

ATHENS AND ROME: LIFE AND CULTURE IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

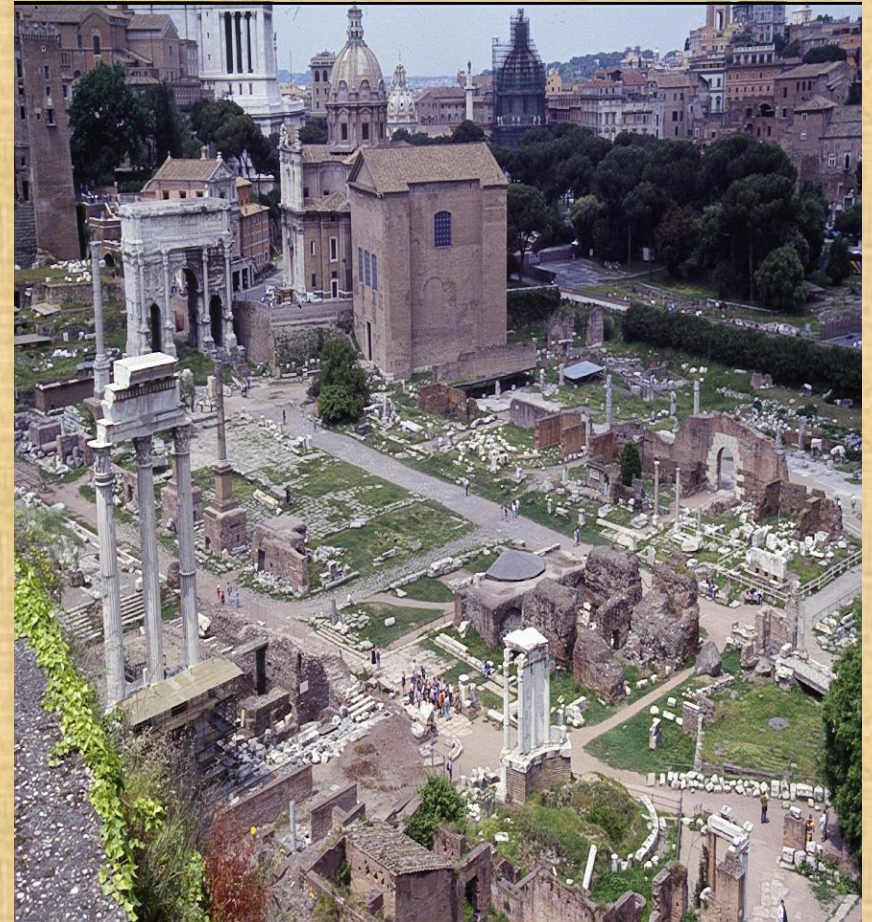
Lecture 28 – Trade, Markets and Food-supply
Rome

CLCS4007

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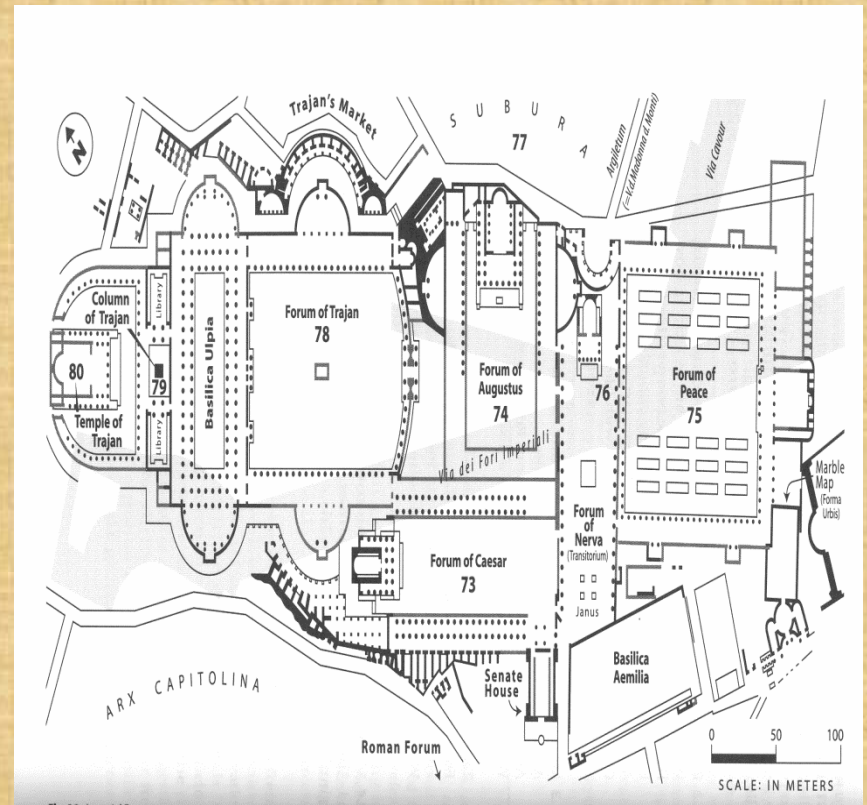
The Roman Forum

- ▣ Located in the centre of Rome - in the valley between the Palatine, Quirinal, Oppian and Capitol hills.
- ▣ The forum acted as a political, Judicial, Religious and Commercial centre.



Imperial *Fora*

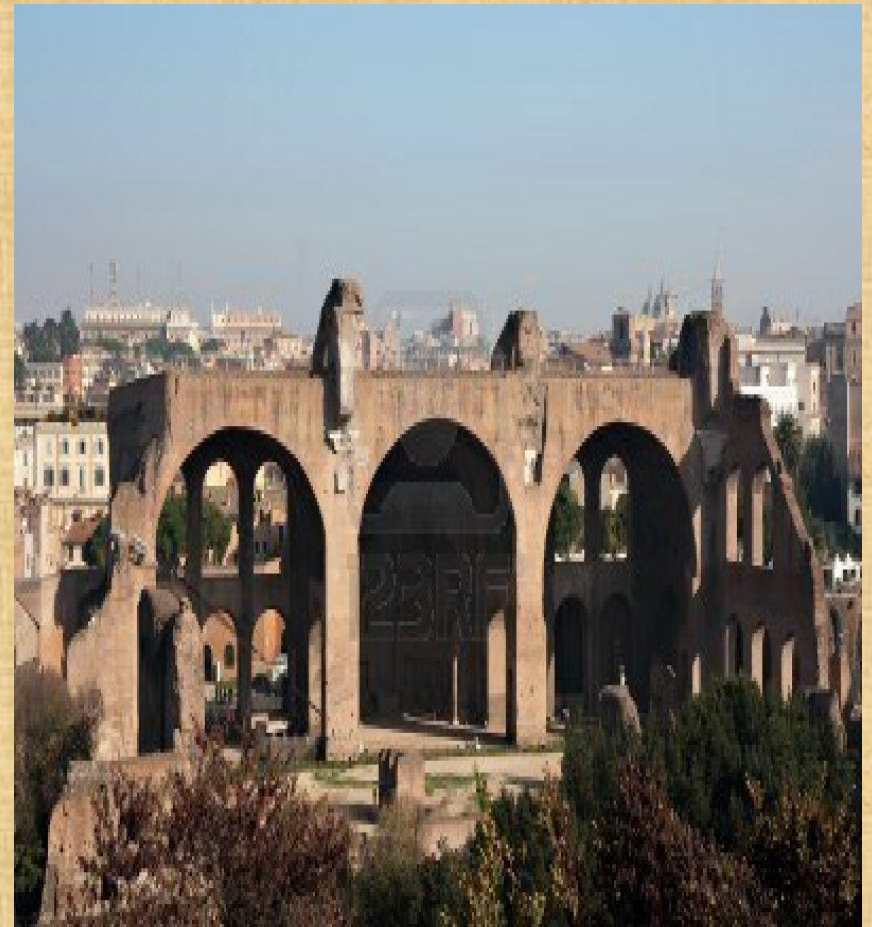
“Augustus built his forum because the two existing *fora* could no longer accommodate the increasing number of people and law cases.....He decreed, therefore, that the senate use the forum to deliberate on war and the awarding of triumphs....” - **Suetonius Augustus 29.1-2.**



“...in light of the customs established by our ancestors of holding gladiatorial displays in the forum... the space between the columns should be widened for better viewing. [*Fora* have] shops for bankers in the surrounding porticoes, and include viewing balconies on the upper stories; such arrangements are both convenient and bring in public revenue.” - **Vitruvius**
Architecture 5.1.1.

Basilica

“The basilicas ought to be placed in the warmest part of forums so the businessmen can meet for business throughout the winter...” –
Vitruvius
Architecture 5.1.4.



Basilica of Constantine (Maxentius)

Markets

- ▣ Market places established for trade and commerce.
- ▣ Some areas of specialisation – e.g. Forum Boarium (“cattle market”) and bankers.
- ▣ Nero’s grain market – the Marcellum Magnum, built on Caelian hill.



Trajan’s Market



Horrea

- ▣ A new commercial area (Emporium) was developed southwest of the Aventine.
- ▣ From the 2nd C BC this area was being developed with *Horrea* (*Horreum* - storehouse).

“Before the death of Commodus there were the following portents... a fire that began at night in some dwelling leaped to the Temple of Peace and spread to the *horrea Piperataria*...” – **Dio Cassius 24.1.**

“Merchandise of the same product can provide the distinguishing name of part of the city... For instance, the area along the Tiber near the Temple of Portunus is called the Forum Piscarium, for its fish.” – **Varro *The Latin Language* 5.146.**

Characters in the Forum

“I’ll show you where to find all sorts of men,
Bad or good, honest men or scoundrels.

Whoever want one to swear through thick and thin,
I send him to the law-courts – A lying boaster
You’ll find not far from Cloacina’s altar.

Your dissolute rich husband you must look for
At the Exchange. There too you’ll find old harlots,
Ready for any bargain...

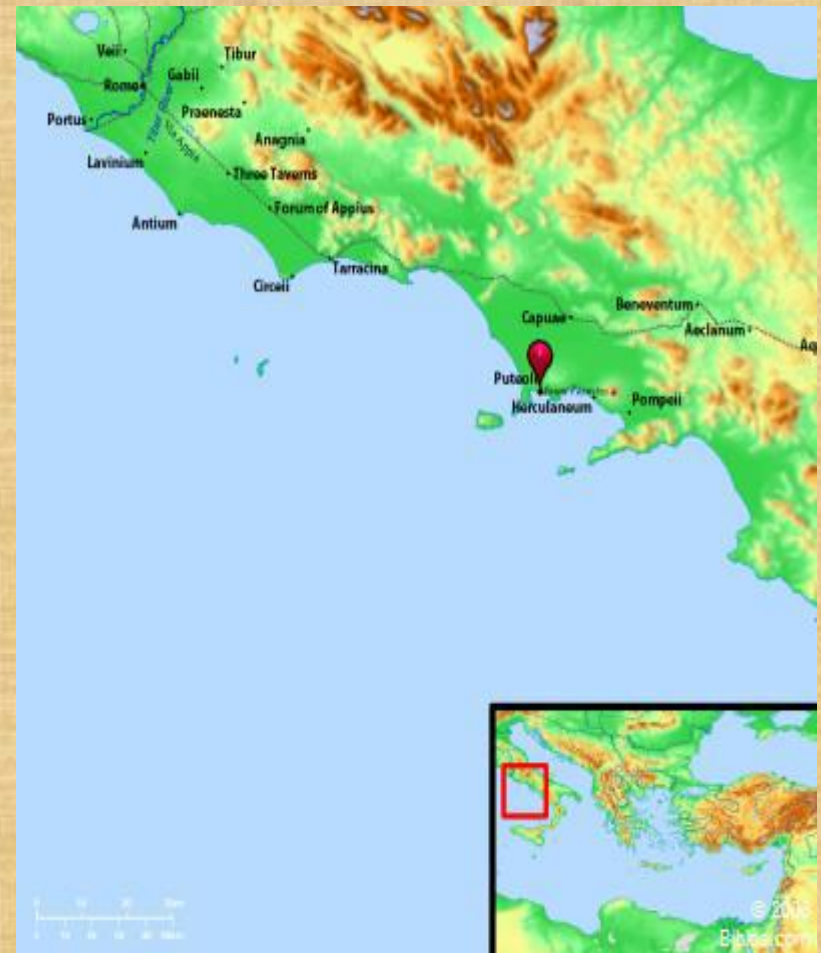
In the middle, you have near the canal,
Mere boasters, bold, chatty – ‘Above the Lake,
Malevolent and foul-mouthed fellows, such
As bodily deal out slander without cause...”

- Plautus *The Parasite* 467-76.

Puteoli, Ostia and Trade

Campania

- ❑ Campania a fertile agricultural region, notable for wine. Also other industries, e.g. bronze-working.
- ❑ Puteoli offered a natural deep-water harbour.
- ❑ Just under 200 km by road from Rome.
- ❑ Archive of the Sulpicii (found at Pompeii).



Costs of Transport

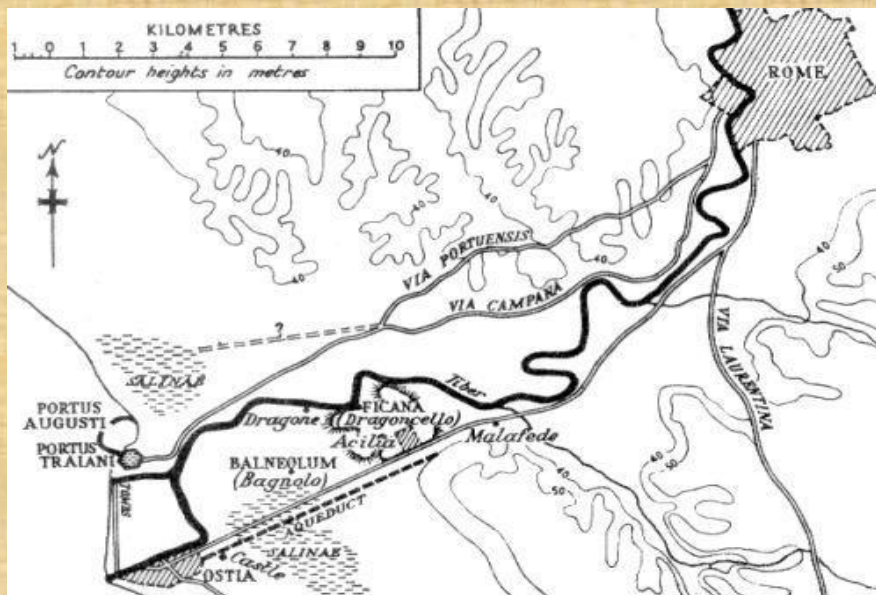
	Sea	River	Land
18 th C. England (Duncan-Jones 1974)	1	4.7	22.6
Roman Empire (Duncan-Jones 1974)	1	4.9	28
Roman Rhine Frontier (Kuenow 1980)	1	5.9	62.5

Ostia and Portus



Ostia

- Fortified settlement created in 4th C BC – earliest settlement attributed to Ancus Marcius.

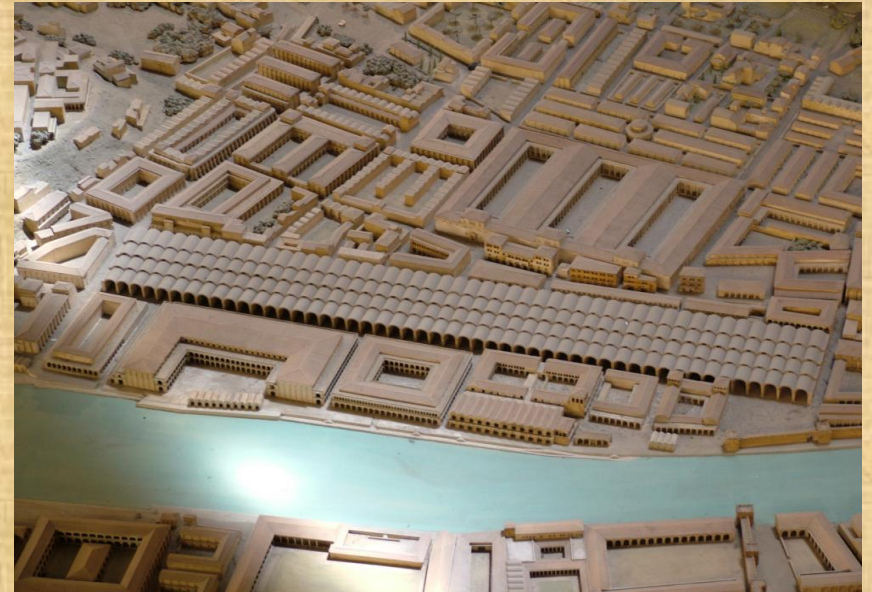


Mosaic from Ostia



“He constructed the harbour at Ostia by building curving breakwaters on the right and left, while before the entrance he placed a mole in deep water. To give this mole a firmer foundation, he first sank the ship in which the great obelisk had been brought from Egypt, and then securing it by piles, built upon it a very lofty tower after the model of the Pharos at Alexandria, to be lighted at night and guide the course of ships.”
– Suetonius *Divus Claudius* 20.3.

Tiber River Port (Aventine)



- ❑ Emporium – wholesale market of ancient Rome – merchandise brought up the Tiber by barge.
- ❑ Porticus Aemilia, initially built by the aediles M. Aemilius Lepidus and L. Aemilius Paullus (193 BC).
- ❑ Concrete wharves probably built in first and second century AD.

Proposed canal from Avernus to Ostia



“Another project would have connected Lake Avernus with Ostia by a ships canal 160 miles long and broad enough for two quinqueremes to pass. Prisoners from every part of the empire were to be used for this task, even those convicted of capital crimes.” – **Suetonius Nero 31.**

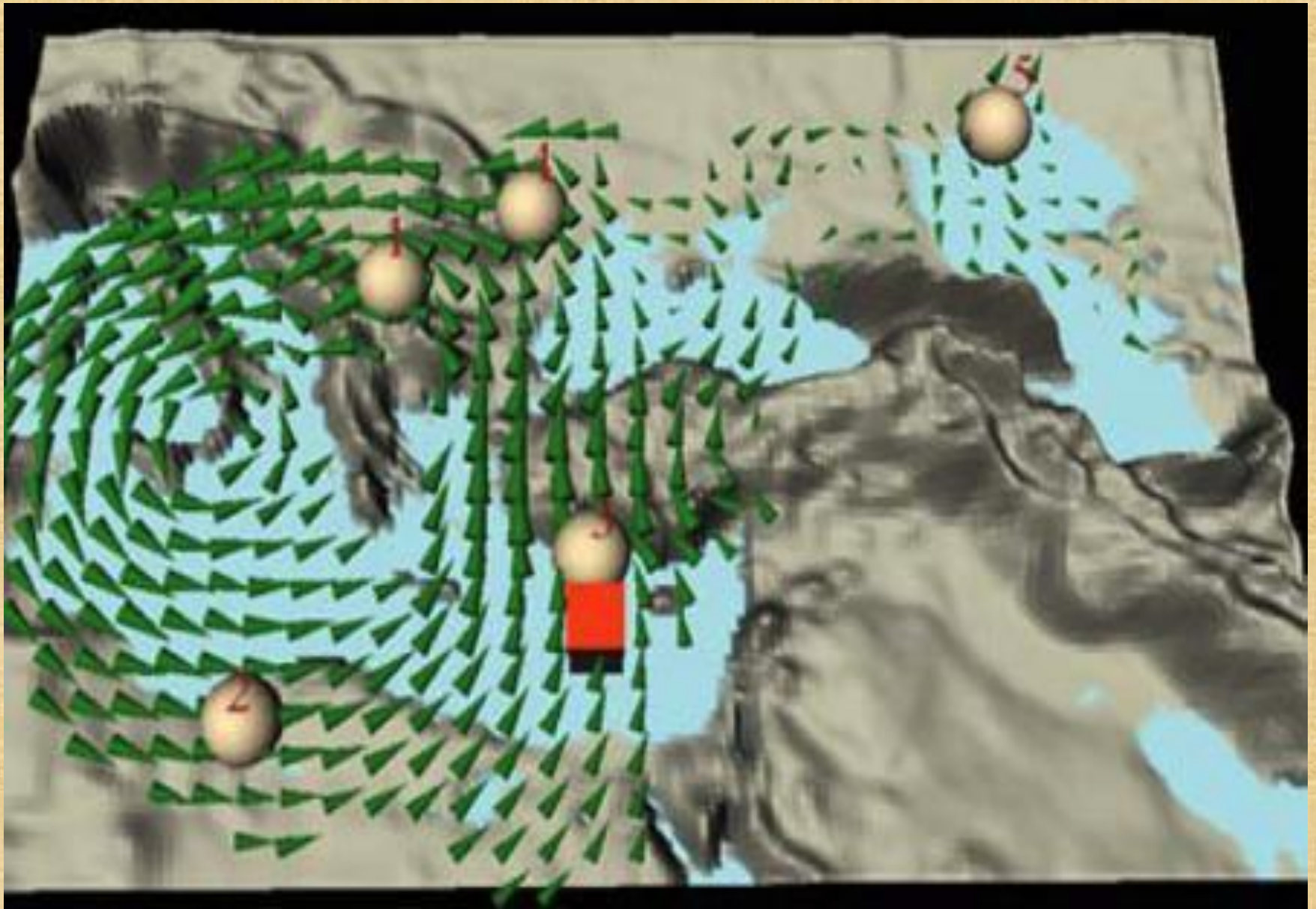
Sailing Times – Between Italy and Alexandria

Puteoli/Ostia to Alexandria

- ▣ Valerius Marianus – Puteoli to Alexandria – 8 days; Galerius and Balbillus (prefects of Egypt) – 6 and 5 days (from straits of Sicily).
- ▣ Average time for death of emperor to reach Alexandria 52 days – Duncan-Jones (1990).

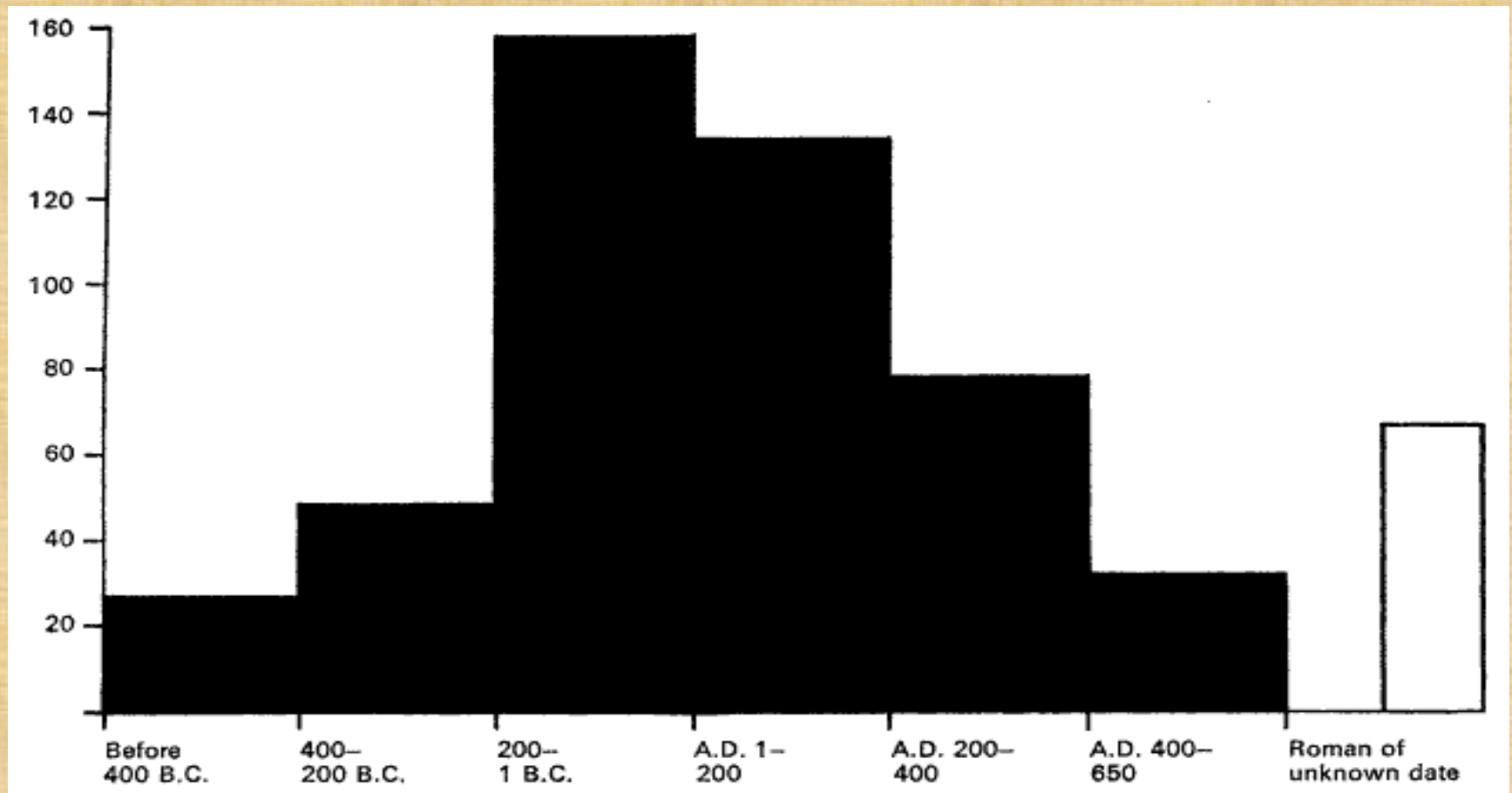
Alexandria to Puteoli/Ostia

- ▣ 30 days – Sulpicius Severus *Dialogues* 1.1.30.
- ▣ 70 days – **Lucian Navigium 7–10.**
- ▣ Venetian records of the 16th and 17th centuries – Jaffa to Venice – 89 days journey on average (pilgrimage records) – Duncan-Jones (1990).



Map from NewScientist - <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn13413-weather-map-interface-lets-you-feel-the-wind.html>

Trade in the Roman World



Number of dated ancient shipwrecks in Mediterranean waters (from Hopkins, *JRS*, 1980).

Shipwrecks



Madrague de Giens (c.mid-first C BC).



Off Malta (scatter).

Supply of Grain to Rome

Need for Grain

- ▣ Grains basic food requirement in Antiquity – perhaps forming two-thirds to three-quarters of average caloric consumption.
- ▣ Rome vast city – one million inhabitants by first century AD?
- ▣ Rome perhaps needed to import 150,000-200,000 tonnes of grain per year.

Grain Dole

- ▣ Institution by Gaius Gracchus in 122 BC of a law (*Lex Frumentaria*) providing subsidised grain for a certain portion of adult male Roman citizen population.
 - ▣ Clodius, during his tribunate (58 BC) made the grain dole one of free distribution (rather than subsidy) - *Lex Clodia Frumentaria*.
- “[Julius Caesar]... reduced the number of those who received grain at public expense from three hundred and twenty thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand.” – **Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.3.**

“He revised the lists of the people district by district, and to prevent the commons from being called away from their occupations too often because of the distributions of grain, he determined to give out tickets for four months' supply three times a year; but at their urgent request he allowed a return to the old custom of receiving a share every month.” – **Suetonius** *Divus Augustus* 40.2.

“In times of scarcity too he often distributed grain to each man at a very low figure, sometimes for nothing, and he doubled the money tickets.” (41.2).

The Emperor and Scarcity

“Once indeed in a time of great scarcity when it was difficult to find a remedy, he expelled from the city the slaves that were for sale, as well as the schools of gladiators, all foreigners with the exception of physicians and teachers, and a part of the household slaves; and when grain at last became more plentiful, he writes: ‘I was strongly inclined to do away forever with distributions of grain, because through dependence on them agriculture was neglected; but I did not carry out my purpose, feeling sure that they would one day be renewed through desire for popular favour.’ But from that time on he regulated the practice with no less regard for the interests of the farmers and grain-dealers than for those of the populace.” –
Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 42.3.

“There was besides a private dinner of his, commonly called that of the "twelve gods," which was the subject of gossip... [Octavian/Augustus] was made up to represent Apollo... The scandal of this banquet was the greater because of dearth and famine in the land at the time, and on the following day there was an outcry that the gods had eaten all the grain and that Caesar was in truth Apollo, but Apollo the Tormentor, a surname under which the god was worshipped in one part of the city.” (70).

Sources of Grain



“He reduced Egypt to the form of a province, and then to make it more fruitful and better adapted to supply the city with grain...” – **Suetonius *Divus Augustus* 18.**

Incentives for Merchants

“To the merchants he held out the certainty of profit by assuming the expense of any loss that they might suffer from storms, and offered to those who would build merchant ships large bounties, adapted to the condition of each: to a citizen exemption from the *lex Papia Poppaea* (law promoting marriage); to a Latin the rights of Roman citizenship; to women the privileges allowed the mothers of four children. And all these provisions are in force to-day.” –
Suetonius *Divus Claudius* 18-19.

Useful Reading

- Garnsey, P. (1983) 'Grain for Rome'. In Garnsey, P., Hopkins, K., and Whittaker, C. R. (eds.), *Trade in the Ancient Economy* (London: The Hogarth Press): 118-130.
- Duncan-Jones, R. (1990) *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).