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## AUGUSTUS AND DIOCLETIAN: CONTEMPORARIES OR 300 YEARS APART?

The amazing matches in activities and material culture over 300 years are not a miracle. The puzzle can be solved when the stratigraphic contemporaneity of both emperors, i.e. of Imperial Antiquity and Late Antiquity, is acknowledged. After the civil wars from 88 to 31 BC, the tetrarchs deliberately do not reside in Rome. They secure the empire externally and avoid internal strife.

Early Imperial Antiquity	Tetrarchy
Invasion of England from Bononia/Gesioracum under Claudius (43 AD with Legio XX Valeria Victrix + Legio II Augusta), Agricola (77 AD) etc. but no evidence for ports on England's coast.	Invasions of England from Bononia in 306 and 343 under Constantius Chlorus and Constans (324-337 AD) used ports built under Diocletian in the 290s. Legio XX Valeria Victrix + Legio II Augusta again in England.
Caligula establishes Legio XXII Primigenia for a failed Germanic War (39).	Legio XXII Primigenia builds Cologne's Roman bridge for Constantine's (306-337) failed Germanic war. (His date for wooden pillars leads dendrochronologists astray.)
Menapians are powerful enemies of Rome that disappear for 300 years.	Menapians reappear. Carausius the Menapian tries to become emperor in Londinium.
Roman camp for Germanic wars is mysteriously missing opposite 1 <sup>st</sup> century Cologne where, however, a 4 <sup>th</sup> century camp (Divitia) was found.	Roman camp for Germanic war is found opposite Cologne at Deutz (Divitia) but exhibits 1 <sup>st</sup> century architecture and small finds.
Tiberius (14-37) is threatened by a usurper.	Constantine defeats usurper Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge (312). Early 1 <sup>st</sup> century tombs are cut into early 4 <sup>th</sup> century walls of Maxentius on Via Appia.
Classical style of imperial sculpture is developed.	1 <sup>st</sup> century style of imperial sculpture is reinvented.
Augustus (31 BC-14 AD)	Diocletian (285-305 AD)
Panegyrici, eulogies to the ruler, are created by Virgil for Augustus.	Panegyrici are recreated after they had petered out under Trajan (98-117).
Aureus gold coin of 9.1 but also 4.55 g with Victoria Augusti reverse are issued since Augustus.	Solidus gold coin of 9.1 but also 4.55 g with Victoria Augusti reverse are issued again since Diocletian.
Early military camps are polygonal.	Again, military camps are polygonal.
Section against Persia was forgotten at Limes Arabicus.	Section of Limes Arabicus against Persia was organized by Diocletian.
Golden Age begins.	Again, Golden Age begins.
Diadem becomes imperial badge	Again, diadem becomes imperial badge.
Deification of the emperor is initiated from Nicomedia.	Again, deification of the emperor is initiated from Nicomedia.
Adoption is established as method to chose successor.	Again, adoption becomes method of choosing successor.
Late Hellenistic swords are still in use. Germanic auxiliaries are deployed.	Return to late Hellenistic swords. Only barbarian swords attributable to 4 <sup>th</sup> century.
Fabricae (weapon factories) exist but no textual sources describing them.	No fabricae (weapon factories) are found but textual sources describing them.
Fire destroys Basililica Iulia.	Fire again destroys Basililica Iulia. It is repaired in 1 <sup>st</sup> century style.
Messianic Jewish sectarians are executed.	Again, messianic Jewish sectarians are executed..
Burials in rotunda mausoleums and garland sarcophagi become common.	Again, burials in rotunda mausoleums and garland sarcophagi become common
Egypt is conquered.	Again, Egypt is conquered.
Rome wages wars against Bructeri, Chauki and Juthungi.	Again, wars against Bructeri, Chauki and Juthungi are waged.
Annual enlistment of Roman citizens is introduced.	Again, annual enlistment of Roman citizens is introduced..
Administration titles are PRAEFECTUS URBI, PROVINCIA, DIOCESIS.	Diocletian recreates titles of PRAEFECTUS URBI, PROVINCIA, DIOCESIS.
Iazyges-Sarmatians attack Romans in Pannonia, are pacified and receive land from unknown emperors.	Iazyges-Sarmatians attack Romans in Pannonia, are pacified and receive land from Diocletian and other tetrarchs.

The rulers, dated to the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, do not adopt the sculptural art of the early 1<sup>st</sup> century out of a collective crazy caprice. Both groups of rulers live at the same time

<p><b>Augustus with civic crown</b> [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Glyptothek]. <b>Late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC</b></p>	<p><b>Diocletian with civic crown</b> [http://museum.classicscam.ac.uk/collections/casts/diocletian; attributed]. <b>Late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.</b></p>	<p><b>Young Octavian/Augustus</b> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor_August_Louvre_Ma1280.jpg]. <b>Late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.</b></p>	<p><b>Young Diocletian</b> [http://www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/9781138776685/chapter4.php] <b>Late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.</b></p>
			
<p><b>Augustus (31 BC-14 AD) in body armour.</b> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_of_Prima_Porta]</p>	<p><b>Nero (54-68) in body armour receives civic crown from Agrippina.</b> [https://followinghadrianphoto.com/2016/05/01/aphrodisias/]</p>	<p><b>Constantine the Gr. (306-337) in body armour receives civic crown from Tyche.</b> [Cameo; http://ancientrome.ru/art/worken/img.htm?id=2559]</p>	<p><b>Constantine II (317-340) in body armour with civic crown.</b> [http://www.romehistory.co.uk/7-constantine/]</p>
			

“Diocletian’s bent was markedly conservative.” He surprised by his "appeal to tradition”, a "distinctly old Roman concept" and an "insistent old Romanness." (All from S. Williams, S., *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, BT Batsford, 1985, 161 f.).

That Diocletian’s "judicious blend of conservatism [...] was rooted in ,Roman‘ moral values” of the Augustan period remains mysterious. (All from A.K., Bowman, “Diocletian and the First Tetrarchy, A.D. 284-305, in *Cambridge Ancient History. 2nd Edition. Volume XII. The Crisis of Empire A.D. 193-337*, Cambridge UP, 2005, 67-89/88.)

Well seen, but not understood is Diocletian’s "intensive insistence on traditional norms." (W. Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie: : Das römische Reich zwischen Krisen-bewältigung und Neuaufbau (284-313 n. Chr.*, Peter Lang, 2004, 23; "intensive Beharren auf traditionellen Normen“.)

**It is true that the tetrarchs imitate the style of Augustus. However, they do not do this 300 years later, but only a few years later.**

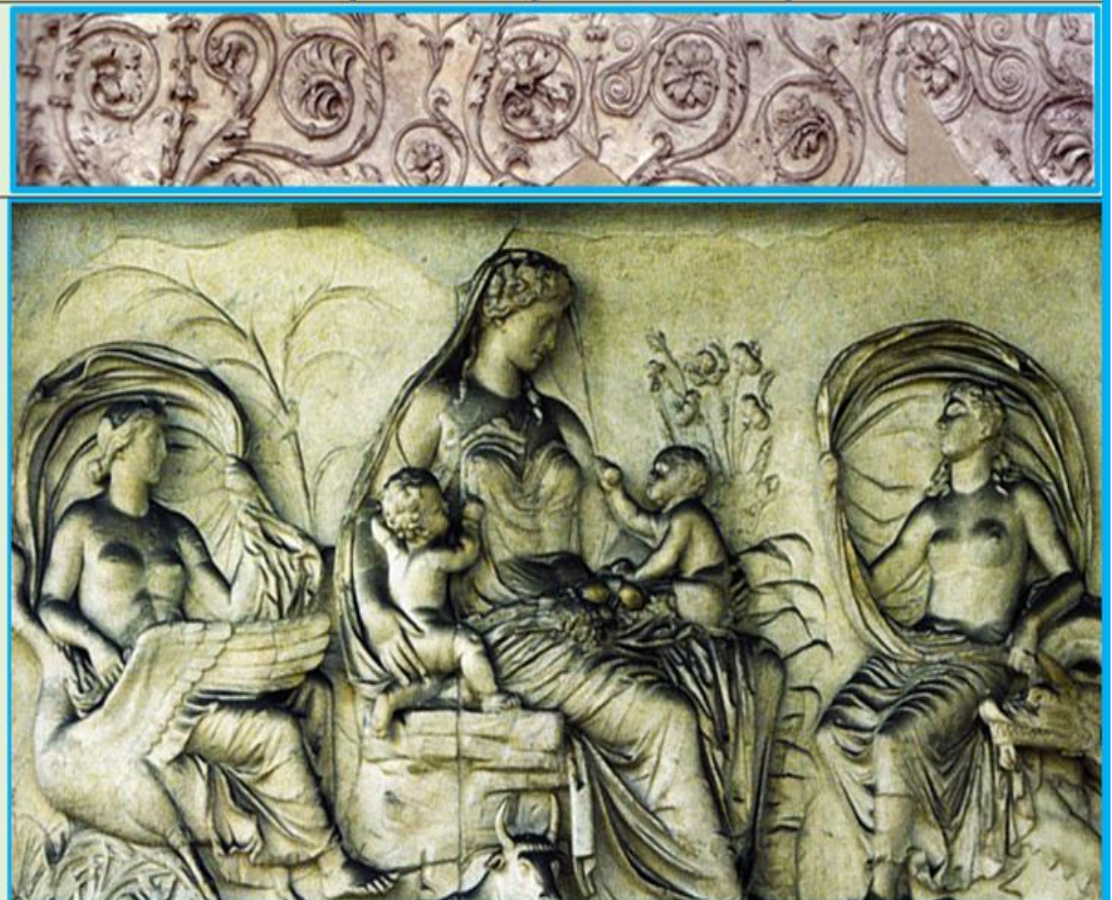
**Acanthus frieze and textile stola wreaths from Arch of Galerius (Thessaloniki, 306 AD)**

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arch-of-Galerius-2.jpg>]



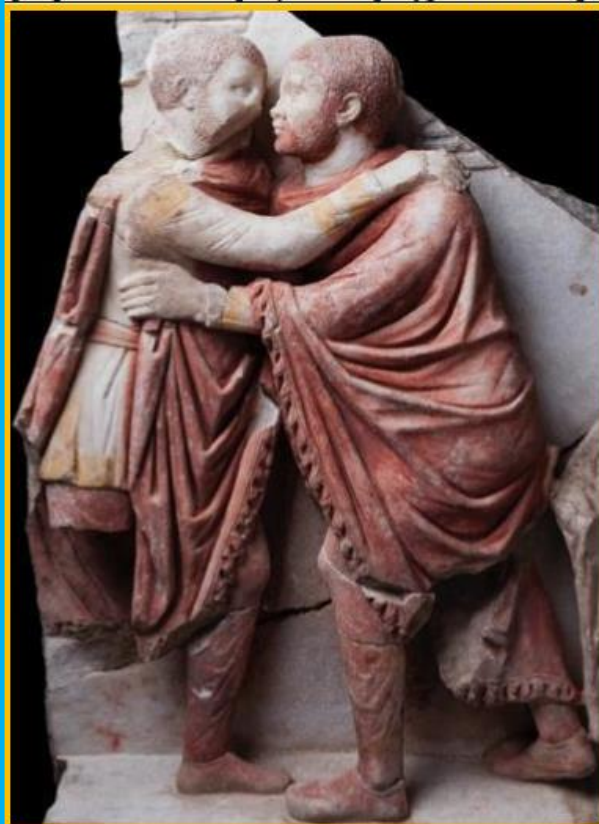
**Acanthus frieze and textile stola wreaths from Ara Pacis (Rome, begun 13 BC)** [<https://pl.pinterest.com/pin/420101471469588878/?lp=true;>

<http://airminded.org/2008/03/13/rome-1a/>]

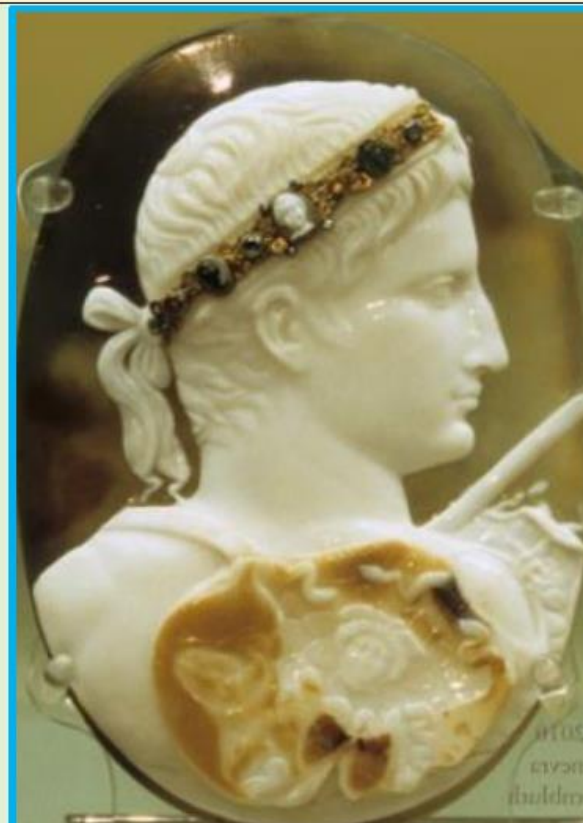


Diocletian and his successor Constantine are regarded as resuscitators of 300-year-old styles, fashions and even color pigments. One sees them as geniuses in imitation, but as absolute zeros in originality. This modern imagination can be dropped as soon as their stratigraphic simultaneity with early Imperial Antiquity is no longer disregarded.

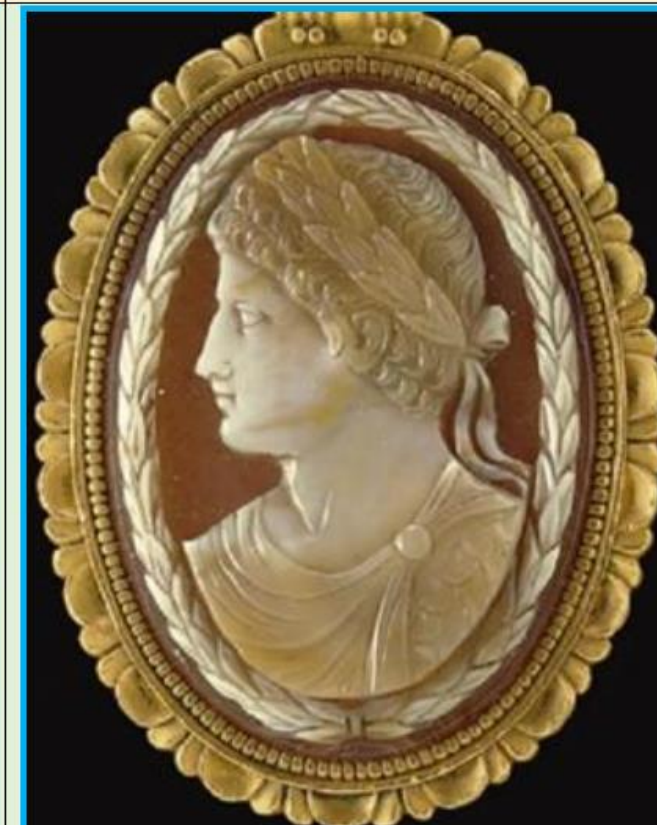
Diocletian (right) with Maximinian (late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD in Hellenistic style of the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Marble from Nicomedia. [https://www.antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/sare346].



Augustus with imperial diadem (Cameo; late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC). [kornbluthphoto.com/HistoricalCameos3.html]



Constantine the Great (306-337) with diadem (Cameo; early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD). [http://www.thehistoryblog.com/archives/date/2009/11]



**Diocletian's swords baffle researchers with a “renaissance of Hellenistic forms“ ending in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC** (C. Miks, *Studien zur römischen Schwertbewaffnung in der Kaiserzeit*, Bd. 1: Text, Bd. 2, Katalog und Tafeln, Rahden: Marie Leidor, I, p. 211).

**Since the emperor is also a general, he seems like a madman who uses weapons that have been obsolete for 300 years. The stratigraphic realization of the simultaneity of Augustus and Diocletian eliminates this awkward impression.**

**Hellenistic/Eastern Roman sword with bird head handle (stele from Chalcedon [Louvre]) from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC**  
[Miks 2007 II, Table 291/A].



**Tetrarch swords with bird head handle from the porphyry statue (originally Byzantium, today Venice) from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.**  
[<http://sword-site.com/thread/99/byzantine-swords?page=1>]



Just as the tetrarchs are considered confused because they used 300 years old swords, their successors – such as Constantine the Great (307-337 AD) or Crispus (317-326 AD) – are considered a little crazy because they resort to 300 years old helmets.

Diademed helmets of Rome's Praetorian Guard (established **23 AD** under Tiberius [14-37 AD]) from the Arch of Claudius (41-54 AD; completed **51/52 AD**).  
[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praetorians\\_Relief](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praetorians_Relief).]



Diademed helmets of Rome's Praetorian Guard on "Urbs Roma" coins (from Trier) struck from **330 to 333 AD** under Constantine the Great (307-337 AD) and in **322 AD** by Crispus (317-326 AD). [<http://www.ancientresource.com/images/roman/romancoins/coins-4th-century/commemorative-coins/urbs-roma-cr2816.jpg>; <https://angelcollectorblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/12/constantine-the-great-ancient-roman-coin-collecting-guide-9/>.]

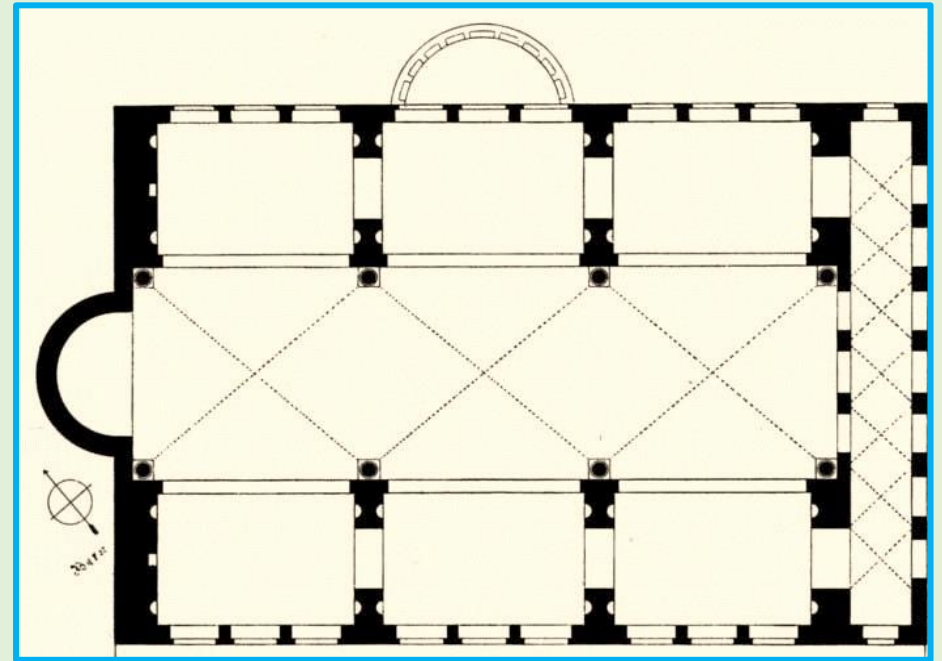
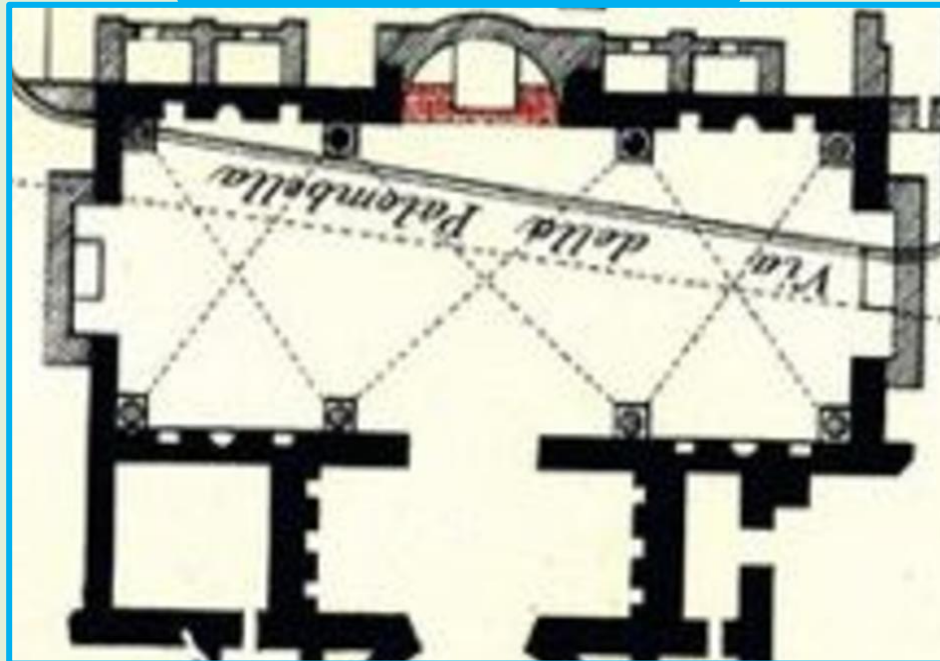


We will see that their architecture, too, has been obsolete for 300 years. But all these absurdities will disappear if the stratigraphic simultaneity of these groups of rulers with those of the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD is no longer denied.

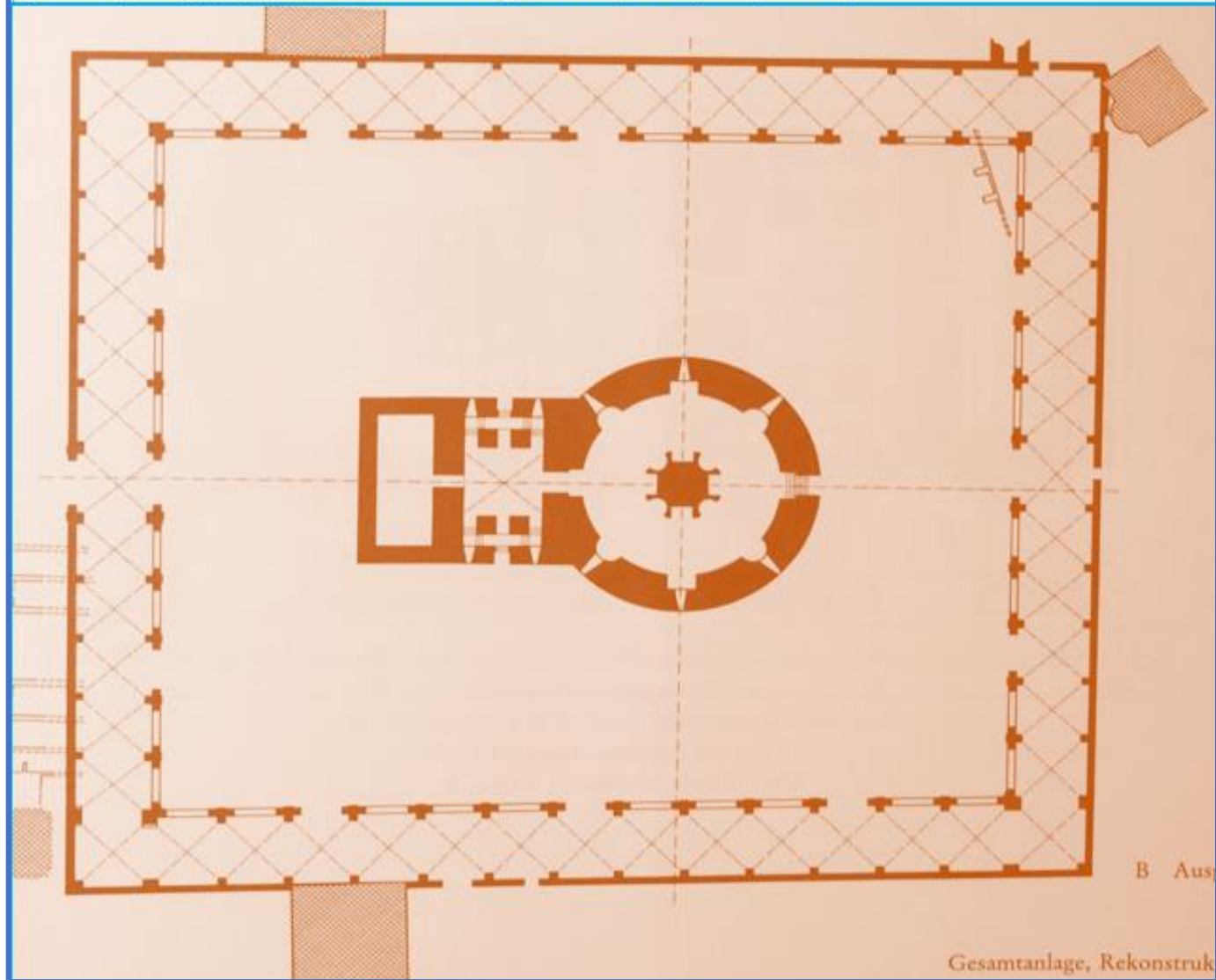
**Shape and floor plan of Agrippa's Basilica Nettuno (33 BC) in the time of Augustus.** [<https://www.maquettes-historiques.net/P23m.html>; <https://www.maquettes-historiques.net/P210.html>]



**Shape and floor plan of Maxentius's Basilica Nettuno (307 AD) in the time of Diocletian.** [[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yQU4wqK\\_9g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yQU4wqK_9g); <https://smarthistory.org/medieval-churches-sources-and-forms/>]

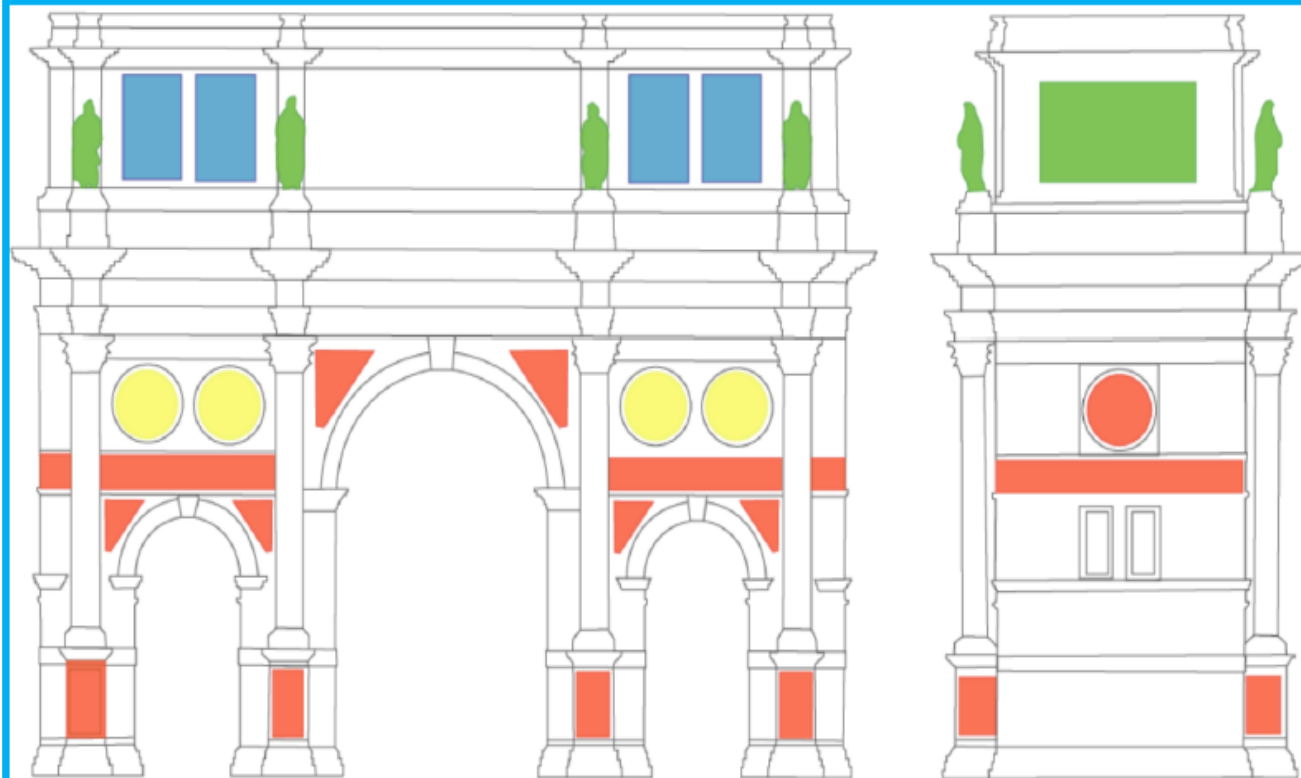


**Mausoleum of Maxentius (+312 AD) in the lifetime of Diocletian. Tombs of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE were cut into its perimeter wall. The southern tomb — it left only 7 cm of the wall — was built by the *Gens Servilia* in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD.**  
[J.J. Rasch, *Das Maxentius-Mausoleum an der Via Appia in Rom*, Zabern, 1984, table 79b].





**CONSTANTINE'S ARCH IN ROME** built in the **early 4th century AD.** *UPON* its 4th c. foundation are additions from the **1st/2nd century AD.** Were the splendid friezes really stolen from monuments of Hadrian, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius (which ones?) or were they added later to honour Rome's defender against Maxentius in 312 AD, **the year Diocletian died?**



Arch relief dating

■ Trajan   
 ■ Hadrian   
 ■ Marcus Aurelius   
 ■ Constantine

**Marcus Aurelius (160-181 AD)**

**Trajanus (98-117 AD)**

**Hadrianus (117-138 AD)**

**Constantine (306-337 ADCE)**

## VISITS OF TETRARCHY RULERS TO ROME

[T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Harvard University Press, 1982, 49-87]

Theodor Mommsen admired, in 1886, Diocletian as "a first-rate statesmanly genius" (B. Demandt, A. Demandt, eds, *Theodor Mommsen: Römische Kaisergeschichte nach den Vorlesungs-Mitschriften von Sebastian und Paul Hensel 1882/1886*, CH Beck 2005, 473). However, Mommsen could not bring himself to publish the urgently awaited final volume of his famous history of the Roman emperors because he did not know where to locate the capital of the empire after 284 AD. Rome, he believed, could not have served as a capital any more. After all, Diocletian had visited the city only once, together with his co-Augustus Maximinian. Constantius Chlorus (293-306) and Galerius (305-311), the two Caesars of the Tetrarchy, did not even visit the city a single time. After Elagabal (218-222), no emperor had ever resided on the Palatine again. After the 230s AD Rome lay in ruins. Not a single residential complex, aqueduct, latrine, street, bakery or brothel was built from the 230s to the 930s. Diocletian did not reside in ruins, but lived at the same time as Augustus. His capital was not Rome. He had residences in Antioch, Nicomedia, and Sirmium. From there he worked tirelessly for the protection of Augustus's empire.

Ruler	Residences (alphabetically)	Known travels and campaigns	Visits in Rome
<b>Diocletian (284-305)</b>	<b>Antioch, Nicomedia, Sirmium</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>1</b> together with Maximinian
<b>Maximinian (284-303)</b>	<b>Aquileia, Mediolanum, Trier</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b> alone; <b>1</b> together with Diocletian; <b>2</b> more not securely proven.
<b>Constantius Chlorus (293-306)</b>	<b>Trier</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Galerius (305-311)</b>	<b>Antioch, Serdica, Thessaloniki</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Constantine the Great (306-337)</b>	<b>Arles, Constantinople, Nikomedia Serdica, Sirmium, Thessaloniki</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>1</b> alone; <b>1</b> together with <b>1</b> his sons Constantinus und Constantius

## Summary

The purpose of the Roman empire's subdivision by Diocletian and his tetrarchy was to permanently end the civil wars that had been raging since 88 BC (Marius [died 86 BC] against Sulla [died 78 BC]). This transformation from a more central to a more decentralized administration did not take place 300 years after these massive internal conflicts, but during the time that Augustus was still emperor. Diocletian did not organize decentralization to weaken Rome, but to protect the capital. Diocletian was not an imitator of Augustus's reforms. He was directly responsible for their implementation.

In order for Rome to remain untouchable, the Tetrarchs, who provided its protection, were given their own capitals with the power emblems of Rome, i.e. primarily a large palace and a majestic circus. These capitals did not by chance look like smaller versions of Rome, but belonged to the same time and culture. The real time of this simultaneity was – stratigraphically seen – not the 1<sup>st</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, but – *cum grano salis* – the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Diocletian's swords look like the weapons of the Augustan period because they were both made during the same era. That's why he could draw on the same number of legions as in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The helmets of Diocletian's successors like Constantine and Crispus resemble the supposedly 300 years earlier helmets of the time of Tiberius or Claudius, because they were their contemporaries. Rome has no settlement layers with dwellings, latrines, roads and water pipes for the Tetrarchs super-imposed, after the crisis years of 235 to 284 AD, on ruins of the Severans (193-234 AD), because the tetrarchy was active before and not after the Severans. Elagabal (218-222) was the last emperor ever to reside on the Rome's Palatine Hill.

Diocletian wanted to pacify a divided empire. Yet, he knew nothing of a physically destroyed empire that he had to resurrect from ruins. According to his own statement, "the greatest thing he succeeded in [...] was the preservation of imperial unity" (B. Demandt, A. Demandt, eds, *Theodor Mommsen: Römische Kaisergeschichte nach den Vorlesungs-Mitschriften von Sebastian und Paul Hensel 1882/1886*, CH Beck 2005, 474).

Diocletian never boasted about reviving and imitating the art and cultural symbols of Augustus. He had no knowledge of a distance of 300 years between himself and Augustus. He had no idea that, after the *Principate* of Augustus, he was going to invent the *Dominate*. After all, the latter term was coined by the German historian Theodor Mommsen [1817-1903]. For Diocletian, the 300 years between the *Principate* and the mysterious "Dominate" adopted by modern scholars, were simply unimaginable. Diocletian and Augustus were contemporaries. Diocletian did not ape Augustus. Their activities were similar because they were both involved in them. To Diocletian's job belonged the avoidance and prevention of any competition with the supreme leader in Rome.

Stratigraphically, Imperial Antiquity and Late Antiquity belong to the period of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century. They experienced their downfall in the cataclysm of the 930s. By reuniting written reports and material findings that had previously been split into two eras, historiography will gain new and reasonable narratives whereas modern historiography is hampered with fragments and perplexities.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC APPENDIX.** Imperial Antiquity, Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages were facets of the same stratigraphic period. They went down together in the cataclysm of about 930 AD. Immediately afterwards, the primitive restart of the High Middle Ages set in. The significant decline of the population after the maximum under Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) happened during the crisis with plague and Antonine Fires between the 160s and the 190s of our textbook chronology. In the anti-stratigraphic diagram below, this rather quick process is overstretched from a real 30 years to two centuries. This time-span combined with the half millennium without demographic recovery represents Rome's 700 archaeologically empty years between 1 and 930 AD. Stratigraphically the decline corresponds to the 860s to 890s AD. The lethal collapse to only 20,000 to 30,000 survivors occurred in the 230s AD (textbook date), after which no more dwellings, bakeries, latrines, aqueducts, and roads etc. were built. Stratigraphically we are then in the 930s AD. [<https://www.romanoimpero.com/2017/12/demografia-di-roma.html>.]



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPENDIX:** The seven centuries missing in Rome's demography are also missing in its archaeology. This is best researched for the Theatre of Balbus. It was built by proconsul Lucius Cornelius Balbus (minor) in 13 BC from the spoils of a military campaign by order of Augustus.

The ruins, whose stones were used by survivors to build their simple houses in the 10th/11th century AD, are devastated buildings of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Thus **no new buildings were erected between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.**

**Reconstruction of the Balbi theatre in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD (stratigraphically 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> c. AD).**

[<http://wikimapia.org/8705983/Theater-of-Balbus-and-the-Crypta-Balbi#/photo/521512>.]

**Imagination of the state of the Balbi theatre after the cataclysm (Third Century Crisis==Tenth Century Collapse;** <https://www.q-mag.org/gunnar-heinsohn-tenth-century-collapse.html>).

[<http://ilgirodiroma.blogspot.com/>.]

**10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> c. AD:** Using materials from the ruins, a small settlement was built in the theatre. In connection with a defensive wall on the open side, the complex turned into a medieval castle. [Venditelli, L., ed., *Crypta Balbi: Guida*, Roma: Electa, 2012.]

