



ROMAN EMPERORS

Julio-Claudian Dynasty

27 BC-14AD, **Octavian** – born in Rome; called “Augustus”; (41 year rule is the longest); part of second triumvirate with Mark Antony and Lepidus; began *Pax Romana*

14-37, **Tiberius** – born in Rome; married Augustus' daughter Julia the elder and spawned Julio-Claudian dynasty; great general, as seen in brilliant campaigns in Pannonia, Illyria, Germania, and Rhaetia; called "the gloomiest of men" because he was dark, reclusive and somber; never wanted to be emperor; Christ was crucified during his reign

37-41, **Caligula** – born in Antium; called "little boots" because of his early travels with his father Germanicus in military campaigns where he wore a miniature army uniform, including boots; very popular with people, though he had an ill family life where, due to his endless paranoia; many of his close friends died and his family members were banished; had an illness during early part of reign; eventually assassinated; wanted to make his horse Incitatus a consul.

41-54, **Claudius** – born in Lugdunum (presently Lyon); first Roman emperor born outside Italy; unknown disability, perhaps cerebral palsy or polio; able administrator; Britain was conquered during his reign; Thrace, Noricum, Lycia, and Judea were also annexed; many public works including 2 aqueducts and the first attempt to drain the Fucine lake; eventually poisoned with mushrooms.

54-68, **Nero** – born in Antium; last of Julio-Claudian dynasty; killed his mother; considered insane; early persecutor of Christians; ruled during Boudicca fiasco; played fiddle while Rome burned; unpopular with rich, and popular with the poor; after 64 fire, supposedly opened palace to homeless and arranged food for the recent victims, then he built an enormous palace in area cleared by fire. Speculations of arson are common; made Seneca commit suicide after the failed Pisonian conspiracy against his life

69, **Year of the Four Emperors** – includes Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian



Flavian Dynasty

69-79, **Vespasian** – Falacrine, Italy; construction of the Colosseum; began Flavian dynasty; sons were Titus and Domitian; ruled during tumultuous Judean revolt where Masada fell and temple destroyed; early in career participated in Britannia campaign

79-81, **Titus** – Rome; first son of Vespasian; good general, crushed Judean revolt; showed skill in dealing with Vesuvius disaster during his reign; supposedly, Domitian was involved in his death

81-96, **Domitian** – Rome; second son of Vespasian; bad for economy; devalued Denarius (roman money); bad general; was stabbed eight times

The Five Good Emperors

1) 96-98, **Nerva** – Chose successor based on capabilities, this led to period of 5 good emperors; elected by senate to the office

2) 98-117, **Trajan** – born in Spain; empire reached greatest extent under him; exceptional general; took Dacia, made famous column because of it; managed to squeeze out more land around Sinai, then took Mesopotamia and Armenia, and made Parthian ruler a puppet king; died of Edema

3) 117-138, **Hadrian** – stoic and epicurean philosopher, made a wall in northern Scotland; his wife was Pompeia Plotina; was popular

4) 138-161, **Antoninus Pius** – longest reign since Augustus; popular

161-169 **Lucius Verus** – (shared rule with Marcus Aurelius); not considered one of the five good emperors

5) 161-177, **Marcus Aurelius** – last of the five good emperors; shared power with Verus and Commodus; called the "philosopher emperor" or the "stoic emperor" for his stoicism and writing the work *Meditations*; fought many campaigns along the Rhine against Germanic tribes including the long Marcomanni Wars

176-192, **Commodus** – son of Aurelius, said to have competed in gladiator games because he enjoyed killing (as depicted in the movie “Gladiator”); conspiracies of 182 were launched against him; he was strangled to death by the wrestler Narcissus.



Severan Dynasty

193-211, **Septimius Severus** – born in Leptis Magna (in Africa, he was the only important emperor from Africa); was a good general

198-217, **Caracalla** – granted citizenship to all roman citizens all over the empire (that were not slaves; he also built an enormous namesake bath structure.

235-268, random nobodies; 260-274, Gallic phase; 268-284, Illyrian phase, **Crisis of the Third Century** – the empire went through scores of rulers in a very short period of time due to the disorder within the empire and problems along the borders.

Tetrarchy/Constantine

284-305, **Diocletian** – born to a Dalmatian (modern Croatia) family of no distinction; secured throne after the battle of Margus; created the tetrarchy, whereby four emperors would co-rule; led a namesake persecution of Christians, the empires largest and last.

324-337, **Constantine** – his rule began after he defeated Maxentius at Milvian Bridge in 312, though in 314 he fought another war with Lisinius, so he technically was not undisputed ruler until 324; he “converted” to Christianity after he saw a cross in the sky at Milvian Bridge; with his mother Helena he constructed churches all over the empire and issued the Edict of Milan, which gave religious tolerance; he had his son Crispus and his wife Fausta put to death

Valentinean Dynasty

364-375, **Valentinian I** – “last great western emperor”; was the brother of Valens, who ruled in the East; was born in Pannonia and was the son of Gratian; successfully defended the borders against Allemani and Saxon invasions

364-378, **Valens** – son of Gratian, brother of Valentinian; died at the battle of Adrianople; fought the revolt of Procopius; sometimes called the last true Roman

375-392, **Valentinian II** – governed from Milan and Vienna; managed to stay in power for a long time; son of Valentinian, he took the throne at age 4

379-395, **Theodosius I** – last to rule both halves of the Roman Empire; he made Christianity the state religion of Rome; had many campaigns against the Goths

395-423, **Honorius** – decided to abandon Britain; was the son of Theodosius; left the Western Roman Empire in a state of decay and on the verge of collapse

423-455, **Valentinian III** – took the throne at the age of four; was the last Western Roman Emperor to hold the throne for longer than 2 years; fought the Huns at Chalons

461-476, **Romulus Augustulus** – the last western roman emperor; he was deposed by Odoacer

