

# ROMAN HISTORY

## Part Three: The Empire from Augustus to Constantine's Sons

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Please ask before circulating.

### Augustus and the Julio-Claudians

- 1) 28 BC—Augustus and Agrippa are co-consuls
- 2) 27 BC—Augustus makes a big show of giving up powers, and is voted proconsular imperium over the two Spains, Gaul, Egypt and Syria
- 3) 23 BC—Augustus gets or renews *tribunicia potestas*.
  - a. Augustus renews the pre-Republican position of *praefectus urbi* and makes Messala *praefectus urbi* but Messala steps down after six days after senatorial opposition.
- 4) Augustus' first choice for succession is Marcellus, his nephew (Marcellus is the son of Augustus' sister Octavia by her first husband). Augustus has his daughter Julia marry Marcellus.
  - a. In 23 BC Augustus falls gravely ill and entrusts his signet ring to Agrippa since Marcellus is not old enough to assume the principate. Eventually, Marcellus dies. Augustus has his daughter Julia marry Agrippa (he makes Agrippa divorce his wife).
- 5) Following Marcellus' death, Augustus adopts the children of Agrippa and Julia as Gaius Caesar and Julius Caesar. The remaining child of Agrippa and Julia is Agrippa Postumus.
- 6) When Agrippa's heart fails in 12 BC, Gaius and Lucius Caesar are too young, so Augustus turns to Livia's son by Tiberius Claudius Nero, Tiberius. Tiberius' popular and well-liked younger brother, Drusus I, dies in Germany in AD 9 by falling off a horse.
- 7) Gaius and Lucius Caesar die, Gaius of wounds in Armenia. So in AD 4, Augustus officially adopts Tiberius, and Tiberius is obviously Augustus' successor.
  - a. Augustus also adopts Agrippa Postumus, Agrippa and Julia's surviving child.
  - b. Augustus makes Tiberius adopt his own nephew Germanicus, the son of Drusus I (Tiberius' brother) and Antonia (daughter of Antony and Octavia).
  - c. Augustus makes Germanicus marry Agrippina, a daughter of Agrippa and Julia.
  - d. Tiberius' own son, Drusus II, is relegated to unimportance since he is only a Claudian and not a Julio-Claudian.

### Augustan Foreign Policy

- 1) Augustus personally fights the Cantabrians and Asturians in northwestern Spain, but his health fails and Agrippa defeats the Cantabrians and Asturians through enslavement.
- 2) Augustus divides the old Gallia Comata into Lugdunensis, Aquitania, and Belgica.
- 3) Augustus forms a veterans' colony at Augusta Praetoria in the Alpine region of Italy.
- 4) Augustus' stepsons Tiberius and Drusus I subdued Raetia (Switzerland) and Noricum (Austria and Tyrol)
- 5) **In Germany:** from 12 to 9 BC, Drusus I performed well against the Germans, but died of a broken leg from falling off a horse. His brother Tiberius succeeded him, but Tiberius was called to suppress a rebellion in Pannonia and Illyricum. Tiberius' successor in Germany, Quinctilius Varus, was creamed along with his three legions by Arminius at Teutoburg Forest in AD 9.
- 6) **Western Northern Africa:** Caesar had annexed Numidia as the province Africa Nova, some of which Augustus gave to King Juba II (who had married Cleopatra Selene).
- 7) Marcus Agrippa fought against the Danubians and Pannonians in 13 BC; after his death, Tiberius finished the job from 12 to 9 BC.

- 8) Augustus separated Macedonia from Greece by creating the province of Achaea, with its capital at Corinth. Augustus also annexed Cyprus as a separated province from Cilicia.
- 9) Client Kingdoms
  - a. Following Actium, Augustus gave large territories in Asia Minor—Galatia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, most of Cilicia—to Amyntas the Galatian. Rome acquired Galatia and Pamphylia when Amyntas was killed.
  - b. Augustus enlarged Judea, kingdom of Herod I, a king who built the Third Temple at Jerusalem and was a wife and son killer. A decade after Herod I's death, Augustus made Judea and Samaria a combined sub-province attached to Syria.
- 10) Armenia and Parthia
  - a. Armenia was annexed as a province in 34 BC, but had slipped away from Roman control right before Actium. Artaxias gained control of Armenia and slew all Roman citizens. For a while, Augustus did not punish Artaxias.
  - b. Phraates IV was ruling Parthia. Tiridates, a rival of Phraates IV, came to Augustus with Phraates IV's son, and Augustus gave Tiridates refuge.
    - i. In 23 BC, Phraates IV agreed to give back the legions and prisoners from Carrhae in exchange for his son.
    - ii. In 20 BC, Artaxias of Armenia was killed and Augustus sent Tiberius with a Roman army to place Tigranes III on the Armenian throne.
      1. Phraates IV got scared and immediately handed over the standards.
      2. Augustus declared a great victory with slogans such as *signis receptis, civibus et signis militaribus a Parthis recuperatis, and Armenia recepta*.
    - iii. When Tigranes III of Armenia died, the Armenians put their own king on the throne. Augustus sent his grandson Gaius Caesar to put a Roman king on the throne. Gaius Caesar died of his wounds from the fighting.
- 11) Egypt and the Red Sea Zone
  - a. Egypt was mostly quiet except for skirmishes on the Nubian border in Upper Egypt.
  - b. Gaius Cornelius Gallus was the first prefect of Egypt. He was an accomplished general, elegiac poet, and friend of Augustus, Vergil, and Asinius Pollio.
  - c. Cornelius Gallus led an expedition against the Nubians (sometimes incorrectly called Ethiopians) in 29 BC.
    - i. In later campaigns, Gaius Petronius, a later prefect, repulsed counterattacks from Nubia and drove them back into the Sudan, destroying their holy city of Napata.
    - ii. Candace of Ethiopia, queen of the Nubians, finally agreed to a fixing of the boundary of Egypt about 60 miles south of Syene and the First Cataract.

### Tiberius (AD 14-37)

- 1) Tiberius succeeds as a fifty-five year old man. Tiberius sends his son Drusus II to put down the soldiers' revolt in Pannonia.
- 2) Tiberius sends his nephew Germanicus with powers greater than consular imperium to the East in order to negotiate with Parthian king Artabanus III about placing a Roman client on the throne of Armenia. Tiberius also sends Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, who hates Germanicus though the two are formal friends, but Calpurnius Piso refuses to follow Germanicus' orders and Germanicus and Calpurnius Piso quarrel, leading to Piso abandoning his post. When Germanicus dies of a delirious fever, he curses Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, saying that Piso killed him through sorcery and poison. Agrippina the Elder, a granddaughter of Augustus and the wife of Germanicus, starts off to Rome with Germanicus' ashes.
- 3) Meanwhile Calpurnius Piso attempts to take Syria and is put on trial at Rome. He commits suicide but Tiberius makes his sons stand trial for him. A *damnatio memoriae* of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso is ordered.

- 4) Agrippina the Elder is suspicious of Tiberius because he and Livia refuse to participate in the public mourning for Germanicus. Agrippina the Elder believes that Tiberius had a hand in Germanicus' death, because he wants his own son Drusus II on the throne.
  - a. Meanwhile, Agrippina the Elder advances the claims of her three children by Germanicus (Drusus III, Caligula/Gaius, and Nero [not the emperor]) to the throne.
- 5) Sejanus: the prefect of the Praetorian Guard under Tiberius, he had risen to the post along with his father, and convinced Tiberius to make him sole Praetorian Prefect after his father's death. Tacitus portrays Sejanus as one of the most infamous and sinister characters in all of Roman history.
  - a. Sejanus attempted to betrothe his infant daughter Junilla to the future emperor Claudius' son, but Claudius' son died. Claudius was a brother of Germanicus.
  - b. Some hold that Sejanus seduced Livilla (sister of Germanicus and wife of Drusus II) and plotted with her to kill Drusus II. After Drusus II's death, Sejanus attempted to marry Livilla, but Tiberius refused the wedding. Sejanus was probably trying to tie his family to Tiberius Gemellus, the son of Livilla and Drusus II (and therefore the grandson of Tiberius).
  - c. Sejanus convinced Tiberius that Agrippina the Younger was plotting against Tiberius' grandson Tiberius Gemellus (son of Livilla, sister of Germanicus, and Drusus II).
  - d. Tiberius, with Sejanus' urging, decided to leave Rome for semiretirement on the island of Capreae (Capri) in the Bay of Naples.
  - e. With Tiberius gone, Sejanus attacked Agrippina the Elder and her friends through the law of *maiestas*. After the death of Livia, he convinced Tiberius to exile Agrippina the Elder and her son Nero to desert islands, and to imprison Drusus III.
  - f. Statues of Tiberius and Sejanus stood side by side, and altars to clemency and friendship had both of their names.
  - g. Tiberius named Agrippina the Elder and Germanicus' son, Caligula, as his preferred heir in a letter to the Senate. When Sejanus plotted against Caligula, Antonia (mother of Agrippina and grandmother of Caligula) sent a freedman of hers, Pallas, to Tiberius, who then called Caligula to the safety of Capri.
  - h. Tiberius sent Naevius Sutorius Macro, prefect of the *vigiles*, to Rome to take over command of the Praetorian Guard from Sejanus. Macro gave the presiding consul a letter that condemned Sejanus.
    - i. Soon Sejanus was executed along with his eldest son Strabo, his daughter Junilla, and his second son, Aelianus Capito. Sejanus' widow, Apicata, committed suicide.
    - ii. Before committing suicide, Apicata wrote Tiberius a letter saying that Sejanus and Livilla had murdered Drusus II.
    - iii. Livilla was the sister of Germanicus and the wife of Drusus II, Tiberius' son. Sejanus seduced her, supposedly, and tried to marry her following Drusus II's death.
- 6) Tiberius journeyed to the boundary of Rome three times from Capri, but could never cross it. On his last trip to Rome he fell into a coma and died at Misenum. Rumor has it that his pretorian prefect Macro smothered him.
- 7) Tiberius nominated Caligula and Tiberius Gemellus, the son of Drusus II (and thus Tiberius' grandson) as co-heirs, but when Tiberius fell into a coma and died at Misenum, Macro proposed that Caligula should be made sole heir.
- 8) *Delatores*, informers, flourished under Tiberius.

### **Caligula (AD 37-41)**

- 1) Caligula had a promising beginning but then became a mad tyrant after a serious illness.
- 2) Caligula lived as a youth with his grandmother Antonia and three young Thracian princes as well as Herod Agrippa I, heir to the throne of Judea, and Ptolemy of

- Mauretania, son of King Juba II and Cleopatra Selene, and grandson of Antony and Cleopatra (by his mother, Cleopatra Selene).
- 3) As newly crowned emperor Caligula abolished the slave tax, burned Tiberius' private records to ease the fears of those Tiberius suspected of treason, piously buried the bones of his brother Nero and his mother Agrippina the Elder in the mausoleum of Augustus.
  - 4) Caligula adopted his cousin and former joint heir, Tiberius Gemellus, as his own son and heir. Caligula also shared the consulship with his uncle Claudius.
  - 5) Caligula's plan to conquer Britain and Germany was put on hold by his serious illness in 37 AD.
  - 6) After his illness Caligula forced Tiberius Gemellus and Macro, who had engineered his accession to the throne, to commit suicide. He also executed his former father-in-law, the senator Marcus Iunius Silanus.
  - 7) Caligula took his sister Drusilla away from her first husband and had her marry his close friend Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. He gave Lepidus his signet ring during his grave illness.
  - 8) Caligula had his sister Drusilla deified after her death in 38 AD.
  - 9) Caligula's three sisters, the children of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder, were: Drusilla, Agrippina the Younger, and Livilla.
  - 10) Caligula later executed his friend Lepidus, asserting that Lepidus was the lover of Agrippina the Younger, and was plotting against him. He exiled his two remaining sisters (Agrippina the Younger and Drusilla).
  - 11) Caligula and the future emperor Galba conducted many successful operations along the Rhine.
  - 12) In 40 AD, Caligula's long-planned invasion of Britain in imitation of Julius Caesar came only to a march to the Strait of Dover and the erection of a lighthouse 200 feet high at Gesoriacum. He ordered troops to gather seashells.
  - 13) Caligula abandoned Greater Armenia and allowed Parthia to control it.
  - 14) Caligula believed his horse Incitatus was a reincarnation of Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander the Great. He made Incitatus a senator.
  - 15) Caligula instructed Petronius, his legate in Syria, to install his statue in the Temple of Jerusalem. Herod Agrippa I and Petronius averted the disaster.
  - 16) Caligula insulted the senator Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso by openly sleeping with his wife. Calpurnius Piso later plotted against Nero.
  - 17) Caligula was assassinated by Cassius Chaerea, a tribune of the Praetorian Guard he had offended, in 41 BC at the Palatine Games.

#### **Claudius (AD 41 to 54)**

- 1) Claudius was the brother of Germanicus and Livilla, the son of Drusus I and Antonia.
- 2) Claudius was the uncle of Caligula, and served with Caligula as consul. Rumor has it he was found cowering in a closet after Caligula's assassination, but in reality he bribed the Praetorian Guard even before Caligula's assassination.
- 3) According to Josephus, Herod Agrippa I persuaded Claudius to accept the emperorship and also persuaded the senate to accept Claudius as emperor.
- 4) Claudius was deformed, had a speech impediment, etc., but Augustus saw his intellect and gave him tutors, the historian Livy encouraged him to write history, etc.
- 5) Claudius introduced several trials *intra cubiculum principis*.
- 6) Claudius was a historian and philologist, learning Etruscan and Punic and writing histories of the Carthaginians and Etruscans.
  - a. Claudius' first two wives, Plautia Urgulanilla and Aelia Paetina, were unfaithful. By Aelia Paetina, Claudius had his first child, Antonia. Claudius then married Messalina
  - b. Messalina bore Claudius two children: Octavia and Britannicus.
  - c. Messalina's lover, Gaius Silius, plotted with her to overthrow Claudius. After learning about this from his freedmen Narcissus, Pallas, and Callistus, Claudius executed Silius and Messalina.

- d. Claudius then married his niece Agrippina the Younger, the brother of Caligula and the daughter of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder. Agrippina the Younger was the lover of Claudius' freedman Pallas, who urged Claudius to marry her. He changed the Roman laws on incest to do so.
- 7) Claudius charged Tiberius' granddaughter Julia and his own niece Julia Livilla (Caligula's sister) with treason and had them executed.
- 8) Claudius relied on his trusted friends (*amici Caesaris*) and freedmen such as Narcissus (his secretary *ab epistulis*), Callistus (examiner of petitions, *a libellis*, and in charge of trials and investigations), and Pallas (head treasurer, *a rationibus*). Antonia, grandmother of Caligula, had sent Pallas to warn Tiberius of threats against Caligula.
- 9) Claudius built an artificial harbor two miles north of Ostia at Portus. Trajan built a more protected inner harbor at Portus during his reign.
- 10) The Dalmatian general Claudius Scribonianus rebelled against Claudius, helped by Annus Vincianus.
- 11) Foreign policy
- a. Claudius suppressed the revolt Caligula had caused in Mauretania by killing the king, Ptolemy of Mauretania. After crushing the revolt, Claudius divided Mauretania into Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Tingitana (Tangiers).
- b. Claudius conquers Britain in 43 BC: Invited by chieftains afraid of the powerful Cunobelinus, who had his capital at Camulodunum, Claudius defeated Cunobelinus' son Caratacus, who had stepped forward as a proponent of Druidism (dangerous to Roman rule *per* its emphasis on Celtic unity).
- i. 43 BC—Romans land in Kent, defeat the Britons at Medway. Then Claudius arrives, defeats Caratacus and takes Camulodunum.
- ii. The senate voted Claudius a triumph and the name "Britannicus".
- 12) To ensure her son Nero would be next in line, Agrippina the Younger married him to Claudius' daughter Octavia. Octavia had been betrothed to the senator Lucius Junius Silanus's son, so Agrippina engineered a charge of incest against him.
- a. In 50 BC. Claudius adopted Nero formally. His name changed from Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus
- b. Nero's education was entrusted to Sextus Afranius Burrus and the Stoic Seneca the Younger. Burrus was a friend of Agrippina, and the new prefect of the Praetorian Guard.
- 13) Claudius died in 54 BC of mysterious circumstances. Pliny the Elder says that Agrippina served him a bowl of poisoned mushrooms.

### Nero (AD 54-68)

- 1) Nero's first five, good years are called the *quinquennium Neronis*. He was guided by Burrus and Seneca and restrained by his mother, Agrippina the Younger.
- 2) At the end of Claudius' reign, the Parthian king Vologeses I put his brother Tiridates I on the Armenian throne. Nero sent Domitius Corbulo, a strict disciplinarian, to the East. Corbulo put Tigranes V, a Roman client on the Armenian throne.
- a. Later, in 61 BC, Tigranes V of Armenia dumbly attacked Media, a powerful Parthian ally. The Romans tried to help and got their butts kicked. So Corbulo took command of Roman forces and invaded Armenia, forcing them to recognize Roman supremacy. In return, he allowed Tiridates I to ascend the throne provided he came to Rome to personally receive his crown from Nero.
- 3) Nero sent Suetonius Paulinus to Britain. After Suetonius Paulinus conquered the island of Mona, the main center of druidism, the queen of the Iceni and Trinovantes, Boudicca, staged a rebellion. Her husband, the king Prasutagus, had been killed by Roman procurators (working under tax collectors, e.g. Seneca the Younger). The procurators also raped Boudicca's daughters and flogged her, and robbed her of her land.
- a. Boudicca captured Camulodunum and Londinium. She massacred 70,000 Roman citizens in Londinium.

- b. Suetonius Paulinus defeated Boudicca and Boudicca killed herself.
- 4) Nero executed the freedman Callistus and his aunt Domitia Lepida (grandmother of Octavia and Britannicus).
  - a. Domitia Lepida had forced Narcissus to commit suicide upon the death of Claudius. She also had contrived to murder Marcus Junius Silanus, provincial governor of Asia. But Nero executed her.
- 5) Wanting to break free of his mother Agrippina the Younger, Nero expelled Pallas, a freedman and her biggest ally in the palace, from his court. Agrippina the Younger was pissed off and threatened to support Britannicus as rightful heir (Britannicus was the son of Claudius and Messalina). In response Nero poisoned Britannicus right before Agrippina's eyes.
- 6) Nero wanted to divorce his wife Octavia and marry his mistress Poppaea Sabina, but Agrippina didn't want this to happen.
  - a. Poppaea Sabina had been the wife of Marcus Salvius Otho. In return for allowing his tryst with Poppaea Sabina, Nero gave Otho the governorship of Lusitania (Portugal).
  - b. Nero exiled Octavia and married Poppaea Sabina. Nero killed Poppaea Sabina while she was pregnant by kicking her in the stomach, because he was batshit crazy.
  - c. After killing Poppaea Sabina, Nero attempted to marry Antonia, the daughter of Claudius. She was eventually executed.
- 7) Nero killed his mother Agrippina the Younger. He tried to with a collapsing boat, but she swam to safety and then he ordered Seneca and Burrus to have the praetorian guard kill her. Anicetus killed Agrippina the Younger, acting on Nero's orders.
- 8) When Burrus died in 62 AD, Nero replaced him with Tigellinus (Gaius Ofonius Tigellinus), the prefect of the *vigiles*.
- 9) Nero was into the arts, performing, music, theatre, etc., and toured Greece. He proclaimed Macedonia free of its governor, in thanks for Greece's welcoming attitude.
- 10) Nero was at Antium during the great fire at Rome in 64 AD. When he came back, he built an extravagant golden palace (the *domus aurea*). He scapegoated the Christians, a process described by Tacitus (who also hated Christians).
- 11) Gaius Calpurnius Piso, whose first marriage Caligula had destroyed, plotted against Nero—the famous Pisonian conspiracy. In the conspiracy were Lucan (Seneca's nephew) and several Praetorians. Because of the conspiracy, Seneca, Lucan, and Petronius had to commit suicide.
- 12) Nero forced Domitius Corbulo to commit suicide when an alleged plot against the throne was discovered at Beneventum.
- 13) Tigellinus' co-praetorian prefect Faenius Rufus rebelled against Nero at some point.
- 14) The Jewish Revolt under Nero
  - a. Judea was incensed by the plundering of their temples' treasures and by Nero's lack of response when the Greeks attacked their Jewish neighbors in the city of Caesarea.
  - b. The imperial legate of Syria, Cestus Gallus, beseiged Jerusalem but had to retreat when the winter came.
  - c. Nero gave Titus Flavius Vespasianus (Vespasian) a special command to quell the uprising in Judea. In 67 BC, Vespasian drew a noose around Jerusalem by taking the countryside. Among those who surrendered was Josephus, commander of the rebels in Galilee and future historian..
  - d. After Nero: in 70 BC, Titus, Vespasian's elder son, stormed and captured Jerusalem. A relief on the Arch of Titus shows this destruction and a triumphal procession bearing the spoils from the Temple of Jerusalem, including a menorah. The funds from the sack were used to fund the Colosseum.
  - e. At Masada, a rebel stronghold, all but two women and five children committed suicide when Flavius Silva took Masada.
- 15) The revolt of Julius Vindex in Gaul against Nero in 68 AD
  - a. Nero was prevented from touring Asia Minor and Egypt when the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, Julius Vindex, rebelled against him. By spring, Otho (governor of

- Lusitania) and Servius Sulpicius Galba (governor of Hispania Citerior) also supported Vindex against Nero.
- b. Lucius Verginius Rufus, Nero's loyal commander in Upper Germany, led three legions into Gaul and defeated Vindex at Vesontio. Vindex committed suicide.
  - c. But Galba went to Rome and bribed the Praetorians, also winning the support of the Senate. Galba was declared emperor. Nero, after saying his last words "*qualis artifex pereo*", had a faithful freedman kill him.
  - d. Nymphidius Sabinus, Tigellinus' successor as the Praetorian Prefect of Nero, urged the Praetorian Guard to defect to Galba.
  - e. Galba restored Nero's fallen statues and took the name Nero.

### Galba (69 AD)

- 1) Galba pissed off the legions on the Rhine by recalling their beloved commander Verginius Rufus. In response, they declared for the general Aulus Vitellius.
- 2) Galba appointed the aristocratic Lucius Calpurnius Piso Licinianus as his successor. Otho, former husband of Poppaea Sabina and governor of Lusitania, became jealous and angry.
- 3) Otho went to the Praetorian Guard and got them to proclaim him emperor. The Praetorians murdered Galba and Piso Licinianus.

### Otho (69 AD)

- 1) Otho was supported by the Praetorian Guard and the Roman people, but the legions on the Rhine still had declared for Vitellius.
- 2) Otho defeated part of the Vitellian forces at Bedriacum.
- 3) At Cremona, Vitellius' forces under Valens and Caecina slaughtered Otho's forces. Otho committed suicide.
  - a. Suetonius Paulinus, victor over Boudicca, fought for Otho.
- 4) Otho took the name Nero and restored Nero's statues.
- 5) Otho was the first emperor who did not have roots in the old Republican aristocracy. Otho's brother Titianus acted as his commander-in-chief.

### Vitellius (69 AD)

- 1) Vitellius failed to prevent looting and violence following Cremona.
- 2) The armies in the East declared for Vespasian. Vespasian left his son Titus to finish sacking Jerusalem and hastened to Egypt to cut off Rome's grain supply.
- 3) At the Second Battle of Cremona, Antonius Primus, the governor of Syria attacking Italy on Vespasian's behalf, defeated Vitellius' forces and brutally sacked Cremona.
- 4) In Rome, Vitellius tried to surrender to Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother. But Vitellius' troops wouldn't let him surrender, and Vitellius was forced to besiege Flavius Sabinus on the Capitoline. The Vitellians destroyed the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and executed Flavius Sabinus.
  - a. Flavius Sabinus had been prefect of the city (*praefectus urbi*) under Otho.
- 5) On December 20<sup>th</sup>, 69 AD, Danubian troops fighting for Vespasian killed Vitellius.
- 6) The senate chose Vespasian as the new emperor.

### Vespasian (69 AD – 79 AD)

- 1) Vespasian was born in AD 9 to an equestrian family that lived near Reate.
- 2) Vespasian's military and financial abilities had won him posts under Claudius and Nero.
- 3) The rebellion of Julius Civilis in Gaul
  - a. Julius Civilis, chief of the Germanic Batavi and a Roman citizen, had raised a revolt against Vitellius in favor of Vespasian.

- b. When Vespasian tried to compromise with Vitellius, Julius Civilis joined with others hostile to Vespasian and formed the *Imperium Galliarum*, the empire of the Gauls, supposedly to create an independent Gallic nation.
- c. Quintus Petilius Cerialis, Vespasian's son-in-law, defeated Julius Civilis in 70 AD. He also conquered the territory of the Brigantes around Eburacum (York).
- 4) Titus captured Jerusalem. See above, under Nero.
  - a. Following the capture of Jerusalem, the council of the Sanhedrin was abolished, the Temple of Jerusalem destroyed, and the Jews required to pay taxes to Jupiter Capitolinus. They were still allowed exemption from Caesar worship.
- 5) Vespasian does a lot of good stuff
  - a. Vespasian reformed the army. He made sure legionaries did not serve where they were born, to make sure they didn't develop local sentiments against Rome.
  - b. Vespasian extended military recruitment and academies to Gaul and Spain.
  - c. Vespasian extended Latin rights to 250 Spanish towns, urbanized Dalmatia, and gave the Danubian provinces Roman citizen colonies (*coloniae deductae*).
  - d. Vespasian used his powers of Censor (taking after Claudius) to expand the senate with Gallic and Spanish aristocracy. Vespasian added 800 to the Senate.
  - e. Vespasian sent Petilius Cerialis, Frontinus, and Tacitus to conquer Britain, which Claudius and Nero had left unfinished.
  - f. Vespasian did not help Parthia when the Alans overran Media and threatened Parthia's existence.
  - g. Vespasian balanced the budget and started taxing previously exempt provinces.
  - h. Building projects under Vespasian
    - i. The Forum of Vespasian with the Temple of Peace in the center
    - ii. The Arch of Titus
    - iii. The Colosseum
    - iv. New temple to Jupiter Capitolinus
  - i. Vespasian expelled Cynic and Stoic philosophers from Rome when they harangued him.
- 6) Vespasian died in the spring of 79 of a fever. He said *puto deus fio* ("I think I'm becoming a God").
- 7) Vespasian's successor was his elder son Titus, who had shared the censorship and seven consulships with his father Vespasian. Vespasian had also appointed Titus sole prefect of the Praetorian guard.
- 8) In 79 AD, Aulus Caecina tried to grab the throne from Titus, but Titus used his position as prefect of the Praetorian guard to thwart Caecina.

### **Titus (79 to 81 AD)**

- 1) Titus had a love affair with Queen Berenice, sister of the Jewish king Herod Agrippa II. Conservative senators were reminded of Antony and Cleopatra, so Titus sent Berenice away. Titus was generally an awesome ruler, the "darling of all the world".
- 2) Three major disasters during Titus' reign
  - a. In August 79 AD, Mount Vesuvius erupted, covering Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. Pliny the Elder, commander of the fleet at Misenum, died trying to save people in Stabiae.
  - b. A plague descended on Campania
  - c. Another great fire raged in Rome for three days.
- 3) In September 81 AD, after a reign of twenty-six months, Titus died of a fever. He was only 43. The people mourned him greatly and he was deified.

### **Domitian (81 to 96 AD)**

- 1) Titus Flavius Domitianus (Domitian) was Vespasian's younger son. Though he had held both seven consulships from 70 to 80, they were largely honorific, and neither Vespasian nor Titus had treated him seriously.
- 2) After Titus' death, Vespasian rode to Rome and got the Praetorian Guard to acclaim him as emperor. There weren't really any rivals.
- 3) Domitian's cognomen *Domitianus* honored the Neronian general Domitius Corbulo. Domitian also married Domitius Corbulo's daughter, Domita Longina.
- 4) After taking office, Domitian appeared before the senate in the regalia of a triumphant general, an *imperator*, offending many senators and aristocrats. He was also made censor for life (*ensor perpetuus*) and asked poets, courtiers and appointees to call him Lord and God (*dominus et deus*).
- 5) Public Benefactions
  - a. Domitian completed the Colosseum, built the Odeum and a Stadium in the *Campus Martius*, and completed the Arch and Baths of Titus.
  - b. Domitian restored the temple complex of Serapis and Isis, and restored the Pantheon and baths of Agrippa. In front of the temple to Serapis and Isis, he placed Egyptian Obelisks. Domitian also built a temple to the deified Vespasian and a temple to *Juppiter Custos*.
  - c. Domitian built a new temple to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline, with columns of marble, gold-plated doors, and roof tiles with gold leaf overlaid.
- 6) Religion
  - a. Domitian had taken an interest at a young age in Roman Religion, and only allowed the worship of traditional Roman deities (except for Isis).
  - b. In the civil war of 69 AD, Domitian had escaped by disguising himself as an acolyte of Isis, so he permitted the worship of Isis in Rome.
- 7) The Rebellion of Saturninus against Domitian in 89 AD
  - a. Lucius Antonius Saturninus, governor of Upper Germany and commander of two legions in the winter quarters at Moguntiacum, bribed the troops to proclaim him emperor, thus rebelling against Domitian.
  - b. Saturninus induced the Chatti (a strong German tribe east of the middle Rhine) to invade Roman territory.
  - c. Domitian called up Trajan from Spain to help him defeat Saturninus, but the governor of Lower Germany, Lappius Maximus, defeated Saturninus before they could get there, at the battle of Castellum.
  - d. Domitian executed many Saturninans and had their heads displayed on the rostra.
- 8) Domitian vs. Decebalus of Dacia
  - a. Decebalus of Dacia invaded the Roman province of Moesia, across the Danube.
  - b. In 85, Domitian marched on Decebalus.
  - c. In 89, Domitian and Decebalus came to an agreement whereby Decebalus surrendered captives and accepted the role of Roman client king.
- 9) In 89 Domitian banished philosophers and astrologers from Rome.
- 10) In 95 or 96 AD, Domitian executed his cousin Flavius Clemens and exiled Flavia Domitilla, Flavius Clemens' wife and also Domitian's cousin.
- 11) The Murder of Domitian, 96 AD
  - a. Influential senators and members of the court, possibly including Domitian's wife the Empress Domitia, entered into a conspiracy.
  - b. Stephanus was the devoted butler of the exiled Flavia Domitilla. Stephanus pretended that he had information about a conspiracy against Domitian, and took Domitian into Domitian's bedroom. There, Stephanus gave him a list of names and then stabbed him in the groin.

## **Nerva (96 to 98 AD)**

- 1) Nerva came from a family of distinguished jurists, but one which had only gained aristocratic acceptance through the marriage of his maternal uncle with a Julio-Claudian. Nerva was consul in 71 AD under Vespasian, and again in 90 under Domitian.
- 2) Nerva vowed never to put a senator to death without a senatorial trial, restored the senate's administration of grain, suspended the *maiestas* (treason law), recalled senatorial exiles, and suppressed informers. As such, the senate loved him.
- 3) Nerva was forced to allow the Praetorian Guard to kill Domitian's assassins, including their former Praetorian prefect.
- 4) Nerva adopted Marcus Ulpius Traianus (Trajan) as his son, heir and co-regent. Trajan was the governor of Upper Germany.

### Trajan (98 to 117 AD)

- 1) Trajan was the first emperor of provincial origin, and was from Spain.
- 2) Trajan was born at Italica near Hispalis (Seville), in the Spanish province of Baetica.
- 3) Trajan had a military career under Vespasian and Domitian, and had won the title of *Germanicus* as governor of Upper Germany under Nerva.
- 4) Trajan styled himself an *optimus princeps*, a title officially assumed in 115 BC.
- 5) Trajan greatly increased the number of provincial senators, making provincial appointees account for 40 percent of the senate.
- 6) Trajan introduced or greatly expanded the *alimenta*, a program of public assistance for freeborn children.
- 7) Trajan invaded Dacia in 101 AD, fighting against King Decebalus of Dacia.
  - a. Trajan was defeated by Decebalus at Tapae near the Danube's Iron Gates.
  - b. In 102 AD, Trajan invaded Dacia again and captured the Dacian capital of Sarmizegethusa, stationing a permanent garrison there. Decebalus surrendered and agreed to become a Roman client. Trajan received the title *Dacicus*.
  - c. In 105 AD, Decebalus rebelled again. Trajan defeated him and Decebalus committed suicide, and Trajan imported 50,000 Dacian war prisoners as slaves in the arena.
  - d. After Decebalus' suicide, Trajan annexed Dacia as a province and made Sarmizegethusa a colony (Ulpia Traiana).
- 8) Trajan defeats Parthia and Chosroes, the Parthian King: 113 to 117 AD
  - a. Chosroes, the new Parthian king, deposed the king of Armenia without Rome's consent. Trajan conquered one Parthian capital, Ctesiphon.
- 9) Revolts under Trajan: Seleucia, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Armenia revolt.
  - a. The most serious revolts are of the Jews in Cyrenaica, Mesopotamia, Adiabene (northern Assyria), Cyprus, and Egypt: savage massacres.
  - b. Trajan's Mauretanian general Lusius Quietus the Moor helped him.
  - c. Trajan captured and destroyed Seleucia on the Tigris, pacifying southern Mesopotamia.
- 10) Trajan Dies in 117 AD: On the road back from Ctesiphon, he became ill. Setting out for Rome, he left Hadrian (Publius Aelius Hadrianus) in command of the near East. Trajan died at Selinus and Cilicia of a stroke.
- 11) Summary: By conquering Dacia and Parthia, Trajan expanded the empire to its greatest extent.

### Hadrian (117 to 138 AD)

- 1) After the death of Trajan the armies of Syria proclaimed Hadrian emperor, and the senate confirmed him.
- 2) Hadrian was born at Rome in 76 AD, of Spanish parents. His mother was from Gades, while his father was from Italica in Baetica, the same town where Trajan was born.
  - a. Hadrian was orphaned at 10 and became a ward of Hadrian, his father's cousin and closest male relative.

- 3) Hadrian loved Greek art and philosophy, and received the half-contemptuous nickname *Graeculus*. Hadrian loved a handsome young Bithynian Greek called Antinous whom he met on an Eastern tour in 123 AD.
- 4) Hadrian was Trajan's quaestor in the First Dacian War. In the Second Dacian War, Hadrian commanded a legion. He was governor of Lower Pannonia and later Syria.
- 5) Hadrian married Trajan's grandniece, Vibia Sabina.
- 6) Hadrian's trusted friend Marcus Turbo replaced Trajan's Moorish chieftain, Lusius Quetus. Marcus Turbo helped him quell revolts in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Cyprus, Moesia, Danube, in Britain, etc.
- 7) Trajan abandoned all recent Roman conquests east of the Euphrates, allowing Greater Armenia to revert to a client kingdom, and making peace with Parthia. Trajan celebrated a magnificent triumph over Parthia.
- 8) Lusius Quietus and three other former chieftains were unhappy with Hadrian's abandoning of expansionist policies. They were executed, supposedly without Hadrian's knowledge.
  - a. Revolt broke out in Mauretania after Lusius Quietus' execution, and was put down by Marcus Turbo. Hadrian also led an expedition against the Moors.
- 9) Hadrian built Hadrian's Wall in Britain, which stretched from Solway Firth to the Tyne and was designed to keep restrain Northern tribesmen.
  - a. Hadrian was the first emperor to build large-scale fixed frontier defenses.
- 10) Under Hadrian, Chosroes of Parthia declared war but decided to negotiate when Hadrian arrived with impressive troop concentrations.
- 11) In Athens, Hadrian completed the *Olympeion*, a huge temple to Olympian Zeus which the tyrant Peisistratus had begun seven centuries before.
  - a. Hadrian built the city of Hadrianopolis in the suburbs of Athens, and he built the *Panhelleion* (a temple dedicated to Greek unity) in Hadrianopolis.
- 12) In Judaea, Hadrian resolved to found a Roman colony called Aelia Capitolina on the site of Jerusalem.
  - a. Hadrian also erected a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus in the Temple of Jerusalem, thereby provoking the rebellion under Simon Bar Kokhba.
  - b. The Jews captured Jerusalem, slaughtered a Roman legion under Bar Kokhba.
  - c. Hadrian appointed Julius Severus to quash the rebellion. Severus slaughtered half a million people and quelled the revolt in 135 AD.
  - d. After Hadrian's general Julius Severus defeated the Jewish Revolt of Simon Bar Kokhba, Hadrian forcibly removed the surviving Jewish Population of Jerusalem.
    - i. Hadrian renamed Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina.
    - ii. Hadrian renamed Judea Syria Palestina.
- 13) Hadrian frequently bestowed the right of *Latinus Maius* (Greater Latinity) which allowed citizenship for all the decurions, town councils, and magistrates of a town.
- 14) Hadrian continued Vespasian's policy of using *equites* as the heads of executive departments rather than Claudius' policy of using freedmen.
- 15) Under Hadrian, the *Concilium Principis*, formerly an informal conclave of palace advisers and friends, began to become a more formal Imperial Council.
- 16) Hadrian made the unanimous opinions (*responsa*) of distinguished jurist the force of law and binding upon judges trying similar cases.
- 17) Hadrian commissioned Salvius Julianus to draw up a Praetorian Perpetual Edict, binding on all present and future praetors unless authorized by the emperor or senate.
- 18) In accordance with Stoic philosophy, Hadrian made it illegal for a master to kill, torture or castrate slaves, to sell them as gladiators, or to use them for lured or immoral purposes. Hadrian deprived the *paterfamilias* of the power of death over his children.
- 19) Hadrian spent his last years at his beautiful villa at Tibur (Tivoli), up the Anio.
- 20) Hadrian's first choice to succeed him was Lucius Ceionius Commodus, whom he adopted as Lucius Aelius Caesar. When Lucius died, Hadrian adopted Antoninus Pius (Titus Aurelius Antoninus), a rich and virtuous senator.

- a. Hadrian required Antoninus Pius to adopt Lucius Ceionius Commodus, the seven year old son of Aelius Caesar, and Marcus Aurelius (Marcus Annus Verus), the seventeen-year-old nephew of Antoninus Pius' own wife.
  - b. Marcus Aurelius was betrothed to Aelius Caesar's daughter, but broke it off so he could marry Faustina, Antoninus Pius' daughter.
- 21) Hadrian died in 138 AD at Baiae near Naples. Antoninus Pius buried his body in a special mausoleum (the Mausoleum of Hadrian, now the Castel Sant' Angelo) and had Hadrian deified against the wishes of the Senate.

### **Antoninus Pius (138 to 161)**

- 1) Titus Aurelius Antoninus won the title of Pius for burying Hadrian, getting him deified.
  - a. Antoninus Pius prevented the senate from annulling the *acta* of Hadrian, in return abolishing the four hated judgeships of Italy and sparing proscribed senators.
- 2) Antoninus Pius was born and raised at Lanuvium, though his rich aristocratic family came from Nemausus (Nimes) in Southern Gaul.
  - a. Antoninus Pius had an estate at Lorium which pleased him a lot.
- 3) Hadrian made Antoninus Pius district judge of Italy in 120 and proconsul of Asia in 135. Later Hadrian made Antoninus Pius a member of the *consilium principis* and his successor.
- 4) Antoninus Pius had an intimate knowledge of the law, and five jurists were on the Imperial Council. He increased penalties against masters who killed their slaves.
- 5) Antoninus Pius built a wall in Scotland between the firths of Forth and Clyde. Antoninus Pius' Wall was built of Turf and Clay and was 37 miles. Antoninus pushed the border of the frontier about 75 miles to the North.
- 6) Antoninus Pius had a peaceful career and died at Lorium in 168 AD. In his delirium he talked of the lying kings and the Empire that had betrayed him.

### **Marcus Aurelius (161 to 180)**

- 1) Marcus Aurelius was a devotee of Stoic Philosophy and wrote the *Meditations* in Greek while encamped along the Danube during the Marcommanic Wars.
  - a. Aurelius studied Stoicism under Junius Rusticus, who lent him Epictetus' *Discourses*.
- 2) Fronto was Marcus Aurelius' tutor. Fronto taught him rhetoric and law. Marcus Aurelius corresponded with Fronto for many years. Lather Aurelius was taught by Maecianus and Atticus, law and rhetoric respectively.
- 3) Marcus Aurelius faced many disasters: a flood of the Tiber, a famine in Galatia, a revolt in Britain, a German crossing of the Rhine, and an invasion of Armenia and Parthia by the young Parthian king Vologeses III.
- 4) Marcus first act on emperor was to appoint his adoptive brother, Lucius Ceionius Commodus the Younger, as his colleague with the new name Lucius Verus. Marcus Aurelius' daughter Lucilla married Verus later. Verus went to deal with Parthia.
- 5) Lucius Verus fights Vologeses III of Parthia: 161 to 165 AD
  - a. Verus' subordinates were Statius Priscus and Avidius Cassius.
  - b. Statius Priscus invaded Armenia and captured and burned Artaxata, its capital.
  - c. Avidius Cassius, a Syrian-born taskmaster, crossed the Euphrates and invaded Mesopotamia, capturing Edess, Nisibis, Ctesiphon and Seleucia. Avidius Cassius burnt Seleucia to the ground. Soldiers returning from Seleucia brought plague.
  - d. Verus died of a stroke while returning from Danube preparations due to the plague.
- 6) The Marcommanic War along the Danube: 168 to 175
  - a. Aurelius fought against the Quadi, Marcommani and Iazyges (of Sarmatia), as well as the Chatti and Chauci.
  - b. In 170, the Quadi and Marcommani defeated Aurelius and swept into Italy, besieging Aquileia, the seaport at the head of the Adriatic.

- c. Aurelius granted temporary peace with the Quadi and Marcommani in order to deal with the Moors, who had plundered the Temple of Mysteries at Eleusis.
  - d. Aurelius found pretexts to attack them when he had dealt with the Moors. This set off the Second Marcommanic War.
  - e. Marcus Aurelius has a column in the Campus Martius which commemorates the Marcommanic Wars.
- 7) Avidius Cassius rebels against Marcus Aurelius, 175 AD
- a. Avidius Cassius was governor of Syria, and he rebelled when misled by the false rumor of Marcus Aurelius' death. Before Aurelius could defeat him, a legionary showed him with the head of Cassius, which Aurelius ordered buried reverently.
- 8) The Third Marcommanic War: 178 to 180 AD
- a. Aurelius crushed the Quadi and Marcommani, and built a legionary camp at Castra Regina on the Danube. But, he did not conquer their towns.
  - b. After the Third Marcommanic War, Aurelius created two new provinces, Marcommania and Sarmatia.
- 9) Aurelius made his successor, his son Commodus, co-emperor in 177 AD.

### Interlude I: Roman Architecture in the First Two Centuries AD

- 1) Imperial Palaces
- a. Emperors all had palaces on the Palatine hill.
  - b. Nero's Domus Aurea. Vespasian destroyed the Domus Aurea and replaced it with a smaller palace.
  - c. Hadrian was an innovative architect and designed his own villa near Tibur.
- 2) Public Buildings
- a. The Flavian emperors destroyed the Domus Aurea and built the Colosseum and baths of Titus on its site.
  - b. Titus began the Arch of Titus, at the eastern entrance to the Forum. It commemorates his victory against the Jews, and has a menorah.
  - c. Vespasian began the Temple of Peace (also called the Forum of Vespasian) to commemorate the end of the Jewish revolt. The Forum of Vespasian was southeast of the Forum of Augustus and just North of the original forum.
    - i. Vespasian also completed the temple of the Deified Claudius.
    - ii. Vespasian probably built the *Templum Sacrae Urbis* (Temple of the Sacred City)
  - d. Vespasian began and Domitian finished the Colosseum, originally called the Flavian Amphitheatre, which received the name Colossus from the massive statue of Nero near it, which Vespasian reworked into a statue of the sun god.
  - e.
- 3) The Forum of Trajan is the largest Imperial forum and the Forum of Nerva is the smallest.
- 4) Hadrian's Public Buildings
- a. Hadrian built the Temple of Venus and Rome, the largest temple in Ancient Rome, between the Colosseum and the Temple of Peace (Forum of Vespasian).
  - b. Hadrian built the Pantheon in Rome, now a Christian Church. The original Pantheon was built by Agrippa, Augustus' colleague. An *oculus* (a round opening in the top) is at the apex of the cylindrical ceiling.
  - c. Antoninus Pius buried Hadrian in Hadrian's tomb, a colossal round mausoleum across the Tiber, now the Castel Sant' Angelo.
- 5) Trajan's Column in the courtyard behind the Basilica Ulpia commemorated the Dacian Wars. The narrative on the column culminates with the death of King Decebalus of Dacia.
- a. Marcus Aurelius imitated Trajan's column with his own in the Campus Martius.

### Commodus (180 to 192 BC)

- 1) Commodus was proclaimed a Caesar in 166 AD, at the age of five. At fifteen, he was made consul, granted *imperium*, and given the title of Augustus. From fifteen, he was a joint ruler with his father.
- 2) Commodus made several *congiaria* (donations of money) and set up a trade route from Africa to Rome to curry popular favor.
  - a. Commodus used the javelin and bow to kill wild beasts in the arena. He trained and fought left-handed as a *secutor*. He boasted of 620 victories in an inscription.
  - b. Commodus had his head placed atop the Colossus and added the club and lion skin of Hercules to it. The Colossus had been dedicated to Nero and then to Helios.
  - c. Commodus dressed in lion skin, carried a club, and associated himself with Hercules. He printed coins with the inscription HERC COMMODUS. He later associated himself with Jupiter, Mithras, Sol, Cybele, Serapis, and Isis. He also embroidered his clothes with gold.
  - d. Commodus renamed Rome the colony of Commodiana.
- 3) Commodus' sister Lucilla was married first to Lucius Verus and then to Titus Claudius Pompeianus, who advised Commodus to finish the Marcommanic War. Commodus negotiated instead, abandoning Aurelius' plans for a frontier on the Elbe River and the Carpathian Mountains.
  - a. Commodus himself was married to Bruttia Crispina, who didn't produce an heir.
- 4) Commodus' first palace chamberlain (*cubicularius*) was Saoterus, a Bithynian Greek freedman.
- 5) In 182 AD, Lucilla and senators plotted against Commodus. Claudius Pompeianus, Lucilla's husband, was not involved.
  - a. Lucilla's daughter by Lucius Verus and the daughter's two lovers, Quintianus (Claudius Pompeianus' relation) and Ummidius Quadratus, were involved.
  - b. Quintianus bungled the assassination of Commodus by proclaiming that the senate was sending the dagger in his hand.
  - c. All the conspirators were executed and arrested, including Lucilla, after a brief exile to Capri. Commodus also suspected and executed his wife, Bruttia Crispina. Claudius Pompeianus retired from public life to avoid suspicion.
- 6) Two members of Ummidius Quadratus' household later became close to Commodus: the freedman Electus became Commodus' chamberlain and the freedwoman Marcia became Commodus' concubine.
- 7) Publius Tarrutienus Paternus and Sextus Tigidius Perennis, Commodus' two joint Pretorian Prefects, brought about the murder of his chamberlain Saoterus.
  - a. Paternus was promoted to the Senate and Perennis became the sole Pretorian Prefect. Perennis then engineered Paternus' execution on charges of planning to put his son-in-law on the throne.
  - b. Perennis removed senatorial generals from their commands and replaced them with equestrian legates. He removed two who later became emperor: Helvius Pertinax (protégé of Claudius Pompeianus and governor of Syria) and Septimius Severus.
  - c. Cleander later recalled Pertinax as well.
  - d. Didius Julianus later became emperor too; he was a relative of Paternus' son-in-law.
- 8) The so-called Deserters' War, a series of provincial mutinies, occurred under Commodus.
- 9) Under Perennis, there was trouble in Northern Britain. A new governor retrieved the situation, allowing Commodus to be proclaimed Britannicus. But then people rebelled against the governor; Perennis fell before he could address this.
- 10) In 185 AD, a group of palace freedmen led by the chamberlain Cleander and including the freedwoman Marcia overthrew Perennis. Cleander and Marcia appointed Imperial administrators in exchange for bribes.
  - a. Cleander took the unprecedented step of appointing himself Praetorian Prefect.
- 11) In 187 AD, Cleander was brought down when the curator of the grain supply (*praefectus annonae*) created a grain shortage that the public blamed on Cleander. Helvius Pertinax, Pompeianus' protégé, may have had a hand in it.

- a. Quintus Aemilius Laetus replaced Cleander as Praetorian Prefect. Laetus was from Africa, the province when Pertinax had recently been proconsul.
  - b. Laetus appointed Septimius Severus as governor of Pannonia, a Danubian province.
    - i. Septimius Severus had been Pertinax's legate in Syria.
    - ii. Septimius Severus' brother was appointed governor of Lower Moesia.
  - c. Clodius Albinus, another African provincial, was appointed commander in Britain.
- 12) Before his assassination, Commodus was planning to move permanently into the gladiatorial barracks next to the Colosseum and kill the two new consuls on January 1<sup>st</sup>, proclaiming himself sole consul in their place.
- 13) Commodus' Praetorian Prefect Laetus, his freedman Electus (who had replaced Cleander), and his concubine Marcia plotted against him.
- a. Marcia tried to poison his food, but Commodus vomitted it due to drinking.
  - b. Commodus' wrestling partner, Narcissus, and another freedman then strangled him as he was bathing. He died on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 193 AD

### **Pertinax (193 AD)**

- 1) Laetus and Electus immediately informed Pertinax of Commodus' death and took him to the Praetorian barracks, where they helped him win the acclamation of the guard through promising each man 12,000 sesterces.
- 2) Claudius Pompeianus, Pertinax's old mentor and the second husband of Lucilla, came to Rome. Pertinax offered to defer in favor of Claudius Pompeianus, but he declined.
- 3) Pertinax made sure Commodus got a good burial though the senate damned his memory.
- 4) Pertinax's two mistakes were a) selling off high offices to get money for the treasury, alienating senators and b) alienating the Praetorian Guard through discipline and failing to pay them their money. In this he was like Galba.
- 5) Pertinax was murdered when hundreds of guardsmen entered the capital. He had ruled for 87 days.

### **Didius Julianus (193 AD)**

- 1) The guardsmen auctioned off the throne to Didius Julianus, a fabulously wealthy senator who promised to pay each man 25,000 sesterces.
- 2) The people of Rome did not like this, pelting Julianus with stones when he made his way into and out of the palace. The people thronged into the Circus Maximus and passed a resolution calling upon Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria, to take the throne by force. The legions of Syria saluted their governor as Emperor.
- 3) The armies of Britain simultaneously declared for their governor, Clodius Albinus, and the armies on the Danube declared for Septimius Severus (governor of Pannonia).
- 4) Julianus was killed after ruling 66 days.

### **Septimius Severus**

- 1) Septimius Severus had been born at Lepcis Magna in Africa Proconsularis. He had been governor of Gallia Lugdunensis and then Pannonia.
  - a. Severus spoke Latin with a Punic accent.
  - b. Severus' second wife was a Syrian woman named Julia Domna, who bore him the sons Caracalla (Septimius Bassianus) and Geta (Septimius Geta).
- 2) Septimius avenged the murder of Pertinax, whose name he assumed, and disbanded the Italian Praetorian Guard. He replaced this with 15,000 of his best legionary soldiers from Illyria and Thrace.
- 3) Septimius Severus acknowledged Clodius Albinus in Britain as his successor with the title Caesar. He did this to focus his armies against Pescennius Niger.
  - a. Septimius Severus defeated Pescennius Niger and captured Antioch. Niger was killed as he attempted to escape to the Parthians across the Euphrates.

- b. Byzantium fell to Severus in 195 AD and was virtually destroyed.
- 4) Septimius Severus fights Vologeses IV of Parthia: 194 to 195 AD
  - a. Vologeses IV of Parthia had offered assistance to Niger and tampered with the loyalty of the king of Osrhoene, a Roman client in northwestern Mesopotamia.
  - b. Severus overran Osrhoene, northern Mesopotamia, and Adiabene, but then was recalled to fight against Clodius Albinus.
- 5) Septimius Severus fights Clodius Albinus of Britain: 195 to 197 AD
  - a. Clodius Albinus amassed an army in Britain because he was suspicious of Severus' sincerity in acknowledging him Caesar and successor.
  - b. In 195 AD, Severus had the army in Mesopotamia declare Albinus a public enemy.
  - c. Clodius Albinus set up headquarters at Lugdunum (Lyons). Severus collected his forces in Pannonia in 197 AD and marched on Gaul.
  - d. At Lugdunum in 197 AD, Septimius Severus defeated Clodius Albinus. Severus allowed his soldiers to sack and burn Lugdunum. He purged Albinus' supporters in the senate.
- 6) Severus was adopted into the family of Marcus Aurelius, the Antonines, and proclaimed the deification of his "brother" Commodus.
- 7) In 195 or 196 AD, Severus had the army proclaim his elder son Septimius Bassianus (later the emperor Caracalla) as Caesar in place of Clodius Albinus. Septimius Bassianus was called Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.
- 8) Septimius had his house worshipped as the *domus divina* in military camps. Septimius Severus was called more and more by the title *dominus* (Vespasian had been *dominus et deus*).
  - a. Septimius is *numen praesens*, Julia Domna is Cybele, *Mater Senatus* and *Mater Patriae*, Geta is Sol and "Son of Severus the Unconquered, Pius Augustus."
- 9) Severus made the Italian senators a minority by appointed Africans and Eastern people.
  - a. Severus abolished the senatorial standing jury courts (*quaestiones perpetuae*) and placed their cases under the jurisdiction of the *praefectus urbi* and *praectus praetorio*.
- 10) Under Severus, the Praetorian Prefect became the commander-in-chief of all armed forces stationed in Italy, the man in charge of the grain supply, and vice president of the Imperial Council (now supreme court and legislative body of the Empire).
- 11) Trajan's wife was Plotina. She helped to engineer the smooth succession of Hadrian.
- 12) 197 to 205 AD: Septimius Severus' senior prefect is C. Fulvius Plautianus
  - a. Plautianus is Septimius Severus' kinsman from Lepcis Magna.
  - b. Plautianus virtually ruled the government while Septimius played the part of the Imperial Warrior.
  - c. Severus married his son Caracalla to Fulvia Plautilla, the daughter of Plautianus.
- 13) Severus created a new treasury, the *res privata principis*, from confiscations, to augment the *fiscus* (the regular Imperial treasury) and the *patrimonium Caesaris*.
  - a. Severus divided the Roman people into *honestiores* (more privileged honorable orders, including equites and all soldiers) and *humiliores* (less privileged humble people).
  - b. Severus disbanded the Italian Praetorian Guard, stationed a newly created legion in Italy, and appointed Near Eastern and African senators. He legalized marriages between soldiers and native women near the forts on the frontiers.
  - c. Severus replaced senatorial legate commanders with *equites* in his reorganization of the army.
  - d. Severus divided Britain and Syria each into two provinces, and separated Numidia from Africa.
- 14) The Second Parthian War: 197 to 198 AD
  - a. In imitation of Trajan, Severus went into Mesopotamia and sacked Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital.
  - b. Severus recreated Trajan's brief province of Mesopotamia.
- 15) Syria, Arabia, Palestine and Egypt

- a. Severus divided Syria into Syria Coele and Syria Phoenice (with its capital at Tyre), putting the rest in Arabia.
  - b. In Egypt, Severus gratified the Jewish population, and closed the tomb of Alexander the Great, associated with Pescennius Niger. Pescennius Niger had claimed to be a second Alexander. Severus permitted Egyptians to become senators at Rome for the first time. He was interested in Egyptian magic.
- 16) Septimius Severus dedicated a triumphal arch in the Forum commemorating his victory in the First Parthian War. It towers over the Comitium, where the *comitia curiata* met.
  - 17) Caracalla hated his wife, Fulvia Plautilla, and her father, the prefect Plautianus. Caracalla, age 18 in 205 AD, had Plautianus assassinated and divorced Fulvia Plautilla. Caracalla then purged the senate of Plautianus' supporters.
    - a. Quintus Maecius Laetus and the distinguished jurist Papinian were appointed as joint Praetorian prefects.
  - 18) Septimius and Julia Domna, along with Caracalla and Geta, went to Britain to lead an expedition into Scotland.
    - a. Septimius Severus rebuilt Hadrian's Wall.
    - b. Septimius Severus died at Eboracum (York) in 211 BC. He advised Caracalla and Geta on his deathbed to "agree with each other, enrich the soldiers, and despise everyone else."

### **Caracalla (211 to 217 AD)**

- 1) Caracalla and Geta ascended the throne together after Septimius Severus' death.
- 2) Caracalla lured Geta to their mother Julia Domna's apartment and murdered him in Domna's very arms. Domna had tried to favor her more temperate son Geta, but then tried to make the best of it with Caracalla.
  - a. Caracalla exterminated Geta's supporters, including Papinian.
  - b. Caracalla issued a new coin, the *Antonianus*, supposedly twice a *denarius*.
- 3) The name Caracalla came from a long Gallic cape he wore.
- 4) Caracalla's new Praetorian Prefect was Marcus Opellius Macrinus.
- 5) Caracalla promulgated the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, the Antonine Constitution, in 212 AD, which extended citizenship to all free inhabitants of the Empire.
- 6) Caracalla's German Wars
  - a. In 213 Caracalla went to the border of Raetia to attack the Germani.
  - b. Caracalla defeated the Germani at the river Main.
- 7) Caracalla's Parthian Wars against Artabanus V of Parthia
  - a. Caracalla proposed to marry the daughter of Artabanus V of Parthia. Artabanus rejected and Caracalla went to fight him.
  - b. Caracalla marched across Adiabene and invaded Media, but then retired to his winter quarters at Edessa (Urfa) in Osroene.
  - c. Caracalla was stabbed at the instigation of his Praetorian Prefect Macrinus, as he was travelling from Edessa to Carrhae to worship at the Temple of the Moon.

### **Macrinus (217 to 218 AD)**

- 1) Macrinus was ringleader of the plot against Caracalla, and a Mauretanian *eques*.
- 2) Macrinus was the first *princeps* without prior experience in the Senate to become emperor.
- 3) Macrinus adopted the name of Severus and bestowed the name Antoninus upon his young son Diadumenianus. Macrinus ordered the senate to proclaim Caracalla a god.
- 4) Macrinus continued Caracalla's war against Artabanus V of Parthia. But eventually he lost his own troops' support through an unfavorable agreement with Artabanus V, and was deserted by his own troops in favor of Elagabalus.

### **Elagabalus (218 to 212 AD)**

- 1) First, some info about some Syrian Queens.
  - a. Julia Domna was the wife of Septimius Severus. Julia Domna's sister was Julia Maesa, and Julia Maesa's daughters were Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea.
  - b. Julia Domna and Julia Maesa were daughters of the high priest of the sun god Elagabalus in the Arabian city of Emesa in Syria.
    - i. Plautianus had superseded Julia Domna in influence with Severus.
  - c. Julia Domna accompanied Caracalla to Parthia for his war against Artabanus V of Parthia, but died there soon after Caracalla was assassinated.
  - d. Macrinus forced Julia Maesa, sister of Julia Domna, to retire to Syria.
  - e. In Syria, Julia Maesa plotted with her daughters Julia Mamaea and Julia Soaemias. Julia Soaemias had a son: Elagabalus (so named because he had inherited the priesthood of Elagabalus; his real name was Varius Avitus). Julia Mamaea also had a son, Gessius Bassianus Alexianus, later the emperor Severus Alexander
  - f. Julia Maesa concocted the rumor that her grandson Elagabalus was the real son of Caracalla, and therefore a real Severus. The legions of Syria saluted Elagabalus (Varius Avitus) as emperor under the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Caracalla's royal name.
- 2) Elagabalus arrived at Rome wearing a purple silk robe, rouge on his cheeks, a necklace of pearls, and a bejeweled crown. He imported a conical black stone, the cult image of the god Elagabalus, to Rome from Emesa.
  - a. Elagabalus enshrined the stone in a temple on the Palatine and worshipped it with sex, drums, cymbals, and singing of Syrian women.
  - b. Elagabalus made the sun god Elagabalus the supreme deity of the Roman state.
- 3) Elagabalus entrusted most of the duties of state to his mother Julia Maesa. But Maesa saw that Elagabalus would lead to the downfall of the Severans and suggested that Elagabalus adopt his cousin, Julia Mamaea's son Severus Alexander (then Gessius Bassianus Alexianus), under the name Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander.
  - a. Severus Alexander was preferred by the senate and people; Elagabalus regretted his decision and twice tried to kill Severus Alexander.
- 4) Julia Mamaea and her mother Julia Maesa appealed to the Praetorian Guard, who hunted down and killed Elagabalus and his mother Julia Soaemias as they hid in a latrine. The Praetorians dragged Soaemias and Elagabalus' corpses through the streets of Rome to the Aemilian bridge (*pons Aemilianus*), tying them down with weights and hurling them into the Tiber.

### Severus Alexander (222 to 235 AD)

- 1) Severus Alexander's real name was Gessius Bassianus Alexianus, as his cousin Elagabalus' real name was Varius Avitus.
- 2) Severus Alexander was only fourteen, and his domineering mother Julia Mamaea really held power.
- 3) Severus Alexander instituted primary school education all across the Empire, legalized guilds (*collegia*), and reduced taxes.
- 4) Severus Alexander's praetorian prefect was Ulpian (Domitius Ulpianus), a distinguished jurist.
  - a. In 228, the Praetorian Guard mutinied and murdered its prefect Ulpian, because he was too strict.
    - i. The historian Cassius Dio would have been killed too by mutiny if Severus Alexander hadn't sent him back to Bithynia, his homeland.
- 5) In Parthia, the Arsacid regime was overthrown by the Sassanid dynasty of Artaxerxes I (Artaxerxes I) and his son Shapur I.
  - a. Artaxerxes I and Shapur I tried to reestablish the old Persian Empire of the Achaemenids.

- b. Severus Alexander went to the East and fought against Artaxerxes I. He didn't manage to make much progress but celebrated a triumph in Rome.
- 6) The Alemannia and other German tribes were breaking into Gaul and Raetia. Severus Alexander bought them off, and his men were pissed off, because they wanted the money for themselves, so Maximinus Thrax rebelled.
- 7) Maximinus Thrax (Gaius Iulius Verus Maximus), a Thracian and commander of the Pannonian legions, mutinied and killed Severus Alexander and his mother Julia Mamaea. With Severus Alexander's death, the Severan dynasty ended.

### **Maximinus Thrax (235-238 AD)**

- 1) Maximus Thrax, having led the mutiny against Severus Alexander, became emperor and fought successfully against the Germanic tribes across the Danube, almost completing Aurelius' scheme of conquest.
- 2) Maximinus Thrax offended wealthy North African landowners in the senate by enforcing taxation. They raised a revolt in favor of Gordian I (Marcus Antonius Gordianus) and his son Gordian II.
- 3) Gordian I and his son Gordian II both died in fighting Maximinus. The senate then made Pupienus and Balbinus (Marcus Pupienus Maximus and Decimus Calvinus Balbinus) co-emperors. The Praetorian Guard compelled the Senate to make Gordian III, the thirteen-year old nephew of Gordian II, emperor designate with the title Caesar.
- 4) Maximinus Thrax was 8'6" and the first barbarian emperor. He never set foot in Rome.
- 5) Maximinus Thrax was killed by his own men when he failed to take Aquileia.

### **Pupienus and Balbinus**

- 1) Pupienus and Balbinus, the senatorial appointees to emperor after Gordian I and Gordian II died, did not give enough money to the Praetorian Guard, who killed them.

### **Gordian III**

- 1) After Pupienus and Balbinus' deaths, Gordian III became sole emperor, with the powerful support of his father-in-law, the Praetorian Prefect Gaius Furius Timistheus.
- 2) Gordian III and Timistheus fought Shapur I in the East, breaking the Persian siege of Anticho and recovering the province of Mesopotamia. Timistheus died on the point of taking Ctesiphon, the Persian capital.
  - a. Philip the Arab replaced Timistheus as Gordian III's Praetorian Prefect.
  - b. Gordian III either fell off a horse and died, or Philip the Arab engineered a mutiny, taking advantage of a threatened food shortage.

### **Philip the Arab (244-249)**

- 1) Philip the Arab reached a settlement with Shapur I.
- 2) Philip the Arab celebrated Rome's one-thousandth anniversary with a big bash.
- 3) While Philip was celebrating, an invasion of the Goths and Carpi led the Danubian legions to acclaim their general emperor, and other legions to do the same.
  - a. Philip sent Decius to restore order on the Danube, but his success just made the Danubian soldiers proclaim Decius emperor instead of Philip.
- 4) In 249 AD at the Battle of Verona, Decius defeated and killed Philip the Arab.

### **Decius (249-251 AD)**

- 1) Decius instituted the first empire-wide persecution of Christians.
- 2) Decius was slain by the Goths under Cniva at the Battle of Abrittus in 251 AD.
  - a. He fell into a trap on boggy ground.

- b. Decius' ineffectual, perhaps purposely unhelpful command was Gaius Vibius Trebonianus Gallus.

### **Gallus (251 – 253 AD)**

- 1) After Decius' death at the Battle of Abrittus, the new emperor Gallus made a disadvantageous treaty with the Goths, allowing them high-ranking prisoners, a guarantee of tribute, and their plunder.
- 2) Later, when Gallus responded to Persian aggression (following a delay due to the plague), the Danubian troops declared for their commander, Aurelius Aemilianus in 253 AD.
  - a. Aemilianus was killed as he was coming to Rome.
  - b. Gallus was killed by his own men.

### **Valerian (253-260 AD)**

- 1) The troops in Raetia declared for an old and respected senator, Publius Licinius Valerianus. Aemilianus was murdered as he was marching to seize Italy, so...
- 2) The Senate gladly confirmed Valerian as co-emperor with his son Gallienus.
- 3) Valerian persecuted Christians, but his son abandoned that persecution.
- 4) Valerian fights Shapur I
  - a. In 253 Shapur I invaded Mesopotamia and Syria, while the Goths plundered the coasts of Asia minor. Valerian led an expedition to the East in 256 AD.
  - b. At the Battle of Edessa in 260 AD, Shapur I defeated and captured Valerian, who became the first Roman emperor to be captured by the enemy.
    - i. Shapur I commemorated Valerian's humiliation on a huge rock-carved relief
  - c. Odenathus, the Roman client shiek of Palmyra, thoroughly defeated Shapur I, leaving him military crippled for a long time. Gallienus rewarded Odenathus.
    - i. Palmyra was an oasis and caravan city in the Syrian desert. Its marketplaces were filled with goods from China, India, Persia, and Arabia: textiles, spices, perfumes, jewelry. Trajan had made it a recruiting ground for the Romans.
    - ii. Gallienus, now sole emperor, rewarded Odenathus by making him commander of all the Roman forces in the Near East. Odenathus reciprocated by destroying some pretenders in the Near east.
  - d. Odenathus then invaded Persia in 267 AD, but then had to turn back to face the Goths. He was stabbed by an unknown assassin. His widow, Zenobia, took over though Vaballathus (son of Odenathus and Zenobia) ruled in name.

### **Gallienus (253-268)**

- 1) Gallienus became sole emperor after the Battle of Edessa, when Shapur I captured his father Valerian.
- 2) Gallienus abandoned his father's persecutions, proclaiming a forty-year peace known as the "little peace of the Church."
- 3) Gallienus fought the Marcommani, Alemmani, rebellions in Pannonia and on the Rhine.
- 4) In 259, the legions on the Rhine mutinied in favor of their general, Postumus. Gallienus, occupied, could only compel Postumus to stay in the West, where he proved an efficient administrator.
- 5) Gallienus had to fight a massive invasion of Goths and Heruli.
  - a. In 268 AD, Gallienus defeated the Goths at Naissus in Moesia.
- 6) Gallienus then had to return to combat the rebellion of Aureolus, the general he had given the defense of Italy against Postumus to.
  - a. Gallienus defeated Aureolus at the Battle of Mediolanum (Milan).
  - b. Gallienus was then assassinated by his own staff officers, all Illyrians who might have felt he wasn't giving enough energy to the defense of the Danube.

- 7) Gallienus introduced new cavalry corps of Moorish javelin men, Dalmatian horsemen, Osroenian and Palmyrene mounted archers, and cataphracts. Gallienus placed the cavalry corps on par with the Praetorian Guard.
  - a. The commander of Gallienus' new cavalry corps was called the *magister equitum*. Claudius Gothicus, Aurelian, and Probus were all *magistri equitum* before becoming emperor.

### **Claudius Gothicus (268-270)**

- 1) Claudius II, named Gothicus for his defeat of the Goths, thoroughly destroyed the Goths at Naissus before dying of the plague.
- 2) Claudius Gothicus' *magister equitum*, Lucius Domitius Aurelianus, succeeded him.

### **Aurelian (270-275)**

- 1) Aurelian was known as *Manus ad Ferrum* for his harsh discipline and *Restitutor Orbis* for regaining most of the land Rome had lost in the past decade.
- 2) Aurelian began the construction of a brick wall around the city in 271 AD, twelve miles long, twenty feet high.
- 3) Aurelian defeated a rebellion of corrupt mint officials and eventually permanently abolished the Roman mint.
- 4) Under Aurelian, the queen of Palmyra and Odenathus' widow, Zenobia, seceded from the Roman Empire and conquered parts of Egypt and Asia Minor.
  - a. Zenobia's main adviser was Cassius Longinus, a famous Greek rhetorician, polymath, and philosopher.
- 5) Aurelian Fights Zenobia and Palmyra
  - a. Aurelian sent Probus, his *magister equitum*, to Egypt. Aurelian himself advanced through Asia Minor.
  - b. At Antioch, Aurelian defeated a Palmyrene army of mounted archers and heavy cavalry. Aurelian won a second victory and went to Palmyra, which he besieged. Palmyra finally capitulated when Zenobia tried to escape to Persia for reinforcements.
  - c. When captured by Aurelian and brought to Rome, Zenobia claimed that Longinus and her other advisers had inspired her to secede from Rome. Aurelian was very lenient with Zenobia, sending her to a villa at Tibur (Tivoli) to live as the wife of a Roman senator. Aurelian executed Cassius Longinus.
  - d. Aurelian found out Palmyra had rebelled again, and sacked and destroyed it ruthlessly. He soon after suppressed a rebellion in Alexandria.
- 6) Aurelian fights Tetricus
  - a. Under Gallienus, Postumus had proclaimed himself Augustus in Gaul and won over the armies of Spain and Britain.
  - b. After Postumus died, the succession passed on to Victorinus, and after Victorinus died, the succession passed on to Tetricus.
  - c. Tetricus, a harmless and ineffectual old senator, deserted his troops and surrendered to Aurelian.
  - d. Aurelian walked Tetricus through the streets in his triumphal parade along with Zenobia, but treated Tetricus with leniency too. He appointed Tetricus chief inspector of Lucania (*corrector Lucaniae*) in Southern Italy.
- 7) Some officers killed Aurelian when they were misled by a rumor spread by a corrupt secretary trying to save himself from Aurelian's wrath. Aurelian was supposedly going to execute them. When they found out the truth, they let the senate appoint the next emperor.

### **Tacitus (275-276 AD)**

- 1) Marcus Claudius Tacitus, a senator in his seventies, won some victories against the Goths and Alans but was assassinated by his own soldiers.
- 2) After Tacitus' death, the *magister equitum* Probus and the Praetorian Prefect Florianus quarreled over who would take the throne. Florianus was murdered by his own men and Probus became emperor.

### **Probus (276-282 AD)**

- 1) Probus subdued the Isaurian Tribesmen in Asia Minor, dealt with the Germanic Bastarnae driven from their lands by the Goths (he resettled them), and defeated many Franks and Alemanni.
- 2) Probus cleared Pannonia and Raetia of invading tribes, defeated the Sudanes tribe the Blemyes in Egypt, and dealt with a rebellion in Gaul.
- 3) Probus was supposedly killed in a mutiny because he worked his soldiers too hard on land reclamation and public works projects.
- 4) In Raetia, the troops declared for Praetorian Prefect Marcus Aurelius Carus, following Probus' murder.

### **Carus, Carinus and Numerian (282 to 285 AD)**

- 1) Carus, another Illyrian general, immediately conferred the rank of Caesar on his two sons, Carinus and Numerian.
- 2) Carus set out with Numerian to the East in 282 AD, leaving Carinus to defend Italy and Gaul. Carus captured Seleucia and almost captured Ctesiphon.
- 3) In 284 AD, Carus mysteriously died, supposedly of a bolt of lightning. More probably, he was killed by the Praetorian Prefect Aper, father-in-law of Numerian.
  - a. Aper later secretly arranged Numerian's assassination, killing his own son-in-law.
- 4) The army in the East declared for Diocles, the commander of the emperor's bodyguard. Diocles' first act was to kill Aper by running him through with a sword.
- 5) But Carinus did not want Diocletian to be his colleague, and marched against him.
- 6) In 285 AD, in the valley of the Margus, in Moesia, Diocletian became emperor.
  - a. Carinus' superior forces had almost defeated Diocletian's army, but then a military tribune whose wife had been seduced by Carinus stabbed and killed Carinus. The soldiers of Carinus, lacking a commander, accepted Diocletian as their leader.

### **Diocletian (284-305 AD)**

- 1) Diocletian came from a provincial Danubian family. The sources, probably inaccurately, claim he had very humble origins.
  - a. Diocletian had been a cavalryman under Gallienus, a cavalry commander in Moesia, and a commandant of the Imperial mounted bodyguard.
- 2) Diocletian chose Maximian, an old comrade-in-arms, to guard the West while he saw to the East. He elevated Maximian to the rank of Caesar and, after Maximian crushed the Bacaudae (a group of desperate, rebelling peasants) in Gaul, Diocletian made Maximian a co-Augustus.
- 3) Maximian established the naval port of Gesoriacum (Bononia, Boulogne) in Gaul to combat Frankish and Saxon pirates raiding the shores of Gaul and Britain.
  - a. Maximian sent Marcus Aurelius Carausius to take command of Gesoriacum. Carausius defeated the pirates, but then seized Gesoriacum and Britain for himself and conferred the title Augustus on himself. For a while, Carausius ruled as the "Emperor of the North", maintaining hold over Britain for seven years.
- 4) In the East, Diocletian successfully negotiated with the Persian king Bahram, making Persia renounce its claim to Mesopotamia, and recognize Tiridates "III" as Roman client king of Armenia.
- 5) Diocletian forms the Tetrarchy
  - a. Diocletian and Maximian, both *augusti*, each chose a subordinate *caesar*.

- b. In the East, Diocletian chose Galerius as his Caesar.
  - c. In the West, Maximian chose Constantius Chlorus (“Pale-faced”) as his Caesar. Constantius Chlorus (and his son, Constantine) were from Naissus.
  - d. Each Caesar was the adopted successor and son-in-law of his Augustus.
- 6) Constantius Chlorus captured Gesoriacum from Carausius. In 293, a rival treacherously assassinated Carausius, allowing Constantius Chlorus to re-establish Roman Rule in Britain
- 7) Meanwhile, Narses overthrew Bahram II to become king of the Persians. Narses drove Tiridates “III” out of Armenia.
- a. Galerius captured Narses’ harem, regained control of Mesopotamia, and seized the fortress of Nisibis and the Persian capital of Ctesiphon.
  - b. After subduing Egypt, Diocletian joined Galerius at Nisibis and made peace with Narses, under which Narses surrendered Mesopotamia, acknowledged Armenia, etc.
- 8) In Egypt, Domitius Domitianus and Aurelius Achilleus revolted under Diocletian. Diocletian brought an army from Syria and besieged Alexandria; eventually, he subdued all of Egypt.
- 9) Diocletian’s Reforms
- a. Diocletian assumed the title of Jovius, indicating he was Jupiter’s earthly representative sent to restore the Roman Empire.
    - i. Maximian took the title of Herculus.
  - b. Diocletian adopted an elaborate court ceremonial, dressing in purple and gold and jewels, wearing the diadem (a royal headdress) and carrying the scepter. People had to kneel and kiss his robe.
  - c. Diocletian divided Italy into a dozen provinces. He subdivided all the old provinces and grouped them into twelve administrative districts known as dioceses. Each diocese was subject to a vicar (*vicarius*).
  - d. *Comitatus*: personal escort of a Caesar or Augustus. *Fabricae*: state-owned military workshops.
  - e. Diocletian issued the Edict on Maximum Prices in 301 which set ceilings on the prices of a thousand different items.
    - i. Diocletian also reformed the coinage and instituted tax reforms.
  - f. Diocletian broke the forty-year religious truce proclaimed by Gallienus and started persecuting Christians again at the end of his career.
    - i. Galerius was especially zealous to persecute the Christians, while Constantius Chlorus didn’t really do much.
    - ii. Incident where Diocletian orders all palace members to sacrifice to the gods, after augurs say “hostile influences” have hindered them.
    - iii. Diocletian’s own wife was Christian.
    - iv. In 303 AD, Diocletian drafted an edict ordering the destruction of Christian churches, sacred books, etc., and prohibiting Christian worship.
    - v. Two fires broke out at Diocletian’s imperial palace in Nicomedia, which he blamed on Christians and punished them for.
- 10) Diocletian abdicated on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 305 AD at his palace at Nicomedia, ordering Maximian to also resign in fulfillment of an earlier promise. He nominated Constantius Chlorus and Galerius as the new Augusti, with seniority for Constantius.
- a. Galerius made his nephew Maximinus Daia his Caesar.
  - b. Constantius Chlorus accepted Galerius’ friend Flavius Valerius Severus as his Caesar.
  - c. Maximian was not pleased with his forced retirement, scheming to take back the throne at his residence in Lucania.
  - d. When Diocletian died, Maximinus exiled his widow Prisca and his only child Valeria. Later, Maximinus’ successor Licinius beheaded Prisca and Valeria.

### **The Rise of Constantine the Great: 306 – 312 AD**

- 1) Constantine the Great was the son of Constantius Chlorus and Helena. Constantius Chlorus later divorced Helena to marry Theodora, Maximian's stepdaughter (Maximian was then Diocletian's Caesar in the West).
  - a. Constantine was sent to Diocletian's court in the East to get military training. After Diocletian died, the court passed onto Galerius.
  - b. Constantine distinguished himself during Galerius' victorious Persian campaigns against Narses in 298 AD.
- 2) Constantine and his father Constantius Chlorus defeated the Picts in Britain, before Constantius Chlorus died at Eburacum.
  - a. According to Lactantius, a different story: Constantine met his father Constantius Chlorus while he was on his deathbed in Eburacum (York).
  - b. After Chlorus' death, the army immediately proclaimed Constantine an Augustus, but Constantine remained loyal to Diocletian's Tetrarchy system by allowing Flavius Valerius Severus, Chlorus' former Caesar, to replace Chlorus as Augustus.
  - c. When Flavius Valerius Severus became Augustus, Constantine became Caesar.
- 3) Maxentius, the son of Maximian, was mad that Constantine had become Caesar, and started his usurpation in 306 AD. He believed that as son of an ex-Augustus, he had more right to being a Caesar. Maxentius was supported by the Praetorians and the population.
  - a. Flavius Valerius Severus attempted to dislodge Maxentius and his allies. After failing, Flavius Valerius Severus fled to Ravenna, where Maxentius treacherously murdered him. Maxentius now declared himself Augustus.
- 4) In 308 AD, Galerius called a meeting with Diocletian and Maximian (Maxentius' father, who had now turned against Maxentius).
  - a. Galerius' old comrade Licinius was appointed to replace Flavius Valerius Severus, and Maxentius was condemned as a usurper.
  - b. Maximinus Daia and Constantine were not happy that Licinius had hopped over them to become Augustus.
- 5) Constantine held the consulship with Galerius in 307 AD, showing his loyalty.
- 6) Constantine divorced his first wife, Minervina (mother of his son Crispus) to marry Maximian's daughter Fausta.
  - a. In 308, Constantine helped Maximian; but in 310 Maximian tried to subvert the loyalty of Constantine's troops and committed suicide after Constantine captured him.
  - b. By Fausta, Constantine had Constans, Constantius II, and Constantine II.
- 7) In 310 AD, Constantine adopted *Sol Invictus* as his patron deity and claimed he was descended from Claudius Gothicus, in the process repudiating the Herculean Dynasty.
- 8) In 311 AD, Galerius (the senior Augustus) issued the Edict of Toleration.
  - a. Galerius had become convinced of the futility of persecuting Christians.
  - b. The Edict of Toleration allowed Christians all over the Empire freedom of worship and the right to reopen their churches, if they would pray for Galerius and the state and not disturb the public order.
- 9) When Galerius died, Maximinus Daia seized Galerius' asiatic provinces and threatened Licinius' control of the Balkans.
  - a. Constantine anticipated a war with Maximinus Daia and therefore allied with Licinius.
  - b. Constantine betrothed his half-sister Constantia to Licinius.
  - c. So Constantine was allied with Licinius; meanwhile, Maximinus Daia had made a secret alliance with the usurper Maxentius.
- 10) Constantine Invades Italy, 312 AD
  - a. At Turin, Constantine defeated cavalry sent by Maxentius.
  - b. In 312 AD, Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge.
    - i. Maxentius had originally intended to defend the walls of the city built by Aurelian, but changed his plans for some reason (omens? public opinion?)
    - ii. As part of his earlier plan, Maxentius had destroyed the Milvian bridge and replaced it with boats in order to hinder Constantine. This did not help him.

- iii. According to Lactantius, Constantine had a vision that bade him place the Christogram (Chi and Rho) on his soldiers' shields.
      - 1. According to Eusebius, Constantine told him years later that he had seen a flaming cross across the face of the sun with the words "*in hoc signo vinces.*"
  - c. After the battle of the Milvian Bridge, the senate declared Constantine senior Augustus.
    - i. Constantine entered the city with the head of Maxentius on a stick, and Maxentius' memory was damned.
  - d. Constantine was getting converted to Christianity but not immediately.
    - i. Constantine's Triumphal Arch shows Sol Invictus as his patron deity.
    - ii. Constantine ordered Maximinus Daia to discontinue his persecution of Christians in the East. Constantine ordered his proconsul in Africa to restore confiscated property to the churches and to give funds to Caecilianus, the newly elected Bishop of Carthage.
- 11) In 313 AD, Constantine called together the Conference of Milan, where a) Licinius and Constantia got married and b) the two emperors reached an agreement on the freedom of religion and the status of Churches. An Edict of Milan was Published.
  - a. Maximinus Daia had continued to persecute Christians after the Edict of Toleration. He refused to desist in 313 AD when Constantine ordered him to.
- 12) In 313 AD, Maximinus Daia attacked Licinius. Licinius defeated Maximinus Daia at the Battle of Adrianople, but Daia escaped by disguising himself as a slave. In Asia Minor, Maximinus Daia fell ill and died.
- 13) Constantine and Licinius mutually feared each other, leading them to go to war in 316 AD. After a few years of apparent harmony, they went to war against.
  - a. Constantine declared war on Licinius because he had reneged on the Edict of Milan and had started persecuting Christians again.
    - i. In 324, Constantine went through Licinius' territory to confront a Gothic invasion of Moesia and Thrace. Constantine rejected Licinius' protest.
    - ii. In 324, Constantine attacked and defeated Licinius. Constantine spared Licinius' life due to the pleading of Constantia (Constantine's half-sister and Licinius' wife), but he executed Licinius six months later for treason anyway.
- 14) Constantine had allowed the Pope to decide on correct Christian doctrine.
  - a. *The Donatist Schism*: In Africa, the fanatical Donatus railed against bishops who had yielded under Diocletian's persecutions. Constantine condemned him and ordered the military suppression of the Donatists and the confiscation of their churches.
  - b. *The Arian Heresy*: Licinius had started persecuting Christians again due to the disruptive Arian Heresy. Arius was an Egyptian priest who, like Donatus, opposed leniency toward lapsed Christians. Arius also contended that Christ was not of the same substance (*homoousios*) as God, but of different substance (*heteroousios*), and was created subsequently and posterior to God.
    - i. Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, excommunicated Arius.

## Constantine

- 1) The Council of Nicaea (325 AD): Constantine gathered 300 bishops to Nicaea in Bithynia for an ecumenical council to restore unity to the Church.
  - a. Constantine had written Arius and Alexander a letter telling them to put aside their squabbles for the sake of the church.
  - b. At the Council of Nicaea, Constantine made a speech at the beginning.
  - c. The Council formulated the Nicene Creed, later modified minorly at the Council of Constantinople at 381 AD.
  - d. The Council of Nicaea affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity and excommunicated Arius.

- e. Constantine claimed to be *Isapostolos* (Equal of the Apostles) and the elected servant of God.
- 2) Constantine founded the city of Constantinople on the site of Byzantium and moved the Empire's capital to Constantinople. In 324, he began fixing up Byzantium. Constantinople was the "New Rome" and pretty much identical to old Rome.
  - a. To beautify Constantinople, Constantine ransacked ancient temples and shrines, even Delphi, from which he took the tripod and statue of Apollo.
  - b. Constantine laid the foundations of a new Byzantine Empire through founding Constantinople.
- 3) In 326 AD, Constantine executed his son Crispus on charges of raping his stepmother Fausta.
  - a. Empress Fausta probably engineered the rape charge against Crispus to remove a rival to her own sons by Constantine: Constantine II, Constantius II, Constans.
  - b. In 326 AD, Empress Fausta died when scalded in a hot bath.
  - c. Helena, Constantine's mother, had revealed that Fausta had committed adultery with a slave.
- 4) In 337 AD, Constantine was preparing to lead an army against Persia when he fell sick; he visited the healing springs of Helenopolis but was not cured.
  - a. Constantine asked Eusebius, a bishop who had defended Arius at Nicaea, to administer his sacrament of baptism.
  - b. Constantine was buried in a mausoleum connected with the Church of the Holy Apostles.

### **Constantius II (337 – 361 AD)**

- 1) After Constantine's death, Constantius II supposedly created false rumors that Constantine's two half-brothers had murdered Constantine. As a result, troops killed the half-brothers and most of their families: only Constantine's young nephews Gallus and Julian survived.
- 2) Constantine II (the oldest son), Constantius II, and Constans had been Caesars; each received the rank of Augustus upon Constantine's death.
  - a. Constantine II attacked Constans and was killed.
  - b. Constans was overthrown and executed by Magnentius, a high ranking officer of British and Frankish ancestry.
  - c. Constantius II had been fighting Shapur II of Persia; disengaging from Persia, Constantius II defeated Magnentius, who committed suicide.
- 3) Constantius II chose his cousin Gallus as Caesar and put him in charge of the East.
  - a. Gallus married Constantius II's sister, Constantia/Constantina.
  - b. When Constantina died and Gallus was successful against the Persians, as well as against the powerful interests at Antioch, Constantius recalled Gallus to Italy and executed him.
- 4) Constantius II next made Julian, another nephew of Constantine and the twenty-three-year-old half brother of Gallus, his Caesar.
  - a. The Empress Eusebia, wife of Constantius II, had urged Julian's appointment. When Eusebia died in 359, Constantius II became jealous and suspicious of Julian.
  - b. Constantius II demanded several of Julian's troops for a "Persian threat." Julian's troops refused. After peace offers for joint rule had failed, Constantius set out to attack Julian in 361 AD.
- 5) Before Constantius II could fight Julian, he became ill and died.
- 6) Constantius II was a moderate Arian. He summoned two regional councils of bishops, at Ariminum in the West and Seleucia in Cilicia in the East, in 359 AD.
  - a. In 360 AD, under Constantius II, The Council of Constantinople declared that the Son was "like the Father."

### **Julian the Apostate (361 – 363 AD)**

- 1) Julian had been raised a Christian, and educated by Bishop George of Cappadocia.
- 2) At Cappadocia, Julian read Greek philosophy and Classical literature, becoming attracted to the spirit of Hellenism (especially since Christians had murdered his family and forced him into exile).
- 3) In 361 AD, Julian entered Constantinople and rescinded laws hostile to Paganism, proclaiming religious toleration for all and using his subtle powers to advanced paganism against Christianity.
- 4) Julian worked to create a “Neoplatonic syncretism of pagan cults with the sun god as the Universal One” and give this pagan synthesis a unified institutional structure.
- 5) Julian practiced magic, divination, omens, theurgy, and elaborate sacrifices, which contributed to Christians seeing him as an agent of Satan.
- 6) Julian rescinded privileges previously granted to Christian churches and declared an end to Imperial financial support for Christian churches.
- 7) Julian forbade Christians to teach the classic works of Greco-Roman literature and philosophy, intending to marginalize them from the dominant culture.
- 8) Julian’s Persian War against Shapur II
  - a. Julian thought his divine destiny would protect him, and wanded himself to win glory as another Alexander the Great. Therefore he attacked Persia under Shapur.
  - b. Julian’s base was at Antioch, a staunchly Christian city he unsuccessfully tried to paganize.
  - c. Julian had success early on, but failed to capture Ctesiphon.
  - d. Julian was killed by a mortal spear wound to his side; according to some, a disgruntled Christian in his own ranks threw it. Shapur II used this to taunt the retreating Romans.

### **Jovian (363 – 364 AD)**

- 1) After Julian died with no heir, his generals chose Salutius Secundus, a Pagan and Praetorian Prefect of the East as well as close adviser to Julian, as their first choice. But he was old and unambitious and therefore refused.
- 2) Their second choice was Jovian, a Christian officer.
- 3) Jovian concluded a treaty with Shapur II.
  - a. The Romans surrendered Nisibis, a stronghold in Mesopotmaia, abandoned provinces beyond the Tigris, ceded the Roman protectorate over Armenia, and paid an annual subsidy to Persia.
- 4) Jovian rescinded Julian’s anti-Christian legilsation.
- 5) Jovian died after reigning eight months.

### **Valentinian I (364 – 375) and Valens (364 – 378)**

- 1) After Jovian died, chief military and civilian officials chose Flavius Valentinianus, an experienced Christian Pannonian officer, as emperor.
- 2) Valentinian chose his brother Valens as co-emperor in charge of the East.
  - a. Procopius, a relative of Julian’ mother, was supported by Julian’s old Gallic legions, pagans, and many who favored the house of Constantine the Great.
  - b. Procopius the usurper was suppressed and executed under Valentinian and Valens.
- 3) In 375 AD, Valentinian died after suffering a stroke during angry negotiations with the Quadi. He left the Western share of the empire to his 16-year-old son Gratian.
- 4) Valentinian created the empire-wide office of *defensor civitatis*.
- 5) The general Theodosius put down a revolt by Firmicus.
  - a. Theodosius uncovered official wrongdoing. Those officials got the emperor to execute him.
- 6) Valentinian I adhered to the Nicene Creed and Valens adhered to Arianism.
- 7) At the Battle of Adrianople in 378 AD, Valens was killed by the Ostrogoths and Visigoths

- a. Pressured by the huns, the Ostrogoths and Visigoths had begged Valens for permission to resettle in Roman territory. Valens gave it to them, but they were exploited by corrupt officials (bad food including dog meat in exchange for high prices or even Gothic people then sold into slavery). The Goths rebelled.
- b. Valens rushed to the Battle of Adrianople because he didn't want to share the glory of the victory with his young nephew Gratian.
- c. The Romans found themselves fighting on the hot dusty plain of Adrianople after a morning march and no midday meal. Two-thirds of the army were killed.

### Gratian and Theodosius the Great

- 1) Gratian, son of Valentinian I, accepted his 4 year-old half brother Valentinian II as co-emperor when the Illyrian troops supported him.
  - a. But Gratian gave Valentinian II no territory and left him with his mother Justina, who was Gratian's step-mother, and a Frankish general named Merobaudes.
- 2) Gratian created a second colleague by recalling Theodosius the Great (son of the Theodosius unfairly executed under Valentinian I for suppressing Firmicus).
  - a. Theodosius confronted the Visigoths, who had been plundering the Balkans since defeating Valens at Adrianople.
- 3) Gratian issued an Edict of Religious Toleration upon the death of Valentinian II but rescinded it in favor of orthodox Christianity (probably influenced by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan).
- 4) Gratian removed the Altar of Victory from the senatehouse in Rome and renounced the title of *pontifex maximus*. He also confiscated the endowments of the Vestal Virgins and other priestly colleges.
  - a. Pagan senators petitioned the following year to reverse these measures, especially the removal of the Altar of Victory, but Ambrose and Pope Damasus successfully opposed them.
- 5) In 383 AD, Magnus Maximus was proclaimed emperor by his soldiers in Britain. Magnus Maximus seized Gaul and captured and executed Gratian.
  - a. After Magnus Maximus overthrew and executed Gratian, Theodosius accepted Magnus Maximus as co-emperor.
    - i. Valentinian II, under the sole regency of his mother, kept Illyricum and received Italy, Dacia, and Macedonia.
- 6) Later, Magnus Maximus tried to seize Italy.
  - a. Theodosius gave refuge to Valentinian II and married Valentinian II's sister Galla.
  - b. Maximus was surrendered by his own troops to Theodosius
  - c. Theodosius' Frankish master of the soldiers, Arbogast, recovered Gaul from Maximus' son Victor.
- 7) Valentinian II was put in charge of the West, under Arbogast's guidance.
- 8) In 392 AD, Arbogast quarrelled with the 20-year old Valentinian II
  - a. Valentinian II was soon found hanged, mysteriously.
  - b. Arbogast's peace overtures to Theodosius were rebuffed.
  - c. Arbogast set up a puppet in the West, the rhetorician Eugenius.
- 9) In 394 AD at The Battle of The Frigidus River, near Aquileia, Theodosius defeated Arbogast and Eugenius.
  - a. Eugenius was killed and Arbogast committed suicide.
  - b. Theodosius was repulsed initially but was aided by a storm and the defection of some enemy troops.
  - c. After defeating Arbogast and Eugenius, Theodosius became sole ruler of the empire.
- 10) Theodosius legally banned public pagan worship in 391 and 392 through his edicts. He required subjects of the empire to believe in the Trinity.
- 11) Theodosius died at Milan in 395 AD and divided his empire between his sons Arcadius and Honorius.

- a. Arcadius (18 years old) received the East and Honorius (10 years old) received the West.
- b. Theodosius was the last ruler of a unified empire.
- c. Honorius had the consulship bestowed upon him at birth.

### **Arcadius and Honorius: The Divided Empire**

- 1) Theodosius II (7 years old) succeeded his father Arcadius in the East when Arcadius died in 408.
- 2) Valentinian III (5 years old) succeeded his uncle Honorius in the West when Honorius died in 423.
- 3) Galla Placidia was the half-sister of Honorius and Arcadius, and the mother of Valentinian III (Honorius' nephew).
  - a. Galla Placidia's daughter and Valentinian's sister was named Honoria.
  - b. Arcadius' wife was named Eudoxia.
  - c. Theodosius II's sister, the daughter of Arcadius, was Pulcheria.
  - d. Theodosius II's wife was Eudocia.