

The Christian Roman Empire

- 212 *Constitutio Antoninia*: universal grant of citizenship
- 303-313 “Great Persecution” of Christians by Emperor **DIOCLETIAN**
- 313 “Edict of Milan” (legalization Christianity by **CONSTANTINE THE GREAT**)
- 324 **CONSTANTINE** becomes sole Roman Emperor; founds Constantinople
- 330s **CONSTANTINE** constructs Christian buildings in Jerusalem
- 351/352 “Gallus Revolt” in Galilee
- 361-363 **JULIAN THE APOSTATE**
- 379-395 **THEODOSIUS I**
- 380s Christianity *de facto* “official” religion of the Roman Empire
- 402-450 **THEODOSIUS II**
- 425 Patriarch Gamaliel IV stripped of his official aristocratic status
- 438 *Codex Theodosianus* (Theodosian Code)
- 476 Last Roman Emperor in the West deposed by invaders
- 527-565 **JUSTINIAN**
- 534 *Codex Iustinianus* (Justinianic Code)
- 610-641 **HERACLIUS**
- 614 Persian sack of Jerusalem



The Roman World circa 500 CE, with the independent, Germanically controlled kingdoms to the West, and the “Byzantine” Empire to the East

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People and terms

“Byzantine”: a name applied to the eastern half of the Roman Empire, usually after the collapse of the western half of the Roman Empire (in the fifth century); from an earlier name of the eastern capital city of Constantinople (*Byzas*); also an adjective meaning overly complex or deviously intricate (e.g., “a byzantine plot”)

Diocletian: Roman Emperor (284-305) who attempted to reform and restructure the flagging political, military, and economic structures of the empire. He devised a system of “joint rule” that did not survive long after his retirement in 305; with his colleagues, ordered the last “Great Persecution” of Christians

Constantine I (*The Great*): Roman Emperor (306-337) who eventually achieved sole rule of the entire Empire (in 324) and founded the eponymous city of Constantinople (now Istanbul); reversed previous imperial policy and patronized Christianity; was actually baptized into Christianity on his deathbed

Julian (“The Apostate”): Roman Emperor (361-363), great-nephew of Constantine the Great; raised a Christian, he publicly declared his allegiance to traditional Greco-Roman religion (which he called “Hellenism”) after he became Emperor; he attempted to institute an Empire-wide revival of “Hellenism” and traditional religions (including Judaism); his efforts were cut short when he died on a military campaign in Persia; the last non-Christian Emperor

Theodosius I: Roman Emperor (379-395) responsible for reuniting a divided and weakened Empire, and instituting legal reforms that made Christianity the *de facto* “official” religion of the Roman Empire (Judaism was still legal)

Theodosius II: Roman Emperor (405-450), grandson of Theodosius I; religiously strict and politically influential (due mainly to his long reign), drafted the first truly comprehensive law code for the Roman Empire (*Codex Theodosianus*)

aurum coroniarum. any tribute tax in the Roman provinces; also used to refer to the small donation (or tax) paid by Diaspora Jews to support the patriarch in Palestine

illustris. “illustrious” or “Noble One”; an official aristocratic title granted by the Emperor to certain imperial officials (of the highest rank) and other favorites; enjoyed by the Jewish Patriarchs for much of the later fourth/early fifth centuries

Justinian: an extremely orthodox and autocratic Emperor, eager to create religious and political unity across the Empire; drafted harsh laws of religion, and a new comprehensive law Code (*Codex Iustinianus*)

Heraclius: Byzantine Emperor (610-641), one of the only Emperors to attempt the forced conversion of Jews (in retaliation for their supposed support of his Persian enemies)