

The Late Roman Empire

Diocletian – Constantine - Demise

The significance of Diocletian's programme of re-organisation

The rise of Christianity

The end of the Roman Empire

The Roman Empire in 117 AD

- Senatorial provinces
- Imperial provinces
- Client states

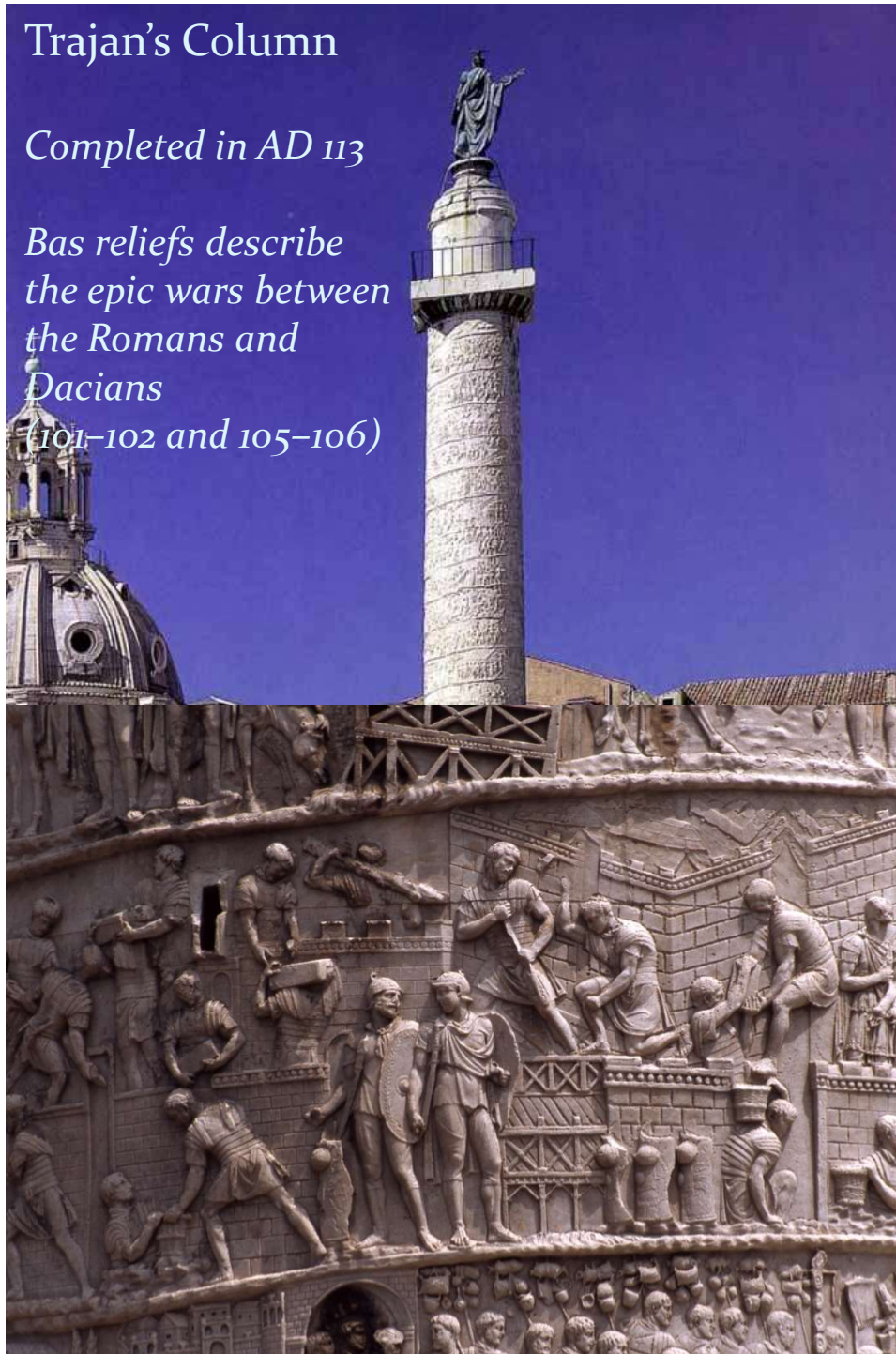


- Roman empire: largest extent, A.D. 117

Trajan's Column

Completed in AD 113

*Bas reliefs describe
the epic wars between
the Romans and
Dacians
(101–102 and 105–106)*



The Roman Empire in 117 AD





The Roman Empire in 117 AD



1. ALPES POENIAE
2. ALPES COTTIAE
3. ALPES MARITIMAE

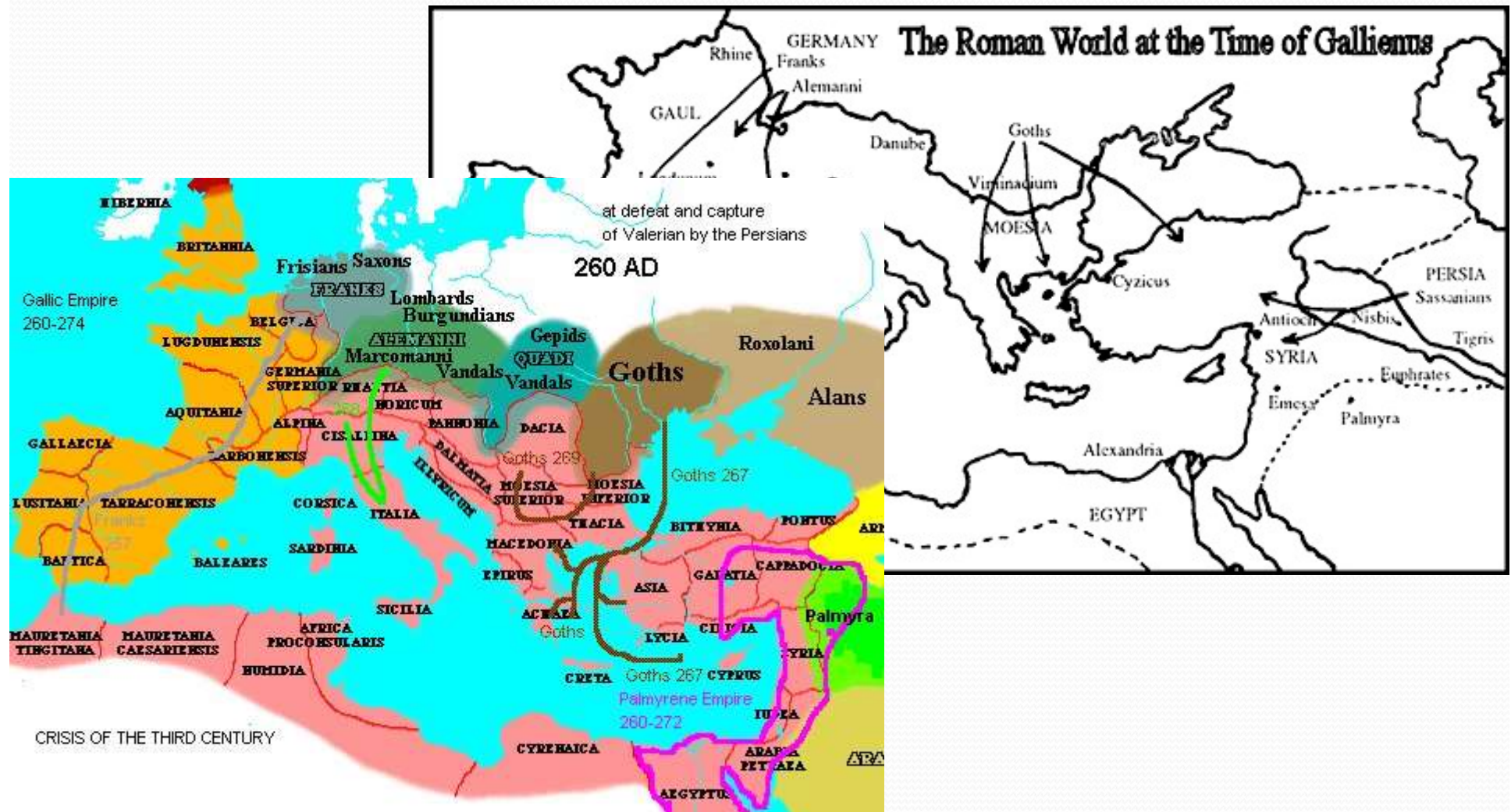
- 11th July 212 *constitutio Antoniana* by Caracalla

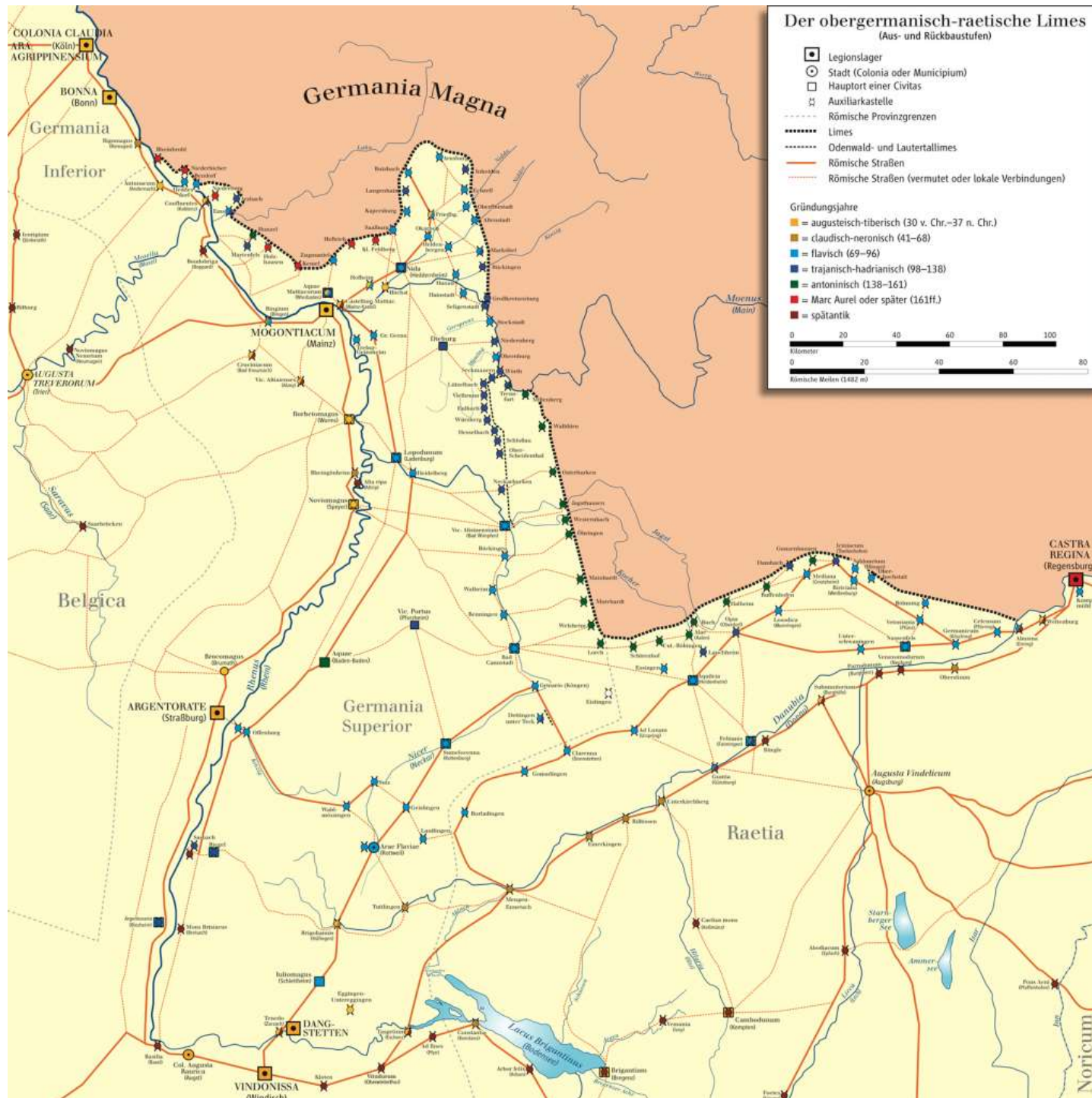
3rd century crisis

- invasion
- 'civil war'
- plague
- economic depression
- Beginning of the crisis:
assassination of the emperor
Alexander Severus
 - → 50 years of instability
(26+ claimants to the throne)



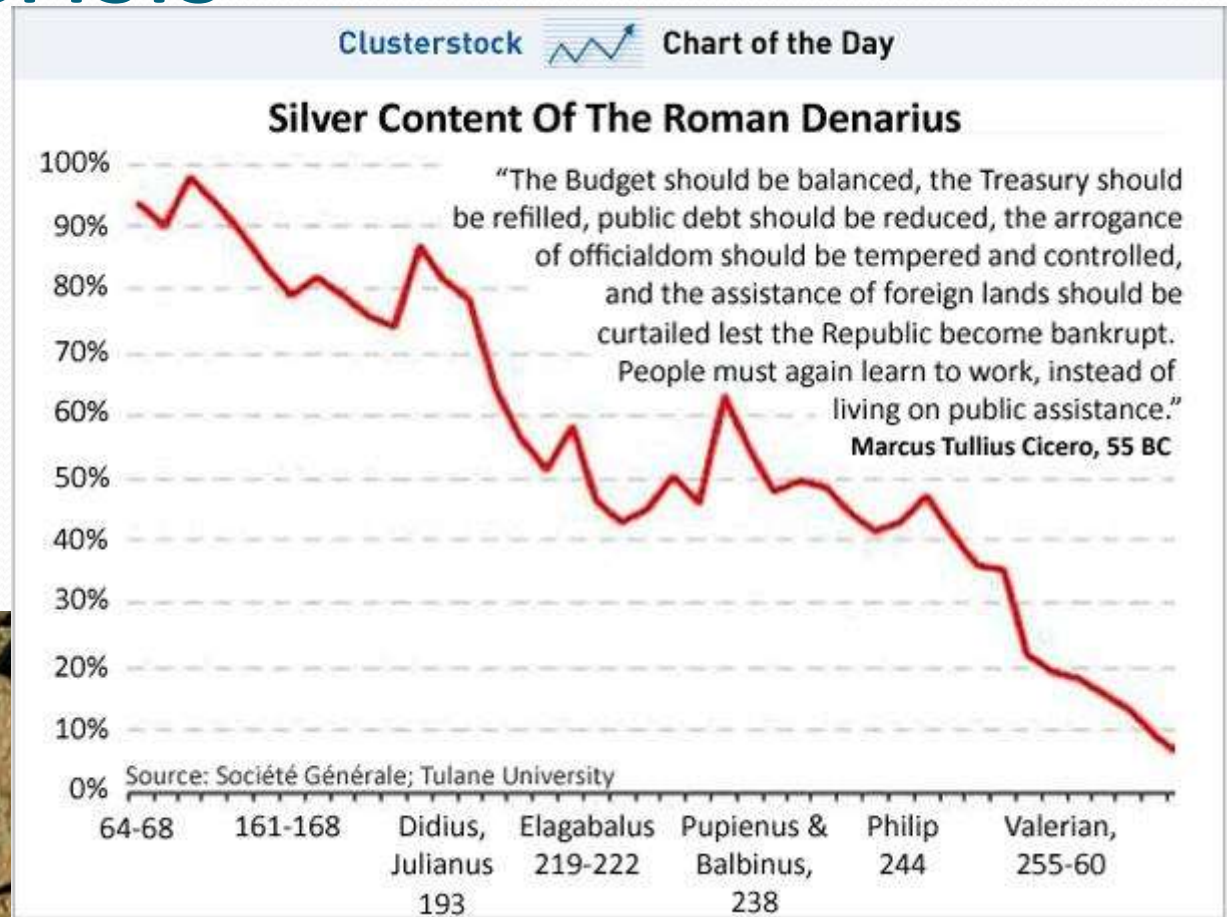
military crisis





economic crisis

- debasement & inflation



split into 3 'empires'

- 258-260
- Gallic empire/*Imperium Galliarum*
 - Postumus – successful governor, killed imperial heir, Salonius; capital Cologne/Trier/Lyon
 - empire with 2 consuls and senate
 - Roman order & institutions, but local regionalism



Coin of Tetradius, last ruler of the Gallic Empire



split into 3 'em

- 258-260
- Palmyrene empire
 - 'Queen' Zenobia Augusta to protect Eastern Roman empire from Sassanian empire
- But were these breakaway empires...?
- 'Re-united' under Aurelian A.D. 270-275

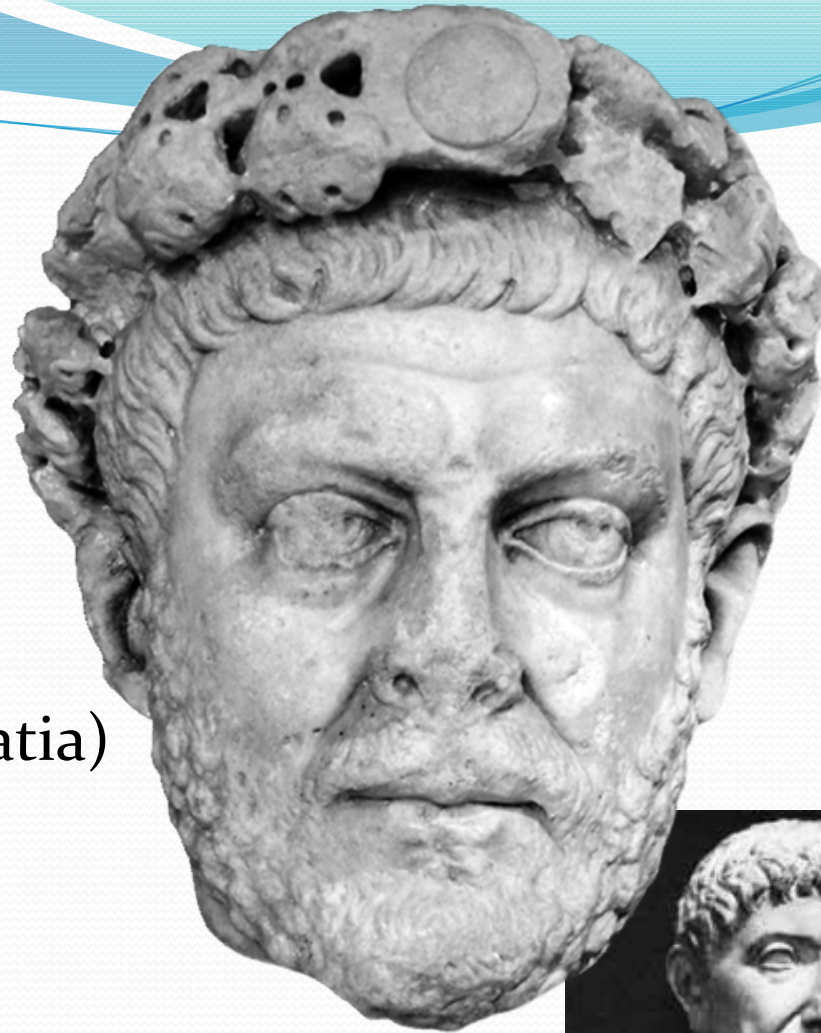


Zenobia Augusta, & Iuno Regina, AD 271-272



Diocletian

- End of crisis with Diocletian: A.D. 284
- Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus (A.D. 240- 311, Croatia/Dalmatia)
- far-reaching reforms
- in imperial propaganda: Diocletian and partners were called “restorers of the whole world” after alleged period of civil war (having re-written recent history)



Military Reforms

- Re-organisation
 - more efficient army to protect the empire from incursions & invasions
 - since Augustus, armies/legions hardly moved at all...
Role of army: Septimius Severus: “Get along very well, pay soldiers a lot and don’t care for anything else” (Dio 66.15.2)
 - now: a more mobile army

Military Reforms

- smaller units, larger number of soldiers, increased role of cavalry
- *Limitanei* → border units
- *Comitatenses* → mobile troops
- recruitment: per land unit – sent by land owners or ‘mercenaries’ (i.e. ‘barbarians’)
- civil and military authority became separated under Diocletian
- Tetrarchy: 4 ‘commanders-in-chief’ for different parts of the empire



Tetrarchy

- “rule/government of four”
- A.D. 293 – instituted by Diocletian
 - 2 AUGUSTI (West / East)
 - 2 CAESARI (successors)



Diocletian, Argenteus 294,
Rev. VIRTUS - MILITVM, Tetrachs sacrificing in
front of gate.



Bureaucracy

- Imperial court at centre
 - Roman Senate reduced to city council
 - a 'council' to advise the emperor;
several departments in the court for specific tasks...
- Number of officials in the Roman empire at least doubled under Diocletian
 - bureaucracy became **highly centralised**,
hugely expensive and oppressive
 - each province: civil and military administration
 - → imperial bureaucracy gradually displaced the older urban administration

number of **provinces** doubled to almost 100 (governors now *praesides/iudex*), grouped into 12 **dioceses**, each governed by a *vicarius*

Now, *duces* in charge of military, not the governors → reduced the power of governors



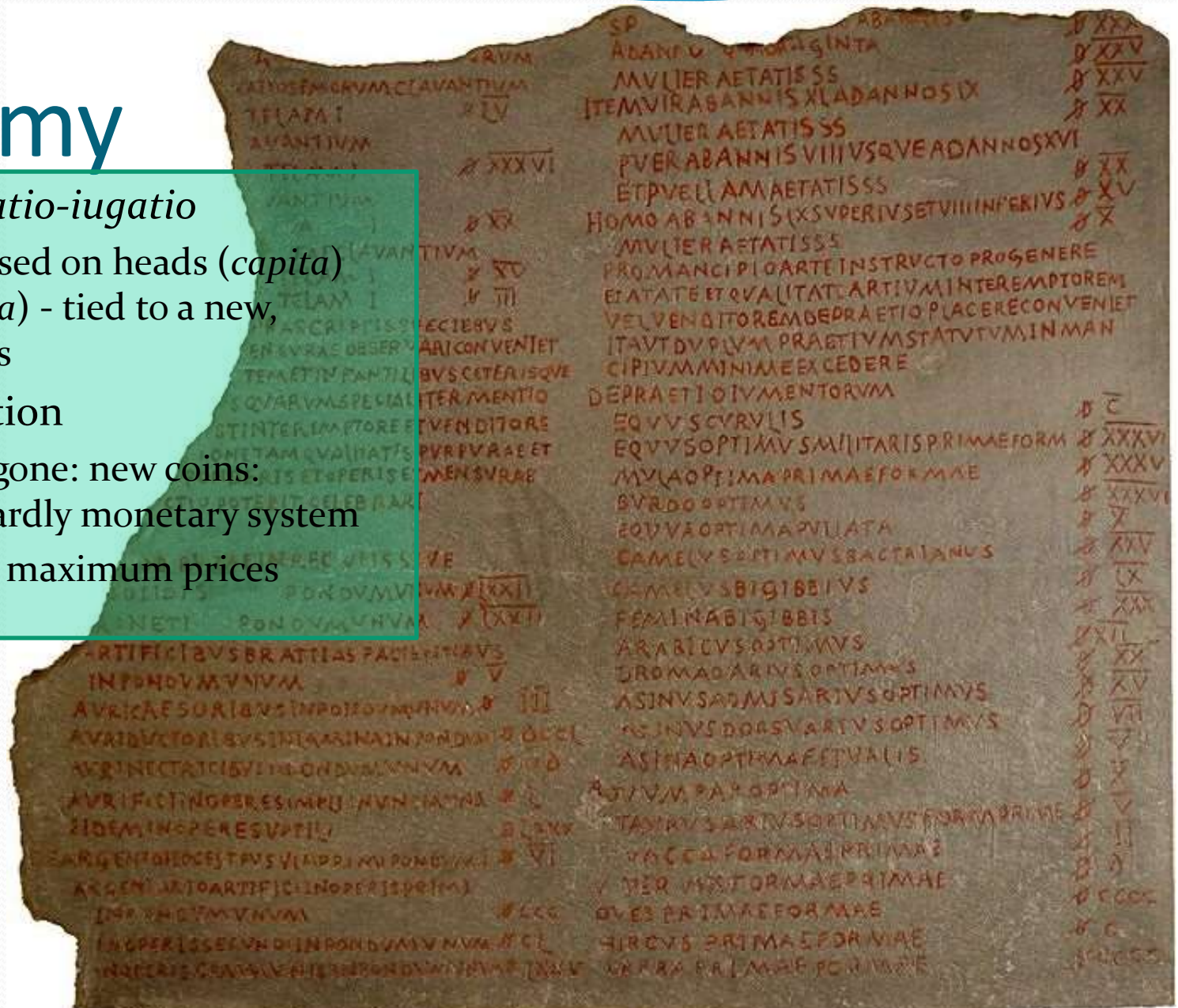
Law

- Diocletian - 1,200 rescripts in his name still surviving, and these probably represent only a small portion of the total issue.
- collection of all laws/edicts between Hadrian and Diocletian
 - → basis for later legal corpora, e.g. codex Iustinianus (*corpus iuris civilis*, A.D. 527-534)



Economy

- Taxation: *capitatio-iugatio*
 - tax system based on heads (*capita*) and land (*iuga*) - tied to a new, regular census
- Coinage / Inflation
 - old denarius gone: new coins: *nummus* → hardly monetary system
 - 301 – edict on maximum prices



Economy

- Mobility: social, professional, spatial
 - in response to economic pressures and to protect the vital functions of the state
 - Diocletian restricted social and professional mobility.
 - Peasants became tied to the land
 - Workers such as bakers, armourers, public entertainers and workers in the mint had their occupations made hereditary



Persecution of Christians

- Religious reformation was central to the reform project
- Tendency to henotheism → importance of Jupiter
 - emperor as representative of Jupiter
- 303-304 edicts against Christians
 - destruction of churches
 - surrender of sacred books
 - Christians lost rights & privileges
 - no longer possible to hold office in admin
- 304: animal sacrifice demanded from all Christians
 - → large number of martyrs

New style of ceremony

- emperor no longer “primus inter pares”
- Diocletian: wearing gold crown and jewels
- subjects required to prostrate themselves in his presence (*adoratio*); the most fortunate were allowed the privilege of kissing the hem of his robe (*proskynesis*, προσκύνησις).
- circuses and basilicas were designed to keep the face of the emperor perpetually in view, and always in a seat of authority.
- emperor became a figure of transcendent authority

Diocletian's palace in Split

- Diocletian reigned twenty-one years
- he abdicated voluntarily, and spent the remaining years of his life in peaceful retirement in Dalmatia

Tetrarchy: legacy

- Although the Tetrarchic system as such only lasted until c.313, many aspects survived.
 - fourfold regional division of the empire continued in the form of **praetorian prefectures**, each subdivided into administrative dioceses
 - The pre-existing notion of *consortium imperii*, the sharing of imperial power, and the notion that an associate to the throne was the designated successor, was to reappear repeatedly.
 - The idea of the two halves, the East and the West, re-emerged and eventually resulted in the permanent de facto division into two separate Roman empires after the death of Theodosius I
 - though the Empire was never formally divided

Constantine

- 27th Feb. 272 – 22nd May 337
- after his father's death (Constantius), 306, acclaimed as emperor by army in York.
- sole ruler in A.D. 324
→ demise of the tetrarchy
- continues reform programme
- new capital city: Constantinople
- → tolerance edict: Christianity



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Constantine

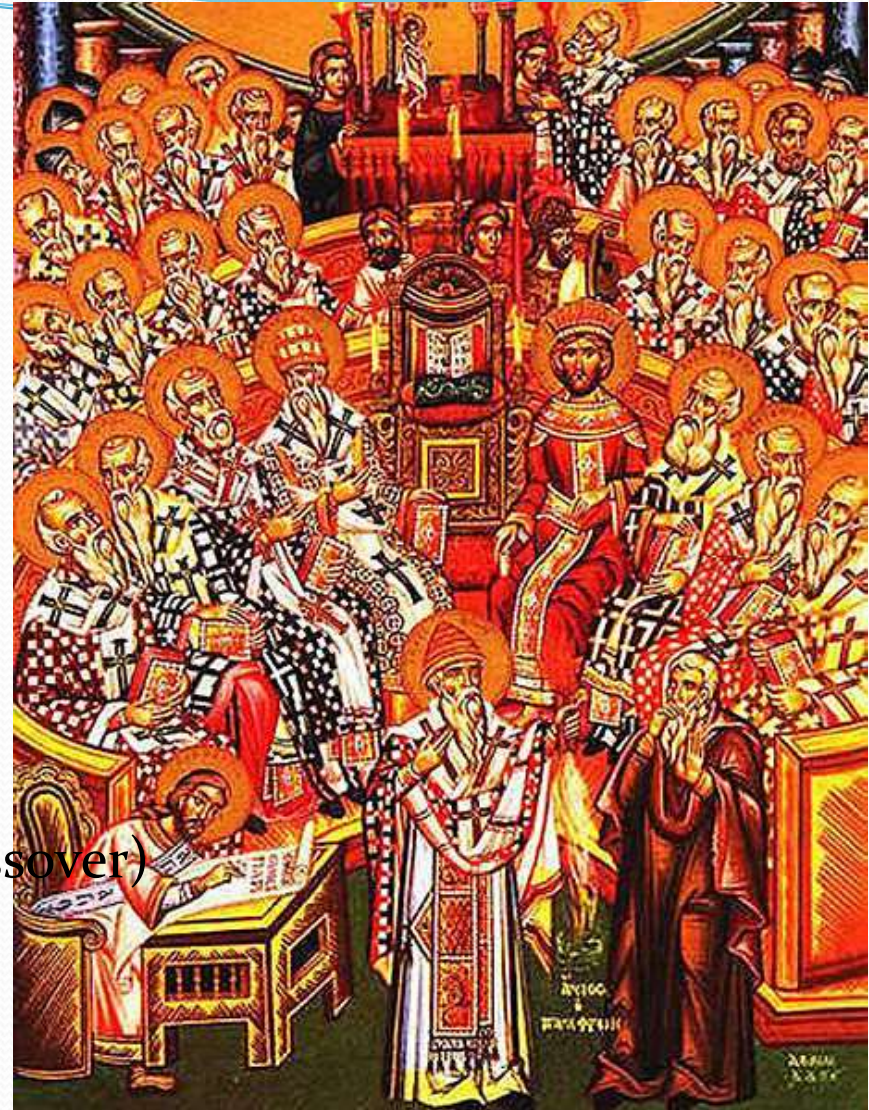
- tolerance edict: Christianity
- A.D. 313 Edict of Milan
→ religious freedom for every one
 - *inter alia*, restoration of Christian property & churches



"Unconquered Constantine" with Sol Invictus, struck in 313. ("solar monotheism")
Still in 321: sun-worship for everyone
Was Constantine a Christian?

Constantine

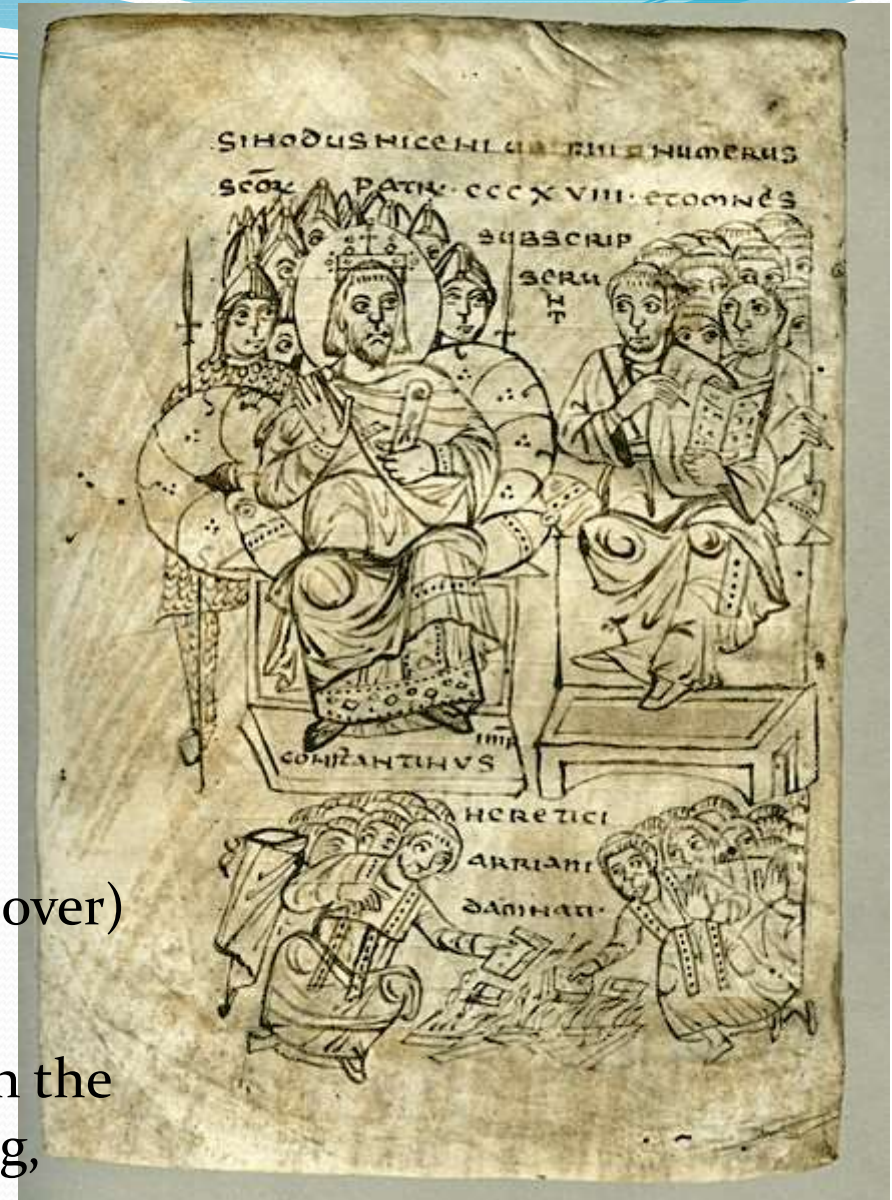
- 1st Council of Nicaea
 - Creed of Niceaea
 - Nicaea, Bithynia
 - 1800 bishops from the empire
 - consensus in the church,
 - nature of the son of god
 - observance of Easter (Pascha/Passover)



Eastern Orthodox icon depicting the First Council of Nicaea (325)

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 - nature of the son of god
 - observance of Easter (Pascha/Passover)
 - Arian controversy
 - God's divinity must be greater than the Son's, that the Son had a beginning, he shared neither the eternity nor the true divinity of the Father



Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea.
Below: The burning of Arian books: "Arian heretics condemned" (from Vercelli, c.825 AD)

Christian emperors

- Constans,
emperor 337 – 350
- tolerant of Judaism
- 341: banned pagan sacrifices
- suppressed Donatism
(Christians in N Africa)



Christian emperors

- Constantius II
337 – 361
- anti-Jewish policies
- tolerant towards paganism,
but closure of temples,
banning of sacrifices, etc.
- 'Semi-Arianism'



Spread of Christianity

- (1) AD 325
- (2) 6th century



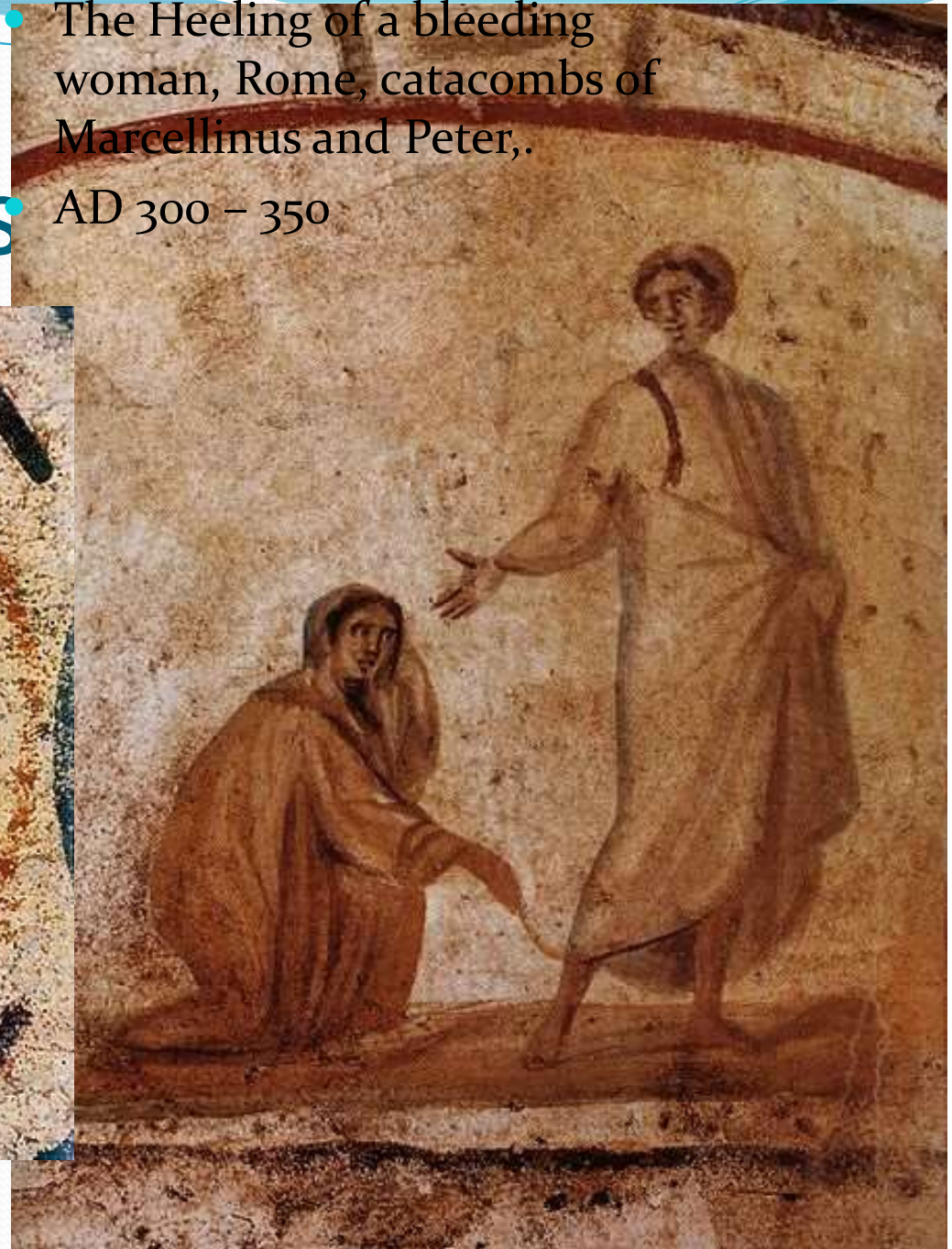
Spread of Chris

The Healing of a bleeding woman, Rome, catacombs of Marcellinus and Peter, AD 300 – 350

AD 300 – 350



The Good Shepherd, Catacomb of Priscilla, AD 250 - 300



Julian

- emperor 361 – 363
- philosopher, Greek writer
- pagan ‘revival’
- 362: tolerance edict
 - tolerating ‘heretics’ and ‘pagans’



Saint Mercurius killing Julian (Cairo)

Edict of Thessalonica

- A.D. 380, edict by Theodosius, Gratian and Valentinian II
- All subjects of the Roman Empire to profess the faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria,
- → Nicene Christianity: state religion of the Roman Empire





Edict of Thessalonica

- A.D. 380
Gratian
- All subjects
to profess
of Roman
- → No
state
Empire

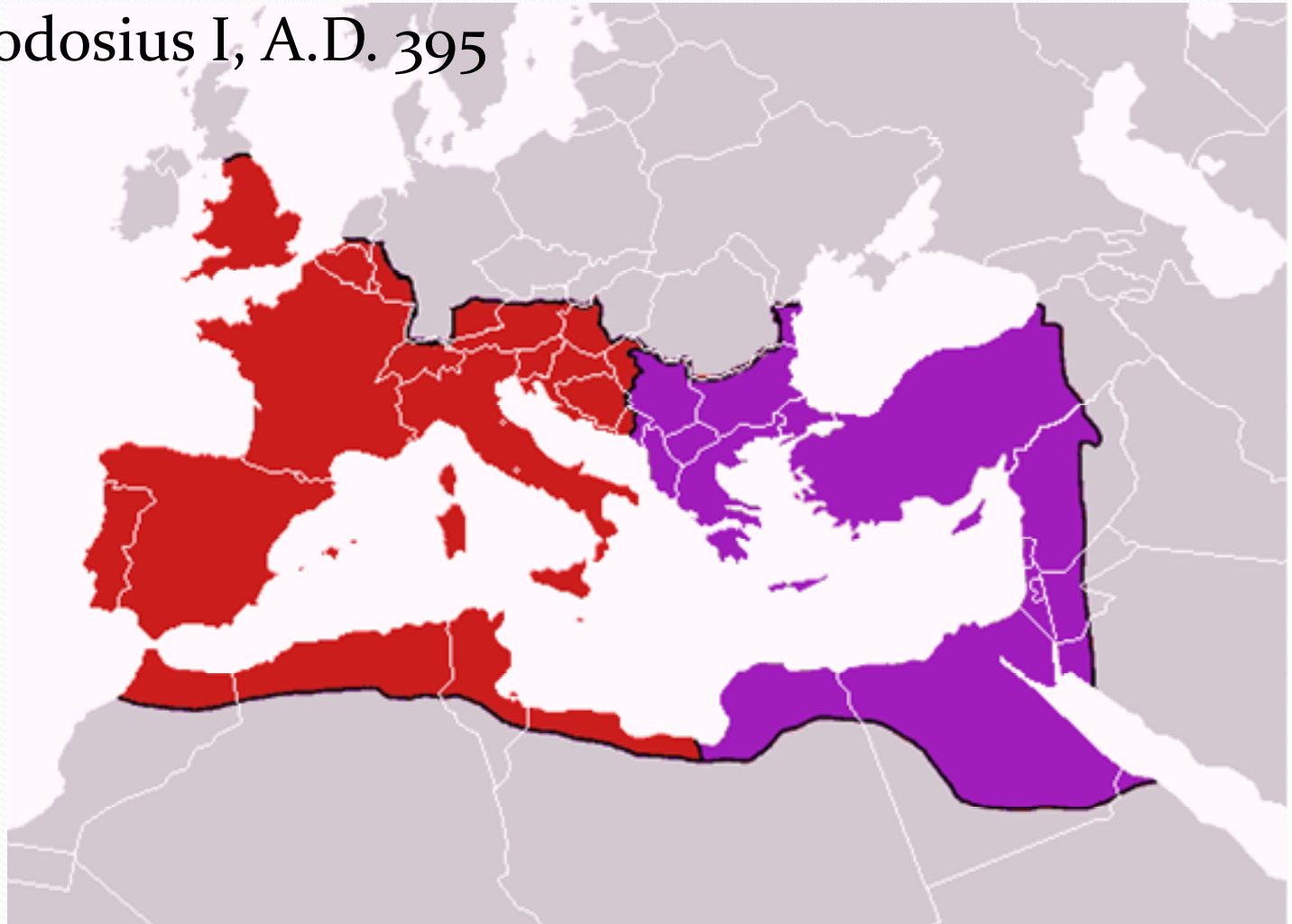
EMPERORS GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN AND THEODOSIUS AUGUSTI. EDICT TO THE PEOPLE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation, should continue to profess that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition, and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians, but as for the others, since, in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation and in the second the punishment of our authority which in accordance with the will of Heaven we shall decide to inflict.

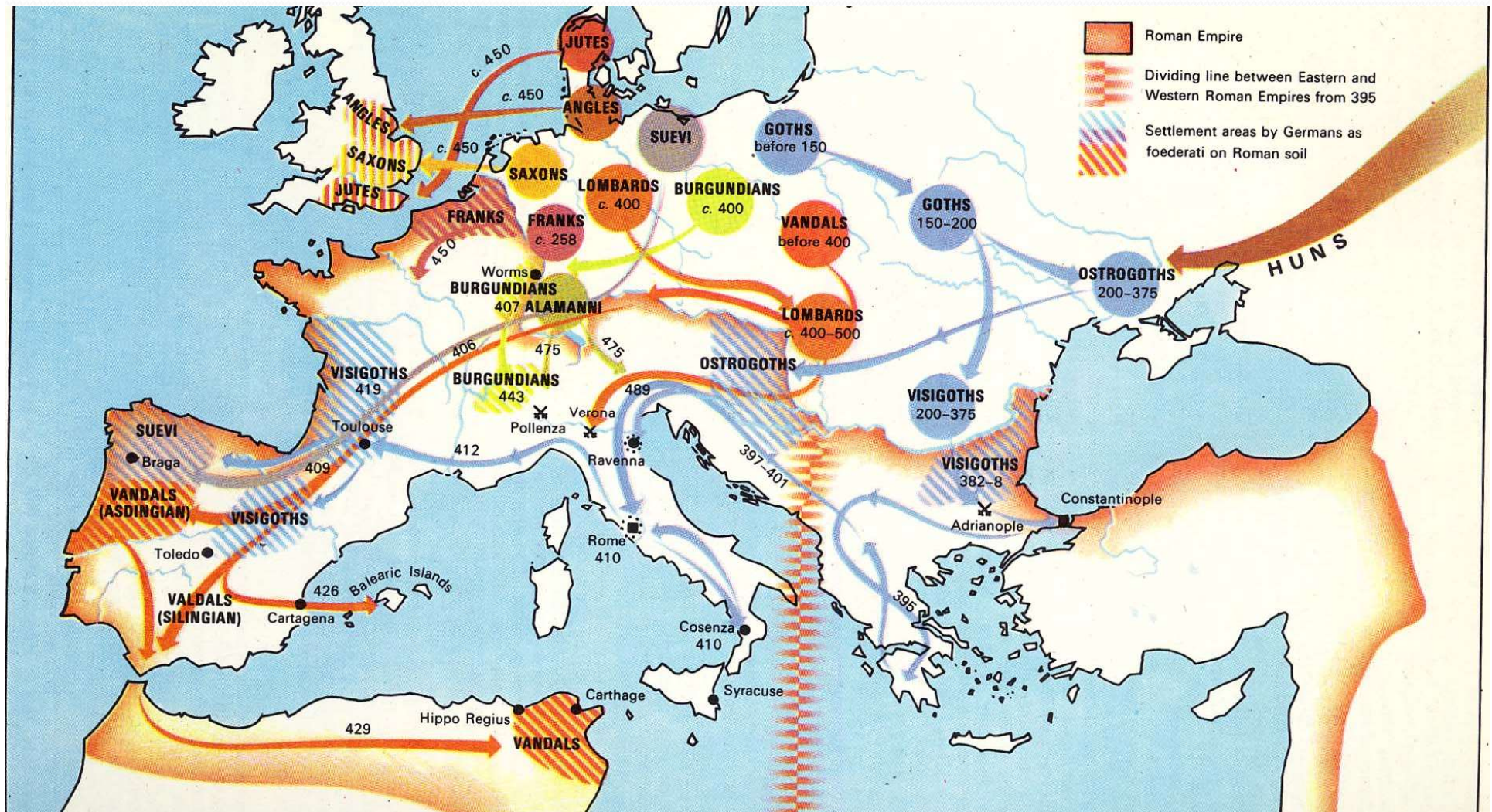
GIVEN IN THESSALONICA ON THE THIRD DAY FROM THE CALENDARS OF MARCH, DURING THE FIFTH CONSULATE OF GRATIAN AUGUSTUS AND FIRST OF THEODOSIUS AUGUSTUS¹—*Codex Theodosianus*, xvi.1.2

Theodosius

- under Theodosius I, A.D. 395

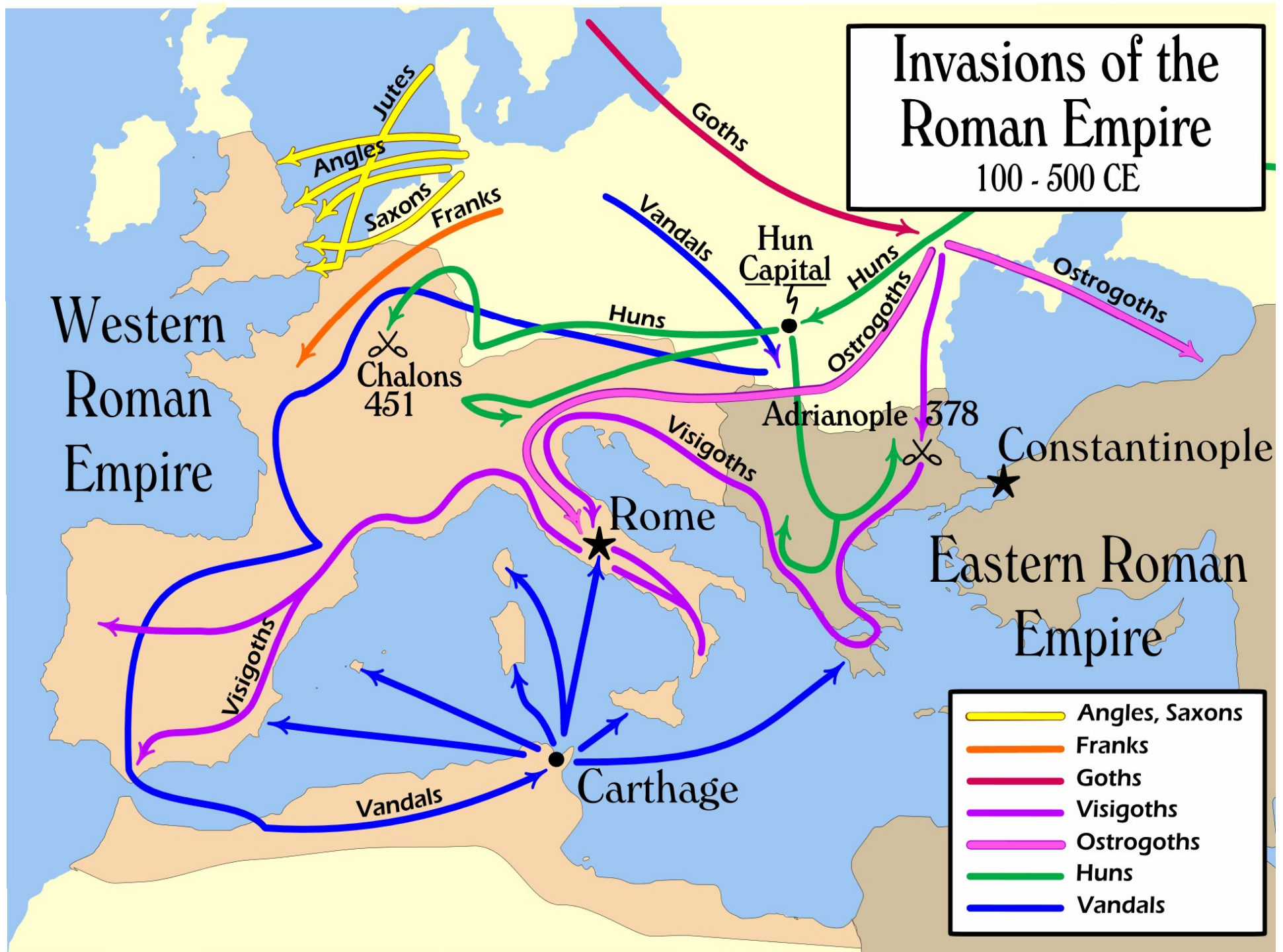


Invasions



Invasions of the Roman Empire

100 - 500 CE



32. THE BARBARIAN MIGRATIONS AND KINGDOMS A.D. 526

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Vandals | Visigoths | Burgundians |
| Goths | Huns | Jutes, Angles and Saxons |
| Ostrogoths | Franks | Britons |
- Kingdom of Attila c. 450
- The dates on the routes are those of the Barbarian migrations.

0 200 400 miles





End of West Roman Empire

- 410 – Britain ‘abandoned’
 - emperor Honorius told Britons that they should look to their own defence...





End of West Roman Empire

- 4th Sep. 476: 'official' end of Western Roman Empire
 - last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, was forced to abdicate by Odoacer



Odoacer → rex



Romulus Augustus

- A.D. 800 Charlemagne → (Holy) Roman Emperor

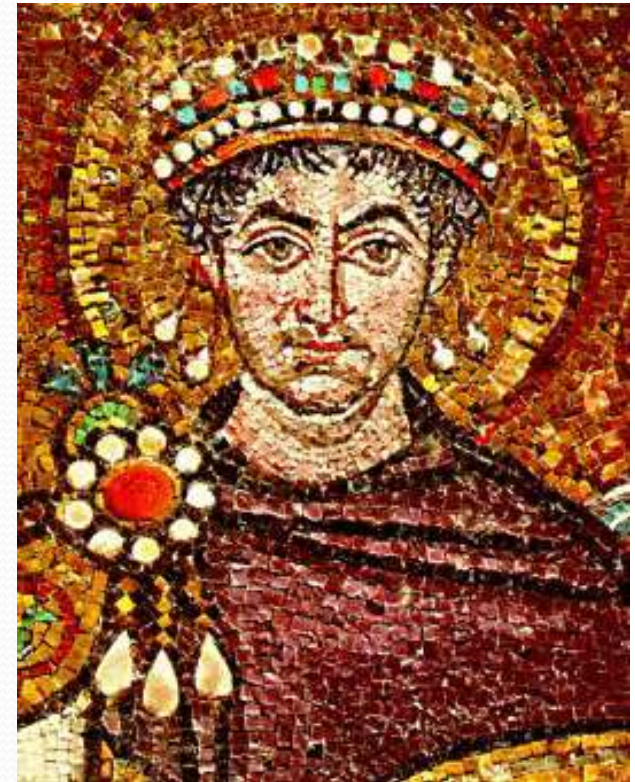


East Rome / Byzantine
Empire: until 1453



East Roman Empire / Byzantine

- officially Roman empire, *Βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων*
- continued until A.D. 1453
 - conquered by Ottoman Turks
- Increasing separation in the 4th century A.D.
 - Already Diocletian partitioned empire into west and east
 - Constantine moved capital to Byzantium/Constantinople
- Greatest extent under Justinian I (A.D. 527 – 565)



Justinian I
mosaic from San Vitele,
Ravenna

Late Antiquity

Ravenna, San Vitale: Justinian



Hagia Sophia



Forum,
Constantinople



Hagia Sophia (construction started in 325),
re-constructed after fire by Justinian I.

