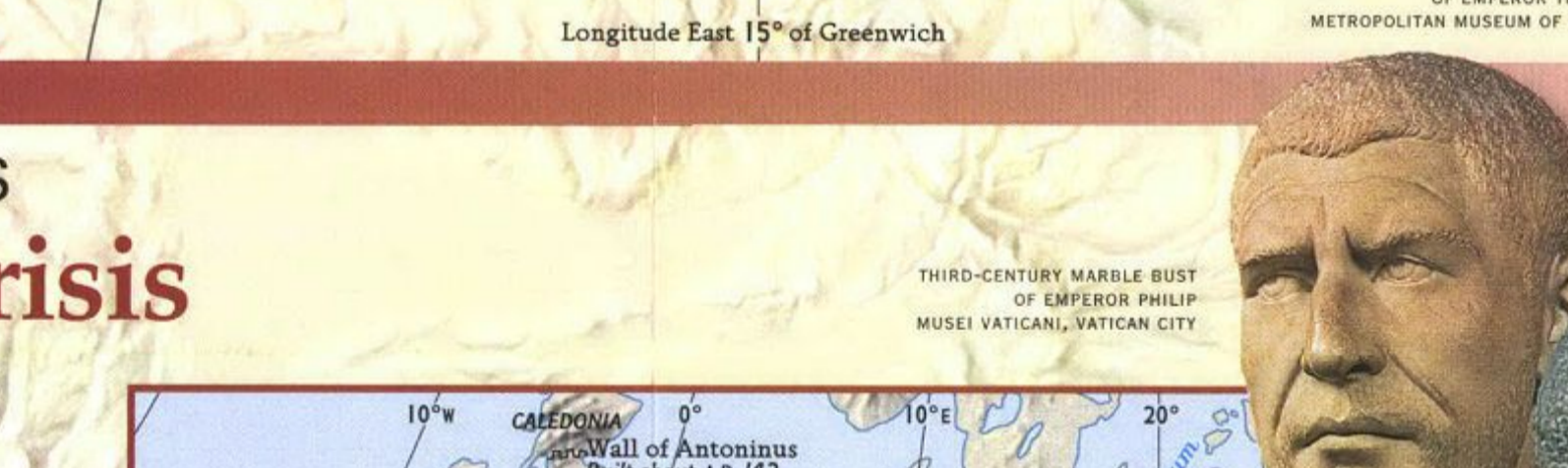
Rome's sea-lanes were crowded with square-sailed merchant ships, which plied the Mediterranean with olive oil from Spain and Africa, spice and silks from the East, and harvests of grain from Egypt and Africa.



Spiritual and aesthetic mentors, the Greeks inspired the Romans with their artistic and literary forms. The Romans transformed those classic prototypes into their own masterpieces.



With mountain and desert borders that were easily defended, the Roman province of Africa required only a single legion of some 5,000 men, compared with 12 or more legions along the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Carthage destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., was later rebuilt by the great city in the province.



2 A.D. 69 - 138 PEACE AND PROSPERITY Height of the Empire

After enduring two "mad" emperors, Caligula and Nero, Rome's military leaders seized the power of kingship. Following a year of conflict during which four senators vied for the imperial mantle, Vespasian emerged victorious in A.D. 69, backed by the Danubian and eastern legions. This began a tradition of rule by the ablest and fittest candidates, enforced by military reaction against weak or tyrannical family successors.

First emperor from the outlying provinces, the Spaniard Trajan extended

Rome's influence to the Persian Gulf, defeating its old enemy Parthia. His adopted heir, Hadrian—also from Spain—made peace with Parthia, withdrawing the empire's border to the Euphrates River.

The empire under these two able and visionary leaders enjoyed an exceptional period of peace and prosperity. Citizenship

was extended to thousands of residents of the provinces, while goods, people, and ideas moved freely across the Mediterranean. In Rome, Trajan undertook grandiose building schemes, largely financed by the gold and silver plundered from Rome's last great European conquest, Dacia. The relief on Trajan's column in Rome details the two Dacian Wars (101-102 and 105-106). Today the inhabitants of this region speak Romanian, evolved from the Romans' Latin tongue.

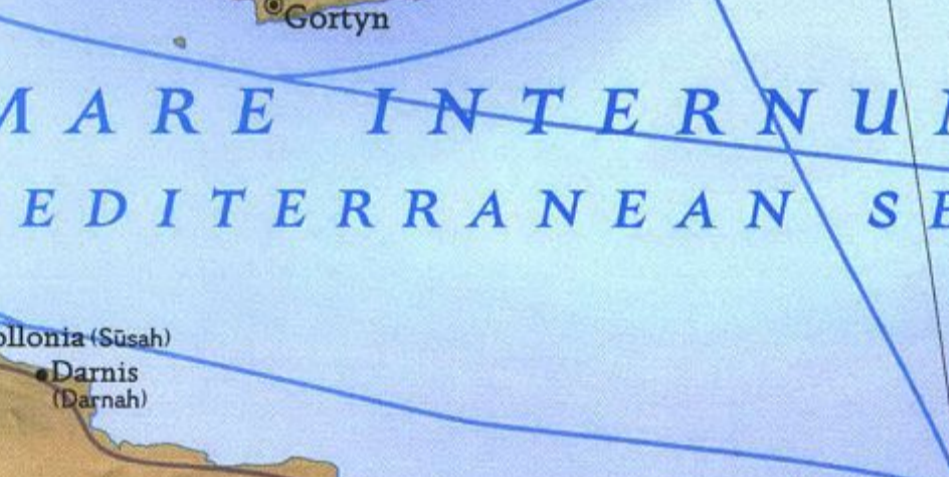


DETAIL OF TRAJAN'S COLUMN, A.D. 113
TRAJAN'S FORUM, ROME

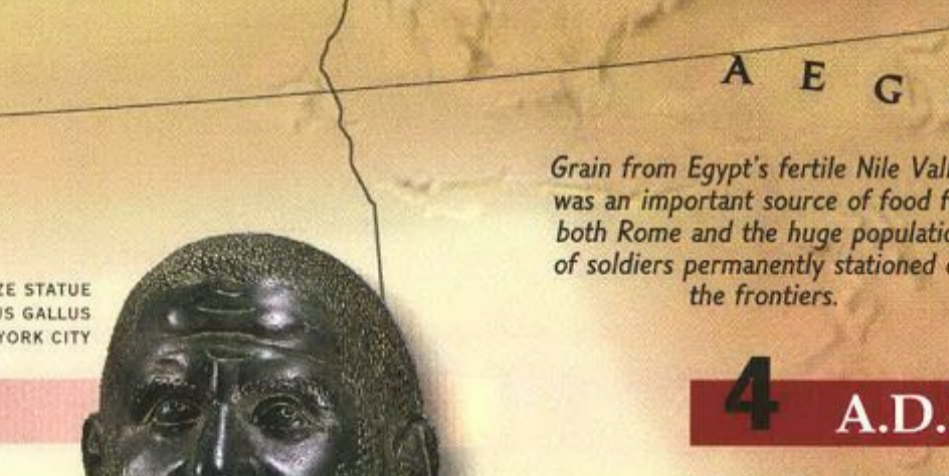
Rome reached its greatest extent under Trajan, who marched his army to the Persian Gulf in A.D. 117 after winning general city citizenship. Trajan died in 117, unable to secure his new holdings, which were consolidated by his successor, Hadrian.



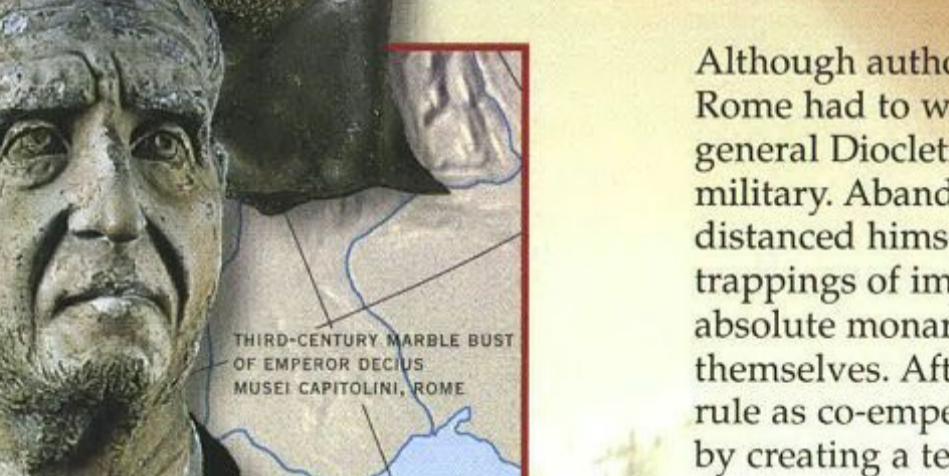
A Bible of religions from the eastern territories attracted the ruler's attention. At a council in Nicaea, the city of many islands on the Persian god of light, Mithras, the one of many based on early Christianity.



Home of cultures much older than Rome's, the Middle East—particularly monotheistic Judaism—was the least susceptible to romanization. Hadrian faced his only serious war, A.D. 132-135, as Jews rebelled during attempts to romanize Jerusalem.



Grain from Egypt's fertile Nile Valley was an important source of food for both Rome and the huge population of soldiers permanently stationed on the frontiers.



DETAIL OF THIRD-CENTURY BRONZE STATUE OF EMPEROR TREBURIANUS GALLUS
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

27 B.C. - A.D. 337 RULERS OF THE EMPIRE Chronology

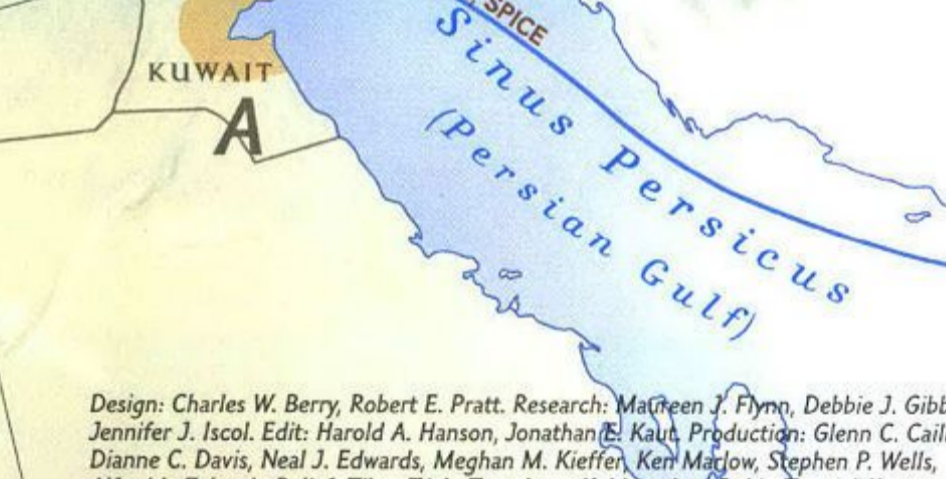
Disorderly succession plagued imperial Rome throughout the centuries. Often succession was based on family ties (such as Julio-Claudians and Severans), and several emperors without sons chose their political heirs by adopting them. Other times the throne was assumed by power won in battle.

MAP	YEAR	EMPEROR	DYNASTY
1	27 B.C. - A.D. 14	Augustus	JULIO-CLAUDIANS
	A.D. 14-37	Tiberius	
	37-41	Caligula	
	41-54	Claudius	
2	54-68	Nero	FLAVIANS
	68-69	Galba (followed by the Year of the Four Emperors)	
	69	Otho	
	69	Vitellius	
3	69-79	Vespasian	ANTONINES
	79-81	Titian	
	81-96	Dominian	
	96-98	Nerva	
4	98-117	Trajan	SEVERANS
	117-138	Hadrian	
	138-161	Antoninus Pius	
	161-180	Marcus Aurelius (with Lucius Verus 161-169)	
5	177-192	Commodus (co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius 177-180)	PERIOD OF MILITARY ANARCHY
	193	Pertinax	
	193	Didius Julianus	
	193-211	Septimius Severus	
6	193-211	Caracalla (co-emperor with Septimius Severus 193-211)	SEVERANS
	209-212	Getta (co-emperor with Septimius Severus and Caracalla 209-211, with Caracalla alone 211-212)	
	217-218	Macrinus	
	218-222	Elagabalus	
7	222-235	Severus Alexander	PERIOD OF MILITARY ANARCHY
	235-238	Maximinus	
	238-248	Gordian I and II	
	248-249	Philip	
8	249-251	Decius	PERIOD OF MILITARY ANARCHY
	251-253	Trebonianus Gallus	
	253-268	Valerian (with son Gallienus)	
	268-270	Claudian II	
9	270-275	Aurelian	PERIOD OF MILITARY ANARCHY
	275-282	Probus	
	282-284	Carausius and Numerian	
	284-305	Diocletian and the Tetrarchy	
10	306-313	Constantine I and the later Tetrarchy	PERIOD OF MILITARY ANARCHY
	313-324	Constantine I	
	324-337	Constantine I (sole ruler)	
	337-337	Constantine I (sole ruler)	

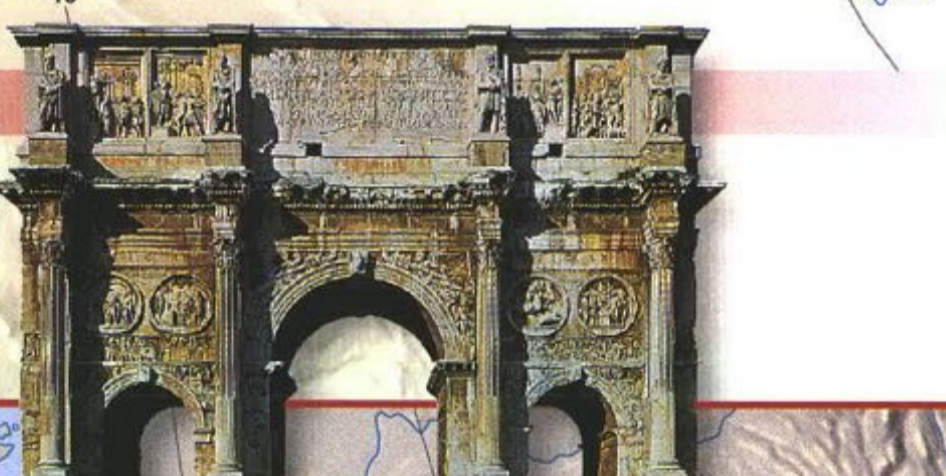


DETAIL OF ROMAN RELIEF
SECOND CENTURY A.D.
BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

A Bible of religions from the eastern territories attracted the ruler's attention. At a council in Nicaea, the city of many islands on the Persian god of light, Mithras, the one of many based on early Christianity.



Home of cultures much older than Rome's, the Middle East—particularly monotheistic Judaism—was the least susceptible to romanization. Hadrian faced his only serious war, A.D. 132-135, as Jews rebelled during attempts to romanize Jerusalem.



DETAIL OF THIRD-CENTURY BRONZE STATUE OF EMPEROR TREBURIANUS GALLUS
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK CITY

3 A.D. 235 - 284 THE SOLDIER-EMPERORS The Empire in Crisis

Military leaders from the provinces had gained great power by 235, when they killed Emperor Severus Alexander and replaced him with Maximinus, the Thracian, one of their own. As Rome's frontiers were coming under increasing pressure from land-hungry tribes and competing empires, a new breed of soldier-emperors spent nearly all their time in the army camps from which they rose. Maximinus, for example, never set foot in Rome. On his way there in 238, he was murdered while quelling a rebellion in northern Italy. From then until the accession of Claudius II, Rome's 30 or more legions fought constantly to defend the borders. In addition to the Germans along the Rhine, Rome faced an even fiercer threat from the Goths, who killed Emperor Decius while they were invading Dacia.

In the east a powerful new threat arose: the Sassanid Persians, who had overthrown Rome's old nemesis, the Parthians. The only Roman emperor to be taken prisoner, Valerian was captured by Persians at Edessa in 260 and died in captivity. During the reign of his unscrupulous son, Gallienus, Rome's western provinces broke away under rival emperor, Postumus (reign 260-69). To the east the city state of Palmyra became a spectacular though short-lived rise to power, culminating in the conquest of Syria, Egypt, and parts of Asia Minor.

The task fell to Aurelian, a general from the Balkans, to rebuild the empire, taking back the last eastern provinces and nearly all the western holdings. After Aurelian's murder by his own guards, anarchy reigned for nine years.



MAP LEGEND
Breakaway Gallic empire, 260-74
Breakaway kingdom of Palmyra, 260-72
Territories lost to invading tribes, 260-71
Roman Empire boundary circa 280
Route of invading tribes
Major battle
Provincial capital
Imperial capital

4 A.D. 284 - 337 DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE Division of Power and Empire

Although authority over its provinces had been restored, Rome had to wait for a powerful new leader, the Illyrian general Diocletian, to regain imperial control over the military. Abandoning the role of citizen-king, Diocletian distanced himself from his subjects by reintroducing the trappings of imperial ceremony and ritual and became an absolute monarch before whom subjects had to prostrate themselves. After appointing a colleague, Maximian, to rule as co-emperor in the west, he divided power again by creating a tetrarchy, or rule by four. From their own capitals two new caesars—Constantius in Gaul and Treveri, Galerius in Illyricum at Thessalonica—helped rule the far-flung commonwealth, which Diocletian reorganized into 12 regional governments, or dioceses.

The tetrarchy did not long survive Diocletian's retirement in 305. Gradually the empire was reunited under one strong ruler, Constantine, son of Constantius. In 313 he proclaimed a policy of toleration toward Christianity, which had been brutally suppressed under Diocletian and Galerius. Attributing his subsequent military victories to this faith, he defeated eastern emperor Licinius 11 years later. In 330 he established a new capital in Byzantium on the Bosphorus, a site strategically chosen for its proximity to the empire's unstable eastern and Danubian frontiers.

Eventually the empire reverted to divided rule. Although the new capital, renamed Constantinople, would endure for a millennium as center of a new Byzantine civilization, the final embers of the western empire were extinguished at the end of the fifth century when Italy was overrun by Goths and Vandals.



MAP LEGEND
Roman Empire, 284-337
Prefecture boundaries, 284-337
Diocese boundaries, 314
Imperial capital
Provincial capital
Christian patriarchate