Crisis and Recovery

From the Severan Dynasty to the Later Roman Empire
Septimius Severus
AD 193 - 211

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Table 12.2 The dynasty of Septimius Severus

Julius Bassianus

Julia Domna

\textit{SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS} (193–211)

Julia Maesa

C. Julius Avitus Alexianus

Bassianus

\textit{M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS} (198–211–217)

Geta

\textit{P. SEPTIMIUS GETA} (209–211–212)

Julia Soaemias

Sex. Varius Marcellus

Gessius Marcianus

Varius Avitus Bassianus

\textit{M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS} (218–222)

Gessius Alexianus

\textit{M. AURELIUS SEVERUS ALEXANDER} (222–235)
Caracalla

198-209     w/ Severus

209-211     w/ Severus & Geta

211-217     alone

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Macrinus, 217-218

Image by Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Coins_of_Roman_Empire).
Julia Maesa

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### Table 12.2 The dynasty of Septimius Severus

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bassianus</td>
<td>Caracalla</td>
<td>Julia Domna</td>
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<tr>
<td>= M. Aurelius Antoninus</td>
<td>(198-211-217)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geta</td>
<td>P. Septimius Geta</td>
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<td>Julia Mamaea</td>
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Elagabalus, AD 218-222

Image courtesy of [Mary Harrsch](https://flickr.com) on flickr. License CC BY NC SA.
Severus Alexander, AD 222-235

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The emperors after [Severus Alexander], more concerned with tyrannizing their subjects than subduing foreign peoples, and with warring among themselves, precipitated the Roman state into a steep decline. Then good men and bad, nobles and low-born, and even many barbarians, were indiscriminately elevated to the purple.
Modern views of AD 235 - 284

• ‘The third-century crisis’
• ‘The age of transition’
• ‘The age of the soldier-emperors’
• ‘The age of anarchy’
• ‘The military monarchy’
Resurgent Persian Empire of Sassanids
Valerian before Shapur in 260

Image by Ali Ganjei. This image is in the public domain.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Rock-cut relief at Naqsh-i Rustam, near Persepolis
Lactantius,  
On the Deaths of the Persecutors 5

He was made prisoner by the Persians and lost not only that power which he had exercised without moderation, but also the liberty of which he had deprived others. He squandered the remainder of his days in the abject form of slavery: for whenever Shapur, the king of the Persians, who had made him prisoner, chose to get into the carriage or to mount on horseback, he commanded the Roman to stoop and present his back…
Carausius

Emperor in Britain and northern Gaul
286-293
Debasement of Roman silver coinage
Loss of confidence in Roman coinage?
Papyrus of 24 Nov., 260 (AJ 199)

Aurelius Ptolemy…strategos of the Oxyrhynchite nome:
Since the public officials have met and have accused the bankers of the banks of exchange of having closed them because they are unwilling to accept the sacred currency of the Emperors [Macrian and Quietus, probably], it has become necessary that an injunction should be issued to all owners of the banks to open them and accept all currency, except what is completely mis-struck and counterfeit, and give change for it.
Diocletian, AD 284-305

Image courtesy of G. dallorto.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
The Tetrachcs – AD 293

Augusti

Diocletian & Maximianus

Caesares

Galerius & Constantius
The Tetrarchs, Venice
Abdication of Diocletian and Maximianus in 305

Augusti

Galerius & Constantius

Caesares

Maximinus & Severus
Many stretches of the boundaries shown are only approximate. The provincial boundaries within Britain are unknown.

Diocese of Britanniae comprises 4 provinces, Galliae 8, Viennensis 7, Hispaniae 6, Africa 7, Italia 12, Pannoniae 7, Moesiae 11, Thracia 6, Asia 9, Pontica 7, Oriens 16.
The New Tax System, AD 296

Aristius Optatus, vir perfectissimus, prefect of Egypt, declares:

Our most provident Emperors, the eternal Diocletian and Maximian, Augusti, and Constantius and Maximian, most noble Caesars, having learned that it has come about that the levies of the public taxes are being made haphazardly, so that some persons are let off lightly and others overburdened, have decided to root out this most evil and baneful practice for the benefit of their provincials and to issue a deliverance-bringing rule to which the taxes shall conform.

Cairo Isidorus Papyrus No. 1

753 BC (April 21) - Foundation of Rome

509 BC – Birth of Republic

27 BC - Augustus

AD 284 – Reforms of Diocletian

AD 476 – Deposition of Romulus Augustulus