



### Third Century Crisis and The New Empire

History of Ancient Rome | Meeting #13

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Upcoming Dates

- Monday, May 11
  - Position Paper Due
- Thursday, May 21
  - 6:15 – 8:15 p.m.
  - Final Exam
- Sunday, May 17
  - Responses for Week 13 Due
- Thursday, May 28
  - **Ultimate Deadline**
    - No late papers or resubmissions for reversible deductions after this date
    - No exceptions
    - Incompletes owing to personal emergencies must be mutually agreed before this date

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Final Exam

- Identification and Impact
  - Given maybe 12 possible terms/names
  - Choose 4
  - Brief definition plus longer discussion of why it's important
  - All terms/names are from the review sheet
- Essays
  - Given maybe 6-7 possible prompts on major themes of the course
  - Choose 2
  - State an opinion and support it with three examples
- Extra credit
- Must be present for final
  - Absence means course was not completed and student receives a WU
  - Make-ups only in cases of documented medical emergency

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Five things today**

- The Third Century Crisis
- Religion in the Roman empire
- Rebuilding the empire
- Diocletian and Constantine
- Fall of the West

4

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Questions from the Responses**

- Are there any archeological findings that contradict Pliny's assertions that these sewer systems never failed?
- Were gladiator games still being performed in 180 CE?
- What happened to the livestock of the deceased?
- How education differed for boys and girls, or for kids in the countryside versus the city
- Was the rule of Marcus Aurelius so unpleasant that the rulers to follow would fail to imitate? Why did the Roman imperial system that supported peace come to an end?
- How Trajan's tenure as emperor ended

5

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

**Questions about whatever**



6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# The Five Good Emperors

7

---



---



---



---



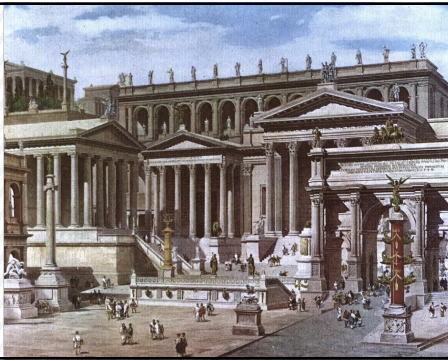
---



---

Primary Source Reading

Pliny The Elder  
The Grandeur of Rome



8

---



---



---



---

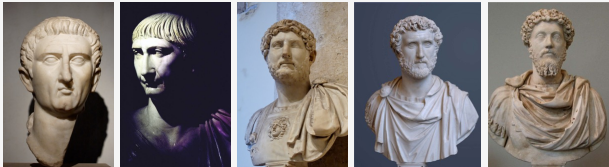


---



---

## Nerva-Antonines



Nerva

Trajan

Hadrian

Antoninus Pius

Marcus Aurelius

9

---



---



---



---



---



---



**Antoninus Pius**

- Princes 138-161
- Senator and trusted official under Hadrian
- Peace and prosperity
  - Consistency through empire regarding law, resources, infrastructure
  - Reforms concerning public lands, imperial property, slavery

10

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

Primary Source Reading

Marcus Aurelius  
On the Virtue of Antoninus Pius



11

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Marcus Aurelius**

- Princes 161-180
- Named by Hadrian, adopted by Antoninus Pius
  - Co-emperor with Lucius Verus, 161-169
- Major wars defending the frontiers
  - Marcomanni to the north
  - Parthians to the East
- Also famous as a stoic philosopher

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



13

---

---

---

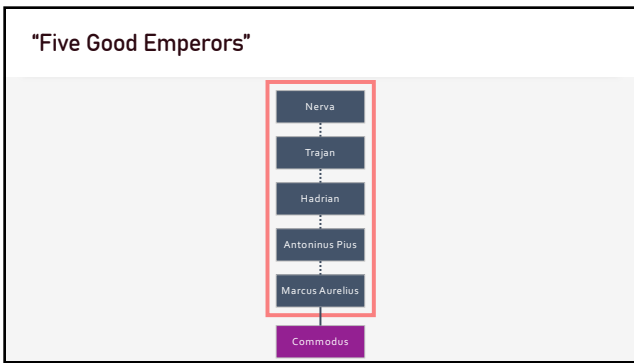
---

---

---

---

---



14

---

---

---

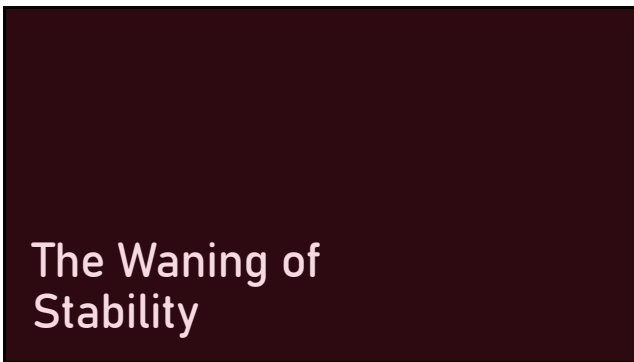
---

---

---

---

---



15

---

---

---

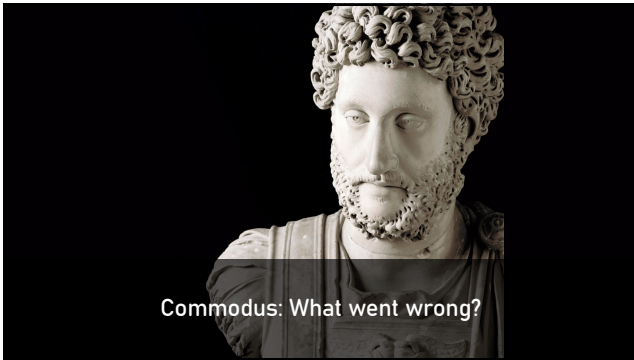
---

---

---

---

---



16

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Commodus: What went wrong?**

- Divided advisors carved the royal family, important senators, and military leaders into antagonistic factions
- Commodus's favorite, the Greek freedman Saoterus, aroused jealousy
- His inexperience and willfulness reminded the Roman elite of Caligula, Nero, and Diocletian
- Ending his father's wars deprived generals of opportunities for glory
- Commodus failed to produce an heir
- His gladiatorial shows were expensive and undignified

17

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**193: Year of the Five Emperors**

- Pertinax (193)
- Didius Julianus (193)
- Pescennius Niger (193)
- Clodius Albinus (193, 196-197)
- Septimius Severus (193-211)

18

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**The Severans**

- Senate diminished
  - Counsel: Replaced by imperial council
  - Local administration: Praetorian prefect
- Stronger economic controls
- Provinces raised to level of Italy
- Military reforms
  - More legions
  - Higher wages, better life
  - More opportunities for war

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Caracalla: Universal citizenship**

20

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Caracalla's "Antonine Constitution"**

- Citizenship extended to nearly all free men throughout the Empire
- Reduced privileged position of Italy
- Emphasizes divides
  - Conquerors and conquered
  - Urban and rural
  - Graeco-Roman and other
- Uniform tax liability
- Recruiting for the army

21

---

---

---

---

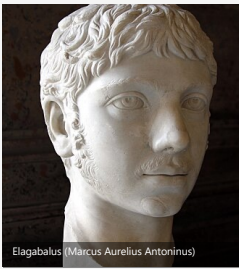
---

---

---

---

Later Severans



Elagabalus (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)



Severus Alexander

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Primary Source Reading

Amianus Marcellinus  
The Luxury of  
the Rich in  
Rome



24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Stability into crisis

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year of Four Emperors 69</li> <li>• Flavians 69–96             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Vespasian</li> <li>– Titus</li> <li>– Domitian</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Nerva-Antonines 96–192             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Nerva</li> <li>– Trajan</li> <li>– Hadrian</li> <li>– Antoninus Pius</li> <li>– Marcus Aurelius</li> <li>– Commodus</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Severans 193–235             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Septimius Severus</li> <li>– Caracalla</li> <li>– Elagabalus</li> <li>– Alexander Severus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Third-Century crisis</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

25

Primary Source Reading

Various  
The Lives of  
Soldiers and  
Sailors




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

26

## The Third Century Crisis

---

---

---

---

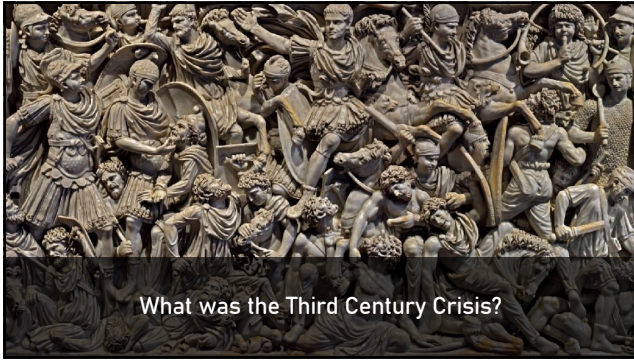
---

---

---

---

27



28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Third Century Crisis**

- Perpetual political chaos
- Increasing economic dislocation
- Invasions across Euphrates and Danube
- Religious disunity feeds cultural fragmentation

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Political**

- Severans did not produce another Severus
- Legitimacy of imperial rule eroded
- Internal tensions
- Civil wars between would-be emperors
- Imperial hierarchy
  - No succession
  - No hierarchy below emperor – governors all equal and one step below
  - Lack of professional bureaucracy

30

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



**Military**

- Pressure on frontiers
  - Closing of the frontiers
  - Barbarian confederacies
  - New peoples arriving from east
  - Sasanians in Persia supplant Parthians and challenge Rome
- Not enough manpower or money
- Civil wars between would-be emperors

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Primary Source Reading

Zosimus  
Imperial Weakness  
Invites Barbarian  
Aggression



33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Economic**

- Rising cost of military
- Debasement
- Taxation
- Depopulation
  - Plague in Italy, other important cities
  - Resulting famine
- Strain on system leads to greater oppression of locals
- Christian persecutions

34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Currency Debasement**

Antoninianus (2 denarius coin introduced by Caracalla)



240s CE ~40% fineness      250s CE ~30% fineness

260s CE ~20% fineness      270s CE <5% fineness

35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Economic fallout**

- Inflationary spiral and currency collapse
- Shortfall in precious metals
- Decline of trade and commerce
- Reduced demand for manufactured goods
- Depletion of skilled labor
- Disruption of agriculture
- Tax levies on provinces are in fixed amounts
  - Costs of legions and administration rise
  - Requisitions in kind

36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Rebuilding the Empire

37

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



## Aurelian

- Reigned 270–275 CE
- Series of victories reunites empire
  - Alamanni, Goths, Vandals, Juthungi, Sarmatians, and Carpi
  - Conquered the Palmyrene Empire
  - Conquered the Gallic Empire
- Abandonment of Dacia
- Monetary reforms
- Murdered by Praetorian Guard before Persia war

38

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



## Diocletian

- Reigned 284–305 CE
- Efforts to stabilize the economy
- Tetrarchy
- Persecution of Christians

39

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



40

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Constantine**

- Reigned 306–337
- Restructuring of imperial government and economy
- Disbanded Praetorian Guard
- Founding of Constantinople
- Roman Christianity
  - Conversion
  - Integration

41

---

---

---

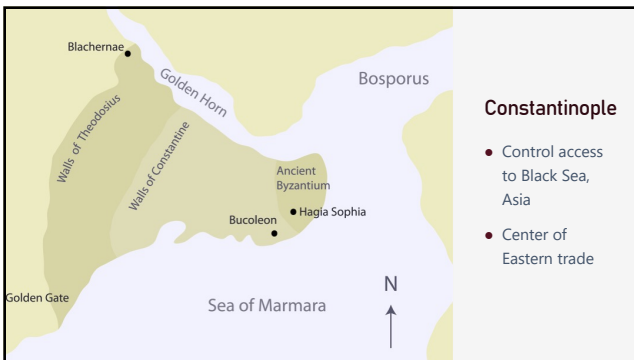
---

---

---

---

---



**Constantinople**

- Control access to Black Sea, Asia
- Center of Eastern trade

42

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Religion in the Roman Empire

43

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



**Religious ideologies in the empire**

- Local paganism
  - Roman state religion
- Emperor worship
- Henotheism
- Philosophical monotheism
- Dualism
  - Zoroastrianism
  - Manichaeism
- Eastern Monotheism
  - Judaism
  - Christianity
  - [later, Islam]

44

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



**Sun-worship**

- Sol Invictus
- Mithraism

45

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



46

---

---

---

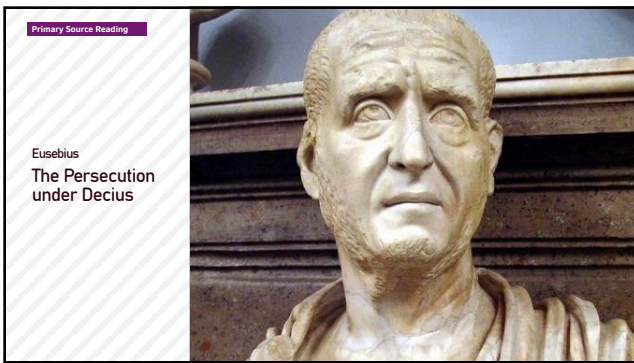
---

---

---

---

---



47

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



49

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



50

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



51

---

---

---

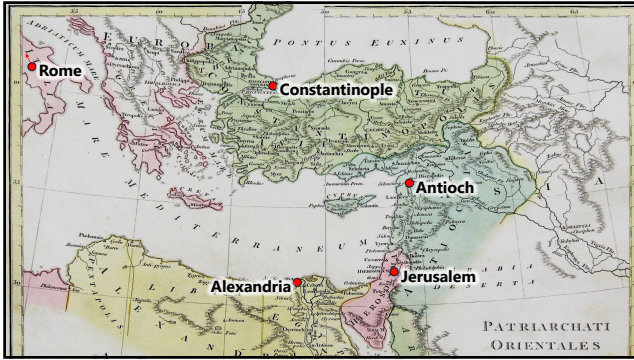
---

---

---

---

---



52

---

---

---

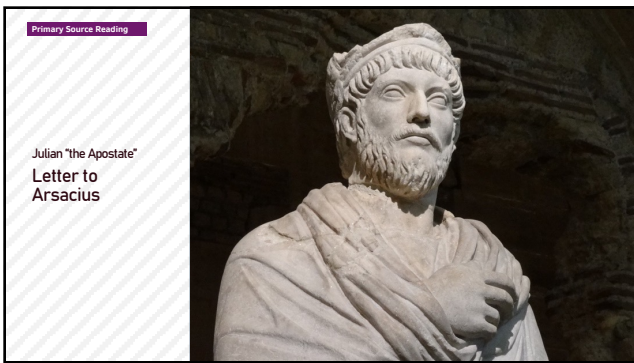
---

---

---

---

---



53

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



54

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Fall of the West

55

---

---

---

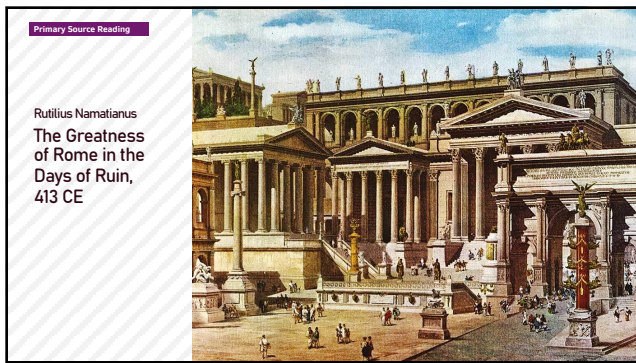
---

---

---

---

---



56

---

---

---

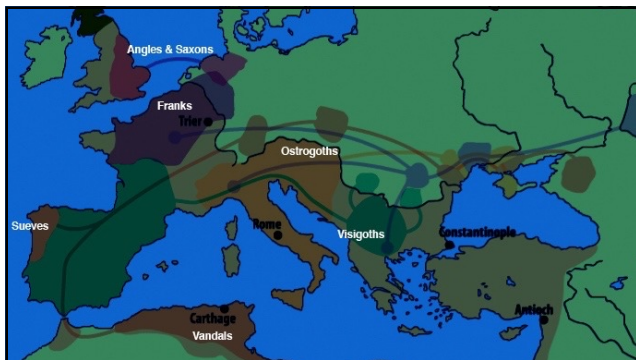
---

---

---

---

---



57

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Visigoths and other Germans

- Some peoples paid by Rome to help defend frontiers
- Migrations push in Roman lands
- Drive to grab more of Roman wealth
- Alaric's Sack of Rome, 410 CE
- Shadow emperors

58

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Primary Source Reading

Jordanes  
The Battle of Chalons, 451 CE

59

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Why does the Western Empire fall?

60

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



61

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



62

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



63

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



64

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Roman questions

- Why Rome?
- Why Carthage? Why Hannibal?
- What made the Republic fall?
- What made the Western Empire fall?
- Why did the Eastern Empire endure?
- Did Christianization save the Empire, or destroy it?
- What was the Roman idea? How did it change?
- What is Rome's legacy for us?

65

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



66

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



67

---

---

---

---

---

---

---