

# Crisis and Recovery



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From the Severan Dynasty to the Later Roman Empire

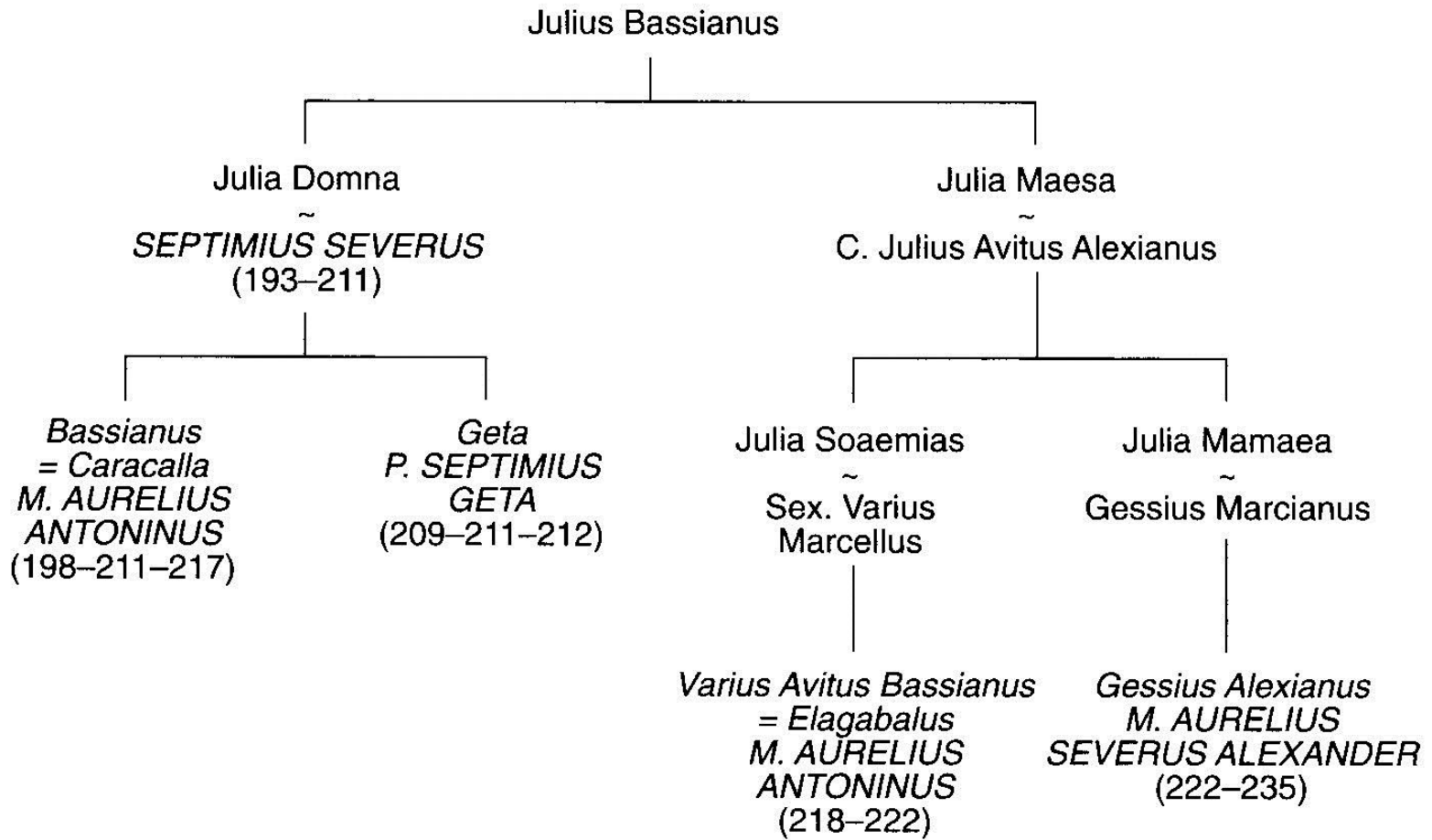
# Septimius Severus

## AD 193 - 211



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**Table 12.2** The dynasty of Septimius Severus



# Caracalla

198-209

w/ Severus

209-211

w/ Severus & Geta

211-217

alone



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# Macrinus, 217-218



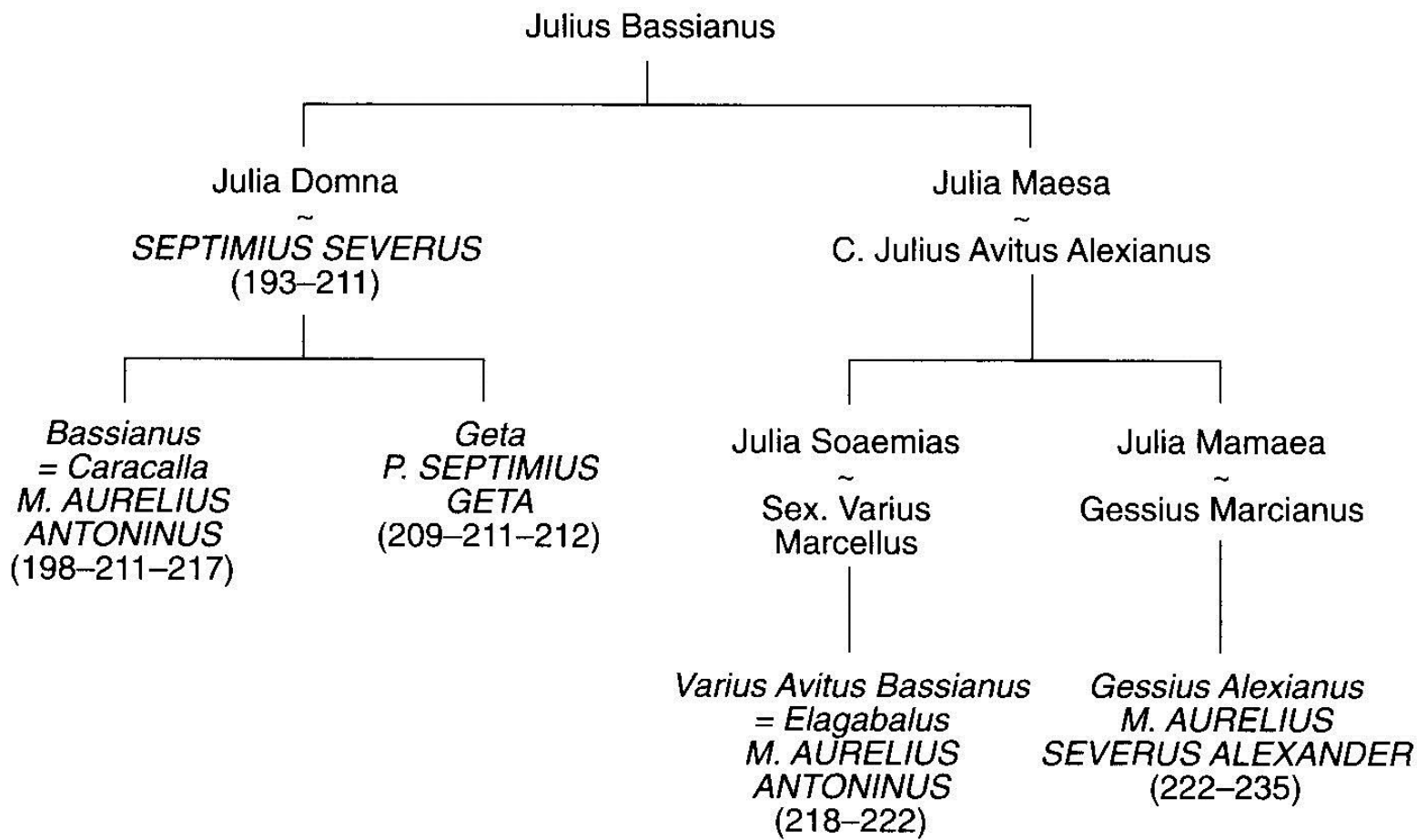
Image by Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. This image is in the public domain.  
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# Julia Maesa



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**Table 12.2** The dynasty of Septimius Severus



# Elagabalus, AD 218-222



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# Severus Alexander, AD 222-235



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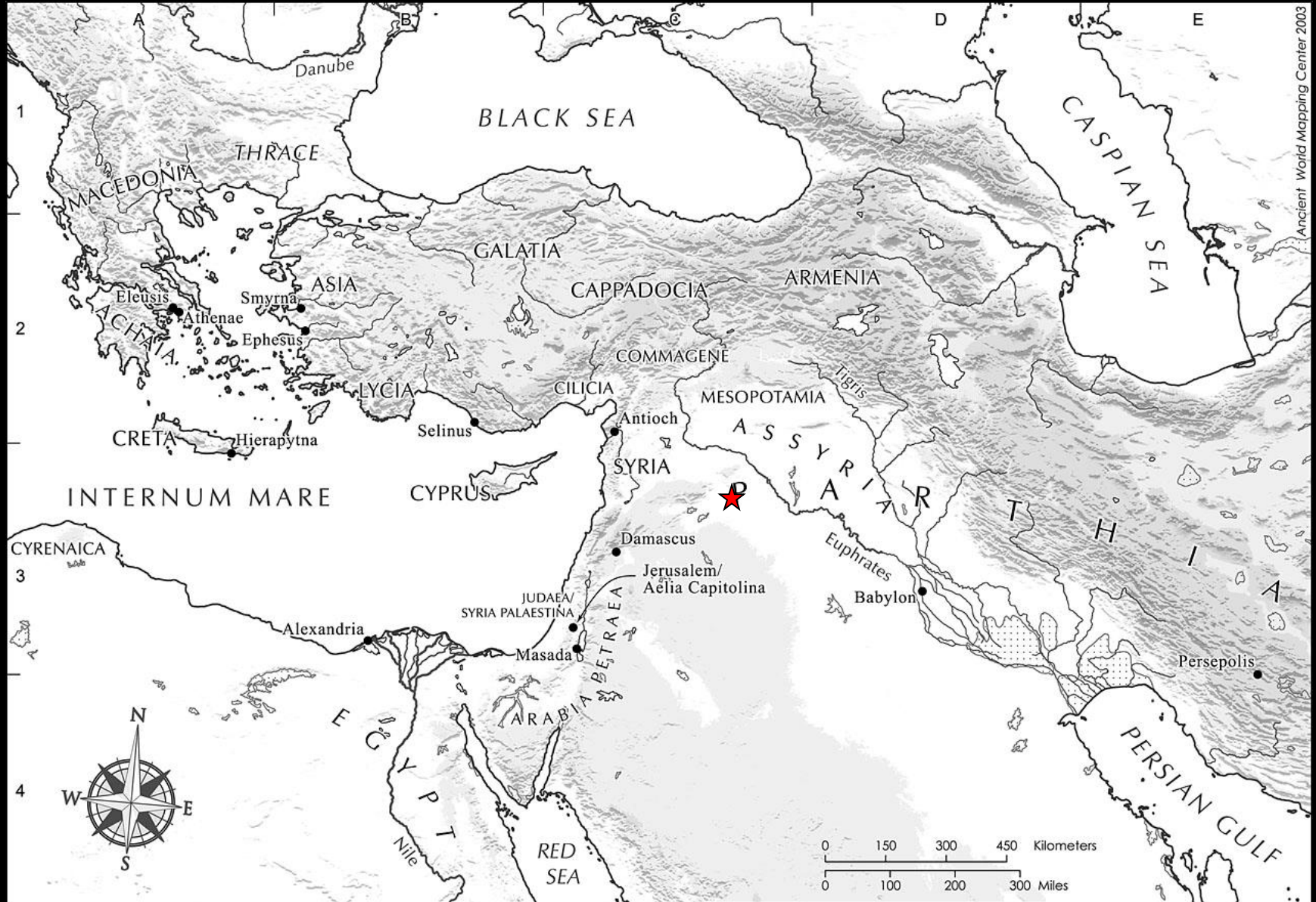
# Aurelius Victor, *Lives of the Emperors* 24

The emperors after [Severus Alexander], more concerned with tyrannizing their subjects than subduing foreign peoples, and with warring among themselves, precipitated the Roman state into a steep decline. Then good men and bad, nobles and low-born, and even many barbarians, were indiscriminately elevated to the purple.

# Modern views of AD 235 - 284

- 'The third-century crisis'
- 'The age of transition'
- 'The age of the soldier-emperors'
- 'The age of anarchy'
- 'The military monarchy'

# Resurgent Persian Empire of Sassanids



# Valerian before Shapur in 260



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Rock-cut relief at Naqsh-i Rostam, near Persepolis

# Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 5

He was made prisoner by the Persians and lost not only that power which he had exercised without moderation, but also the liberty of which he had deprived others. He squandered the remainder of his days in the abject form of slavery: for whenever Shapur, the king of the Persians, who had made him prisoner, chose to get into the carriage or to mount on horseback, he commanded the Roman to stoop and present his back...

Postumus  
260-274

Zenobia  
260s-272



# Carausius

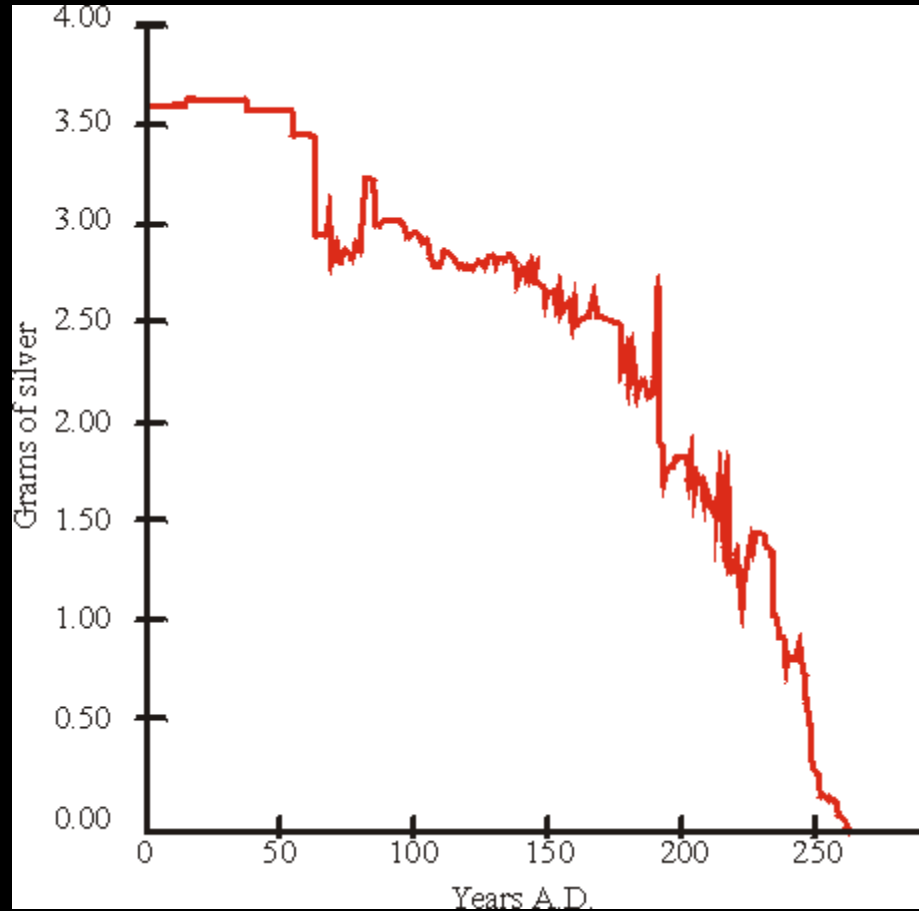


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Emperor in Britain and northern Gaul  
286-293



# Debasement of Roman silver coinage



# Loss of confidence in Roman coinage?

Papyrus of 24 Nov., 260 (AJ 199)

Aurelius Ptolemy...*strategos* of the Oxyrhynchite nome:

Since the public officials have met and have accused the bankers of the banks of exchange of having closed them because they are unwilling to accept the sacred currency of the Emperors [Macrian and Quietus, probably], it has become necessary that an injunction should be issued to all owners of the banks to open them and accept all currency, except what is completely mis-struck and counterfeit, and give change for it.

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# Diocletian, AD 284-305



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# Maximianus



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# The Tetrachs – AD 293

Augusti

**Diocletian & Maximianus**

Caesares

**Galerius & Constantius**



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## The Tetrarchs, Venice

# Abdication of Diocletian and Maximianus in 305

Augusti

**Galerius** & **Constantius**

Caesares

**Maximinus** & **Severus**









# The New Tax System, AD 296

Aristius Optatus, *vir perfectissimus*, prefect of Egypt, declares:

Our most provident Emperors, the eternal Diocletian and Maximian, Augusti, and Constantius and Maximian, most noble Caesars, having learned that it has come about that the levies of the public taxes are being made haphazardly, so that some persons are let off lightly and others overburdened, have decided to root out this most evil and baneful practice for the benefit of their provincials and to issue a deliverance-bringing rule to which the taxes shall conform.

Cairo Isidorus Papyrus No. 1

Lewis, Naphtali, and Meyer Reinhold, eds. *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings, Vol. II: The Empire*. 3rd edition. Columbia University Press, 1990. © Columbia University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



EARLY KINGS

753 BC (April 21) - Foundation of Rome

509 BC – Birth of Republic

REPUBLIC

27 BC - Augustus

EMPIRE / PRINCIPATE

AD 284 – Reforms of Diocletian

LATE EMPIRE

AD 476 – Deposition of Romulus Augustulus

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