The Archaeology of Rome and the Roman provinces
Lecture 8. The middle and later Roman Empire
The Empire at its Peak

- Flavian Dynasty
  - Vespasian (69–79)
  - Titus (79–81)
  - Domitian (81–96)

- Five Good Emperors
  - Nerva (96-98)
  - Trajan (98-117)
  - Hadrian (117-138)
  - Antoninus Pius (138-161)
  - Marcus Aurelius (161-180)
Flavian Dynasty (69 to 96)

The Flavian dynasty rose to power during the civil war of 69, known as the Year of the Four Emperors. Although the dynasty proved to be short-lived (with three emperors reigning only 27 years), several significant historic, economic and military events took place during their reign.

60s
69 - Following the civil war of 68, general Vespasian emerges victorious and is proclaimed by the Senate as Emperor

70s
70 - As part of the Roman response to the Great Jewish Revolt, the general Titus lays siege to Jerusalem, destroying the Great Jewish Temple
73 - Lucilius Bassus, military governor of Judea, lays siege to Masada, ending the Great Jewish Revolt
77 - Gnaeus Julius Agricola is appointed military governor of Britain, consolidates Roman control over the island, and expands Roman domination into Wales and Scotland
79 - Vespasian dies of natural causes at the age of 69 after a 10-year reign. His eldest son, the general Titus, becomes Emperor
Mount Vesuvius erupts, destroying the Italian cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum

80s
81 - Titus dies of fever at the age of 41 after a 2-year reign. His younger brother Domitian becomes Emperor.
85 - Gnaeus Julius Agricola, military governor of Britain, returns to Rome after successful campaigns in Britain and is honored by Emperor Domitian.
86 - Dacians under King Decebalus cross the Danube river and invade the Roman province of Moesia, beginning a two-year war with the Empire
88 - Following a Roman victory against the Dacians at Tapae, the Dacian King Decebalus sues for peace. Domitian grants favorable terms to Decebalus, with Dacia becoming a Roman client kingdom and receives massive annual subsidies
89 - Lucius Antonius Saturninus, military governor of Germania Superior, revolts against Domitian’s rule
Under orders from Domitian, the general Trajan defeats Saturninus and restores imperial control over Germania Superior

90s
96 - Domitian is assassinated by members of his own court at the age of 44 after a 15-year reign. The Senate proclaims the elderly Nerva as Emperor
The Nerva–Antonine dynasty were seven Emperors who ruled the Roman Empire from 96 to 192. The dynasty began when the Senate proclaimed Nerva as Emperor following the assassination of Emperor Domitian. The first five of the six successions within this dynasty were notable in that the reigning Emperor adopted the candidate of his choice to be his successor. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius would be the only Emperor of this dynasty to be succeeded by his biological son, the Emperor Commodus. Commodus' assassination would plunge the Empire into a civil war, known as the Year of the Five Emperors.

90s
96 - Following the assassination of Domitian, the Senate proclaims the elderly Nerva as Emperor
97 - Facing military opposition to his reign, Nerva adopts the popular and successful general Trajan as his son and heir
98 - Nerva dies of natural causes at the age of 67 following a 2-year reign. His adoptive son, the general Trajan, becomes Emperor without opposition

100s
101 - As part of his conquest of Dacia, Trajan crosses the Danube river and launches an invasion of Dacia, defeating the Dacian King Decebalus at Tapae
102 - Trajan approves a peace treaty unfavorable to Decebalus, though Dacia remains a Roman client kingdom
105 - Unhappy with his peace treaty with Rome, Dacian King Decebalus crossed the Danube river and raids Roman cities in Moesia. In response, Trajan crosses the Danube and launches an invasion as part of his conquest of Dacia
106 - Defeating the Dacians at the Battle of Sarmisegetusa, Trajan brings his Dacian wars to an end with the annexation of Dacia into the Empire as a province
107 - Rabbel II Soter, Roman client king of Nabataea, dies. Trajan annexes his kingdom into the Empire as the province of Arabia Petraea

110s
113 - Trajan begins his invasion of the Parthian Empire
114 - Trajan deposes Parthamasir of Armenia, a Roman client king, and annexes his kingdom into the Empire
116 - Trajan captures the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon, annexing Mesopotamia and Assyria into the Empire
Trajan deposes King Osroes I of Parthia, installing Parthamaspates of Parthia as his puppet king over the whole of the Parthian Empire
117 - Trajan dies of natural causes at the age of 63 after a 20-year reign. His adoptive son, the general Hadrian, becomes Emperor
Osroes I of Parthia, the deposed Parthian king, deposes King Parthamaspates of Parthia, reclaiming the Parthian throne
118 - Hadrian withdraws from the Parthian Empire, returning the recently acquired provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria to their status prior to Trajan's war
119 - Hadrian arrives in Britannia to suppress a revolt
Trajan (98-117 CE)

- Born into a non-patrician family in what is now Spain
- Massive public works program in Rome
  - Trajan’s Column, Trajan’s Forum, Trajan’s Market
- Oversaw the expansion of the empire to its greatest extent
- Considered to have been a great emperor

Optimus princeps by Roberto Paribeni
Hadrian (117-138 CE)

- Strengthened the empire’s defenses
  - Hadrian’s Wall separated Roman territory in Britannia from the Picts (in what is roughly now Scotland)
- Under Hadrian, the Romans put down the Second Jewish Revolt, 132-136 CE
Roman Empire about 150 AD
120s
122 - Construction of Hadrian's Wall in Britannia begins
123 - Hadrian arrives in Mauretania to suppress a revolt
124 - Hadrian arrives in Greece to experience Hellenistic culture
126 - Hadrian returns to Rome and his ordered reconstruction of the Pantheon begins

130s
131 - Hadrian’s anti-Jewish policies while in Judea sparks the Bar Kokhba revolt
135 - Hadrian defeats the Bar Kokhba revolt, suppressing Jewish political autonomy and religious freedom, renaming "Judea" as "Syria Palæstina"
136 - Hadrian names Lucius Aelius Caesar as his adoptive son and heir
138 - Lucius Aelius Caesar, Hadrian’s adoptive son and heir, dies of natural causes
Hadrian names Antoninus Pius as his adoptive son and heir on the condition that he, in turn, adopt Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus as his heirs.
Hadrian dies of natural causes at the age of 62 after a 21-year reign. His adoptive son Antoninus Pius becomes Emperor

160s
161 - Antonius Pius dies of natural causes at the age of 74 after a 23-year reign. His adoptive sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus become Co-Emperors
169 - Lucius Verus dies of plague, leaving his adoptive brother Marcus Aurelius as sole Emperor

170s
177 - Marcus Aurelius names his son Commodus as Co-Emperor

180s
180 - Marcus Aurelius dies in Danube War at the age of 58 after a 19-year reign. His son Commodus becomes sole Emperor

190s
192 - Commodus is assassinated on December 31 by members of his court at the age of 31 after a 15-year reign.
193 - A civil war begins to determine Commodus’ successor as Emperor
Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE)

• Stoic philosopher
  – Wrote book Meditations
• Succeeded by his son, Commodus (180-192 CE)
  – The characters in the Russell Crowe film “Gladiator” are very loosely based on Marcus Aurelius and Commodus
• The end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius was the end of the Pax Romana (27 BCE-180 CE)
• From 161 to 169 reigning together with adopted brother Lucius Verus
The Severan dynasty ruled the Empire between 193 and 235. The dynasty was founded by the general Septimius Severus, who rose to power as the victor of the civil war of 193, known as the Year of the Five Emperors. Although Severus successfully restored peace following the upheaval of the late 2nd century, the dynasty was disturbed by highly unstable family relationships and constant political turmoil.

190s
193 - Following the civil war of 193, general Septimius Severus emerges victorious and becomes Emperor
198 - Septimius Severus names his eldest son Caracalla as Co-Emperor

200s
209 - Septimius Severus names his youngest son Geta as Co-Emperor with himself and Caracalla

210s
211 - Septimius Severus dies of natural causes at the age of 65 after an 18-year reign. His sons Caracalla and Geta rule the Empire jointly as Co-Emperors
211 - Geta is assassinated by his brother Caracalla at the age of 22 after an 11-month reign. Caracalla becomes sole Emperor
217 - Caracalla is assassinated by members of his bodyguard at the age of 29 after a 19-year reign. His Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, Macrinus, becomes Emperor
218 - Following a military revolt, Macrinus is executed at the age of 53 after a 13-month reign. Septimius Severus' great-nephew Elagabalus becomes Emperor

220s
222 - Elagabalus is assassinated by the Praetorian Guard at the age of 18 after a 4-year reign. His cousin Alexander Severus, another great-nephew of Septimius Severus, is proclaimed Emperor by the Guard.

230s
235 - Following a military revolt, Alexander Severus is assassinated by his own troops at the age of 26 after a 13-year reign. The army proclaims the general Maximinus Thrax as Emperor, beginning a fifty-year political and military crisis.
Near Collapse 235-284

- 20-25 emperors and many claimants
- Internal dissension weakens frontiers
- Dacia (modern Romania) lost
- Empire fractures into three parts 258-275
- Economic stagnation and hyperinflation
- Two tough general-emperors, Claudius Gothicus and Aurelian, stabilized Empire
- Diocletian (284-305) created autocracy, reformed military, bought another two centuries for the Empire
Crisis of the Third Century (235 to 285)

- The Crisis of the Third Century was a period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under the combined pressures of invasion, civil war, plague, and economic depression.
- The Crisis began with the assassination of Emperor Alexander Severus at the hands of his own troops, initiating a fifty-year period in which dozens of claimants to the Imperial throne, mostly prominent Roman Army generals, assumed imperial power over all or part of the Empire.
- In 260, the Empire split into three competing states: the western Gallic Empire, the eastern Palmyrene Empire, and the Roman Empire proper in the center.
- The Emperor Aurelian reunited the three states into a single Empire by 274. The Crisis ended with the ascension and reforms of Diocletian.

- The Crisis resulted in such profound changes in the Empire's institutions, society, economic life and, eventually, religion, that it is increasingly seen by most historians as the transition period between the historical periods of Classical antiquity and late antiquity.
The Empire in Crisis: 3c
Diocletian (284-305 CE)

- Rome had a century of chaos following the death of Marcus Aurelius
  - The “Crisis of the Third Century”
  - Diocletian was the first emperor in 100 years to properly restore order and end the violence
- Absolute ruler who ended all personal liberties
- Weakened by illness, Diocletian left the imperial office on 1 May 305, and became the first Roman emperor to abdicate the position voluntarily
- Administration
  - Increased the bureaucracy for more effective administration
  - Divided the empire into two administrative realms (east and west) in 285 CE
    - This was the first step in the creation of what would become two separate empires
      - Roman (Western) Empire
      - Byzantine (Eastern) Empire
Diocletian and the Tetrarchy (285 to 313)

- When Diocletian was proclaimed Emperor, he ruled the entire Empire as sole Emperor. Diocletian named Maximian as his Co-Emperor in 286, through Diocletian remained the senior partner.
- He then established a system for governing the Empire by four rulers known as the Tetrarchy: two Senior Emperors (Augustii) and two Junior Emperors (Caesars'), with one Senior and Junior Emperor (the designated heir) in the West and East respectively.
- Diocletian, and his successors, become Senior Emperor of the East and Maximian, and his successors, Senior Emperor in the West. The Tetrarchy was relatively stable until the death Constantius Chlorus in 306, which started a civil war to determine the true successor to the Western throne.
- The Tetrarchy system ended in 313 with the death of Eastern Emperor Maximinus II, when internecine conflict eliminated most of the claimants to power, leaving Constantius' son Constantine I as Western Emperor and Licinius as Eastern Emperor.
Diocletian Splits the Empire in Two: 294 CE

Division of the Roman Empire
- Western Empire
- Eastern Empire
- Dividing line between lands under Diocletian and Maximian

Home of Constantius I, Maximian’s Caesar
Home of Galerius, Diocletian’s Caesar
Home of Emperor Diocletian
Home of co-emperor Maximian

Map showing the division of the Roman Empire into Western and Eastern Empires, with key cities and regions labeled.
From principate to dominate

- The Dominate or late Roman Empire was the "despotic" later phase of imperial government, following the earlier period known as the "Principate", in the ancient Roman Empire. It has traditionally been considered to begin with the commencement of the reign of Diocletian in AD 284, following the Third Century Crisis of AD 235–284.
- The term Dominate is derived from the Latin dominus, which translates into English as lord or master. This form of address—traditionally used by slaves to address their masters—was sporadically used in addressing emperors throughout the Principate, usually in the form of excessive flattery when referring to the emperor. Augustus actively discouraged the practice.
- Under Diocletian the term was adopted as part of the emperor’s official titulature, forming part of Diocletian’s radical reforms that transformed the Principate into the Dominate.
- Transition from the Principate
- The Dominate system of government emerged as a response to the 50 years of chaos that is referred to as the Crisis of the Third Century.
- The stresses and strains of those years (chronic usurpations, military insurrections, simultaneous military conflicts across multiple frontiers) exposed the weaknesses in the Roman state under the Principate, and saw a gradual movement from the collegiate model of government that existed prior to AD 235 to a more formally autocratic version that begins after AD 285.
- In broad terms, it saw the gradual exclusion of the senatorial elite from high military commands and the parallel elevation of the equestrian orders, the reorganisation of the armed forces and the creation of mobile field armies, changes in imperial dress and ceremonial displays, a religious policy aiming at religious unity, large scale monetary reforms, and the creation of an empire-wide civil bureaucracy.
The Two Empires

- Emperor Diocletian had believed that dividing the empire for administrative purposes would strengthen the empire
  - He was wrong
  - Once Constantine set up Constantinople as a capital city, the east/west split deepened

- **Western (Roman) Empire**
  - Ended officially in 476 CE when the last emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed by a barbarian, Odoacer

- **Eastern (Byzantine) Empire**
  - Lasted until 1453 when the empire was conquered by the Ottoman Turks
Palace of Diocletian in Spalato
Constantine (312-337 CE)

- Moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium
  - Renamed the city Constantinople
    - Today the city is Istanbul (in modern Turkey)
- Constantine and Christianity
  - His mother, Helena, had converted to Christianity
  - Edict of Milan (313 CE)
    - Christianity legalized (religious toleration)
  - Converted to Christianity on his deathbed
Barbarzyńskie tsunami. Okres Wędrówek Ludów w dorzeczu Odry i Wisły

- Muzeum Narodowe w Szczecinie – Muzeum Tradycji Regionalnych, ul. Staromłyńska 27
  31.10.2017–07.01.2018
  Kurator: dr Bartłomiej Rogalski

- Wystawa zorganizowana przez Muzeum Narodowe w Szczecinie i Uniwersytet Warszawski

- Kolejne prezentacje:
  Państwowe Muzeum Archeologiczne w Warszawie:
  01.2018–03.2018
The Rise of Christianity

[Map of the Mediterranean region showing the missionary journeys of Paul of Tarsus, A.D. 46–62, highlighting Christian majority, strong Christian minority, Christian minority, areas with few or no Christians, and borders of the Roman Empire.]
Final Decline

- Constantine the Great (306-337)
  - Legalized Christianity 313
- Theodosius I (379-395)
  - The last ruler of the whole empire
  - Made Christianity official 391
  - Empire divided East-West 395
- Eastern Invasions
- Romulus Augustulus deposed 476
- Eastern half endures as Byzantine Empire to 1453