



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 30, the Tetrarchy 1 of 2

(Wikipedia)

The **Tetrarchy** describes the system of government instituted by Roman Emperor Diocletian in 293. This system lasted until c. 313, when mutually destructive civil wars eliminated most of the claimants to power, leaving Constantine the Great in control of the Western half of the empire, and Licinius in control of the Eastern half.

Creation

The first phase, sometimes referred to as the diarchy ("rule of two"), involved the designation of the General Maximian as co-emperor, firstly as Caesar (junior emperor) in 285, followed by his promotion to Augustus in 286. Diocletian took care of matters in the Eastern regions of the empire while Maximian similarly took charge of the Western regions. In 293, Diocletian thought that more focus was needed on both civic and military problems, so with Maximian's consent, he expanded the imperial college by appointing two Caesars (one responsible to each Augustus)—Galerius and Constantius Chlorus.

In 305, the senior Emperors jointly abdicated and retired, allowing Constantius and Galerius to be elevated in rank to Augustus. They in turn appointed two new Caesars: Severus II in the West under Constantius, and Maximinus in the East under Galerius, thereby creating the second Tetrarchy.

Regions and capitals



The four tetrarchs based themselves not at Rome but in other cities closer to the frontiers, mainly intended as headquarters for the defence of the Empire against bordering rivals (notably Sassanian Persia) and barbarians (mainly Germanic and an unending sequence of nomadic or displaced tribes from the Eastern steppes) at the Rhine and Danube.

These centres are known as the tetrarchic capitals. Although Rome ceased to be an operational capital, Rome continued to be nominal capital of the entire Roman Empire, not reduced to the status of a province but under its own, unique Prefect of the City (*praefectus urbi*, later copied in Constantinople).

The four tetrarchic capitals were:

- Nicomedia (modern Izmit in Turkey), a base for defence against invasion from the Balkans and Persia's Sassanids was the capital of Diocletian, the Eastern (and most senior) Augustus.
- Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica in the Vojvodina region of modern Serbia, and near Belgrade, was the capital of Galerius, the Eastern Caesar.
- Mediolanum (modern Milan) was the capital of Maximian, the western Augustus; his domain became "Italia et Africa", with only a short exterior border.
- Augusta Treverorum (modern Trier, Germany) was the capital of Constantius Chlorus, the Western Caesar, near the strategic Rhine border; it had been the capital of Gallic emperor Tetricus I.
- In addition: Aquileia, a port on the Adriatic coast, and Eboracum (modern York, in northern England near the Celtic tribes of modern Scotland and Ireland), were also significant centres for Maximian and Constantius respectively.

In terms of regional jurisdiction there was no precise division among the four tetrarchs, and this period did not see the Roman state actually split up into four distinct sub-empires. Each Emperor had his zone of influence within the Roman Empire, but little more, mainly high command in a 'war theater'.

Each tetrarch was himself often in the field, while delegating most of the administration to the hierarchic bureaucracy headed by his respective Pretorian Prefect, each supervising several *Vicarii*, the governors-general in charge of another, lasting new administrative level, the civil diocese.

In the West, the Augustus Maximian controlled the provinces West of the Adriatic Sea and the Syrtis, and within that region his Caesar, Constantius, controlled Gaul and Britain. In the East, the arrangements between the Augustus Diocletian and his Caesar, Galerius, were much more flexible.

However, it appears that some contemporary and later writers, such as the Christian author Lactantius, and Sextus Aurelius Victor (who wrote about fifty years later and from uncertain sources), misunderstood the tetrarchic system in this respect, believing it to have involved a stricter division of territories among the four emperors.