One of the most popular ways to collect ancient Roman coins is by emperor, as most bear a portrait of the issuing ruler. This checklist includes imperial portrait coins of most of the emperors and their families, followed by a brief description of their lives. Dates for reign as Caesar as well as Augustus are included. Note the emperor’s family or adopted name follows his historical name, then look at the progression as rulers adopt a predecessor’s names to advertise their legitimacy.

To help you track your coins, simply place a check in the box next to those you already own. We hope you enjoy collecting ancient Roman coins, and that you find this Ancient Roman Coin checklist useful and entertaining.

Please Note: Because of the wide variety of portraits used, the photo opposite each description serves as a representation of the emperor’s portrait - individual portraits will vary.

☐ AUGUSTUS (Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus)
   27 B.C.-A.D. 14
   Augustus (known as Octavian until 27 B.C.) was the first Roman to use the title Augustus, and was Rome’s first Emperor. He laid down the foundation for provincial administration, preserved republican institutions, and returned the administration of government to the Senate.

☐ LIVIA (Livia Drusilla)
   Augusta A.D. 14-29
   Livia came from a noble family, and was the second wife of Augustus. Their marriage of 52 years was based on compatibility and love. Politically savvy, she was involved in conspiracies to ensure her son Tiberius’ succession. Died at age 85.

☐ AGRIPPA (Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa)
   Tribunician Power 18-12 B.C.
   As classmate and friend of Augustus, Agrippa had a distinguished military career and won many honors. He married Augustus’ daughter and received the tribunician power (was made heir to throne). He died in 12 B.C.

☐ TIBERIUS (Tiberius Claudius Nero)
   Augustus A.D. 14-37
   One of the Empire’s best generals and an experienced administrator, shared rule during the last 10 years of Augustus’ life. Tiberius ruled during Christ’s life, and by continuing the policies instituted by Augustus, increased Rome’s prosperity.
DRUSUS (Drusus Julius Caesar)
Born 14 B.C./Died A.D. 23
Son of Tiberius, who eventually received the tribunician power. Compared to his father, he was inferior in almost every way. He was poisoned by his wife and her lover, Sejanus (praetorian prefect of Tiberius).

NERO CLAUDIUS DRUSUS (Drusus the Elder)
Born 38 B.C./Died 9 B.C.
Brother of Emperor Tiberius. One of the greatest heroes of his time. After becoming general of the armies in Germany, he had outstanding success. Married Marc Antony’s youngest daughter Antonia. When he died, the Senate gave him the surname Germanicus.

GERMANICUS (Germanicus Julius Caesar)
Born 15 B.C./Died A.D. 19
Son of Nero Claudius Drusus and very popular with the Roman legions. They wanted him to fight for the rule of the Empire, but Germanicus remained loyal. He was nephew of Tiberius, who made him Caesar in A.D. 4. While overseeing the succession to the throne in Antioch, he was poisoned.

NERO CAESAR (Nero Julius Caesar)
(Born A.D. 7/Died A.D. 30/31)
and DRUSUS CAESAR (Drusus Julius Caesar)
(Born A.D. 8/Died A.D. 33)
Sons of Germanicus and Agrippina. Nero was highly educated and outstanding in character, the opposite of his brother, Drusus. He fell victim to a plot by Sejanus and Drusus, and was exiled to an island where he died.

Drusus helped plot his brother’s downfall, but became a victim of political intrigue, too. He was arrested and died in prison.

CALIGULA (Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus)
Caesar A.D. 35-37
Augustus A.D. 37-41
Youngest son of Germanicus and Agrippina, and brother to Nero and Drusus Caesar. He was given the nickname “Caligula” by soldiers because as a young boy he wore a small soldier’s uniform along with the half-boot (caliga). Caligula (or “Bootsie”) became emperor after smothering Tiberius. He soon became excessively cruel and was murdered by a group of praetorians.

To assist the reader in coin identification, every effort has been made to present actual-size photographs.
CLAUDIUS (Tiberius Claudius Drusus)
Augustus A.D. 41-54
Claudius was the son of Nero Claudius Drusus. Because he suffered from infantile paralysis and was considered dull-witted, he was passed over for any serious office by his family. The legions, who took an oath in his name, forced the Senate to accept Claudius through use of arms, and Claudius proved he was indeed capable of ruling.

NERO (Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus)
Caesar A.D. 50-54
Augustus A.D. 54-68
Nero had a happy first year of rule. Eventually he killed his half-brother, mother, aunt, wife and tutors. Many noble families became victims of his murderous rage. Legend says Nero started the fire which burned ten districts in Rome. After the Praetorian Guard deserted him, he committed suicide.

GALBA (Servius Sulpicius Galba)
Augustus A.D. 68-69
Emperor for only seven months, Galba alienated the Praetorian Guard by refusing to reward them for bringing him to power. The army eventually killed him because of his strict discipline and thriftiness.

OTHO (Marcus Salvius Otho)
Ruled about 3 months in A.D. 69
The Senate accepted Otho as emperor but the two Roman armies proclaimed their generals, Vitellius and Vespasian, emperor. Even though Otho defeated Vitellius’ army three times in battle, he committed suicide when he lost the fourth battle.

VITELLIUS (Aulus Vitellius)
Ruled almost 8 months in A.D. 69
After becoming emperor, Vitellius gradually left the government to his freeman, Asiaticus, and focused his attention on lavish banquets and eating. Defeated by Vespasian’s soldiers, his lifeless body was dragged through the streets of Rome.

VESPASIAN (Titus Flavius Vespasianus)
Augustus A.D. 69-79
Vespasian brought calm and sanity after years of bloodshed. He was a just ruler, from a humble background. The Colosseum, Rome’s largest ruin, was built by him. After ruling 10 years, and bringing calm to Rome, he died at age seventy.
- **TITUS** (Titus Flavius Vespasianus)
  *Caesar A.D. 69-79  
  *Augustus A.D. 79-81*

  Elder son of Vespasian, who is best known for his campaigns in Judea. He was a good ruler, who looked after the welfare of his people. His brother, Domitian, was thought to have poisoned him.

- **DOMITIAN** (Titus Flavius Domitianus)
  *Caesar A.D. 69-81  
  *Augustus A.D. 81-96*

  Domitian, youngest son of Vespasian, followed Augustus’ style in ruling the Empire, but was unpopular with the senate and upper class. He became very suspicious and cruel, and was eventually killed by members of his household.

- **NERVA** (Marcus Cocceius Nerva)
  *Augustus A.D. 96-98*

  One of the “good” emperors, Nerva tended to the poor, reorganized the Empire’s finances, and brought peaceful relationships into existence between the army and Senate.

- **TRAJAN** (Marcus Ulpius Trajanus)
  *Caesar A.D. 97  
  *Augustus A.D. 98-117*

  Trajan was popular with the army and Senate. Under his rule, the Roman Empire reached its largest size. Many public works were undertaken during his reign.

- **HADRIAN** (Publius Aelius Hadrianus)
  *Augustus A.D. 117-138*

  Hadrian was adopted by Trajan and continued his governmental policies. Hadrian’s Wall in Britain is one of the many fortifications he ordered to protect the Empire’s frontiers.

- **SABINA** (Vibia Sabina)
  *Augusta A.D. 128?-136*

  Entered an arranged marriage with Hadrian long before he became emperor. Contemporary history paints their 36 years of marriage as unhappy, but Sabina accompanied Hadrian on most of his journeys throughout the empire.

- **AELIUS** (Lucius Aelius Verus [Vagi])
  *Caesar A.D. 136-138*

  Adopted by Hadrian, stories about his character vary. Some say he was unfit to rule, and others say he was competent and fair. Aelius’ weak and unhealthy constitution caused his death.
How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins

Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

☐ **ANTONINUS PIUS**  
(Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus)  
*Caesar A.D. 138*  
*Augustus A.D. 138-161*  

Adopted by Hadrian, and in turn adopted his nephew Marcus Aurelius to succeed him as emperor. He had a peaceful reign in which the economy flourished.

☐ **FAUSTINA SR.** (Annia Galeria Faustina)  
*Augusta A.D. 138-140/1*  

From a wealthy and noble Spanish family, Faustina Senior married Antoninus Pius about A.D. 110. Although they had four children, only Faustina Jr. survived. Three years after Antoninus became emperor, Faustina Sr. died and was deified on a vast number of Imperial coins.

☐ **MARCUS AURELIUS** (Marcus Annius Verus)  
*Caesar A.D. 139-161*  
*Augustus A.D. 161-180*  

Continued Rome’s prosperity, but had border problems with the barbarians. A careful, moral ruler whose writing survived and showed that he should have been a philosopher instead of emperor. As promised, he raised Lucius Verus to co-emperor.

☐ **FAUSTINA JR.** (Annia Galeria Faustina)  
*Augusta A.D. 147-175/6*  

Faustina became the first daughter of an emperor to marry an emperor, give birth to a future emperor, and die naturally. Ancient historians accuse her of numerous infidelities. She travelled extensively with her husband Marcus Aurelius, and earned the title Mater Castrorum (mother of the camps).

☐ **LUCIUS VERUS** (Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus)  
*Augustus A.D. 161-169*  

Lucius became “Colleague in the Principate” in A.D. 161. He was almost the opposite of Marcus Aurelius in character. He died in A.D. 169 while returning to Rome from battles in Dacia.

☐ **LUCILLA** (Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla)  
*Augusta A.D. 164-182/3*  

The daughter of Marcus Aurelius, wed at 16 to co-emperor Lucius Verus. Widowed at 20, her father carefully selected a respected, older senator as her next husband. When her involvement in a plot to murder her brother and emperor Commodus was exposed, she was exiled and put to death.
- **COMMODUS** (Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus)
  - Caesar A.D. 166-177
  - Augustus A.D. 177-192
  
  Made Augustus and co-emperor in A.D. 177. When Marcus Aurelius’ son Commodus came to rule, the peaceful era that had existed from Galba to Aurelius ended. Later in life, Commodus was probably insane. He believed he was the reincarnation of Hercules.

- **CRISPINA** (Bruttia Crispina)
  - Augusta A.D. 177-182/3
  
  Married Commodus in A.D. 177, the year he became emperor. According to contemporary historians, she was exceptionally beautiful. As Commodus’ insanity progressed, she supposedly engaged in many affairs, resulting in banishment and death. Now, it is believed she took part in an assassination attempt.

- **DIDIUS JULIANUS** (Marcus Didius Severus Julianus)
  - Augustus A.D. 193
  
  One of three emperors who ruled during a 6-month span. Didius bought the office of emperor during an auction, thereby offending Rome’s citizens. They appealed to the frontier generals to rescue them. He was beheaded, a fate usually reserved for common criminals. Ruled for 66 days.

- **PESCELLNIUS NIGER** (Gaius Pescennius Niger)
  - Augustus A.D. 193-194
  
  After a long military career, Pescennius became governor of Syria. When Pertinax was murdered, Pescennius’ troops proclaimed him emperor. Although he was one of the generals Rome’s citizens appealed to, word reached him too late and he was killed less than a year later.

- **CLODIUS ALBINUS** (Decimus Clodius Septimius Albinus)
  - Caesar A.D. 193-195
  - Augustus A.D. 195-197
  
  Coming from a military family, Clodius was well educated in geography. Became Caesar under Septimius Severus, later proclaimed emperor by his troops. Lost his life after Septimius defeated an eastern rival and returned to defeat him.

- **SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS** (Lucius Septimius Severus)
  - Augustus A.D. 193-211
  
  Became emperor after defeating both of his rivals Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. Adopted a military-style government, while paying little attention to the Senate.
JULIA DOMNA (Julia Domna)
Augusta A.D. 193-217
A woman of beauty, intelligence and wit, Julia Domna was matriarch of the Severan dynasty. Her staunch refusal to allow the empire to be divided between her sons was her greatest feat. She was so well respected that she retained the title of Augusta even after her sons died.

CARACALLA (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)
Caesar A.D. 195-198
Augustus A.D. 198-217
Elder son of Septimius and brother of Geta. His nickname, Caracalla, came from the Gallic coat he wore. He convinced the Praetorian Guard to murder his brother. Known for his extravagances and cruelties, he was murdered by his praetorian prefect. “Caracalla’s Baths” in Rome still exist.

PLAUTILLA (Publia Fulvia Plautilla)
Augusta A.D. 202-205
Caracalla and Plautilla’s marriage was based on political necessity, not love. Supposedly, they loathed each other so much that they wouldn’t even dine together. Eventually, Caracalla divorced, exiled and murdered her.

GETA (Lucius Septimius Geta)
Caesar A.D. 198-209
Augustus A.D. 209-211
Younger son of Septimius, was popular with the military and co-ruled with his brother, Caracalla. But at the age of 23, Geta was murdered under the direction of his cruel brother.

MACRINUS (Marcus Opellius Macrinus)
Augustus A.D. 217-218
Became involved in Caracalla’s death in order to save his own life. Later, the army killed him and his young son because of an unfavorable peace made with the Parthians and mutiny brought about by the grandmother of future emperor Elagabalus.

DIADUMENIAN (Marcus Opellius Diadumenianus)
Caesar A.D. 217-218
Ruled for one month in A.D. 218
Became Caesar in A.D. 217, and at the age of 10, Diadumenian’s father, Macrinus gave him the title Augustus. He was later killed in the revolt that took his father’s life.
Julia Maesa (Julia Maesa)
Augusta A.D. 218-224/5
Sister of Julia Domna, and grandmother of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, Julia Maesa was a shrewd woman of wealth and courage. She bribed the Eastern legions, aiding Elagabalus’ rise. Took part in Senate proceedings, and attempted to restrain her grandson. Survived the assassination of Elagabalus, but died three years later.

Elagabalus (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)
Augustus A.D. 218-222
Elagabalus was generally disliked because of his unusual Eastern religious practices. His rule was noted for cruelty, bloodshed and excesses of every type.

Julia Soaemias (Julia Soaemias Bassiana)
Augusta A.D. 218-222
Became Augusta when her 14-year-old son Elagabalus became emperor. Of the four women of the Severan dynasty, Soaemias was the least responsible in her duties. Slain by the Praetorian Guard.

Severus Alexander (Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander)
Caesar A.D. 221-222
Augustus A.D. 222-235
Severus Alexander, who was adopted by his cousin Elagabalus, ruled wisely and justly with the help of his mother and advisors. He was slain by his soldiers during a German campaign.

Julia Mamaea (Julia Avita Mamaea)
Augusta A.D. 222-235
When her son Severus Alexander became emperor, Julia Mamaea directed the empire’s political decisions for over a decade. Although popular with some Romans, she was disdained by others for her greed and arrogance. Murdered by the same army that killed her son.

Maximinus I “Thrax” (Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus)
Augustus A.D. 235-238
Historical sources say “Thrax” had great strength and size, standing over 8½ feet tall. Rose through the military to become emperor. He was noted for his cruelty. Murdered by his troops along with his son, Maximus.
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<tr>
<th><strong>MAXIMUS</strong> (Gaius Julius Verus Maximus)</th>
<th>Caesar A.D. 235/6-238</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maximus became proud and insolent after receiving the title Caesar from his father Maximinus I. He was hated by Roman citizens and the military, and eventually executed by his troops. His severed head was sent to Rome.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>GORDIAN I</strong> (Marcus Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus “Africanus”)</th>
<th>Ruled 21 days in A.D. 238</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in the empire, and a man of great integrity. Made emperor by his troops in Africa. Because of his age, made his son co-emperor. Committed suicide when he learned that his son, Gordian II, had been killed in a battle.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>GORDIAN II</strong> (Marcus Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus “Africanus”)</th>
<th>Ruled 20 days in A.D. 238</th>
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<tr>
<td>Highly educated, with a library of over 62,000 books, Gordian II led an inexperienced, undisciplined army against supporters of Maximinus. When the two forces met, Gordian’s army fled. Many soldiers were trampled trying to escape, and he was killed. His body was unrecognizable when found.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>BALBINUS</strong> (Decimus Caelius Balbinus)</th>
<th>Ruled 98 days in A.D. 238</th>
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<td>The Senate named Balbinus joint emperor with Pupienus on the condition that they make Gordian III Caesar. Murdered by the Praetorian Guard who were jealous because the Senate had named him emperor instead of one from their ranks.</td>
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<th><strong>PUPIENUS</strong> (Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus)</th>
<th>Ruled 98 days in A.D. 238</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joint emperor with Balbinus. Rose through the ranks of the military, and as co-emperor with Balbinus, had the best interests of the country at heart. The Praetorian Guard killed him.</td>
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<th><strong>GORDIAN III</strong> (Marcus Antonius Gordianus “Pius”)</th>
<th>Caesar A.D. 238</th>
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<tr>
<td>Augustus A.D. 238-244</td>
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<tr>
<td>A popular, young emperor who was grandson of Gordian I. Fought several successful battles in Mesopotamia. Murdered at the age of 21 by his own soldiers.</td>
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Philip I (Marcus Julius Verus Philippus)  
**Augustus A.D. 244-249**  
Known as Philip the Arab, because he was from Arabia. Philip progressed through the military ranks to become Praetorian Prefect under Gordian III. He was thought to have instigated Gordian’s murder.

Otacilia Severa (Marcia Otacilia Severa)  
**Augusta A.D. 244-249**  
Little is known about Otacilia, wife of Philip I (the Arab). Christian historians tend to portray her as Christian, seeking penance for her part in Gordian III’s death. Most experts now believe this is untrue. She was killed by the Praetorian Guard.

Philip II (Marcus Julius Severus Philippus)  
**Caesar A.D. 244-247**  
**Augustus A.D. 247-249**  
Became Caesar at the age of seven. He died at the age of 12, soon after his father, Philip I, was murdered. Philip II was probably murdered by the Praetorian Guard.

Trajan Decius (Gaius Messius Quintus Traianus Decius)  
**Augustus A.D. 249-251**  
When his soldiers revolted against Philip I, he was forced to become emperor under the threat of death. Superior to Philip in governing the Empire, he restored the office of Censor to the Senate. Trajan Decius died along with his older son, Herennius, in a battle against the Goths.

Herennia Etruscilla (Herennia Cupressenia Etruscilla)  
**Augusta A.D. 249-253**  
Little is known about Herennia, except that she came from an aristocratic Italian family. Whether or not she shared her husband Decius’ views on the persecuting of Christians is unknown.

Herennius Etruscus  
(Quintus Herennius Etruscus Messius Decius)  
**Caesar A.D. 250-251**  
**Augustus A.D. 251**  
Herennius, the elder son of Trajan Decius, became Caesar in A.D. 250 and a year later, Augustus. Died with his father in a battle against the Goths.
HOSTILIAN (Gaius Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus)
Caesar A.D. 250?/251
Augustus A.D. 251
Hostilian, younger son of Trajan Decius, remained in Rome, becoming Augustus under Trebonianus Gallus. Trebonianus, who became emperor after Trajan Decius’ death, adopted Hostilian and agreed to share the title of Augustus with him. His death was caused by the plague.

TREBONIANUS GALLUS
(Gaius Vibius Afinius Trebonianus Gallus)
Augustus A.D. 251-253
Proclaimed emperor after Decius and his son were killed. Made a disgraceful treaty with the Goths, and headed to Rome, where he discovered plague had crippled the city. Borders were under attack on all sides, and when Aemilian, governor of Lower Moesia, was proclaimed emperor, Gallus and his son were murdered by their troops.

VOLUSIAN
(Gaius Vibius Afinius Gallus Vendumnianus Volusianus)
Caesar A.D. 251
Augustus A.D. 251-253
Volusian was made Caesar in A.D. 251, and a year later Augustus by his father, Trebonianus. Volusian was killed in the same mutiny that claimed his father Trebonianus Gallus’ life.

AEMILIAN (Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus)
Ruled about three months in A.D. 253
After decisively defeating the Goths, Aemilian was made emperor by his own troops. His resolute rule was the opposite of Trebonianus’ rule. Aemilian was murdered by his soldiers when marching to fight against Valerian I.

VALEARIAN I (Publius Licinius Valerianus)
Augustus A.D. 253-260
Remaining loyal to Trebonianus Gallus, he defeated Aemilian, becoming the sole emperor. Had Valerian ruled earlier, he might have been considered one of Rome’s greatest emperors. He was captured by Shapur I of Persia and died in captivity.
GALLIENUS (Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus)  
Augustus A.D. 253-268
Gallienus was co-emperor and later became sole ruler after his father, Valerian, was captured by the Persians. He made no effort to rescue his father. The Empire suffered under attacks from the barbarians, and Gallienus was eventually assassinated.

SALONINA (Julia Cornelia Salonina Crysogone)  
Augusta A.D. 254-268
An ideal empress, this woman was interested in the arts and philosophy. She worked to enhance her husband’s achievements and ensure the army’s loyalty. Salonina died during a massacre of Gallienus’ family and followers at Milan.

VALERIAN II (Publius Licinius Cornelius Valerianus)  
Caesar A.D. 256-258
Valerian, the older son of Gallienus, was given the title of Caesar when his father became emperor. He died during a campaign on the Danube.

SALONINUS (Publius Licinius Cornelius Saloninus Valerianus)  
Caesar A.D. 258-260  
Augustus A.D. 260
Saloninus, younger son of Gallienus, became Caesar in A.D. 258 when his brother Valerian II died. After attaining the rank of Augustus in A.D. 260, he was murdered by Postumus’ soldiers.

MACRIANUS I (Titus Fulvius Junius Macrianus)  
Augustus A.D. 260-261
The son of a general, Macrianus, who served under Valerian. Declared emperor by his soldiers, the elder Macrianus refused and appointed his sons Macrianus and Quietus. As Macrianus set out to challenge Gallienus, he was killed in a battle.

QUIETUS (Titus Fulvius Junius Quietus)  
Augustus A.D. 260-261
Quietus showed talent for leadership in both the government and military, and was left in charge of Eastern provinces. When both his father and brother were slain by Gallienus’ troops, he escaped to Emesa, but was taken prisoner and put to death.
POSTUMUS* (Marcus Cassianius Latinius Postumus)
Augustus A.D. 260-269
Postumus became commander of the legions in the Rhine under Valerian. He was considered a usurper by some, because he declared himself emperor of Gaul, Spain and Britain while Gallienus ruled. To his credit, he fought off the barbarians, and kept peace within his borders. His own soldiers killed him because he wouldn’t allow them to sack a town after battle.

LAELIANUS* (Ulpius Cornelius Laelianus)
Usurper A.D. 269
Laelianus seized power in what is now Germany. His own men killed him during the revolt he started against Postumus.

MARIUS* (Marcus Aurelius Marius)
Usurper A.D. 269
Marius had a reputation for having great strength in his body and hands. After Postumus’ death, he proclaimed himself emperor, but was killed shortly thereafter by his soldiers.

VICTORINUS* (Marcus Piavvonius Victorinus)
Augustus A.D. 269-271
Victorinus was Postumus’ colleague, and reigned in Gaul a short time after his death. After he insulted the wife of a military official, his soldiers murdered him and his son.

TETRICUS I* (Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)
Augustus A.D. 271-274
Tetricus I was one of the few emperors who died naturally. Having been convinced to rule Gaul, he proved equal to the task, but grew tired of the constant threat of revolt by his army. He begged Aurelian to take possession of Gaul, and retired in peace. Gaul was returned to the Empire after having been separated since A.D. 259.

TETRICUS II (Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)
Caesar A.D. 273-274
Augustus A.D. 274
Named Caesar when his father came to rule, and eventually became co-emperor. After his father abdicated, Aurelian gave him a seat in the Senate and returned his family’s possessions.
CLAUDIUS II GOTHICUS (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Claudius)
Augustus A.D. 268-270
A brilliant soldier who fought in many battles, and received the title Gothicus from a victory against the Goths. He was proclaimed emperor after Gallienus’ death. He died of the plague.

QUINTILLUS (Marcus Aurelius Claudius Quintillus)
Augustus A.D. 270
Younger brother of Claudius II Gothicus, Quintillus was initially supported by the Senate and the army as the next emperor. When Aurelian proclaimed himself emperor, these parties shifted their support to him instead, and Quintillus committed suicide.

AURELIAN (Lucius Domitius Aurelianus)
Augustus A.D. 270-275
Called the “Restorer of the Empire,” he brought Gaul back into the realm, restoring the Empire to its former size. An able defender of Roman borders, he made peace with the barbarians. Eventually he was assassinated by his generals.

SEVERINA (Ulpia Severina)
Augusta A.D. 274-275
History has left us little to remember of Severina, wife of Aurelian, except her coins. Her family name seems to indicate she might have come from the same Spanish family as Trajan. What happened to her after the murder of Aurelian is unknown.

VABALATHUS (Lucius Julius Aurelius Septimius Vabalathus Athenodorus)
Augustus A.D. 270/1-272
After the murder of his father in A.D. 267, Vabalathus governed Palmyra with his mother Zenobia. When his troops named him Augustus, Aurelian marched against him. Vabalathus was taken captive by Aurelian in A.D. 272.

TACITUS (Marcus Claudius Tacitus)
Augustus A.D. 275-276
The Senate and army elected Tacitus, who was a modest and fair man. These virtues extended to his rule. The cause of his death is uncertain. Thought to have died of either a fever or treachery during a campaign.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

☐ **FLORIANUS** (Marcus Annius Florianus)
   *Ruled less than 3 months A.D. 276*
   Became emperor after his half-brother Tacitus died. He was supported by the Senate and most provinces. The East did not support Florianus; they supported Probus. When war broke out between the two, Florianus was killed by his own soldiers.

☐ **PROBUS** (Marcus Aurelius Probus)
   *Augustus A.D. 276-282*
   Prefect of the East, and after Tacitus’ death became emperor. Protected Rome’s borders, ruled wisely and justly, was loved by all. As he marched to Persia, he was murdered by his own jealous soldiers who later regretted their actions.

☐ **CARUS** (Marcus Aurelius Carus)
   *Augustus A.D. 282-283*
   Praetorian Prefect under Probus, Carus earned respect for his talents and was approved as emperor by the Senate and the army. During a campaign in Persia, he was struck by lightning.

☐ **NUMERIAN** (Marcus Aurelius Numerianus)
   *Caesar A.D. 282-283*
   *Augustus A.D. 283-284*
   Younger son of Carus, who became Caesar and upon his father’s death took the title of Augustus. Numerian was popular because he had the public’s interest at heart. While returning to Italy from a campaign, he was discovered murdered in his litter.

☐ **CARINUS** (Marcus Aurelius Carinus)
   *Caesar A.D. 282-283*
   *Augustus A.D. 283-285*
   Carinus was left in charge of the West while his father and brother, Numerian, fought in the East. Diocletian had been proclaimed emperor by his troops, and Carinus, marching against him, was victorious. His cruel disposition led to his murder.

☐ **NIGRINIAN**
   *Died before A.D. 283*
   Because no records exist about Nigrinian, we only know about him today because of his coins. They are extremely rare, and inscription on his coins indicates he was son of Carinus.

☐ **JULIAN OF PANNONIA** (Marcus Aurelius Julianus)
   *Usurper A.D. 284-285*
   Julian, a general under Numerian, proclaimed himself emperor of Pannonia. Rebelling against Carinus, he marched against Rome, where he was defeated and killed a year later.
Two factors were at work in the subsequent division of the Roman Empire. At one time the title of emperor was awarded by the Senate, but over the years their power diminished, and was replaced by the military. Because of the Empire’s size, the emperor needed strong generals whom he could trust, and who commanded the respect of the army.

Plus, the size of the Roman state made it difficult to defend against frequent border attacks. These attacks and internal unrest caused economic upheaval. Peasants could not work the land, tradesmen lacked supplies for their crafts, so landowners had no income for taxes. Consequently, these upheavals spelled economic disaster, causing dissatisfaction with the government and internal unrest.

Diocletian realized the Empire was too large for one man to rule, so he established a method of government called the Tetrarchy, made up of two co-emperors and two Caesars. One co-emperor and Caesar ruled the East, and the other pair ruled the West. The Empire was split into Greek and Latin-speaking portions, in the region encompassing present-day Yugoslavia southward, and including Africa. However, the Tetrarchy lasted only 20 years. After Diocletian and Maximianus retired, fighting among would-be rulers broke out. Constantine the Great finally became emperor in the West, while Licinius became emperor in the East.

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<th>E = Ruled East</th>
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- **Diocletian** (Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus)
  **Augustus A.D. 284-305**
  After Numerian was killed, he became emperor. An excellent statesman and military leader, who unified most of the Empire with the exception of Britain. Introducing far-reaching reforms, he changed the Empire’s makeup. He was one of the tetrarchs, and later abdicated rule and retired in peace.

- **Maximian “Herculius”**
  **(Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus)**
  **Caesar A.D. 285-286**
  **Augustus A.D. 286-305, 307-308, & 310**
  Because of Diocletian’s respect for Maximian’s military ability and implicit trust in him, Maximian was raised to Augustus in the West. Although he abdicated at the same time that Diocletian did, he returned to rule from A.D. 307-308 at the request of his son. But in A.D. 310, when he declared himself emperor again, he was put to death.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

□ CARAUSIUS (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Carausius)
Usurper in Britain A.D. 286/7-293
Taking advantage of his position as commander in Gaul, Carausius started pillaging the countryside. He went to Britain, where he proclaimed himself emperor. Never recognized by legitimate emperors as ruler, he was eventually slain by Allectus.

□ ALLECTUS
Usurper in Britain A.D. 293-296/7
As Carausius’ chief minister, Allectus became emperor after killing him. He was known for his cruelty, and died in a battle against Constantius I from Gaul.

□ DOMITIUS DOMITIANUS (Lucius Domitius Domitianus)
Usurper in Egypt A.D. 296-297/8
Diocletian’s monetary reform, coupled with harsh taxes, led to a revolt in Egypt by Domitius. Little is known about this usurper who was able to grab control for about 18 months before Diocletian crushed the uprising.

□ CONSTANTIUS I “CHLORUS” (Flavius Valerius Constantius)
Caesar A.D. 293-305
Augustus A.D. 305-306
Named Caesar of Gaul, Spain and Britain in A.D. 293, Constantius I ruled the West and was one the tetrarchs. Upon Diocletian’s abdication, he became Augustus, reigning as co-emperor with Galerius. He died in Britain of natural causes.

□ HELENA (Flavia Julia Helena [Saint Helena])
Augusta A.D. 324-328/30
A remarkable woman who began life as a barmaid and ended as a Christian saint. Helena was the first wife of Constantius I, and mother of Constantine the Great. While on a Christian pilgrimage, it is said that she recovered the “true cross.”

□ THEODORA (Flavia Maximiana Theodora)
Augusta, Posthumously
As daughter of Diocletian’s Praetorian Prefect, Theodora became Constantius I’s second wife shortly before he became Caesar. She was Constantine the Great’s stepmother.
GALERIUS (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus)
Caesar A.D. 293-305
Augustus A.D. 305-311
Ruled in the East as Caesar with Diocletian, making his capital Thessalonica. Made favorable peace after defeating the king of Persia in A.D. 298. Became co-emperor after Diocletian’s abdication. Galerius was extremely cruel and persecuted the Christians. His death was caused by disease.

GALERIA VALERIA (Galeria Valeria)
Augusta A.D. 293?-311
Daughter of Diocletian, and second wife of Galerius. Her tragic life was dictated by the politics of the time. Valeria supported Galerius’ persecution of Christians, though she herself may have been sympathetic. After her husband and father died, she was put to death by Licinius.

SEVERUS II (Flavius Valerius Severus)
Caesar A.D. 305-306
Augustus A.D. 306-307
Named Caesar A.D. 305 and Augustus in the West by Galerius in A.D. 306. Equally as cruel as Galerius, he died while putting down a rebellion by Maxentius (son of Maximianus) in Italy. When his troops deserted him he was captured and killed.

MAXIMINUS II DAIA (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximinus)
Caesar A.D. 305-310
Augustus A.D. 310-313
This cruel, uneducated drunkard was named Caesar in A.D. 305, ruling Syria. In A.D. 310, he was proclaimed Augustus by his troops. In an attempt to forestall an alliance between Constantine and Licinius, he invaded the Eastern Empire, but suffered defeat. Eventually poisoned himself, and his territory went to Licinius.

MAXENTIUS (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius)
Caesar A.D. 306-307
Augustus A.D. 307-312
When the people of Rome proclaimed him Augustus, Maxentius invited his father Maximian to come out of retirement. Together they defeated Severus II, gaining control over Italy, Africa and Spain. In A.D. 308, he quarreled with his father. During a retreat in battle against Constantine, he was drowned when the bridge of boats collapsed.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

- **ROMULUS** (Marcus Valerius Romulus)
  Died A.D. 309
  Son of Maxentius, who was probably named Caesar, but died at the age of four. Maxentius placed Romulus in rank with the gods after he died. All his coins were struck posthumously.

- **LICINIUS I** (Gaius Valerius Licinianus Licinius)
  Augustus A.D. 308-324
  Gained prominence in battles against the Persians. He was given the title of Augustus by Galerius following negotiations involving Maximianus, Constantine I, and Galerius. After reigning with Constantine I for about ten years, Licinius chose to attack him several times, and was eventually killed.

- **LICINIUS II** (Flavius Valerius Licinianus Licinius)
  Caesar A.D. 317-324
  Son of Licinius I, who was made Caesar in A.D. 317. As a prince he showed great promise, but after his father’s death he was killed at the age of nine.

- **CONSTANTINE I “THE GREAT”** (Flavius Valerius Constantinus)
  Caesar A.D. 306-310
  Augustus A.D. 310-337
  Constantine I shared joint rule of the Empire with Licinius. In A.D. 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, which gave all subjects religious freedom. After defeating Licinius, he became sole ruler. Attempted to instill Christianity as ruler, and in A.D. 330 dedicated the city of Constantinople. He fell sick and died near Nicomedia.

- **FAUSTA** (Flavia Maxima Fausta)
  Augusta A.D. 324-326
  In an attempt to strengthen family ties, Maximian wed his daughter Fausta to Constantine the Great. History remembers her as the wife who plotted against her step-son Crispus and caused his execution in order to secure power for her own sons. In the end, Constantine regretted his actions and executed her.

- **CRISPUS** (Flavius Julius Crispus)
  Caesar A.D. 316-326
  Crispus, the popular son of Constantine the Great, had many talents and showed military skill at an early age. Because of his stepmother’s jealousy, he was put to death on his father’s orders.
**DELMATIUS** (Flavius Julius Delmatius)
*Caesar A.D. 335-337*

Was a favorite nephew of Constantine the Great. He gave Delmatius part of what is now Greece and Bulgaria to rule. When Constantine died, Delmatius was put to death.

**HANNIBALLIANUS** (Flavius Claudius Hanniballianus)
*Caesar A.D. 335-337*

Another nephew of Constantine and brother of Delmatius. He was given part of modern-day Turkey to rule. Like Delmatius, he was put to death after Constantine died.

**CONSTANTINE II** (Flavius Claudius Julius Constantinus)
*Caesar A.D. 316-337*
*Augustus A.D. 337-340*

Eldest of three sons of Constantine the Great and his second wife, who became emperor with his brothers after his father died. He ruled Gaul, Spain and Britain, but was killed while fighting against his brother Constans over the division of land.

**CONSTANS** (Flavius Julius Constans)
*Caesar A.D. 333-337*
*Augustus A.D. 337-350*

The youngest son of Constantine the Great, he retook Britain for the Roman Empire after Constantine II’s death and ruled the western portion. Assassinated by his closest members in government when Magnentius usurped the power.

**CONSTANTIUS II** (Flavius Julius Valerius Constantius)
*Caesar A.D. 324-337*
*Augustus A.D. 337-361*

The second son of Constantine the Great and his second wife. Constantius II ruled the Eastern Empire. After Constans’ death and his defeat of Magnentius, he ruled the West, also. His reign brought some peace to the Empire, and he died at the age of 44 because of illness.

**MAGNENTIUS** (Flavius Magnus Magnentius)
*Augustus A.D. 350-353*

As commander of troops on the Rhine, Magnentius caused the death of Constans and was proclaimed emperor. He marched against Constantius II, Constans’ brother. After withdrawing to Gaul, he was deserted by his soldiers and committed suicide.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

☐ **DECENTIUS** (Flavius Magnus Decentius)
  *Caesar A.D. 350-353*
Younger brother of the usurper Magnentius, who was given command of Gaul. As Constantius’ forces regained Italy and Africa in the summer of A.D. 353, Magnentius committed suicide, and Decentius hung himself eight days later.

☐ **VETRANIO**
  *Augustus A.D. 350*
After the death of Constans, the sister of Constantius persuaded the soldiers of Illyrian to proclaim Vetranoi emperor. Upon hearing Constantius II’s appeal to the troops as son of Constantine the Great, Vetranoi gave up his claim and was allowed to live out his life peacefully.

☐ **NEPOTIAN** (Constantinus Flavius Popilius Nepotianus)
  *Augustus A.D. 350*
Because Nepotian was half nephew to Constantine the Great, he was a potential rival to the throne. He managed to escape the massacre of his family members by Constantine’s sons, and lived most of his life in exile, until he was proclaimed emperor in A.D. 350. He put down a rebellion, but was killed by another rival.

☐ **CONSTANTIUS GALLUS** (Flavius Claudius Constantius Gallus)
  *Caesar A.D. 351-354*
One of the three grandsons of Theodora who survived the massacre of his family by Constantine the Great’s son. Little is known of him until he came to power in A.D. 351, appointed by his cousin Constantius II as ruler in the east. Because of his cruel and cavalier attitude, he became unpopular with the public and army. When Constantius II sent officials to investigate Gallus’ brutalities, the officials were hung. Gallus was arrested and beheaded on the emperor’s orders.

☐ **JULIAN II** (Flavius Claudius Julianus)
  *Caesar A.D. 355-360*
  *Augustus A.D. 360-363*
A nephew of Constantine the Great, but because of an aversion to Christianity he restored the pagan religion and became known as Julian “the Apostate.” After Constantius died in A.D. 361 he was sole emperor. Julian II died on the banks of the Tigris while engaging in war against Persia.
JOVIAN (Flavius Jovianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 363-364**

After Julian II’s death he was proclaimed emperor by his troops. To obtain peace he had to give up lands east of the Tigris. As emperor, Jovian restored rights to the Christians. But at the age of 33, while journeying to Constantinople, a brazier of charcoal placed in his bed chamber caused his accidental suffocation.

VALENTINIAN I (Flavius Valentinianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 364-375**

Rose through the military ranks to become emperor upon Jovian’s death. After leaving his brother Valens in charge of the East, he returned to Italy. He favored the poor and spent much of his time protecting his borders against the barbarians. He died of a rage-induced stroke in A.D. 375.

VALENS (Flavius Julius Valens)  
**Augustus A.D. 364-378**

Became co-emperor with Valentinian and was responsible for the eastern provinces. Skillfully put down rebellions by usurpers, Visigoths and Huns. In a battle against the Visigoths in A.D. 378, two-thirds of the Roman army was ambushed and Valens died either in battle or during a fire, set in the farmhouse he sought refuge in to dress his wounds.

PROCOPIUS  
**Usurper, ruled eight months A.D. 365-366**

A commander from the East, and a distant relative of Julian II, he withdrew from public life when Jovian became emperor. However, when Valentinian became emperor, he reappeared in Constantinople where the army proclaimed him emperor. He was defeated by Valens and executed.

GRATIAN (Flavius Gratianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 367-383**

Gratian, son of Valentinian I, became Augustus at age 7 and eventually ruled the entire West. After Valens’ death, he appointed Theodosius, a general, to help rule in the East. He was killed after his soldiers deserted him in a battle against Magnus Maximus.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

- **VALENTINIAN II** (Flavius Valentinianus)
  Augustus A.D. 375-392
  Younger brother of Gratian, who after Gratian’s death ruled the entire West. His reign was troubled by religious disturbances. He was forced to flee from Magnus Maximus, but Theodosius helped him regain power. Valentinian II was strangled under the orders of Frankish Master of Infantry Arbogast.

- **THEODOSIUS I “THE GREAT”** (Flavius Theodosius)
  Augustus A.D. 379-395
  Rose through the military ranks to eventually become co-emperor with Gratian. He successfully campaigned against the Goths, and defeated Magnus Maximus and Eugenius (another usurper). Upon his death, he divided the Empire between his two sons, and it was never reunited.

- **MAGNUS MAXIMUS** (Flavius Magnus Clemens Maximus)
  Augustus A.D. 383-388
  Rising through the ranks of the army, Magnus rebelled against Gratian at his soldiers’ prompting. He became emperor of Gaul, Spain and Britain after Gratian’s death. While trying to invade Italy, he was killed by Theodosius.

- **FLAVIUS VICTOR** (Flavius Victor)
  Augustus A.D. 387-388
  When Magnus became emperor his young son, Flavius, was made Augustus. Flavius was executed with his father after Theodosius I’s victory.

- **EUGENIUS** (Flavius Eugenius)
  Usurper A.D. 392-394
  Even though Eugenius was a Christian, he allied himself with the pagans to gain support. He served as a puppet emperor for Arbogast, a Frankish general who formerly had been co-regent with Valentinian II. Eugenius occupied Italy until Theodosius I defeated his army and executed him.

- **ARCADIUS** (Flavius Arcadius)
  Augustus A.D. 383-408
  Elder son of Theodosius, who became co-emperor with his father at age six and ruled the East after his father’s death. His wife and ministers held the real power during his reign. The Eastern Empire was generally at peace while he ruled. Died naturally.
HONORIUS (Flavius Honorius)  
Augustus A.D. 393-423
Younger son of Theodosius, who ruled the West from Ravenna. During his rule, the city of Rome was sacked in A.D. 410. It was the first time the city had fallen in 800 years, and marked the collapse of the Western Empire. He died of disease after reigning 30 inglorious years.

CONSTANTINE III (Flavius Claudius Constantinus)  
Usurper in Gaul and Britain A.D. 407-411
Constantine III promised to defend the West against the Goths. A general of Honorius captured Constantine III and his son, killing both of them. As a result of his usurpation, Rome gave up all claims to Britain, and it was later conquered by the Saxons.

PRISCUS ATTALUS  
Augustus A.D. 409-410 & 414-415
After the Goths invaded Rome, Gothic king Alaric set Priscus Attalus up as a puppet ruler in exchange for command over the military. Attalus proved an ineffective leader and was deposed in A.D. 410. Proclaimed emperor again in A.D. 414, but after a short rule, was banished by Honorius.

CONSTANTIUS III (Flavius Constantius)  
Augustus A.D. 421
Appointed general of the armies under Honorius, and later made Augustus. When Honorius died, he became emperor, controlling the whole Western region, but the Eastern government refused to recognize him. Died of disease after ruling only seven months.

JOHANNES (John)  
Usurper A.D. 423-425
After the death of Honorius he proclaimed himself emperor of Italy, Gaul and Spain, but Theodosius II refused to acknowledge him and sent an army to defeat him. After his capture, he was put on display and later executed.

THEODOSIUS II (Flavius Theodosius)  
Augustus A.D. 402-450
The grandson of Theodosius “the Great.” He was made Augustus at Constantinople before age one. Later in life, he made peace with the Persians, which lasted 24 years. He died from a fall from a horse.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

- **VALENTINIAN III** (Flavius Placidus Valentinianus)
  Caesar A.D. 424-425
  Augustus A.D. 425-455
  W
  The son of Constantius III. He was made emperor of the West by his cousin Theodosius II. The Empire was continually under siege from barbarians, and Africa was lost to the Vandals. He was murdered by a man whose wife he had offended.

- **MARCIAN** (Flavius Valerius Marcianus)
  Augustus A.D. 450-457
  E
  A distinguished soldier who was chosen to be Theodosius’ successor. Although Marcian did not stop the Vandals from sacking Rome, under his reign, Roman lands enjoyed six years of peace. He died of natural causes.

- **LEO I “THE GREAT”** (Flavius Valerius Leo)
  Augustus A.D. 457-474
  E
  Emperor in the East, who was known for his high morals, leniency, unselfishness and piety. He destroyed a portion of German military which threatened the Eastern Empire. He died of illness.

- **LEO II**
  Caesar A.D. 473-474
  Augustus A.D. 474
  E
  Grandson of Leo I, who was made Caesar and then Augustus after Leo I’s death. He was a sickly child and died after reigning 9 months. His father, Zeno, was made co-emperor before Leo II died.

- **MAJORIAN** (Flavius Julius Valerius Majorianus)
  Augustus A.D. 457-461
  W
  From an old Roman family, he rose through military ranks. Following a period of about six months with no Western emperor, he claimed the throne. Executed by the general Ricimer after an unsuccessful campaign in Africa.

- **SEVERUS III** (Libius Severus)
  Augustus A.D. 461-465
  W
  A puppet emperor under the influence of the German general Ricimer. During his reign, almost every province except Gaul was lost to the barbarians.
ANTHEMIUS (Procopius Anthemius)
Augustus A.D. 467-472

An Eastern general who had many victories over the Huns and Goths. Appointed emperor by Leo I as the Western Empire began to deteriorate. A bad relationship with his father-in-law, Ricimer, led to a civil war. Eventually Anthemius was murdered.

ZENO (Tarasicodissa)
Augustus A.D. 474-491

Through marriage to Leo I’s daughter, Zeno became his ally against the barbarian general Aspar. After Leo’s death, and death of Zeno’s son, he became emperor. Soon he became victim of a plot hatched by his mother-in-law and lived in exile for 19 months. Upon his return in A.D. 476, he ruled for another 17 years before dying of natural causes.

BASILISCUS
Augustus A.D. 475-476

Basiliscus was encouraged to rebel against Zeno by his sister, the former empress Aelia Verina (wife of Leo I), and gained control of Constantinople. Not having Zeno’s military strength, and alienating the religious community and his leading generals, he became unpopular. When Zeno regained control, Basiliscus was exiled to Cappadocia, where he was starved to death.

ANASTASIUS I
Augustus A.D. 491-518

Rose from a simple officer in the emperor’s household to ruler by marrying Zeno’s widow. During his reign of 27 years, Anastasius set the empire on firm financial footing. Under his direction the Long Walls of Thrace, an outer defense around Constantinople, were built to protect the city from invaders. With his monetary reforms, Byzantine bronze coinage began. After a long life, he was struck by lightning and killed.