

# NOTES... SADLY, THE LAST

- 26-67 Julio-Claudians
- 69-96 Flavians
- 96 – 180 Antonines (five good emperors)
  - Under them, the empire expanded to greatest extent
  - Made province much more important, giving resources several of the emperors were actually non-Italian
  - Empire more unified
  - Emperor position no longer exclusive for Italians
  - All emperors adopted other worthy people to be ruler
  - Last was Marcus Aurelius, who was an accomplished writer and philosopher (spent most time outside of Rome, which was losing importance)
  - More areas considered important
  - Most of Marcus Aurelius' time spent with Northern Germans
  - Gave rulership to his son, breaking the pattern of non-relatives
  - Marcus Aurelius, like a typical parent, did not know his son, Commodus, was a worthless scoundrel, rivaling Caligula in madness and Nero in devotion to games
- Commodus ruled for 16 years after Aurelius' death and was assassinated by rivals, who worried they would be on his list of people to have killed
- Empire passed to commander of Praetorian guard
- Praetorian Guard auctions off throne to the highest bidder (Yes, the empire was in that bad condition)
- -- Edward Gibben in 1776 (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire) argued Christianity caused Rome's fall --
- Didius, the highest bidder, was later assassinated
- Empire eventually went to Septimus Severus
- Rule 193 – 235 – Putting down mutinies and revolts the whole time
- Death of last of Severans almost destroyed empire
- Next, an extremely rapid succession of emperors
  - Hard even to keep who was in power straight
  - Called "Barracks Emperors"
    - Proclaimed Caesar by some provincial garrison
- Frontiers parilously unprotected
  - 50 year period of civil war encouraged outside enemies
  - Particularly Ferman and Persian (Parthian) frontiers
  - Sassanids came to power in Persia 226 – Arab Conquest
  - Began to take eat away at Roman Empire
- Also problem of rebellious provinces that reestablished independence and had to be re-conquered
  - Rome never had enough troops, too much large territory
- Collapse also compounded by economic collapse from debasing to inflation

- Few modern rulers put own face on coin or bill
    - To debase a coin is to put base metals in with the pure
    - Currency worth less and less
    - In many cases, money disappeared from civilization
    - People started to use barter once more
    - Pay taxes in kind (with cattle etc)
    - Not enough money to pay for troops
    - Empire more and more difficult to rule
  - Empire rebounded a bit in 285 with ascension of Diocletian from Dalmatia
  - Diocletian began reform
    - Taxation
    - Disband army,
    - Make more auxiliary forces for soldiers
    - Permit foreigners to serve
  - Division
  - Tetrarchy
  - East and West of Roman empire would have an “Augustus”, a “Caesar”
  - For a short while handled the problem of succession and shot down revolts
  - Began division of empire
  - Western Empire
    - Rome, Italy
  - East
    - Better
  - Domascus in Siria and Alleppo (2 older)
    - Longer in cities than any other place on the planet
  - Constantine begins laws
  - Constantine involved himself in (can’t read my own handwriting)
  - Series of Civil wars after his death amongst his son and nephews
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- Formal division of the empire into 2 parts
  - Eastern Capitol, Constantinople begins to be the “real” capital
  - Rome is a fading city
  - Everyone that made Rome work moved to Constantinople
  - Assertively Christian
  - With death of Constantine, several emperors ruled who were related to Constantine
  - Among the emperors, Julian the Apostate 361-3
    - Tried to Reverse Christianity
    - Constantine had bled pagans dry of money toward Christian
    - Julian was a reactionary, revert to past
    - Murdered by someone in own army while campaigning in Persia
  - 364-375
    - Valentinian and Valens emperors
    - Brothers

- Valentinian was the Augustus of the West, Valens, Augustus of the East
- 375 Valentinian dies, empire goes to Valens and Gratian
  - These two make a decision to hasten decline of empire
  - Allow Germans to settle in large numbers within Roman territory
  - Germans needed safety from hunns and were allowed to settle near lower Danube and lived for two years oppressed by Roman heavy-handedness, especially taxes - > they revolt
- 378 – Adrianople, border of Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece
  - By end of day, 40,000 Roman troops led by Valens had died
  - Crushing defeat for Romans
  - Romans never recovered from loss of these troops
  - Germans remain within borders
- After the death of Gratian, Theodosius is the last to rule both sides of the empire
- 407 – Britain falls away
- 410 – Vandals (group of barbarians) capture Spain and North Africa and declare them independent
- Goths, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals and Franks begin to hive off empire
- 410 – Vandals sack the city of Rome and leave only on the condition of taking all the gold in the city
- 455 – Vandals sack Rome again and practically destroy it
- Franks take over Roman Gall
- By mid fifth century most of the west is gone
- Rome continues under puppet emperors
- 476 – Last emperor Romulus Augustulus
  - Deposed by military captain, who is deposed by a king, Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths
    - 493 - Theodoric becomes what he calls the Roman emperor
- Roman Empire in the East continues under Byzantine empire
  - Mixture of Roman, Greek and Christian elements
  - Lasted til the capture of Constantinople in 1463
- 529 – Academies closed for non-conformity with christianity, ends classical age some say
- Why did the empire ‘fall’?
- 1776 – Decline and Fall – People in modern age’s interest peaked
- Reasons for Rome’s decline
  - Failure of army
    - Failure to control its generals hence civil wars
    - 100 BCE civil wars started in Rome (with intermissions), drain treasury and manpower
    - Loss of troops never made back up
    - Harder to recruit
  - Social Strife
    - Between army and everyone else
    - Between rich and poor

- Empire needed revenue
- Money for taxation
- Politically difficult to tax wealthy
- Rich amazingly unproductive
- Growing echoes of serfdom in west
  - Poor people bound to land through obligation
- Between religious groups
  - Rise of Christianity
  - Monotheism more intolerant
  - Monasticism (From Egypt 350)
    - Outside established religious communities
    - Celibacy
    - Sucked up a lot of talent that could have been used for civil organizations
    - Thus, people running empire less competent
  - Army used up precious resources
- Latin in west continued on for some time, but became less and less recognizable from lack of contact
- Latin becomes five Romance languages

