

An Analysis of the Surface Area of the Western Roman Empire until CE 476

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

In 1968, Rein Taagepera created growth curves of four empires by measuring the surface area of each and plotting his data on a graph of area versus time. He used his growth curves to analyse the development of empires quantitatively, as he considered surface area to be the best measurable indicator of an empire's strength. His growth curve of the Roman Empire, in particular, has been referenced numerous times by scholars researching the decline and fall of complex civilizations to support their individual analyses of the collapse of Rome. While this thesis surveys only the territories of the Western Roman Empire, many of the parameters used by Taagepera have been either borrowed or adapted in order to define, measure, and graph the surface area of the Western Empire as precisely as possible. This thesis also adds further precision and validity to Bryan Ward-Perkins' theory that surface area can be used to analyse and quantify the collapse of a complex society accurately.

In order to demonstrate the extent to which differing circumstances and outcomes of provincial history impacted the total surface area of the Western Roman Empire, it was essential to include not only an overview of Rome's extensive history, but also to establish the chronology, as it related to the Roman Empire, of each individual province, territory, and client kingdom within the Western Empire. Detailed chronologies of Noricum and Britannia have been included to serve as case studies as they comprise a broad range of distinct characteristics and so represent typical western provinces.

My research of the history and geography of the Roman Empire has generated a comprehensive inventory that includes all the pertinent onomastic and chronological data needed to measure the surface area of each of Rome's western provinces and client kingdoms. When plotted on a graph of area versus time, my data not only produced an accurate representation of

the actual surface area of the Western Roman Empire, but also one that facilitates temporal analyses of territorial fluctuations at any given point in the Empire's history until the fall of the Western Empire in CE 476.

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contributed to the successful completion of this thesis. Thank you for patiently enduring these last four years, and for teaching me to take pride in everything I do. I love you both very, very much.

To my parents

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Abbreviations

Ancient works appearing more than once have been cited according to the system of abbreviations employed in *A Latin Dictionary* (Ed. Charlton Lewis and Charles Short. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963) and Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Ed. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

“ἐπειδὴ γὰρ παντὸς καὶ σώματος καὶ πολιτείας καὶ πράξεώς ἐστὶ τις αὔξις
κατὰ φύσιν, μετὰ δὲ ταύτην ἀκμή, κᾶπειτα φθίσις...”

“Every organism, every state, and every activity passes through a natural cycle;
first of growth, then of maturity, and finally of decay...”

Polybius. *Histories*. 6.51.4

Chapter 1: Introductory Information

1.1 General Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to create a graph of the surface area of the Western Roman Empire¹ by borrowing or adapting many of the parameters used by Rein Taagepera in his 1968 article “Growth Curves of Empires”,² in which he presented a growth curve of the Roman Empire³ (Figure 1.1) that has been used extensively by modern scholars, including Joseph A. Tainter⁴ and Bryan Ward-Perkins,⁵ to support their individual theories regarding the collapse of Rome. A more systematic and accurate measuring method was utilized such that Taagepera’s graph has been revised and a more accurate representation of the Western Empire produced. Taagepera’s work necessitates revision as his graph has been constructed using approximations and without first establishing specific parameters for the inclusion and omission of a given territory, which is necessary for accurate, and consistent, surface area calculations.⁶

In order to present a thorough and unbiased argument, a critical analysis of Tainter’s particular reliance on Taagepera’s work, as well as the methodology used by Taagepera, has been undertaken. In addition to generating a detailed graph of the surface area of the Western Empire, this thesis adds further precision and validity to Ward-Perkins’ theory that surface area

¹ Only the provinces and client kingdoms, which, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, were part of the Western Roman Empire when the Roman Empire was divided in CE 395, have been analysed and included in surface area calculations. For this reason, the province of Praevalitana and the island of Malta, which were situated in the western half of the Empire, but became part of the Eastern Roman Empire in CE 395, have been excluded from the accompanying graph for the duration of their association with the Empire.

² Published in *General Systems* Vol. 13. (1968), pages 171-175, with further updates and analyses published by Taagepera in “Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size” (*Social Science Research*. Vol. 7. 1978) 108-127 and “Size and Duration of Empires: Growth-Decline Curves, 600 B.C. to 600 A.D.”. *Social Science History*. Vol. 3, No. 3-4. (1979) 115-138.

³ An image of Taagepera’s graph has been included for illustrative purposes only.

⁴ “The Collapse of Complex Societies”. *New Studies in Archaeology*. Ed. Colin Renfrew and Jeremy Sabloff. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially pages 125-126. Tainter utilizes Taagepera’s graph to analyse the collapse of several complex societies, including the Western Roman Empire.

⁵ *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Ward-Perkins includes Taagepera’s work in his study of the collapse of the Roman Empire.

⁶ See section 3.5, page 22 for a deeper analysis of Taagepera’s methodology.

is one of many yardsticks⁷ that can be used to accurately analyse and quantify the collapse of a complex society. William R. Catton Jr.'s study of marginal productivity as it relates to modern-day America in *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*⁸ has also been surveyed.⁹ His insights into mankind's dependence on abundant sources of energy for its advancement are certainly applicable to this study of the Roman Empire.

⁷ Other yardsticks include: pottery, coinage, population size, and literacy. See footnote 24 for a fuller description of each yardstick.

⁸ (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

⁹ See section 3.5, page 24-25.

1.2 Introduction to the Collapse of the Roman Empire

In order to understand why the frontier of the Western Roman Empire and the amount of surface area it consequently controlled are so significant for its decline, a general understanding of societal collapse as it relates to the Roman Empire, as a whole, is essential. Rome, like many other complex civilizations in human history,

has been characterized by a seemingly inexorable trend toward higher levels of complexity, specialization, and sociopolitical control, processing of greater quantities of energy and information, formation of even larger settlements, and development of more complex and capable technologies.¹⁰

Such a constant upward trend is inherently unsustainable; continual growth cannot be expected nor presumed, given a finite sphere of action. If a society's success depends on such growth, it will be unable to avoid collapse when expansion inevitably becomes no longer possible or *is* possible but no longer profitable. According to Tainter, "a society has collapsed when it displays a rapid, significant loss of an established level of sociopolitical complexity".¹¹ While the collapse of the Roman Empire as a whole was certainly provoked by a combination of factors, it is most easily quantified when expressed in terms of the amount of territory held and the rate at which these holdings were lost. This is not to say that territorial fluctuations should be considered the *cause* of the Empire's collapse. Instead, such fluctuations are symptomatic of Rome's mismanagement and overexploitation of the Empire's energy resources. A collapse as intricate as Rome's is best illustrated and understood when the extent of the Western Empire's territorial holdings, their individual importance, and the years in which they were lost are not only taken into consideration, but made the focal point of this study.

¹⁰ Tainter, 3.

¹¹ Tainter, 4.

Figure 1.1 Rein Taagepera's Growth Curve of the Roman Empire

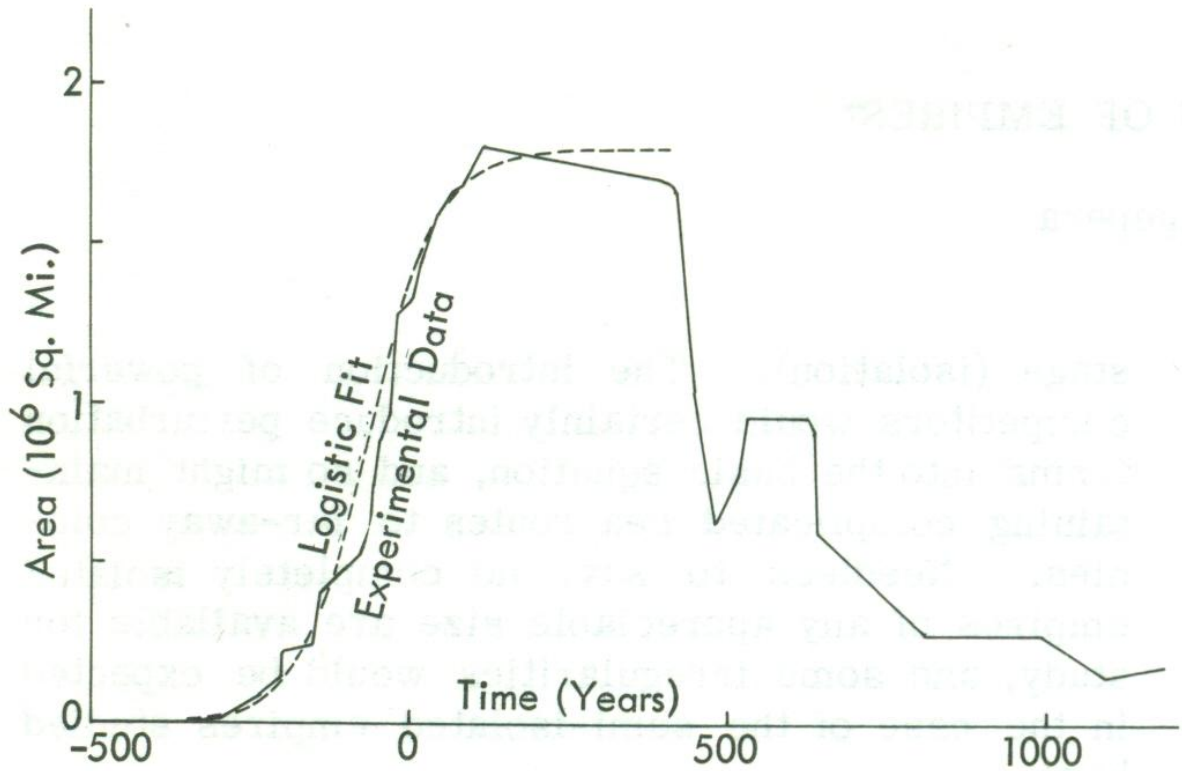
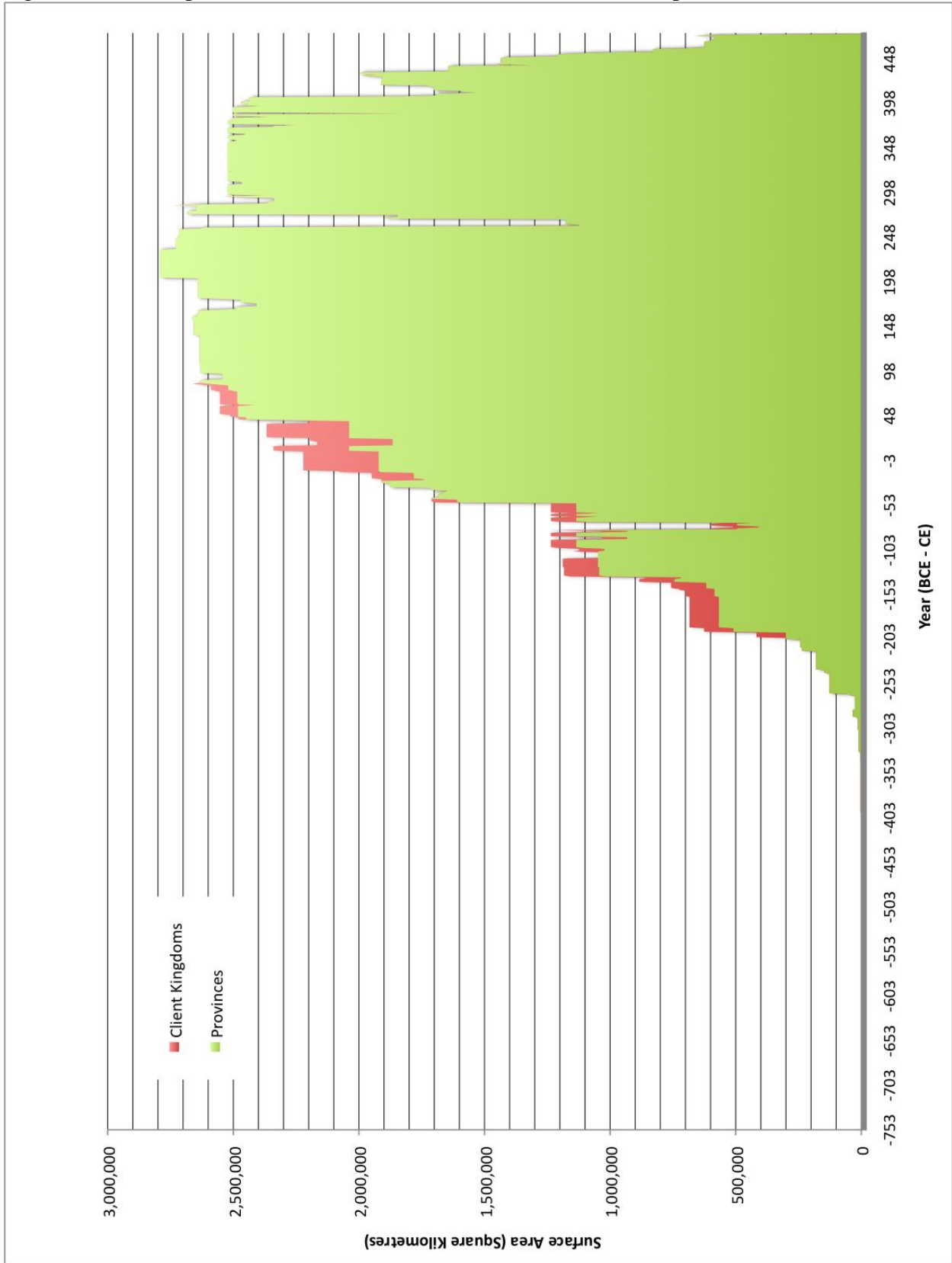


Fig. 1. GROWTH OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Areas measured on maps in Historical Atlas by W. R. Shepherd, 1956, pp. 29, 34, 42, 48, 54, 66, 70.

Figure 1.2 Graph of the Surface Area of the Western Roman Empire



Chapter 2: A Theory of Collapse

2.1 Marginal Productivity

In Tainter's study of societal collapse, the suggestion that an empire is more vulnerable to collapse when it ceases having access to expanding resources is central to the author's application of the theory of 'diminishing returns'. When a society's investments in complexity begin to yield smaller returns, more resources are subsequently invested with the expectation that the return will correspondingly increase. It is, however, repeatedly the case that an ever-smaller return is yielded instead. The result of the reciprocal relationship between the amount of energy¹² returned on the amount of energy invested is best understood as the concept of 'marginal productivity'.¹³ In order for any complex society to maintain itself, energy supply (i.e., available resources) and energy demand must evolve at roughly the same rate. As this is rarely the case, new energy allotments are sought when energy demands can no longer be met.¹⁴ Eventually, however, energy returns decline again because complex societies adhere to the principle of Increasing Opportunity Cost¹⁵ by taking advantage of the most favourable opportunities first before pursuing resources with higher opportunity costs.¹⁶ Indeed, all complex societies depend very specifically on agricultural surplus in order to specialize. The band-aid solution of acquiring

¹² The resources, human or material, required to administer and maintain an empire. For two other useful interpretations of the concept of energy as it relates to its pursuit and consumption, see David Holmgren's *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways beyond Sustainability* (Hepburn: Holmgren Design Services, 2002) and Thomas Homer-Dixon's *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization* (Washington: Island Press, 2006).

¹³ Tainter, 92, 124.

¹⁴ Conversely, at times of great resource abundance, additional, though somewhat exorbitant, ways of utilizing the energy surplus are invented. Augustus' monumental building projects, for example, are representative of the first Emperor's efforts to legitimize his rule by promulgating Rome's cultural and architectural supremacy to the citizenry.

¹⁵ Also referred to as the 'Low-Hanging Fruit' principle. Over time, the energy returned on energy invested declines because the most concentrated and easily accessible resources, agricultural or otherwise, are, almost without exception, exploited first. Because of the increased cost associated with their exploitation, the more difficult to access resources are exploited last.

¹⁶ Robert Frank and Ben Bernanke. *Principles of Microeconomics, 2nd edition*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004) 33-47.

new, temporary energy subsidies first creates, then perpetuates, an inescapable cycle of energy pursuit. When energy demands increase, specialized societies, either through conquest or by increasing their level of complexity, attempt to meet their energy deficit – a choice that always incurs further energy investment and higher costs.

2.2 Marginal Productivity and the Collapse of the Roman Empire

Within this newly established framework of why civilizations deteriorate, a more detailed explanation of how Rome cultivated its own collapse can be attempted. On account of its numerous territorial holdings and the extensive frontier that was created as a result, Rome was especially subject to the pressures of marginal productivity. Although the Roman Empire was especially good at using conquest to obtain additional surplus beyond what had been readily available, the conquest of new territory could no longer compensate for the Empire's initial investment of resources, manpower, and time spent acquiring it because Rome not only needed to withstand the increasing cost of its operative internal and external wars, but also finance the resultant cost of manning and equipping permanent frontier defences.¹⁷ If the idea of marginal productivity is then applied to several postulated themes of collapse,¹⁸ it helps explain why Rome lost control of its Empire. In the context of this thesis, however, invasions from foreign civilizations and revolts by the discontented populace are most significant because of their capacity to provoke territorial losses and so affect resource availability.

While the early Republic enjoyed a food surplus, the Italian peninsula eventually produced smaller agricultural yields since not only were fewer people farming, but the soil had also become exhausted by overuse, overgrazing, and deforestation.¹⁹ The environment was permanently changed and the population, by their own doing, was forced to rely on provincial imports in order to compensate for the irrecoverable loss of agricultural products and meet their demand for food. Throughout the Republican and Imperial periods, Italy relied heavily on grain

¹⁷ Shimon Applebaum. "Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times: Historical and Archaeological Essays". *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Ed. Jacob Neusner. Vol. 40. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989) 145.

¹⁸ As listed in Tainter, 42, and Ward-Perkins, 32. The latter is a direct copy of the list compiled by Alexander Demandt in *Der Fall Roms: Die Auflösung der römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984) (695).

¹⁹ Tainter, 49.

imports from its agriculturally rich provinces²⁰ and if the grain supply into Italy should be disrupted for whatever reason – poor weather during transport, bad harvests, or usurpers – Italy was at risk of starvation.²¹ The conquest of fertile lands like Sicilia and Sardinia temporarily satisfied this need and as a result, territorial expansion became inherently linked to, and responsible for, Rome’s future success. Upon defeat, conquered provinces were “looted of their accumulated surpluses, [...] working capital, [...] and] permanent tributes, taxes, and land rentals were imposed”.²² New territories were also important for the social, political, and economic benefits they provided²³ as well as for army recruitment, the settlement of veterans, and for use as a buffer zone between Rome and other prominent powers in the region, especially the Parthian Empire to the east and Carthage to the south.

The geographical size resulting from the acquisition and consolidation of new territories has often been considered an appropriate yardstick²⁴ by which the power of an empire can be measured.²⁵ So long as Rome received some sort of tangible resource from each region it controlled, that same region has been considered part of the overall surface area of the Empire. If, however, it is determined that a territory commonly considered part of the Empire did not provide any type of energy and therefore cannot factor into Rome’s overall energy sources, it has been, by definition, excluded from the final graph. (Fig. 1.2) In order to justify the use of surface

²⁰ Especially Sicilia, Sardinia, Aegyptus, and parts of Africa province.

²¹ In *Annales*, Tacitus describes how Rome’s particular reliance on foreign agricultural imports made it vulnerable to starvation. (3.54 and 12.43)

²² Tainter, 129.

²³ Tainter, 128.

²⁴ Other yardsticks of collapse suggested by Ward-Perkins in *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* include: more regionalized distribution of pottery, as well as a reduction in the variety, quality, and amount of pottery manufactured (87-110); a decline in the production and circulation of low-denomination copper coinage (110-117); decreased population size caused by inefficient food production (142-146); and a decline in the casual and everyday use of writing (graffiti, production stamps, etc.) as a result of a lower percentage of the population being able to read and write (151-167).

²⁵ In “Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size”, Taagepera measures, represents graphically, and analyses the size of various empires in an attempt to disprove the validity of using geographical size as a yardstick for measuring the duration and stability of an empire. The conclusions of Taagepera’s 1978 article should be viewed in conjunction with his work on the growth curves of empires in his 1968 and 1979 articles.

area as a yardstick, it is necessary to disregard the inherent differences in value between provinces in terms of surplus generated per square kilometre. Instead, the emphasis must be placed on the *aggregate* control Rome held over each province or territory in question. Furthermore, when an empire's administrative centre depends on resources from outlying lands, maintaining control of the peripheries – absolutely imperative, but logistically difficult – requires substantial and continual investments from the centre. If, for whatever reason, a territory is lost or unsuccessfully conquered, the time, money, manpower, and materials that were invested into its capture, infrastructure, and/or defence are not reimbursed. As a result, the energy invested now yields a negative return and the empire is thrust into an even worse energy crisis.

As new territories were integrated into the Roman Empire, the distance between its frontier and administrative centre, Rome, increased accordingly. As a result of sharing its borders with foreign tribes,²⁶ Rome made continuous attempts to first subjugate, and then assimilate, these tribes into the Empire. Rome's frontier provinces, however, became especially susceptible to raids and incursions from these same newly, or incompletely, conquered tribes later in its history. In the same way that Rome needed to expand its territory in order to meet its growing energy requirements and sustain its population, so too did these neighbouring civilizations which were, in comparison to Rome, at a lower level of complexity. The ever-expanding distance between Rome and the periphery also meant that reinforcements could not, necessarily, be expected to arrive swiftly in a crisis, despite the speed at which the cavalry messengers were able to travel.²⁷ Whether or not such invasions were successful, Rome's profitable arrangement of

²⁶ Especially tribes in Northern Britain and on the European mainland.

²⁷ The *cursus publicus* was, by far, the fastest and most effective communication system in place at the time. In "The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post" (*The Journal of Roman Studies*. Vol. 15. 1925) 60-74, A. M. Ramsay used Procopius' statement regarding the rate of speed required of Imperial couriers to determine that most messengers travelled an average of 41 to 67 Roman miles per day. (*Historia arcana*. 30.1-7) 'Bad' news, news of defeat or danger, however, was expected to travel much faster. Speeds of up to 10 Roman miles per hour and 200 Roman

resource collection and distribution was temporarily disrupted. Internal revolts had much the same effect. A successful revolt, besides interrupting the flow of resources, showcased Rome's inability to control its Empire and ensured that future provocations from "foreign challengers [and disgruntled regions within the Empire] became increasingly successful".²⁸

As Rome grew in complexity, so too did its energy demands. New energy subsidies were constantly required to maintain the Empire's socioeconomic stability and avoid a decline in marginal productivity.²⁹ Rome's energy supply and demand were continually out of synch and in an attempt to reconcile the two, an expansionist policy was adopted early on in its history; a policy which not only endured throughout most of the Empire's existence, but one which also ensured that Rome's success was inherently fixed to its ability to acquire new land. Only a few Emperors³⁰ actually recognized the instability of continual growth, the costs associated with maintaining such a vast empire, and the benefits that a policy of consolidation provided. In the reign of Diocletian, consolidation ended the "chronic problems of the mid-third century - the rapid and violent turnover of Emperors, separatist regimes, and the debilitating effects of barbarian incursions".³¹ Expansion, however, was by far the more popular policy because it not only increased and legitimized the prestige and power of the Emperor,³² but also had the benefit of quickly satisfying the Empire's energy demands. The resources from newly acquired

miles per day have been recorded by Tacitus (*Historiae*. 1.12-18) and Valerius Maximus (*Factorum et dictorum memorabilium*. 5.5.3), respectively.

²⁸ Tainter, 19.

²⁹ Tainter, 124.

³⁰ Especially Augustus, Hadrian, and Diocletian. Augustus, however, was unique. During his principate, he supported first an expansionist policy, then one of defense. In short, before advocating the consolidation of the Empire's borders, he first expanded the Empire, by diplomacy or conquest, to what he believed was its naturally defensible, and most profitable, borders.

³¹ Roger Rees. "Diocletian and the Tetrarchy". *Debates and Documents in Ancient History*. Ed. Hugh Bowman and Shaun Tougher. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2004) 16.

³² Rees, 16.

territories were directed³³ to the support of the central government in Rome from where decisions were made either to stockpile or, more typically, redistribute them according to need. Operating as if any resource surplus constituted waste, the government used new resources to deploy and maintain provincial infrastructure and high levels of luxury for the elite, as well as the social complexity and specialization required for both.

Growth continued, even accelerated, as the new energy was partially invested in further expansion, but eventually subsided because continual expansion demanded “too high a marginal cost”.³⁴ Now, new border areas needed to be defended from territorial rivals; the citizenry protected; a new administration installed; the process of Romanization begun; and the now greater distance between the city of Rome and the frontier compensated for in order to facilitate the collection and distribution of resources. If the new region became sufficiently Romanized and integrated into the Empire, its population also came to benefit from costly Imperial infrastructure developments³⁵ already enjoyed by existing Imperial provinces, as well as social programmes, like the grain dole, that relied heavily on government subsidies. The *Lex Frumentaria*, introduced by Caius Gracchus in 123 BCE, ensured “ut senis et triente frumentum³⁶ plebi daretur” (Livy. *Ab urbe condita*. 60)³⁷ from the portion of the *annona* especially set aside by the government. Numerous laws³⁸ aimed at reducing the financial burden that the grain subsidies placed on the treasury were subsequently proposed. Toward the end of the Republican

³³ I do not necessarily mean physically directed, but rather that the new resources were now at Rome’s disposal to do with as the Senate, and later the Emperor, pleased.

³⁴ Tainter, 125-126.

³⁵ For example, the construction of roads facilitated the transport of people and information into the region while aqueducts significantly increased the amount of fresh water available to the population for personal and industrial use.

³⁶ During the reign of Severus (CE 193 – 211), olive oil also began to be sold to citizens at a subsidized price. Pork and wine were subsidized during the reign of Aurelian (CE 270 – 275).

³⁷ Cf. Appian (*Bella civilia*. 1.3.21), Plutarch (*Caius Gracchus*. 5.2), and Velleius Paterculus (*Historiae Romanae*. 2.6.3).

³⁸ Including *Lex Octavia* (91 BCE), *Lex Cornelia* (82 BCE), and *Lex Terentia Cassia* (73 BCE).

period, however, many political leaders, in a calculated effort to gain the support of the people, made changes to the grain laws³⁹ that further increased Rome's expenses; a trend that continued during the Imperial Period. The allocation of resources to newly acquired territories, as well as the deliberate devaluation of said resources, not only encroached on the amount of resources that Rome had at its disposal for further expansion by placing great strain on the treasury, but also put the Empire's very survival at risk.

³⁹ For example, Caesar's *Lex Clodia* (58 BCE) began the distribution of free corn to Roman citizens. Changes to the number of recipients as well as the amount of corn distributed soon followed.

Chapter 3: Methodological Considerations

3.1 A Few Problems

For this study, several major problems needed to be addressed and resolved. The first problem was determining the precise boundaries of the Western Roman Empire as a whole as well as the boundaries of each internal province or territory since surface area calculations are impossible without established borders.⁴⁰ Despite my best efforts, the measurements herein remain approximate, but on the whole do not detract from the shape of the generated graph.⁴¹ (Fig. 1.2) Secondly, establishing the extent to which the Empire and Emperor controlled each region was problematic as “control over a given area may change gradually and intangibly”.⁴² For the purpose of this thesis, it is impossible to consider any territory, whether a client kingdom or a full-status province, to be part of the Empire if it did not contribute to Rome’s overall resources. One of the primary concerns of this paper, therefore, is whether or not each of these territories, by the provision of tribute, taxes, or other tangible resources, actually made their contribution to Rome for the duration of their presence within the Empire. Taagepera, however, takes a different approach before including a region as part of an empire; he is primarily concerned with whether or not that same region can be considered a *stable* part of the empire in question⁴³ and so omits regions that were occupied for brief periods of time. Stability is less important in that regard in this thesis and will only be considered insofar as it affected a province’s ability to provide resources to the central authority. Consequently, some territories traditionally considered part of the Western Roman Empire⁴⁴ do not appear on the final graph for reasons that will be discussed later in this paper. Lastly, establishing the chronology, as it related

⁴⁰ See section 3.4, pages 20-21.

⁴¹ See section 3.4, pages 20-21.

⁴² Taagepera. “Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size”, 111.

⁴³ Taagepera. “Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size”, 112.

⁴⁴ In particular Germania Magna, which was never fully pacified during Augustus’ reign.

to Rome, of each individual territory, whether a client kingdom or province, within the western half of the Empire proved to be especially difficult. The ancient, and modern, authorities either frequently provided conflicting dates and data,⁴⁵ or lacked the necessary information needed in order to date important events⁴⁶ in a territory's history correctly.

⁴⁵ For example, the ancient sources conflict on the date of Rome's withdrawal from Britannia. Since Rome's withdrawal from Britannia happened gradually, it is difficult to determine an exact date for the end of the province. Roman authority deteriorated at the end of the fourth century CE as the military set up usurpers, troops were recalled to Italy, and tribes from Caledonia and Hibernia began to plunder the poorly garrisoned province. The official end of Britannia, however, is not synonymous with the withdrawal of the military that began in CE 383, but rather the end of Roman intervention in provincial administration and defense. Zosimus (*Historia nova*. 6.5 and 6.9) states that "τῆς Βρεττανίας ὄπλα ἐνδύντες καὶ σφῶν ἀτῶν προκινδυνεύσαντες ἠλευθέρωσαν τῶν ἐπικειμένων βαρβάρων τὰς πόλεις" after having received instructions from Honorius to defend themselves, as there was no longer a Roman general or governor upon whom they might rely for protection. Procopius (*De bello Vandalico*. 3.2.38) writes that "Βρεττανίαν μέντοι Ῥωμαῖοι ἀνασώσασθαι οὐκέτι ἔσχον, ἀλλ' οὔσα ὑπὸ τυράννοις ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἔμεινε".

⁴⁶ Including: the date of a territory's inclusion into the Empire, whether as a client kingdom or a province; the dates of any effective rebellion or invasion; and the date a territory ceased to be a part of the Empire.

3.2 Important Definitions

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define a few important and frequently used terms. In this paper, an ‘empire’ denotes a sovereign political unit consisting of many parts, all of which are beholden to the central government of said empire. The ‘frontier’ is defined as the furthest boundary of an empire. In Rome’s case, many of the provinces along its frontier acted as a buffer zone between the heart of the Empire, the city of Rome itself, and the foreign tribes and civilizations which existed beyond the border. Legions were distributed along the frontier according to perceived threat, and the policy that governed the frontier changed frequently throughout the evolution of the Empire, a topic that will be investigated in more detail below.⁴⁷ As Rome began to expand and transform into an empire, the term *provincia*, which originally referred to a specific ‘task’ or ‘sphere of responsibility’ assigned by the Senate to a Roman magistrate, came to describe a specific territory outside the Italian peninsula. A province was the largest territorial administrative unit in the Roman Empire until the end of the third century CE when Diocletian reorganized the Empire by dividing larger provinces into multiple smaller ones, thereby increasing the number of provinces to almost 100. Since the definition and boundaries of a province remained essentially fluid throughout Rome’s history, in such cases where a region cannot be considered an ‘official’ province using the definition above, the term ‘territory’ has been used instead.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See section 4.1, especially pages 29-33, for Augustus’ frontier policy, as well as steps taken by Hadrian, Diocletian, and Honorius, respectively, to consolidate the Empire’s power through border changes.

⁴⁸ For a compellingly argued paper regarding Roman imperialism, in particular the Romans’ concept of power, as well as analyses of the many laws regarding Roman governorship in the provinces, see “What Was the ‘Imperium Romanum’?” *Greece & Rome*. Second Series. Vol. 28, No. 1. (Apr. 1981) 53-67. In this article, Andrew Lintott also delves deeper into the definitions and expectations of *provinciae*, allied kingdoms, and free cities within the Roman Empire. His arguments illustrate just how difficult it is to establish precise boundaries for the Roman frontier.

3.3 Characterizing Empire Size: The Parameters

First and foremost, because this study strives to understand the connection between the amount of surface area controlled by the Roman Empire and the rate at which the western half of the Empire grew and collapsed, it is essential to ensure that each province or territory provided Rome with some type of tangible resource as an expression of their subservience.⁴⁹ The resource can include, but is not limited to, grain and other agricultural products, wood, metals and minerals, coin, already manufactured goods, slaves, and soldiers. In many cases, such resources were collected as tax, but the various methods by which Rome extracted such revenue are not within the scope of this study.

When defining and measuring the size of the Western Roman Empire, certain parameters have been either borrowed or adapted from Taagepera's work. Only dry land area has been included in my calculations while large bodies of water,⁵⁰ most notably the Mediterranean Sea, have been excluded. To be sure, the Roman people believed that they did control the whole of the Mediterranean “ἐντὸς Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν θαλάσσης” (Plutarch. *Pompey*. 25.2) after it was cleared of pirates in 67 BCE by Pompey, but it is impractical to consider water a calculable component of the total surface area under Rome's control. Although the water itself provided some benefits (i.e., fish and lanes of transportation) that cannot be accounted for solely using land surface area calculations, the surface of the water itself was uninhabited and any of its ‘potential’ residents (i.e., fishermen) would have been obligated to provide resources to Rome with respect to their place of residence inland instead. Accordingly, the value of the Mediterranean and any other river or lake within the borders of the Western Empire is intrinsic

⁴⁹ Benefits obtained from conquest could also be intangible. For example, Claudius' invasion of Britannia in CE 43 increased the legitimacy of an otherwise militarily weak Emperor. While such benefits are not easily quantifiable, they do represent an additional motivation for conquest beyond the potential for resource-based profit.

⁵⁰ With the exception of inland rivers and lakes.

and lies in their respective coastlines. It is, therefore, within reason to consider Rome's control of these coastlines to be a strategic source of power. As long as their harbours were readily accessible and sufficiently fortified, they facilitated the transportation of resources, people, and information during times of crisis or peace. So, while every coastline within the Empire was certainly valuable and duly warranted protection, the surface area of the water itself has been excluded from the final graph since it is not measurable property and therefore, not directly taxable.

According to Taagepera, the date of conquest should be reckoned from the "earliest date of uninterrupted tributary status"⁵¹ since most new territories did not achieve provincial status immediately, if at all, but began their inclusion into the Roman Empire as a tributary state. While this is true of some of the provinces in the Empire, it is certainly not true of each one. A distinction must be made between a territory that was, at any point in its history, a client kingdom of Rome and one which was, or became, a 'permanent' province of the Empire. Tributary states were usually self-governed and their contributions were given in order to acquire and preserve Rome's friendship and protection.⁵² Dio Cassius remarks that Rome gained "δυνάμεις καὶ τιμὰς καὶ συμμαχίας" (*Historia Romana*. 38.38.4) from its client kingdoms. Allies or 'friends' of Rome, however, should not be mistaken for client kingdoms since they were not required to pay tribute to Rome. The Empire enjoyed 'mutual hospitality' with many kingdoms and tribes, but they have all been excluded from my calculations of surface area because they did not pay tribute or provide the Empire with any resources. Tribes that enjoyed such 'hospitality' could not rely upon Rome for support, military or otherwise, because no formal treaty would have been signed and so Rome was not required to act in any predetermined manner towards its

⁵¹ Taagepera. "Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size", 113.

⁵² It should be noted that tributary states and client kingdoms were as self-governed as Rome allowed them to be and that their voluntary remittances to Rome often came about after an initial course of duress.

amici. (Appian. *De rebus Gallicis*. 4.13)⁵³ While Rome requested, and in many cases expected, military support from its *amici*, it was also not mandatory for their friends to comply. That being said, most nations that refused to support Rome during wartime soon found themselves out of Rome's favour and under threat of retaliation. Tributary states and client kingdoms have been counted in the overall surface area calculations for the Western Empire, but remain distinguishable from the 'full-status'⁵⁴ provinces on the attached graph. (Fig. 1.2) The disappearance of client kingdoms from the graph is indicative of the gradual decline of the client system in the first century CE. As Rome's client kings passed away or bequeathed their kingdoms to Rome, their territory, which acted as a buffer between Rome and the neighbouring foreign tribes, was absorbed into the Empire, thus necessitating the complete reorganization of the frontier regions. More permanent frontier defenses, including the deployment of military troops and the construction of physical barricades, were established and tighter administrative control over the frontier regions that were once client states was instituted.

To determine the date any given territory was lost, Taagepera measured from "the date at which reassertion of ever increasing autonomy first becomes noticeable".⁵⁵ Aside from the vague and subjective nature of his statement, the methodology used by Taagepera only works for this study if the first sign of autonomy is defined as an end to the flow of a territory's resources into Rome. If a province or territory continued to pay taxes or send resources to Rome while it strove for autonomy, it must still be counted as part of the Empire. Complete control of a region's energy resources must be in the hands of the rebels or invaders before it is excluded from surface area calculations.

⁵³ "ἔποιοῦντο δ' οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ξένους, οἷς ἐδίδοσαν μὲν εἶναι φίλοις, ἀνάγκη δ' οὐκ ἐπῆν ὡς φίλοις ἐπαμύνειν"

⁵⁴ A 'full-status' province of the Empire is one which was governed by Rome, was Romanized through a steady course of infrastructure programmes, paid taxes, and which had at least some of its energy (i.e., resources) collected by Rome for redistribution.

⁵⁵ Taagepera. "Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size", 113.

3.4 Calculating Surface Area

Since Roman power and influence, its military and cultural boundaries, often lay far beyond the more formalized administrative boundary of a given province, establishing the exact geographical limit of each province, while largely arbitrary, was necessary for this study. The Roman frontier was not simply a static, defensive line demarcating the precise extent of Rome's power, but was established as an extensible and permeable zone of administrative control and cultural, political, linguistic, and religious exchange in order to permit and facilitate the movement of Rome's allies, citizens, and military as well as maximize the Empire's potential for economic profitability.⁵⁶ I have attempted to determine the boundaries of each province, territory, and client kingdom within the western half of the Empire using historical maps,⁵⁷ the writings of ancient authors, and modern scholarship. If disagreements arose between the maps and text, the average surface area has been used. Since the borders, and sometimes the names, of many of Rome's territories were constantly changing, calculations were extraordinarily difficult, especially when geographical features⁵⁸ that are now difficult to pinpoint defined said borders. As a result, calculations of surface area can be no more than good estimations.

In order to achieve the most accurate estimate, a grid technique was employed wherein each territory was marked into a grid of small 1 cm by 1 cm squares so that any square which encompassed part of the border could be more easily calculated for the percentage of territory it did, in fact, contain. Each 'whole' square corresponded to 2.25, 25, or 100 square kilometres,

⁵⁶ C. R. Whittaker. "Frontiers". *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd edition, Vol. 11: The High Empire, A.D. 70-192*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 311-317. The productivity of the land in many areas beyond the frontier has been found to be marginal at best. As evidenced by the lack of material and botanic remains, the marshy land in Germania Magna would not have supported large-scale agricultural production. Likewise, the Severan frontier in western Algeria corresponded to the ecological limit of profitable grain production in an area of limited rainfall.

⁵⁷ For consistency in my measurements, only the maps found in the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Richard J. A. Talbert, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) were used to calculate surface area.

⁵⁸ Including rivers, mountain ranges, forests, and deserts. Forest and desert 'boundaries' are especially ambiguous as they are particularly prone to physical changes on account of deforestation and desertification, respectively.

depending on the scale of the corresponding map. This technique facilitated reasonably accurate calculations. For example, the actual surface area of Sicily, not including its surrounding islands, is 25,460 square kilometres.⁵⁹ Using my method, I calculated it to be 25,421.875; only 38.125 square kilometres, or 0.15%, less than the actual surface area of the island. Other Mediterranean islands produced similar margins of error both over and under the actual surface area with the result that the aggregate of these margins of error would tend to cancel each other out, thereby ensuring the uniformity of my graph of the surface area of the Western Roman Empire.⁶⁰ The data collected were then plotted on a graph of area versus time for visual reference.

By using both primary and secondary sources, the history of each province, territory, and client kingdom – as it related to the Western Roman Empire – was independently established. The chronology of each includes the date the territory was conquered, as well as the date it was permanently lost. In addition, any internal revolts or annexations by an outside power which were significant enough to disrupt the administration of the region, as well as the flow of resources into Rome so that it should be considered autonomous, even if for a short time, have been included and accounted for on the graph.

⁵⁹ “Sicily.” *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. 12 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/542800/Sicily>>.

⁶⁰ I calculated Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic Islands to be 0.30%, 1.67%, and 0.66% larger than the actual surface area of the islands, respectively.

3.5 Evaluating the Sources

Taagepera's study of trends in the size and duration of empires during periods of growth and decline has yielded a graph of the surface area of the Roman Empire, as well as other empires of the past and present.⁶¹ Using these graphs, he was able to isolate several patterns of growth and decay that are particularly applicable to Rome. He noticed that empires underwent "a slow start, a speed-up of expansion, and finally a slow approach to a stable maximum size".⁶² Taagepera goes on to describe how empires subside or collapse "after only a few centuries or even years at near-maximum size".⁶³ A quick glance, however, at his graph of the Roman Empire and its accompanying table shows that the author chose to be unspecific and approximate in its construction. He does not allow for surface area changes between dates nor does he account for any years of stability until the sixth century CE. Instead, his graph always shows the surface area of the Empire increasing or decreasing during the years that lie within the scope of this paper. He is also unspecific about the dates of conquest and gives a range instead, which would be perfectly acceptable, if this range was then clearly reflected on the graph itself. In comparison, my methodology has ensured precision, as much as is possible, when calculating the surface area of the Western Roman Empire. The final graph reflects, in its entirety, my own research.

Many reviewers of *The Collapse of Complex Societies* take particular issue with Tainter's methodology, theory, and overall success in explaining societal collapse. Bruce Trigger finds Tainter's approach limited, as he does not specifically define societal collapse such that it is distinguishable from the prolonged process of decline,⁶⁴ while James Rule finds the author to be

⁶¹ In addition to the Roman Empire, Taagepera created growth curve graphs for the Ottoman Empire, Muscovy-Russia, and the Thirteen Colonies and the United States in his 1968 article.

⁶² Taagepera. "Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size", 110.

⁶³ Taagepera. "Size and Duration of Empires: Systematics of Size", 109.

⁶⁴ Bruce G. Trigger. Rev of *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, by J. A. Tainter. *Man*. New Series, Vol. 24, No. 2. (Jun., 1989) 375.

unspecific as to whom his theory of diminishing returns affects and which ‘types’ of returns he is speaking to. As a result, Rule argues that Tainter’s argument “risks becoming circular”.⁶⁵ Tainter’s approach to collapse, however, should be understood as one solution to societal decline, not the problem itself. As complex societies experience declines in marginal productivity, a return to a simpler level of sociopolitical complexity is one of many options available to ease the pressure of acquiring resources to maintain the *status quo*. Bowersock finds fault with Tainter’s reliance on literary, rather than archaeological, evidence. He argues that many of the conclusions are only half-truths because Tainter lacks proper first-hand knowledge of the ancient texts⁶⁶ and uses literary sources that are dated and in many cases, discredited.⁶⁷ Any study of the Roman collapse must incorporate both archaeological and literary evidence since neither can stand alone when scrutinized. Used exclusively, each approach is insufficient, and when used together, contradictions inevitably occur. Oftentimes, literary works can be distorted and vague, if not rooted in either corrupted fact or utter fiction. This proves especially frustrating when using literature to determine territorial boundaries. For this reason, other less text-dependent methods of determining the frontiers have been incorporated into this study. One such approach, rooted in archaeology, is especially practical. Since Roman influence and trade spread well beyond its own borders, it can be extremely difficult to determine the limits of the Roman frontier using only the remains of material culture, such as pottery or other durable and frequently traded items. Permanent military forts,⁶⁸ on the other hand, can be a more reliable

⁶⁵ James B. Rule. Rev of *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, by J. A. Tainter. *Population and Environment*. Vol. 11, No. 1. (Fall, 1989) 74.

⁶⁶ G. W. Bowersock. Rev. of *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, by J. A. Tainter. *Journal of Field Archaeology*. Vol. 18, No. 1. (Spring, 1991) 120.

⁶⁷ For example, Tainter favours the older theory that Rome’s population was in decline during the third century CE and ignores more recent scholarship that proposes a theory of population redistribution instead.

⁶⁸ A distinction must be made between permanent forts situated along the frontier and the many marching camps that were constructed during Rome’s campaigns into foreign territory. The discovery of many such camps in northern Caledonia, for example, does not support a new northern frontier of Roman Britain.

indicator of the location of the frontier since it can be presumed that the army, and consequently Rome, controlled *at least* all the territory up to the forts themselves. The locations of such forts, as described and detailed in Guy Halsall's "Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568",⁶⁹ act as an approximate limit in such cases where the boundary of a province or territory is unclear or questionable. In particular, the location and dating of military forts was used not only to determine the frequently changing boundaries of Britannia, but also to date Rome's withdrawal from the island.

In *Overshoot*, Catton explores humanity's perpetual exploitation of energy and resources in its quest to remove, and go beyond, the limits imposed by nature upon human activity. By using numerous examples of American innovation during the latter half of the twentieth century, he concludes that resource exploitation is rooted in the belief that all resources will be in a perpetual state of abundance. He describes how this attitude of 'limitless possibilities' has primed mankind for inevitable drops in industrialization, economic growth, and population levels. He also details how overpopulated European countries, suffering from dwindling energy reserves, systematically invaded new lands during the Early Modern period in order to establish and control new resource bases. These newly acquired resource bases were soon thoroughly exhausted and a new, deeper energy deficit created. Rome, whether functioning as a republic or an empire, was also regularly forced to acquire new energy resources throughout its 1000+-year history⁷⁰ in order to compensate for the dwindling returns that were generated by the overpopulated and overused lands within the Empire. Like Catton's European examples, Rome

⁶⁹ *Cambridge Medieval Textbooks*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially pages 138-162.

⁷⁰ If the Byzantine Empire is considered an extension of the Roman Empire, it can be argued that the Roman Empire lasted *in some form* for nearly two millennia.

never achieved a sustainable, steady state of resource consumption, but instead perpetuated an inescapable cycle of energy pursuit, acquisition, and depletion.⁷¹

⁷¹ Once an energy deficit was recognized, the pursuit for new resources began. If said pursuit was successful, the governing body would have control over these new resources. Inevitably, however, they would be exhausted and a new deficiency created, thereby ensuring the cycle's repetition. For modern steady-state economy theories, see the writings of economist Herman Daly, especially *Steady-State Economics: The Economics of Biophysical Equilibrium and Moral Growth*. (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1977).

Chapter 4: Historical Overviews

4.1 A General History of the Roman Empire

In the following section, the evolution of the Roman Empire, beginning with the foundation of the city in 753 BCE, is traced and the reasons for its growth, as well as the specific benefits gained through expansion, are described. A detailed narrative, however, of Rome's expansion before the fourth century BCE cannot be attempted without first acknowledging that the outcome will be "restricted, defective, and to varying degrees, conjectural".⁷² Even when using extant ancient authors within the context of modern archaeological excavations, such uncertain outcomes inevitably still occur. It follows then that several of the first Greek and Roman authors⁷³ to chronicle some portion, however small, of the early history of Rome "faced a chronic shortage of reliable information".⁷⁴ They had, therefore, no choice but to rely on the much less dependable branches of knowledge that *were* available to them – conventional, but popular, 'wisdom',⁷⁵ consular lists, and inscriptions, among others – as well as their own creativity, when necessary, to fill in chronological gaps. For these reasons, many of the earliest dates used in the chronology of Rome's growth, while traditionally accepted, prove problematic nonetheless. Their use, however, cannot be avoided since precise dates for Rome's early development have not yet been established and likely never will be.

Sometime during the first half of the eighth century BCE, several settlements on the plains of Latium – of which Rome was one – and the surrounding hills began to flourish⁷⁶ at the same

⁷² R. M. Ogilvie and A. Drummond. "The Sources for Early Roman History". *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd edition, Vol. 7, Part 2: The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 29.

⁷³ The best-preserved and most relevant examples include: Ennius (*Annales*. 1-4); Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica*. 7.1-7.8, 8.1-8.6, 8.14, 8.25-8.26, 8.31, 10.1-10.2, 10.20, 10.22); Strabo (*Geographica*. 5.3, 6.4); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.9-9.96); Livy (1.1-2.65); and Velleius Paterculus (1.1-1.8).

⁷⁴ Ogilvie, 24.

⁷⁵ Stories and tales of Rome's early history that invoke a world of myth more often than one of fact.

⁷⁶ A. Momigliano. "The Origins of Rome". *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd edition, Vol. 7, Part 2: The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 65.

time that larger centres located on the Alban Hills to the southeast underwent a decline.⁷⁷ A drop in the number and richness of burials on the Alban Hills beginning in the middle of the ninth century BCE and lasting until the middle of the eighth century BCE reveals the severity of this ‘crisis’. With so many new settlements emerging, growth was best facilitated through the conquest of neighbouring territory and the subjugation of its people. Instability in the region inevitably followed. Indeed, archaeologists have discovered that in the interest of safety, such conquests coincided with the construction of new defensive structures, especially walls, and more extensive settlements.⁷⁸ Such developments likely fostered a sense of community and loyalty within each society that could then be invoked in order to mount a successful invasion or resistance against perceived threats.

According to ancient historians, Rome was founded atop the Palatine Hill in the middle of the eighth century BCE. As previously stated, any specific date – calculations by ancient historians to determine an exact date⁷⁹ yield a range of about thirty years – is much disputed. During the Republican Period, Varro constructed a chronology of Rome’s history by using the traditional dates of the Early Republican consuls. His chronology, which included 753 BCE as the date of Rome’s foundation, was not only made official during the reign of Augustus, but was also used to reckon the Roman *ab urbe condita* calendar. Soon after, an Etruscan monarchy was established and its kings ruled the Roman people until 509 BCE, the traditional date that the last Etruscan king was overthrown. While small territorial gains were made in Latium during the monarchy, Rome first acquired “ξενικῆς δυνάμεως [...] ἀπείρου” (Appian. *Praefatio to Historia Romana*. 6) during the Republican Period that followed as it rapidly expanded its territory

⁷⁷ M. Torelli. “Archaic Rome between Latium and Etruria”. *The Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd edition, Vol. 7, Part 2: The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 38.

⁷⁸ Torelli, 39 and Momigliano, 65.

⁷⁹ Plutarch (*Romulus*. 12.1-6), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1.74.1-75.3), Livy (1.60.4), Velleius Paterculus (1.8.4-5).

beyond central Italy and into the Mediterranean world. By the end of the First Punic War in 241 BCE, Rome had conquered its first province, Sicilia, and evolved into an empire. While such rapid expansion was initially a workable policy because of opportunity and the need to meet the land demands of the growing population, the preservation of the state soon became the primary reason for Rome's expansion. Opportunities to expand were not initially sought, but came frequently nonetheless during the early years of the Republic as populations beyond the Roman borders attempted either to absorb the young Roman state into their own civilization, or subdue them before they became too powerful and a serious threat. These external threats required immediate action and following several wars early in its history, Rome found itself in control of all the territory in Latium by the end of the fourth century BCE. In many cases, therefore, Rome's earliest growth should be considered unintentional, or even accidental, but never unwelcome by its citizens. Many writers⁸⁰ of Rome's history, having attributed Rome's successful expansion to 'fortune',⁸¹ concluded that the conquered peoples had no choice but to submit to Roman rule. Rome's rapid expansion during the Republican period is illustrated on the graph (Fig. 1.2) by the sharp increases in surface area in the first and second centuries BCE.

During the third and second centuries BCE, the Roman Republic made considerable political, and oftentimes territorial, advances into the Balkan Peninsula, Hispania, the Near East, North Africa, and Gallia. It was not, however, until the last years of the Republic, when Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great rose to military and political prominence, that Rome's power over these important Mediterranean regions was more firmly established. Hispania and Gallia, in

⁸⁰ Including Polybius (1.4.4-5), Livy (*Praefatio* to *Ab urbe condita*. 7-8, 11), Florus (*Praefatio* to *Epitome*. 1.1-2), Appian (*Praef.* 11), and Zosimus (1.1).

⁸¹ Polybius writes of luck (τύχη); Livy, a divine source (consecrare ad deos); Florus, valour and fortune (virtus et fortuna); Appian, prudence and good fortune (εὐβουλίαν καὶ εὐτυχίαν); and Zosimus, great fortune (μέγεθος τύχης).

particular, became stable Roman provinces following the campaigns of Pompey and Caesar, respectively.

As the first Emperor of Rome, Augustus further solidified Rome's hold in the Balkans and North Africa as well as made his own provincial additions, including Aegyptus, Dalmatia, Pannonia, the remaining independent territories of Hispania, and two Alpes regions to the northwest of the Italian peninsula. He established client kingdoms in Noricum, Raetia, and Armenia and “antea Siciliam et Sardiniam occupatas bello servili reciperavi”.⁸² (Augustus. *Res gestae*. 27) Augustus promoted a policy of advancing the frontiers of the Empire to their natural, and therefore more easily defensible, boundaries: the Rhine and Danube in the north, the Euphrates River in the east, the Sahara Desert in the south, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. After adding significantly to the expanse of the Empire, Augustus believed that its consolidation at these natural borders would ensure Rome's future prosperity. (D.C. 56.33.5-6)⁸³ He also recommended that the Rhine River remain the boundary between Rome and the Germanic tribes to the north because when the transportation of supplies and reinforcements to the legions was required, it was more easily accessible from Rome than the Elbe River which was located further north and surrounded by less fertile lands.⁸⁴ After losing three legions in Germania in CE 9, Augustus understood firsthand that future attempts at conquering the region would be both dangerous and unprofitable. Nevertheless, after Augustus' death, Germanicus, the nephew of the new Emperor, Tiberius, waged an unsanctioned campaign to conquer the territory between the Rhine and Elbe that proved not only expensive and lengthy, but which accomplished very little

⁸² Augustus refers not to the Servile Wars of the late Republic, but of the Sicilian revolt led by Sextus Pompeius, son of Pompey the Great, between 44 and 36 BCE.

⁸³ “δημόσιον σφαλή. γνώμην τε αὐτοῖς ἔδωκε τοῖς τε παροῦσιν ἀρκεσθῆναι καὶ μηδαμῶς ἐπὶ πλεῖον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπαυξῆσαι ἐθελῆσαι: δυσφύλακτόν τε γὰρ αὐτὴν ἔσεσθαι, καὶ κινδυνεύσειν ἐκ τούτου καὶ τὰ ὄντα ἀπολέσαι ἔφη. τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὄντως αἰεὶ ποτε οὐ λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔργῳ ἐτήρησε: παρὸν γοῦν αὐτῷ πολλὰ ἐκ τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ προσκτήσασθαι οὐκ ἠθέλησε” Cf. Tacitus (*Annales*. 1.11)

⁸⁴ Peter Heather. *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 55-56.

in the way of obtaining usable energy resources. The first major dip on the graph (Fig. 1.2) is representative of the territorial losses that occurred during the first century BCE, in particular those associated with the outbreak of the Social War in Italy, the Civil War and Third Servile War in Italy and Gallia Cisalpina, and the Sertorian Revolt in Hispania and parts of Gallia Transalpina.

Rome continued to grow in size and population throughout the first century CE. The provinces which were added after Augustus' death, especially Iudaea, Cappadocia, and Armenia in the east,⁸⁵ and Britannia in the west, proved to be only temporary solutions to meeting the Empire's energy demands because they were expensive to pacify and draining on the treasury to maintain. Multiple Roman legions, by now a familiar sight across the Empire, were stationed in the furthest eastern provinces and along the northern Danubian frontier so that the constant threat from the Parthian Empire and Transdanubian tribes, respectively, could be held at bay. Conquest and garrison in these regions were especially expensive because Parthia, later Persia, was a capable competitor and despite several attempts, Rome was never able to fully subjugate any of the foreign tribes north of the Danube for long. Trajan was the last Emperor to add extensively to the size of the Empire, but unlike earlier conquests, his campaigns, especially those in Parthia, were not self-sustaining and placed further strain on the treasury instead. As a result, Hadrian abandoned both Mesopotamia and Assyria in CE 117, a year after they were annexed by Trajan.

The sudden influx of wealth appropriated from its first provinces allowed Rome to "thrive on the plunder of expansion".⁸⁶ New territories were readily annexed, but soon the acquisition of territories that were not self-sustaining caused revenue levels to drop. When Rome was no longer able to expand, it was unable to cope with the serious financial and military crises

⁸⁵ The attempted pacification of other eastern territories, like Mesopotamia and Assyria, during the second century CE was expensive and in spite of the vast amount of resources put towards these campaigns by Trajan, no return on Rome's investment can be accounted for as they were only occupied for approximately one year.

⁸⁶ Tainter, 134.

that plagued the Empire during the third century CE.⁸⁷ In an effort to replenish the exhausted treasury, from which the army, public servants, civil service, public works, and grain dole were financed, several Emperors, most notably Augustus, Vespasian, Caracalla, and Diocletian, increased taxes. Agricultural products provided “90% of the government’s revenue”⁸⁸ and increased taxation placed even greater pressure on farmers. Farm yields could not be increased beyond a certain point and the attempt to do so further exhausted the already overused soil, which only served to decrease future yields. Emperors such as Caracalla, Gallienus, and Diocletian chose to further debase the once-respected coinage – a decision that only worsened the financial situation. As a result, inflation increased and trade slowed because merchants across the Empire lacked confidence in the intrinsic value of Roman-issued coinage. In addition to the continued debasement of the coinage, Caracalla also extended full Roman citizenship to all freemen throughout the Empire⁸⁹ during his reign in order to increase the number of taxable persons in the provinces and generate more revenue for the Empire. (D.C. 78.9.5)⁹⁰ Rome’s inability to expand any further triggered its decline and little by little, the Empire began to lose territory to foreign societies and rebellious citizens who recognized that the cost, real or perceived, of remaining a part of the Empire far outweighed the benefits. The second major dip on the graph (Fig. 1.2) is representative of the territorial losses that plagued the Empire during the third century CE.

Following the crises in the middle of the third century CE, Italy became increasingly isolated from the rest of the Empire and was forced to rely on its own resources for its economic

⁸⁷ Tainter, 134. While the financial and military crises were especially grim during the third century, such woes began to plague the Empire, albeit slowly, almost immediately after expansion beyond the Italian peninsula began.

⁸⁸ Tainter, 133.

⁸⁹ The *constitutio Antoniniana* was issued in CE 212.

⁹⁰ “ἀτελείας τὰς ἐπὶ τούτοις τὰς δεδομένας τοῖς πάνυ προσήκουσι τῶν τελευτάντων καταλύσας ὅτι ἕνεκα καὶ Ῥωμαίους πάντας τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτοῦ, λόγῳ μὲν τιμῶν, ἔργῳ δὲ ὅπως πλείω αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦτου προσίη διὰ τὸ τοὺς ξένους τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν μὴ συντελεῖν, ἀπέδειξεν”

and political survival. Although Aurelian, and later Diocletian, “pushed back the barbarians [...] and reattached the rebellious provinces”,⁹¹ the Italian Peninsula had lost its status as the centre of the Empire and become a province of marginal political importance instead. Recognizing the logistical difficulties that came with managing the vast Empire alone and from one administrative centre, Diocletian split the Empire into Eastern and Western halves. After establishing his own headquarters at Nicomedia, from where he took responsibility for the East, Diocletian designated Maximian, who ruled from Mediolanum, as his co-emperor and leader of the Western Empire. In CE 293, he established the Tetrarchy, which not only allowed responsibility and rule of the Empire to be delegated even further, but also created two new administrative centres. In addition, Diocletian carved up larger provinces to create smaller ones, which were easier to administer not only on account of their reduced size, but also because they were grouped into twelve regional dioceses.⁹² His system of government lasted until CE 313 when the entire Empire returned to one-man rule under Constantine I. After his death in CE 337, Constantine’s sons, Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans, divided the Empire amongst themselves, creating what would eventually become its four official praetorian prefectures.⁹³ The official, final partition of the Empire into Eastern and Western halves, however, did not occur until after the death of Theodosius I in CE 395.

At the beginning of the fifth century CE, Rome found itself overstretched, bankrupt, and no longer able to defend its frontiers properly. In an effort to consolidate the Empire’s power, Honorius began a systematic withdrawal from Britannia ca. CE 410. The Emperor understood

⁹¹ Tainter, 140.

⁹² It is generally accepted that most of the dioceses were created by CE 297. The names of Diocletian’s provinces and dioceses ca. CE 314-324 for the eastern provinces and ca. CE 303-314 for the western provinces have been preserved in the *Laterculus Veronensis*. (Rees, 171-173).

⁹³ The names of the provinces, dioceses, and praetorian prefectures ca. CE 400 for the Eastern half of the Empire and ca. CE 420 for the Western Empire have been preserved in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. (Rees, 160-169).

that the island's unprofitability could only worsen if Rome did not withdraw, as the mass quantities of resources that had already been invested into its defence – two immense walls spanning the island from east to west, which had been constructed by Hadrian and Antonius Pius ca. CE 122 - 128 and CE 142 - 154, respectively – offered little discernable return. In spite of these fortifications, a permanent military presence, at considerable expense, was still required in order to defend the walls from constant breaches conducted by the island's northern tribes, especially the Caledonians.⁹⁴ The Empire's "marginal return on [their] investment[s] in complexity"⁹⁵ had shrunk so much by the fifth century CE that it was unable to recover from other foreign invasions that spread across the Empire. Invasions occurred quickly and frequently and in some provinces,⁹⁶ the invaders were even welcomed as a relief from heavy Roman taxation. (Orosius. *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII. 7.41.7*)⁹⁷

Although the decline of the Roman Empire occurred over many centuries, a series of disasters during the fifth century CE marked the beginning of the end of the Western Roman Empire. In CE 406, several Germanic tribes⁹⁸ crossed the Rhine frontier together,⁹⁹ thoroughly devastating northern Gallia before continuing separate invasions southward. Within a few decades, many of the tribes occupied large parts of Gallia, Hispania, and Africa, the Western Empire's most profitable provinces. In the fifth century CE, Aëtius, the general of the Western Empire, enacted a number of agreements with the foreign tribes, which allowed them not only to

⁹⁴ While primarily defensive, Hadrian's Wall also facilitated the taxation of products entering or exiting the province.

⁹⁵ Tainter, 196.

⁹⁶ Especially Gallia, which had been subject to Rome's heavy tax laws since the first century BCE.

⁹⁷ "[...] inruptae sunt Hispaniae, caedes uastationesque passae sunt: nihil quidem nouum, hoc enim nunc per biennium illud, quo hostilis gladius saeuit, sustinuerunt a barbaris, quod per ducentos quondam annos passae fuerant a Romanis, quod etiam sub Gallieno imperatore per annos propemodum duodecim Germanis euertentibus exceperunt"

⁹⁸ Including the Vandals, Alans, Sueves, and Burgundians.

⁹⁹ In order to explain how so many Germanic tribes were able to cross the Rhine frontier at one time, Edward Gibbon was the first to suggest that the Rhine had been frozen in CE 406 in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 12 volumes. Vol. 1 (New York: The Kelmscott Society Publishers, 19-) 275. This suggestion, however, has been dismissed by Halsall (211) and is not mentioned in any of the extant contemporary sources, including Jerome (*Epistulae*. 123.8), Zosimus (6.3.1), and Orosius (7.38.3-4).

settle on land within the Empire as *foederati*,¹⁰⁰ but also to receive the revenue generated from taxation in the respective territory. Each settlement, however, was merely an official acknowledgement of the land already beyond Rome's control.¹⁰¹ The initial Germanic invasion enabled further migrations of other foreign tribes from beyond the frontier, the destruction of numerous Roman cities, and the collapse of Roman political structure in the Western Empire.¹⁰² After a series of sieges that had begun in CE 408, the Visigoths, under the leadership of Alaric I, sacked Rome in CE 410. Alaric's triumph "sent a shock around the Roman world",¹⁰³ as the city of Rome, no longer the capital of the Western Roman Empire, but still very much considered the inviolable centre of the Empire, had not been overcome by any of its enemies in almost 800 years. After Vandals sacked the city in CE 455 with Rome's own fleet, the Western Empire was left in a volatile political state; besieged on all sides by foreign tribes and without a competent ruler. The end of the Western Roman Empire came in CE 476 when Odoacer, a Germanic soldier, led a revolt of the Sciri and Heruli *foederati* to depose the last Emperor, Romulus Augustus.¹⁰⁴ Odoacer quickly conquered the rest of mainland Italy, becoming the first King of Italy until defeated by Theodoric, the Ostrogothic King, in CE 489. (Procopius. *De bello Gothico*. 5.1.6-

¹⁰⁰ In exchange for providing soldiers to the dwindling Roman army, foreign tribes were allowed to settle on Roman territory along the frontier in increasing numbers during the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Although bound by treaties, the loyalty of these tribes, or *foederati*, was not always guaranteed; some of the Gothic *foederati* defeated Rome at the Battle of Hadrianopolis in CE 378.

¹⁰¹ For example, when the Vandals invaded North Africa in CE 429, Rome, unable to suppress the invasion, offered them a *foedus* in CE 434 and conceded the West African provinces. In exchange for continuing to export grain to Rome, the Vandal *foederati* were to be paid and supplied by the Empire. Neil Christie. "The Fall of the Western Roman Empire: An Archaeological and Historical Perspective". *Historical Endings*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011) 43. The Emperor Justinian overthrew the Vandal Kingdom in the middle of the sixth century CE.

¹⁰² Lucien Musset. *The Germanic Invasions: The Making of Europe AD 400-600*. Trans. Edward and Columba James. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975) 29.

¹⁰³ Halsall, 216.

¹⁰⁴ Although the Eastern Roman Emperor did not recognize Romulus Augustus' rule, his abdication allowed Odoacer to gain control of Italy nonetheless.

11)¹⁰⁵ The rapid drop at the end of the attached graph (Fig. 1.2) represents the loss of controlled surface area in the Western Empire during the fifth century CE.

¹⁰⁵ “ἦν δέ τις ἐν αὐτοῖς Ὀδόακρος ὄνομα, ἐς τοὺς βασιλέως δορυφόρους τελῶν: ὃς αὐτοῖς τότε ποιήσιν τὰ ἐπαγγελόμενα ὠμολόγησεν, ἥνπερ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς καταστήσονται”

4.2 A Concise History of the Provinces of the Western Roman Empire

In the ensuing section, the chronologies of each province and client kingdom in the Western Empire are traced using both ancient and modern sources, thus creating a detailed narrative, which can be used to explain the peaks and valleys in the appearance of my graph. (Fig. 1.2) Since this thesis relies heavily on Tainter's theory of diminishing returns, it is appropriate that only the territories of the Western Empire have been surveyed as Tainter himself analyses in detail the collapse of the Western half of the Roman Empire rather than the Empire as a whole. In addition, the territories of the West were especially subject to the theory of marginal productivity and so comprise the vast majority of data related to surface area fluctuations. Each time that Rome acquired, lost, or willingly withdrew from any territory, or new political reforms or edicts were enacted by the Emperor, not only could the number of Imperial holdings fluctuate, but so too could the name, status, and, most importantly, the borders of each territory. In order to better visualize, track, and evaluate such territorial fluidity in the Western Empire, the onomastic and chronological data of all of Rome's Western prefectures, dioceses, provinces, and client kingdoms have been compiled first into a comprehensive database before being subsequently converted into a stacked graph (Fig. 1.2) that illustrates the surface area controlled by the Empire. The database has been subdivided in such a way that the resulting inventories detail their own explicitly defined territorial region, such that section 4.2.1 is a prospectus of Rome's territorial holdings within the *praefectura praetorio Galliarum* and section 4.2.2 surveys the territories within the *praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae*. The decision to use prefectures as the database's defining parameter was threefold. Regional organization not only ensures that each territory is accounted for and included in calculations every year that it was a part of the Empire, but it also expedites the tracking and analysis of statistical changes for

a specific geographical region over time. In addition, it simplifies surface area calculations as it accounts for periods of time when the surface area of a given province, diocese, or prefecture remained unchanged at the same time that it, or the territories within in, underwent administrative, border, or onomastic changes. The dates required for surface area calculations and the construction of an accurate timeline have been included as well as the circumstances surrounding the conquest and loss¹⁰⁶ of each territory. Events that do not affect the surface area of a given territory have been excluded.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ If the territory was, in fact, lost.

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted here that the following chronologies have been compiled primarily using the second edition of The Cambridge Ancient History series, volumes 7, part 2, through 14.

4.2.1 Praefectura praetorio Galliarum

Established in CE 337, the praefectura praetorio Galliarum included the diocesis Hispaniarum, Septem Provinciarum, previously named Viennensis, Galliarum, and Britanniarum. In CE 395, the praefectura praetorio Galliarum and its dioceses were ascribed to the Western Roman Empire.

I. Diocesis Hispaniarum

Created by Diocletian ca. CE 297, the diocese was comprised of the provinces Baetica, Carthaginiensis, Gallaecia, Lusitania, Tarraconensis, and Mauretania Tingitana. The Insulae Baleares became the seventh province of the diocesis Hispaniarum after it was separated from Tarraconensis in the fourth century CE. At different times during the fifth century CE, the provinces of the diocesis Hispaniarum succumbed to foreign invaders and so ceased being part of the Western Roman Empire.

i. Hispania

Following the expulsion of the Carthaginians from the Iberian Peninsula after the Second Punic War, Rome was able to conquer and pacify a long coastal strip from the Pyrenees to Cadiz by 197 BCE. Although divided into Hispania Citerior and Hispania Ulterior, the provinces have not been included in surface area calculations until after they were more fully pacified in 195 BCE. Several wars in the middle of the second century BCE brought the majority of the peninsula under Roman control. At the end of the Lusitanian War in 139 BCE, the borders of Hispania Ulterior were stretched to include all the territory in the west as far as the Lusitani tribe, which occupied the northern half of modern-day Portugal. Central Iberia was added to Hispania Citerior after the Second Celtiberian War ended in 133 BCE. Ten years later, the Balearic

Islands were settled by Rome and also added to Hispania Citerior. Shortly after adding the remaining independent regions in the northwest to Citerior in 16 BCE, Augustus divided Hispania Ulterior into Hispania Ulterior Baetica, or Baetica, and Hispania Ulterior Lusitania, or Lusitania. Its borders unchanged by Augustus, Hispania Citerior, which came to be known also as Tarraconensis, was later divided by Caracalla into Hispania Nova Citerior and Asturiae-Gallaecia. His division, however, was short-lived and Hispania Citerior remained unaltered until the reign of Diocletian when it was divided into the provinces of Carthaginiensis in the southeast, Gallaecia in the northwest, and Tarraconensis, which included the Insulae Baleares, in the northeast. In addition to Baetica and Lusitania, which remained unchanged by Diocletian's reforms, the Emperor's new Spanish provinces were added to the diocesis Hispaniarum, which also included Mauritania Tingitana in North Africa (see Mauretania). The Insulae Baleares became the seventh province in the diocese after they were detached from Tarraconensis during the fourth century CE. Once pacified, the provinces of the Iberian Peninsula remained relatively peaceful Roman holdings, with a few exceptions, until the foreign invasions of the fifth century CE. During the Sertorian Revolt, both Hispania Citerior and Hispania Ulterior were outside Rome's control from 80 until 72 BCE. In CE 171, the Mauri tribe of North Africa began invading southern Baetica, causing widespread devastation and disrupting Rome's control of the province. Peace was restored to Baetica by CE 179 with the help of Mauretania Tingitana's army. In CE 261, Baetica, Lusitania, and Hispania Citerior became part of the breakaway Gallic Empire until the death of Postumus in CE 269. In CE 409, some of the same Germanic tribes that had crossed the Rhine a few years

earlier invaded Roman Spain and conquered most of the peninsula. By CE 411, only Tarraconensis, which was controlled by the usurper Maximus of Hispania, remained outside their control. The Alans had gained control of Lusitania and Carthaginensis, while the Suevi and Hasding Vandals occupied Gallaecia and the Siling Vandals controlled Baetica. Commissioned by Honorius to restore order in Hispania, the federate Visigothic army led by Wallia was able to drive the surviving Siling Vandals and Alans out of Lusitania and Carthaginensis by CE 419 and into Baetica where they merged with the Hasding Vandals under King Gunderic. The Sueves retained control of Gallaecia and the Vandals occupied the Balearic Islands by CE 425. After withdrawing from Baetica and the Balearics ca. CE 429, the Vandals and Alans crossed into North Africa and gained control of Tingitana, Mauretania Caesariensis, Mauretania Sitifensis, and Numidia by CE 434. As a result of the political vacuum created by the Vandal withdrawal in CE 429, Rome's hold on its Spanish provinces was seriously threatened. Indeed, by CE 441, the Sueves under King Rechila had gained control of Lusitania, Baetica, and Carthaginensis. Although Tingitana and the other Mauretanian provinces were returned to Roman control in CE 442, the provinces had been so badly devastated by the invading Vandals that Rome was forced to reduce the tax rate to an eighth of its former amount. The Emperor's increasing inability to govern the Mauretanian provinces effectively allowed the Vandalic Kingdom to reclaim the provinces by CE 460. The Insulae Baleares were also added to the Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in CE 455. The last remaining Roman province in the Iberian Peninsula, Tarraconensis, became part of the growing

Visigothic Kingdom in CE 456, though nominally still considered a Roman province until CE 475.

Important Dates

195 BCE The provinces of Hispania Citerior and Hispania Inferior are established
139 BCE Hispania Ulterior is expanded to include Lusitania
133 BCE Hispania Citerior is expanded to include central Iberia
122 BCE The Balearic Islands are incorporated into the province of Hispania Citerior
80 BCE The Sertorian revolt begins
72 BCE Pompey ends the revolt and restores the provinces to Roman control
16 BCE The northwest regions are added to Hispania Citerior
CE 171 Mauri invasions disrupt Roman control in Baetica
CE 179 Baetica is pacified
CE 261 Hispania Citerior, Baetica, and Lusitania become part of the Gallic Empire
CE 269 The provinces are restored to Roman control
CE 409 Lusitania, Carthagenensis, Baetica, and Gallaecia are lost to the Germanic tribes; Maximus of Hispania controls Tarraconensis
CE 411 Constantius III defeats Maximus; Roman control is restored to Tarraconensis
CE 419 The Visigoths restore Roman control to Lusitania and Carthagenensis
CE 425 The Vandals take control of the Insulae Baleares
CE 429 The Vandals withdraw from Baetica and the Balearic Islands
CE 434 Tingitana is lost to the Vandals and Alans
CE 441 Suevic control spreads to Baetica, Lusitania, and Carthagenensis
CE 442 Rome regains control of Tingitana
CE 455 The Balearic Islands are lost to the Vandals and Alans
CE 456 The Visigoths take control of Tarraconensis
CE 460 Tingitana succumbs to Vandal rule

II. Diocesis Septem Provinciarum

The diocesis Viennensis, later renamed Septem Provinciarum, was established by Diocletian in CE 297. It included the provinces of Narbonensis Prima, Narbonensis Secunda, Viennensis, Aquitania Prima, Aquitania Secunda, Novem Populi, also known as Novempopulania and Aquitania Tertia, and Alpes Maritimae.

i. Gallia Transalpina

Before becoming a Roman province, Gallia Transalpina denoted a specific geographical region between Hispania Citerior and Italy that stretched along the

Mediterranean coast from the Pyrenees Mountains in the west, to the *flumen* Varus in the east. The Rhône River separated the western half of Gallia Transalpina, which extended north to the Cevennes Mountains and as far west as Toulouse and Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, from the eastern half, which was bordered by the Rhône River on the west and north and by the high Alps in the east. The Greek city of Massalia in southern Gallia Transalpina, which had enjoyed friendly trade relations with Rome since the fifth century BCE, proved an invaluable ally to Rome during the Gothic sack of Rome in 390 BCE, helping to pay the city's ransom, and again during the Second Punic War, ensuring Rome safe passage along the coast to Spain. In reward for its unwavering loyalty, Massalia, and its surrounding territory, remained an independent ally of Rome until captured by Caesar in 49 BCE and added to the province of Gallia Transalpina. Like the other Gallic provinces, Gallia Transalpina was organized as such slowly, and only after several prolonged military campaigns. The campaigns of 125 to 121 BCE against the Gallic tribes brought southern Gaul further into Rome's sphere of influence, but did not alter Rome's relationship with the region as no province was officially established and many of the native tribes in the region remained autonomous. Although Rome established the colony of Narbo Martis in southern Gaul in 118 BCE, it was not until after Marius' victory against the Teutones and Ambrones in 102 BCE that normal provincial administration first became evident in Gallia Transalpina. The governors of Hispania Citerior and Gallia Cisalpina likely controlled the western and eastern halves of Transalpine Gaul, respectively, until 76 BCE when Gallia Transalpina, or Gallia Narbonensis as it became known, was independently established following its pacification by Pompey

in 76 BCE, two years after the Sertorian revolt first disrupted Roman control over the region. After two brief revolts by the Allobroges in 66 and 62 BCE, Narbonensis remained a prosperous and relatively peaceful Roman province until the third century CE. Part of the breakaway Gallic Empire from CE 260 until 274, Narbonensis was wrested from Roman control again by the usurper Magnus Maximus in the fourth century CE. Although recognized as the legitimate ruler of Gaul in CE 384 after usurping in Britannia, when Maximus invaded Italy three years later, he was declared an enemy of Rome and defeated in CE 388 by Theodosius I. At the end of the third century CE, Diocletian divided Gallia Narbonensis into Viennensis, Narbonensis Prima, and Narbonensis Secunda, and added his new provinces to the diocesis Viennensis, later named Septem Provinciarum. Although the province of Narbonensis Secunda appears in both the *Laterculus Veronensis* and the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it may have been merged with the province of Viennensis for a time. After breaching the Rhine frontier in CE 406, the Germanic tribes raided the provinces of Gallia Transalpina until crossing into Spain three years later. The provinces were restored to Roman control under Constantine III, whose rule of the British, Germanic, and Gallic provinces had been officially recognized in CE 409. Three years after granting land in the region of Valentia to the Alans, Aëtius settled the displaced Burgundians of Germania Prima in the region of Sapaudia in CE 443, which effectively ended Roman rule in northern Viennensis. While the rest of Gaul had fallen outside formal Roman control by CE 451, Rome still maintained control of Narbonensis Prima, Narbonensis Secunda, and the southern half of Viennensis. The Visigoths, who were granted control of Narbonensis Prima in CE 461 in exchange for their support of Libius

Severus, took control of southern Viennensis by CE 475. Only Narbonensis Secunda remained part of the Western Roman Empire at its collapse in CE 476.

Important Dates

101 BCE Gallia Transalpina is controlled by Rome
78 BCE The Sertorian Revolt begins; Transalpina is lost to Rome
76 BCE Pompey restores Gallia Transalpina to Roman control
66 BCE The Allobroges rise in revolt
65 BCE Piso quells the revolt
62 BCE The Allobroges revolt again
61 BCE Pomptinus restores peace to Transalpina
49 BCE Massalia is added to Gallia Narbonensis
CE 260 Narbonensis becomes part of the Gallic Empire
CE 274 Aurelian defeats Tetricus II and returns Narbonensis to Roman rule
CE 387 Magnus Maximus is declared an enemy of Rome
CE 388 Maximus is defeated; Roman rule is reestablished
CE 406 The Rhine frontier is breached; Germanic tribes plunder the Gallic provinces
CE 409 The Germanic tribes cross into Spain; the three provinces of Narbonensis are restored to Roman control under Constantine III
CE 443 Federate tribes are settled in northern Viennensis
CE 461 Narbonensis Prima is no longer under Roman control
CE 475 The Visigoths take control of southern Viennensis
CE 476 Narbonensis Secunda becomes part of Odoacer's Italian Kingdom

ii. Gallia Aquitania

During his Gallic Wars, Caesar defined the borders of the Aquitani tribe by the territory of Gallia Comata between the Garonne River and the Pyrenees Mountains, west of Gallia Narbonensis. In 22 BCE, Augustus expanded Aquitania to include the territory between the Loire and Garonne Rivers that had been previously part of Caesar's Celtica. At the end of the third century CE, Diocletian divided Aquitania into Aquitanica Prima, Aquitanica Secunda, and Novem Populi, which corresponded to Caesar's Aquitania, and added the provinces to the diocesis Viennensis. Like the other Gallic provinces, Aquitania remained a relatively peaceful Roman province until the third century CE. The province formed part of the breakaway Gallic Empire

from CE 260 until 274, and Magnus Maximus, who had been declared an enemy of Rome in CE 387, controlled the Aquitanian provinces until defeated the following year by Theodosius I. After crossing the Rhine in CE 406, the Germanic tribes plundered the provinces of Gaul, including Aquitania, until migrating further south into the Iberian Peninsula in CE 409. Constantine III, who had proclaimed himself emperor of the Gallic provinces in CE 407, was recognized in CE 409 and controlled the Aquitanian provinces until his death two years later. After successfully driving the Germanic tribes out of Lusitania and Carthaginensis on Rome's behalf, Wallia and his federate Gothic troops were settled in Aquitania Secunda and Novem Populi in CE 419 by Honorius. While Rome may have retained nominal control of both provinces, most of the region's tax revenue generated was diverted to the Visigothic leader, rather than Rome. Aquitania Secunda and Novem Populi were officially ceded to the Visigothic tribe by the terms of a treaty established by Aëtius in CE 439, although both provinces have been excluded from surface area calculations since CE 419. After the territory of the federate Burgundian tribe, who had been settled in Viennensis by Aëtius, was expanded into Aquitania Prima in CE 456, the province can no longer be considered under formal Roman control.

Important Dates

50 BCE Caesar conquers all of Gallia Comata, except Aquitania

28 BCE Aquitania is pacified

22 BCE Aquitania is expanded in the north to the Loire River

CE 260 Gallia Aquitania becomes part of the Gallic Empire

CE 274 Aurelian restores Roman rule in Aquitania

CE 387 Maximus controls the Aquitanian provinces; is declared an enemy of Rome

CE 388 Theodosius I defeats Magnus Maximus and restores Roman rule in Gaul

CE 406 The Germanic tribes plunder Gaul after crossing the Rhine frontier

CE 409 The Aquitanian provinces are restored to the Empire under Constantine III

CE 419 The Visigoths are settled in Aquitania Secunda and Novem Populi

CE 456 Aquitania Prima is settled by Burgundians and therefore lost to Roman rule

iii. Alpes Maritimae

After conquering the Ligurian tribes in northwestern Italy, Augustus established the small province of Alpes Maritimae in 14 BCE in the Southern Alps between modern-day France and Italy. Although it may have not been organized under a provincial governor until CE 69, the Maritime Alps were bordered in the north and east by the Alpes Cottiae, in the south by the Ligurian Sea, and in the west by Gallia Narbonensis since the reign of Augustus. During the reign of Diocletian, the province was extended north to the Durance River into the territory of the Alpes Cottiae, and added to the diocesis Viennensis. Since the three Alps regions remained peaceful Roman provinces until the fall of the Western Roman Empire in CE 476, the border fluctuations between the provinces do not need to be precisely established after their initial conquest, as they do not affect the total amount of surface area controlled by Rome.

Important Dates

14 BCE Augustus conquers the territory of the Maritime Alps

CE 297 Diocletian extends the province's northern border to the Durance River

CE 476 The Alpes Maritimae become part of Odoacer's Italian Kingdom

III. Diocesis Galliarum

Established ca. CE 297 by Diocletian, the diocesis Galliarum originally included the provinces of Belgica Prima, Belgica Secunda, Lugdunensis Prima, Lugdunensis Secunda, Sequania, later named Maxima Sequanorum, Germania Prima, Germania Secunda, and Alpes Graiae et Poeninae. The number of provinces in the diocese increased to ten after Magnus

Maximus divided Lugdunensis Secunda into Lugdunensis Secunda, Lugdunensis Tertia, and Lugdunensis Senonia at the end of the fourth century CE.

i. Gallia Comata

Gallia Comata was a term used by Rome to distinguish the part of Gaul that was not yet under Roman control from Gallia Cisalpina and Gallia Transalpina, which had been incorporated into the Republic during the second and first centuries BCE, respectively. Stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Rhine in the east, the territory of Gallia Comata, which corresponded to the Augustan provinces of Gallia Aquitania, Gallia Belgica, Gallia Lugdunensis, Germania Superior, and Germania Inferior, was separated from the province of Gallia Narbonensis in the southeast by the Rhône River and the Cevennes Mountains, from Hispania Tarraconensis by the Pyrenees Mountains, and from Raetia by the territory of the Helvetii. Under the pretense of protecting Roman interests in Gallia Transalpina from the advances of the Helvetii, Suevi, and Belgae tribes, Julius Caesar began the subjugation of Gallia Comata in 58 BCE. After eight years of campaigning, Caesar successfully brought all of Gallia Comata under Roman control by 50 BCE, with the exception of the territory in the southwest, which was not fully pacified until 28 BCE, as well as the territory on the southern bank of the Rhine. During his Gallic Wars, Caesar determined that Gallia Comata was divided amongst three ethnic groups: the Aquitani, Belgae, and Celts. He imposed his ethnic divisions on the territory and named each region after its dominant ethnic group. Encompassing most of central Gallia Comata, Caesar distinguished Celtica, his largest ethnic division, from Belgica in the northeast by the Seine and Marne Rivers and from Aquitania in the southwest

by the Garonne River. In 22 BCE, Augustus reorganized Caesar's Gallic territory and established the provinces of Gallia Aquitania, Gallia Belgica, and Gallia Lugdunensis. Caesar's Celtica, which was renamed Gallia Lugdunensis, was greatly reduced in size after Augustus transferred its territory between the Loire and Garonne Rivers to Gallia Aquitania, and its territory along the Rhine from the Moselle as far south as Lake Geneva to Gallia Belgica. In 16 BCE, military buffer zones were created in the northwest using territory between Gallia Belgica and the Rhine to protect the Gallic provinces from the Germanic tribes living in Germania Magna. These buffer zones became the independent Roman provinces of Germania Inferior and Germania Superior in the first century CE (see Germania). During the reign of Domitian, Gallia Lugdunensis was reduced in size again after a portion of its eastern territory was transferred to Germania Superior. As part of his administrative reforms at the end of the third century CE, Diocletian divided Gallia Belgica along the Meuse River into Belgica Prima and Belgica Secunda, Gallia Lugdunensis into Lugdunensis Prima and Lugdunensis Secunda, and added his provinces to the diocesis Galliarum. Gallia Aquitania was divided into Aquitanica Prima, Aquitanica Secunda, and Novem Populi and ascribed to the diocesis Viennensis (see Aquitania). As a result of its military importance and proximity to the Rhine frontier, Roman Gaul endured numerous rebellions and invasions throughout its history. Gallia Aquitania, Belgica, and Lugdunensis became part of the breakaway Gallic Empire in CE 260 until Aurelian restored Gaul to Roman rule in CE 274. After helping the Emperor quell an uprising in the region of Armorica in CE 286, Carausius declared himself emperor in Britain and seized control of western Belgica and western Lugdunensis. Gaul was

restored to Roman rule following his death in CE 293. At the end of the fourth century CE, the British usurper Magnus Maximus, who had been recognized as the legitimate ruler of Gaul since CE 384, invaded Italy in 387. He was declared an enemy of Rome and defeated the following year by Theodosius I. After his rule was recognized, Magnus Maximus further divided Lugdunensis Secunda into Lugdunensis Secunda, Lugdunensis Tertia, and Lugdunensis Senonia as part of his provincial reorganization of Gaul. In CE 406, a large number of Germanic tribes breached the Rhine frontier and plundered the Gallic provinces, effectively removing them from Roman control for three years, before crossing into Spain in CE 409. In the midst of the Germanic invasion, Constantine III proclaimed himself emperor of the British, Gallic, and Germanic provinces in CE 407. After Constantine's death in CE 411, two years after his rule was legitimized, another usurper, Jovinus, seized control of the Belgica provinces until his defeat in CE 413. After seven years of revolt, Exuperantius pacified rebel peasants, known as Bagaudae, in Armorica, the territory of western Lugdunensis Secunda and Tertia between the Seine and Loire Rivers, in CE 417. Another Bagaudae uprising in the 430s effectively ended Roman control in Armorica, despite later attempts to pacify the region. By CE 451, Belgica Prima, Belgica Secunda, Lugdunensis Prima, and Lugdunensis Senonia, had also fallen outside formal Roman control as a result of the long period of political unrest that followed the Germanic invasion at the beginning of the fifth century CE, the various settlements treaties enacted by Aëtius in the 440s, and the devastating Hunnic invasions that followed. Although Aëtius successfully campaigned against the Franks, Burgundians, Alans, and Visigoths at different times during his career, the northern Gallic

provinces remained under the control of unrecognized local leaders and foreign warlords for the rest of the Western Empire's history.

Important Dates

50 BCE Caesar brings all of Gallia Comata, except the southwestern territory of the Aquitani and the territory south of the Rhine, under Roman control
28 BCE Messalla Corvinus pacifies Aquitania
16 BCE The military buffer zones that become Germania Superior and Inferior are established along the Rhine
CE 260 Gallia Aquitania, Belgica, and Lugdunensis become part of the Gallic Empire
CE 274 Roman rule is reestablished in the Gallic provinces
CE 285 A Bagaudae revolt begins in Armorica in northwest Gaul
CE 286 The uprising is quelled; Carausius declares himself emperor in Britain and northern Gaul
CE 293 Rome rule is reestablished in northern Gaul
CE 387 Magnus Maximus controls the Gallic provinces; is declared an enemy of Rome
CE 388 Theodosius I defeats Maximus and restores Gaul to Roman control
CE 406 Germanic tribes breach the Rhine frontier and plunder Gaul
CE 409 The Germanic tribes cross the Pyrenees into Spain; Constantine III is recognized as Emperor of the British, Gallic, and Germanic provinces
CE 410 The Bagaudae in Armorica rebel against Constantine III
CE 411 Jovinus usurps control of the Belgica provinces
CE 413 Jovinus is defeated by the federate Gothic troops
CE 417 Exuperantius pacifies Armorica
CE 434 Lugdunensis Secunda and Lugdunensis Tertia are no longer under Roman control
CE 451 Lugdunensis Prima, Lugdunensis Senonia, and the two Belgica provinces succumb to foreign control

ii. Germania

In 16 BCE, six years after Augustus had reorganized Caesar's Gallic acquisitions, several tribes from Germania Magna, the Germanic territory east of Rome's Rhine frontier, invaded Roman Gaul, defeated the governor of Gallia Belgica, Marcus Lollius, and captured the standard of Rome's fifth legion. In response, Augustus sent Drusus and Tiberius to northern Gaul to secure the Rhine frontier and pacify the Germanic tribes living between the Rhine and Elbe Rivers. In order to protect the

Gallic provinces from the invading Germanic tribes, military buffer zones were established on the western bank of the Lower and Middle Rhine frontier using territory between Gallia Belgica and the Rhine, which Augustus had expanded to Lake Geneva. The military zones, which were subordinate to the governor of Belgica, were also referred to as Lesser Germania as they encompassed territory settled by tribes of Germanic origin. In 12 BCE, the Roman invasion of Germania Magna officially began under Drusus, but despite several early victories against the Germanic tribes, the territory between the Rhine and Elbe cannot be considered part of the Roman Empire for the purposes of this thesis because not only were military campaigns in the region ongoing, but several tribes remained autonomous as late as CE 6. After Varus' devastating defeat in CE 9 at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, Augustus withdrew Rome's military from Germania Magna and reestablished the Rhine and Danube Rivers as the northern frontier of the Empire. Perhaps to compensate for Rome's withdrawal, the military buffer zones of Germania Inferior and Germania Superior, which were situated along the Lower Rhine and Middle Rhine, respectively, and partitioned by the Moselle River, officially became independent Roman provinces during the first century CE. During the reign of Domitian, Germania Superior was enlarged ca. CE 84 by the addition of part of Gallia Lugdunensis' eastern territory as well as part of the territory known as the *agri decumates*, which facilitated transportation and communication between the German and Danubian provinces. Roughly equating to the region of Swabia in the southwest of modern-day Germany, the *agri decumates* encompassed the Black Forest area south of the Main River between the Upper Danube and the Upper Rhine and was

bordered on the southeast by Raetia. During the reign of Antoninus Pius, ca. CE 157, the *limes Germanicus*, the Empire's northernmost boundary, was expanded further north by approximately 24 kilometres, thus enlarging both Germania Superior and Raetia. In the wake of invasions from the Alamanni, however, the Emperor Gallienus evacuated the *agri decumates* ca. CE 260 and reestablished Rome's northern frontier at the Rhine and Danube. At the end of the third century CE, Diocletian renamed Germania Inferior to Germania Secunda, divided Germania Superior into Germania Prima and Sequania, which was later named Maxima Sequanorum, and added the three provinces to the diocesis Galliarum. As frontier provinces of the Empire, Germania Inferior and Superior were subjected to frequent internal rebellions as well as invasions from the Germanic tribes beyond the Rhine. Both German provinces became part of Postumus' breakaway Gallic Empire in CE 260, after Gallienus' evacuation of the *agri decumates*, until Aurelian's victory at the Battle of Châlons in CE 274. In CE 285, the Rhine frontier of Germania Inferior and Superior was breached by a number of Germanic tribes. After expelling the invading tribes from Roman territory in CE 289, Maximian settled the Salian Franks, who had supported the usurper Carausius until their king sued for peace, between the border of Belgica and the Lower Rhine in the region known later as Toxandria, which encompassed most of Germania Inferior. After crossing the Rhine frontier in CE 406, the Burgundian tribe settled along the Upper Rhine in Germania Prima, while other Germanic tribes overran Maxima Sequanorum. Although Constantine III proclaimed himself emperor of the Germanic provinces in CE 407, it was in name only as Rome had already lost control of the provinces to the Germanic tribes. Maxima Sequanorum, however, was

restored to the Empire two years later after Honorius recognized Constantine's rule and the Germanic tribes withdrew to continue their migrations further south. The Alamanni, who had already overrun Maxima Sequanorum in CE 434, also took over control of Germania Superior three years later when the Burgundians were defeated by Aëtius, who later settled the survivors in Sapaudia, and his Hunnic mercenaries. Despite numerous military campaigns to expel the Germanic tribes from the Rhine, Aëtius was unable to restore control of the Germanic provinces to the Empire.

Important Dates

16 BCE The military zones that later become Germania Inferior and Superior are established

CE 83 Germania Inferior and Germania Superior become independent provinces

CE 84 Germania Superior is expanded by the addition of Lugdunensis' eastern territory and the *agri decumates*

CE 157 The *agri decumates* reach their furthest extent under Antoninus Pius

CE 260 Gallienus evacuates the *agri decumates*; Germania Inferior and Germania Superior become part of the Gallic Empire

CE 274 Roman rule is reestablished in the German provinces

CE 285 Germanic tribes overrun Rome's German provinces

CE 289 Maximian pacifies Germania Superior; settles Franks in Germania Inferior

CE 406 Tribes from Germania Magna breach the Rhine frontier; Germania Prima and Maxima Sequanorum are lost to the Empire

CE 409 Constantine III's rule is recognized in Maxima Sequanorum

CE 434 The Alamanni seize control of Maxima Sequanorum

iii. Alpes Graiae et Poeninae

After the successful campaigns of the Alpine War, Augustus established the province of Alpes Graiae in 14 BCE in the Alps between modern-day France and Italy. The province bordered the Alpes Cottiae in the south, Narbonensis in the west, Germania Superior in the north, and Italy in the east. The province was renamed the Alpes Graiae et Poeninae after Claudius attached Valais, part of Raetia, to the province in CE 43. At the end of the third century CE, Diocletian added the province

to the diocesis Galliarum after restructuring the boundaries of the three Alpes provinces. Diocletian's border adjustments do not, however, need to be precisely pinpointed geographically, as they do not affect the overall surface area of the Empire since the Alpes Graiae et Poeninae, as well as the Alpes Maritimae and Alpes Cottiae, remained stable Roman provinces until the fall of the Western Roman Empire in CE 476.

Important Dates

14 BCE The Alpes Graiae become a Roman province
CE 43 Claudius enlarges the province by the addition of Valais
CE 476 The Alpes Graiae et Poeninae become part of Odoacer's Kingdom

IV. Diocesis Britanniarum

The diocesis Britanniarum was established by Diocletian ca. CE 305. It initially consisted of the provinces of Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Flavia Caesariensis, and Maxima Caesariensis. In CE 369, a fifth province, Valentia, was created and added to the diocese during the reign of Valentinian I. The diocese and its provinces were no longer part of the Western Roman Empire after Rome's withdrawal from the island in CE 410.

i. Britannia

The Roman invasion of Britain began in CE 43 during the reign of Claudius. Initially covering only the southwest coast of the island, the province of Britannia was expanded quickly. By CE 85, all of Britain as far north as the Solway-Tyne line, including modern-day Wales, was added to the province. For approximately twenty years during the second century CE, the northern border of Britannia was moved north to the Forth-Clyde line in Caledonia before reverting back to the Solway-Tyne line in CE 160. During the reign of Caracalla, the province was divided into Britannia

Inferior and Britannia Superior in an effort to prevent usurpations by reducing the number of legions under one governor's control. After dividing Britannia Inferior into Britannia Secunda and Flavia Caesariensis, and Britannia Superior into Britannia Prima and Maxima Caesariensis, Diocletian ascribed his new provinces to the diocesis Britanniarum at the beginning of the fourth century CE. In CE 369, Valentia became the fifth province in the diocese. Although its exact location is debated, Valentia was likely created using territory from Britannia Secunda and Flavia Caesariensis. For the purposes of this thesis, however, its location is irrelevant since it was created out of existing Roman territories and so does not affect the total surface area of the Empire. Rome's control of the British provinces was interrupted several times by revolts and usurpations. In CE 60, Boudica, an Iceni queen, led southwest Britannia in revolt for the first time until her defeat the following year. Part of the breakaway Gallic Empire beginning in CE 261, Britannia Inferior and Superior were restored to the Empire in CE 274 by Aurelian only to be under the control of another usurper, Carausius, from CE 286 until his successor, Allectus, was defeated in CE 296. In CE 383, Magnus Maximus usurped control over the provinces in the dioceses of Britannia, Gallia, and Septem Provinciae. Theodosius I recognized the usurper's rule in CE 384 until Maximus' ambitions led him to invade Italy in CE 387. The provinces returned to Roman control the following year. After proclaiming himself emperor in CE 407, Constantine III was recognized as ruler of the British and Gallic provinces, except the Alpes Maritimae and the Alpes Graiae et Poeninae, and Maxima Sequanorum in CE 409 until his death two years later. In addition to these revolts and usurpations, all the provinces in the diocesis Britanniarum have been excluded from

surface area calculations in CE 410, the approximate date of Rome's permanent withdrawal from the island.

Important Dates

- CE 43 The Roman province of Britannia is established in southwest Britain
- CE 47 Britannia is expanded to include Exeter and the Severn Estuary in the southwest and Humber in the north
- CE 60 Boudica leads the province in rebellion
- CE 61 Paulinus defeats Boudica and restores Britannia to Roman rule
- CE 76 Southwest Wales is added to the province
- CE 77 North Wales is conquered and attached to Britannia
- CE 78 Rome's conquest of Wales is complete after the Isle of Anglesey is annexed
- CE 85 Rome controls all of Britain south of the Solway-Tyne line
- CE 139 The northern frontier of Britannia is moved north to the Forth-Clyde line
- CE 160 The northern frontier reverts south to the Solway-Tyne line
- CE 261 Britannia Inferior and Britannia Superior become part of the Gallic Empire
- CE 274 Aurelian restores Roman control in Britain
- CE 286 Carausius usurps control of the province
- CE 296 Carausius is defeated; Britannia is returned to Roman rule
- CE 383 Magnus Maximus seizes control of Britain
- CE 384 Maximus is recognized as the ruler of Britain and Gaul
- CE 387 Maximus is declared an enemy of Rome after invading Italy
- CE 388 The British provinces are restored to the Empire after Maximus' defeat
- CE 407 Constantine III takes control of the British and Gallic provinces and Maxima Sequanorum
- CE 409 Honorius recognizes Constantine III's rule
- CE 410 Rome permanently withdraws from the island

4.2.2 Praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae

Established in CE 337, the praefectura praetorio Italiae, Illyrici, et Africae originally included the diocesis Italiae, Africae, Macedoniae, Daciae, and Pannoniarum. It was renamed the praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae after the dioceses of Macedonia, Dacia, and Pannonia were ascribed to the newly established praefectura praetorio per Illyricum in CE 356. In CE 379, the diocesis Pannoniarum was renamed the diocesis Illyrici and added to the praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae. Originally a single diocese, Italia was divided to create the diocesis Italiae Annonariae and Italiae Suburbicariae during the fourth century CE. In CE 395, the praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae and its dioceses, Italiae Annonariae, Italiae Suburbicariae, Africae, and Illyrici, became part of the Western Roman Empire.

I. Diocesis Italiae

Established by Diocletian ca. CE 297, the diocesis Italiae included the provinces of Campania, Samnium, Tuscia et Umbria, Picenum, Lucania et Bruttii, Apulia et Calabria, Liguria, Aemilia, Flaminia, Venetia et Histria, Sicilia et Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, Raetia, and Alpes Cottiae. When the diocese was split during the fourth century CE, the diocesis Italiae Annonariae included the provinces of Venetia et Histria, Liguria, Aemilia, Flaminia et Picenum Annonarium, Raetia Prima, Raetia Secunda, and Alpes Cottiae while the diocesis Italiae Suburbicariae was comprised of Campania, Samnium, Tuscia et Umbria, Picenum Suburbicarium, Apulia et Calabria, Valeria, Sicilia, Sardinia, and Corsica. Since Malta came under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Roman Empire after the death of Theodosius I, it has not been included in surface area calculations for the duration of its association with the Roman Empire, including the years prior to CE 395.

i. Italia

According to the traditional foundation myths of Rome, the city was founded in 753 BCE along the banks of the Tiber River. In the seventh century BCE, Etruscan kings ruled Rome until the Roman Republic was established in 509 BCE after the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, was expelled from the city. During the monarchy, Rome had absorbed many of its neighbouring towns, including Alba Longa, and expanded its territory, the *ager Romanus*, beyond the banks of the Tiber. Rome's total conquest of the Italian Peninsula, however, came about as the result of a prolonged series of intensive military campaigns during the Republican era. In 396 BCE, Rome captured Veii, a rival city, as well as some of its surrounding allies, and incorporated their territory north of the Tiber into the *ager Romanus*. Since the early years of the Republic, Rome had been in an alliance of mutual defense with a confederation of neighbouring tribes in Latium Vetus known as the Latin League until a disparity in power led to war in 340 BCE. After dissolving the Latin League two years later, the Republic absorbed its territory, which stretched as far south as Mount Circeo, into the *ager Romanus*. Rome continued military operations along the Tyrrhenian coast, subjugating the Volsci, Sidicini, Aurunci, and Campani tribes and establishing a Roman Commonwealth that by 329 BCE stretched from north of the Tiber as far south as the Bay of Naples. Although Rome had conquered, or become allies with, many of its neighbouring tribes by the end of the fourth century BCE, the conquest of central and southern Italy was not complete until after Rome's victories against the Samnites and King Pyrrhus in the middle of the third century BCE. By 264 BCE, Rome defeated the rebellious regions that had defected to Pyrrhus, overran Magna Graecia, and

conquered the remaining tribes in central Italy in order to defend the Commonwealth, which now extended in the north from the river Arnus through the Upper Tiber Valley to Ariminum, against the Gallic tribes of northern Italy. Rome readily acknowledged the Gallic threat, having previously campaigned against the Senones and Boii tribes in the *ager Gallicus* two decades earlier (see Gallia Cisalpina). In 238 BCE, Rome began military campaigns against the tribesmen of Liguria, who controlled the territory north of the Arnus River along the Ligurian Sea in northwest Gallia Cisalpina, but was unable to subjugate the region until 155 BCE. After Rome's defeat at the Battle of Cannae, much of southern Italy, including Capua, many cities in Samnium, and most of Magna Graecia, defected to Hannibal in 216 BCE. Although Rome recaptured many of the rebellious cities and colonies shortly thereafter, the resources of the southern Peninsula were not accessible to Rome until after the cessation of military activity in Italy following Hannibal's withdrawal to Spain in 203 BCE. The Italian Peninsula was also the site of several disruptive internal conflicts at the beginning of the first century BCE. The political and legal inequality that existed between the Roman citizens and their Italian allies was one of many reasons for the outbreak of the Social War in 91 BCE. Although the Latin colonies and many individual Italian cities remained loyal to Rome, most of the allied peoples in central and southern Italy, and even some in the north, took up arms against the Romans. As a result, Italy, including Gallia Cisalpina, has been excluded from surface area calculations until the rebellion was quelled in 88 BCE. Roman citizenship was subsequently extended to all of Italy as far north as the Po, and the Latin colonies and allied communities were absorbed into the Roman state. The tribes north of the Po in

Gallia Transpadana received Roman citizenship in 49 BCE. In 83 BCE, the civil war between Sulla and his enemies in the senate spread throughout the Italian Peninsula. Upon capturing Rome the following year, Sulla was appointed dictator by the senate for the purpose of restoring a stable government to the Republic. The Italian Peninsula has been excluded from surface area calculations until Sulla's resignation of the dictatorship in 81 BCE. In 73 BCE, Spartacus, an escaped Thracian gladiator, led a brief, but intense, slave revolt in Italy known as the Third Servile War. Much of southern Italy was devastated until Crassus killed Spartacus and his followers two years later. Under Augustus, Roman rule in the Italian Peninsula was consolidated first by the incorporation of Gallia Cisalpina into Italia, which was governed directly from Rome, then by the division of the Peninsula, which now stretched into the Alps, into eleven regions. Originally part of Illyricum Inferior, the territory surrounding Emona in modern-day Slovenia became part of Italia at the end of the first century CE (see Pannonia). During the reign of Diocletian, Augustus' Italian regions were deprived of their tax-exempt status and reconfigured into ten provinces, which were added to the diocesis Italiae, along with the provinces of Sicilia et Malta, Sardinia, Corsica, Raetia, and Alpes Cottiae. In the fourth century CE, the diocese of Italy was split into the diocesis Italiae Annonariae, which encompassed the northern provinces, the two Raetias, and Alpes Cottiae, and the diocesis Italiae Suburbicariae, which was comprised of the southern Italian provinces and the adjacent islands. Although abandoned as the centre of the Empire during the Tetrarchy as new imperial residences were established closer to the frontier, Rome's political insignificance was irreversible after Constantine chose Byzantium, not Rome, as the capital of the

reunified Roman Empire. Nevertheless, the city very much remained the ideological capital of the Empire, such that its double sacking in the fifth century CE sent shockwaves across the Mediterranean. Despite external pressures from the Gallic and Germanic tribes, the Italian mainland remained part of the Western Roman Empire until Odoacer deposed its last Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, in CE 476.

Important Dates

753 BCE Rome is founded on the Palatine Hill
509 BCE Rome expands beyond the Tiber
396 BCE Veii is captured after the Third Veientine War
338 BCE Rome absorbs the territory of the Latin League after the Latin War
329 BCE The Roman Commonwealth is extended south to the Bay of Naples
264 BCE Rome controls Italy from the Arnus River to Ariminum
216 BCE Southern Italy defects to Hannibal
203 BCE Rome regains control of the southern peninsula
91 BCE The Social War begins
88 BCE The War ends; Roman rule is restored to Italy
83 BCE Civil war breaks out in Italy
81 BCE Sulla resigns the dictatorship
73 BCE The Third Servile War begins
71 BCE Spartacus and his followers are defeated; southern Italy is restored to Rome
ca. CE 96 Emona becomes part of Italy
CE 476 The provinces of the Italian Peninsula become part of Odoacer's Italian Kingdom

ii. Gallia Cisalpina

Gallia Cisalpina was a term used by the Romans to distinguish northern Italy, which was inhabited by tribes of Celtic origin, from the rest of the Italian Peninsula. Roughly corresponding to the later Diocletian provinces of Venetia et Histria, Aemilia, Flaminia, and the western part of the enlarged Alpes Cottiae, Gallia Cisalpina was bordered by the Ligurian Sea in the southwest, the Alps in the west, north, and east, the Adriatic Sea in the southeast, and the Po River, Apennine Mountains, and Rubicon River in the south. It was subdivided along the Po into

Gallia Transpadana and Gallia Cispadana, which identified the Gallic territory that lay to the north and south of the river, respectively. The Roman subjugation of the native Celtic tribes was a gradual process, brought about by Rome's many military campaigns in northern Italy during the Republican era. In the 280s BCE, Rome gained a foothold in Gallic Italy after defeating the Senones and Boii and establishing a colony just south of the Rubicon along the Adriatic coast in the *ager Gallicus*. In 238 BCE, Rome began campaigning north of the Arnus River against the Gallic tribesmen of Liguria, whose territory corresponded to the later Roman province of the same name, but was unsuccessful in extending the Commonwealth's boundary into northwestern Italy. In 225 BCE, a Gallic force of Boii, Insubres, Taurini, and Lingones invaded Roman Italy, plundering Etruria as far south as Clusium, until defeated at Telamon later that year. After defeating the Gallic tribes, Rome began systematic invasions into Gallic territory north of the Commonwealth. After four years of campaigning, Cisalpine Gaul, including Histria west of the Arsia River between the Adriatic coast and the Julian Alps, but not Liguria, was brought under Roman control in 221 BCE following the surrender and withdrawal of the tribes to the foothills of the Alps. Although more Roman colonies were subsequently established in northern Italy, these same newly conquered Gallic tribes revolted against Rome when Hannibal crossed the Alps in 218 BCE. Gallia Cisalpina cannot, therefore, begin to be included in surface area calculations until after the end of the Second Punic War and the cessation of Rome's offensive military campaigns at the beginning of the second century BCE. Rome regained control of Gallia Cisalpina as far north as the Alpine foothills by 190 BCE, but was unable to effectively conquer Liguria until 155

BCE. At the beginning of the first century BCE, several internal disputes were settled on Italian soil. When the Social War began in 91 BCE, some tribes in Gallia Cisalpina and Liguria joined the rebellious Italian allies and took up arms against Rome. The rebellion was put down three years later and Roman rule was restored to the whole Peninsula. Shortly thereafter, Rome's control of northern Italy was once again disrupted when civil war raged between Sulla and the Roman senate from 83 until 81 BCE. During the Republican era, Gallia Cisalpina, including Liguria, had become so Romanized that Octavian removed its provincial status, merged it with the rest of the Italian Peninsula, which was governed directly from Rome, and established the regions of Aemilia, Venetia et Histria, Transpadana, and Liguria from its territory. During the campaigns of the Alpine Wars, Augustus extended Italy's northern frontier further into the Alps, enlarging the regions of Transpadana and Venetia et Histria, respectively. At the end of the third century CE, Diocletian adjusted the boundaries of Augustus' eleven Italian regions and created ten provinces in the Italian mainland, which he ascribed to the diocesis Italiae, in their stead. The borders of Diocletian's Italian provinces were subsequently readjusted in the fourth century such that his five Cisalpine provinces, Aemilia, enlarged in size, Venetia et Histria, unchanged, Flaminia, enlarged and renamed Flaminia et Picenum, Liguria, enlarged, and the Alpes Cottiae, reduced, became part of the diocesis Italiae Annonariae upon its creation in the fourth century CE. The border fluctuations of the Italian provinces do not need to be precisely tracked as the entire Peninsula remained part of the Western Roman Empire until its fall in CE 476.

Important Dates

283 BCE Rome seizes land in the *ager Gallicus*

190 BCE Rome controls Cisalpine Gaul, excluding Liguria, as far north as the foothills of the Alps

155 BCE Liguria is conquered

91 BCE The Social War begins

88 BCE Roman rule is restored to northern Italy

83 BCE Civil war spreads across Italy

81 BCE Sulla resigns the dictatorship

16 BCE Italy's frontier is extended further north into the Alps

CE 476 The Roman provinces in Cisalpine Gaul become part of Odoacer's Kingdom

iii. Sicilia et Malta

Sicilia became the first territory outside the Italian Peninsula to be controlled by Rome when the Carthaginians were forced to withdraw from Sicily and its surrounding islands, which included Malta, at the end of the First Punic War. With the exception of the Syracusan territory in the southern tip, which was not added to the province until 212 BCE, the island was officially organized into a Roman province in 241 BCE. In CE 297, Sicilia et Malta was added to the diocesis Italiae and later became a province of the diocesis Italiae Suburbicariae. When the Empire was divided after the death of Theodosius I in CE 395, Malta came under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire, despite its proximity to the Italian Peninsula. For this reason, the surface area of Malta has not been included in the corresponding graph. (Fig. 1.2.) As one of Rome's largest suppliers of grain during the Republican period, Sicilia was of great importance to the Empire. As a result, it was also the site of several revolts early in its history. Sicilia, but not Malta, was lost to Rome during the First and Second Servile Wars, which occurred between 135 and 132 BCE and 104 and 100 BCE, respectively, and again during the Sicilian Revolt, which began in 44 BCE. Sextus Pompeius' rule of Sicilia was legitimized in the Pact of Misenum, which was

brokered in 39 BCE, until hostilities resumed the following year. Pompeius was finally defeated in 36 BCE at the Battle of Naulochus. Although Sicilia et Malta lost some of its importance after the conquest of more fertile lands in North Africa, the province remained a stable and peaceful part of the Empire until the foreign invasions of the fifth century CE. Sicilia, Malta, and the surrounding islands were annexed to the Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in CE 461.

Important Dates

241 BCE Sicilia, together with Malta and the surrounding islands, becomes the first Roman province
212 BCE The Syracusan holdings are added to the province
135 BCE The First Servile War begins
132 BCE The War ends; Sicilia is returned to Roman control
104 BCE The Second Servile War begins
100 BCE The War ends; Roman control is reestablished in Sicilia
44 BCE The Sicilian revolt begins under Sextus Pompeius
39 BCE Pompeius is recognized as ruler of Sicilia, Sardinia, and Corsica
38 BCE Hostilities resume between Octavian and Pompeius
36 BCE Pompeius is defeated; Sicilia is restored to Rome
CE 395 Malta is ascribed to the Eastern Roman Empire
CE 461 The Vandals and Alans overrun Sicilia, Malta, and the surrounding islands

iv. Corsica et Sardinia

Soon after Carthage surrendered the islands at the conclusion of the Mercenary War, the dual Roman province of Corsica et Sardinia was formally established in 237 BCE. Separated in the first century CE, Corsica and Sardinia were added to the diocesis Italiae and later became provinces of the diocesis Italiae Suburbicariae. With only a few exceptions, Corsica and Sardinia remained stable and peaceful Roman provinces during both the Republican and Imperial periods. During the Sicilian Revolt, Sextus Pompeius seized control of Sardinia from Rome in 40 BCE until the Pact of Misenum, negotiated the following year, legitimized his rule of both Sardinia

and Sicilia as well as granted him possession of Corsica. Hostilities between Octavian and Pompeius resumed in 38 BCE and the islands were not restored to Roman control until Pompeius was defeated in 36 BCE at the Battle of Naulochus. Domitius Alexander, a usurper in Africa, also briefly controlled Sardinia between CE 308 and 311. Corsica and Sardinia were added to the Kingdom of the Vandals and Goths in CE 455 and 468, respectively.

Important Dates

237 BCE The province of Corsica et Sardinia is established
40 BCE Sextus Pompeius seizes control of Sardinia
39 BCE Pompeius' rule is legitimized in Sardinia; the Triumvirs also grant him control of Corsica
38 BCE Hostilities resume between Pompeius and Octavian
36 BCE Pompeius is defeated; Corsica et Sardinia is restored to Roman control
CE 308 Domitius Alexander seizes control of Sardinia
CE 311 Sardinia is restored to the Empire
CE 455 Vandals and Alans overrun Corsica
CE 468 Sardinia is subjected to Vandalic rule

v. Raetia

The client kingdom of Raetia, Vindelicia, and Vallis Poeninae was established under a prefect in 14 BCE after the successful campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius during the Alpine War. In CE 43, Claudius established the province of Raetia, also known as Raetia et Vindelicia, by detaching the Vallis Poenina, modern-day Valais in the Rhône Valley of southwestern Switzerland, from Raetia and adding it to the Alpes Graiae, which he renamed Alpes Graiae et Poeninae. By the end of the first century CE, Raetia province, which included the territory of Vindelicia, bordered the Danube in the north as far as the Inn River, Noricum in the east, the Alps in the south, and Gallia Belgica and Germania Superior in the west. The province, which had already been extended north of the Danube ca. CE 84 by the addition of the *agri decumates*,

was expanded further north by the final extension of the *limes Germanicus* during the reign of Antoninus Pius. In CE 260, the territory west of the Iller River, including the trans-Danubian territory, was abandoned in the wake of invasions from the neighbouring Germanic tribes, especially the Alamanni, and the Danube was subsequently reestablished as Raetia's northern frontier. That same year, Raetia also became part of Postumus' Gallic Empire until recovered by Gallienus in CE 263. From CE 271 until 278, several migrating Germanic tribes, including the Iuthungi, Burgundians, and Vandals, repeatedly invaded the province. Diocletian, who added Raetia to his new diocesis Italiae, may not have divided the province as part of his administrative reforms, as it appears undivided in the *Laterculus Veronensis*, which dates from CE 303 to 314 for the Western Empire. Attested after CE 354, Raetia Prima in the south and Raetia Secunda in the north were added to the diocesis Italiae Annonariae during the fourth century CE. The boundary between the Raetian provinces was established at Lake Constance in the west and continued east to the Inn River, which also formed its border with Noricum. In CE 450, the Huns, led by Attila, and their Germanic allies began invasions into Raetia Secunda that effectively ended Rome's control of the province. Raetia Prima remained part of the Western Roman Empire until it too was overrun and settled by Germanic tribes during the migrations of the latter half of the fifth century CE.

Important Dates

14 BCE Raetia becomes a Roman client kingdom

CE 43 The province of Raetia is established; Valais is detached and added to the Alpes Graiae

CE 84 Raetia is expanded in the northwest under Domitian

CE 157 The *limes Germanicus* are extended further north; Raetia is enlarged as a result

CE 260 Raetia is reduced in size by Rome's withdrawal from the *agri decumates*; becomes part of the Gallic Empire
CE 263 Gallienus restores Raetia to the Empire
CE 271 Germanic invasions into Raetia begin
CE 278 Peace is restored to the province after the foreign tribes are expelled
CE 450 Raetia Secunda is lost to the Empire
CE 470 Germanic tribes overrun Raetia Prima

vi. Alpes Cottiae

Located between the Alpes Maritimae and Alpes Graiae, the kingdom of Donnus became a Roman territory during the reign of Augustus. Claudius reorganized the territory as a client kingdom under Cottius in CE 44 after expanding its territory. In CE 63, Nero annexed the kingdom as a Roman province, thus completing Rome's subjugation of the Alpine tribes. Originally part of Diocletian's diocesis Italiae, the Alpes Cottiae was added to the diocesis Italiae Annonariae during the fourth century CE. In addition to assigning the Alpes provinces to dioceses, Diocletian also completely restructured their borders. He moved the southern border of the Alpes Cottiae north to the Durance River and transferred the territory to the Alpes Maritimae. In addition, he expanded the Alpes Cottiae into northwestern Italy so that the province was no longer land-locked between the Alpes Maritimae and the Alpes Graiae et Poeninae, but situated instead along the coast of the Ligurian Sea between the Alpes Maritimae and Liguria and Aemilia in northwestern Italy. Since the Alpes Cottiae, as well as Liguria, Aemilia, and the other Alpes provinces remained part of the Western Roman Empire until its fall in CE 476, the border fluctuations implemented between these provinces after the annexation of the Alpes Cottiae in CE 63 do not need to be precisely established for the purposes of this thesis as they do not affect the total surface area controlled by the Empire.

Important Dates

14 BCE The kingdom of Donnus becomes a Roman territory

CE 44 The territory is enlarged and reestablished as a client kingdom

CE 63 Nero annexes the client kingdom as a province

CE 297 Diocletian moves the province's southern border north to the Durance River and expands it into northwestern Italy

CE 476 The Alpes Cottiae become part of the Odoacer's Italian Kingdom

II. Diocesis Africae

Established ca. CE 303, the diocesis Africae initially included the provinces of Proconsularis, also known as Zeugitana, Byzacena, Tripolitania, Numidia Cirtensis, Numidia Militiana, Mauretania Caesariensis, and Mauretania Sitifensis. The number of provinces in the diocese was reduced to six after Numidia Cirtensis and Numidia Militiana were rejoined in CE 314 and replaced, in name, by Numidia. Shortly after crossing the Straits of Gibraltar in CE 429, the Vandals and Alans wrested control of Numidia and the Mauretanian provinces from the Western Roman Empire. By CE 460, the Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans controlled all the provinces of the diocesis Africae.

i. Africa Proconsularis

After Rome's victory at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE, the Second Punic War came to a decisive end the following year when Carthage sued for peace. In addition to paying a large war indemnity, Carthage saw its territory in North Africa drastically reduced and demarcated by a trench, which stretched from Tabarka in the north to Sfax in the southeast. As a reward for his loyalty to Rome, Masinissa, leader of the neighbouring Massyli tribe in eastern Numidia, was granted some of Carthage's territory in North Africa, roughly the western half of Diocletian's Proconsularis province. He was also proclaimed King of Numidia after defeating Syphax, the ruler of western Numidia. His kingdom, which now stretched to the Moulouya River in the

west, became a Roman client kingdom in 201 BCE. Before his death in 148 BCE, Masinissa had further expanded his kingdom to include the territory south of Carthage, which equated to the southwestern half of Diocletian's Byzacena province. In an effort to stay the expansion and potential power of their Numidian client kingdom, Rome established the province of Africa upon annexing Carthage in 146 BCE during the Third Punic War. Unwilling to share rule of the Numidian client kingdom with his cousin, Jugurtha instigated the Jugurthine War in 112 BCE. At the end of the war in 105 BCE, Rome granted western Numidia to King Bocchus of Mauretania, but kept eastern Numidia as its client kingdom. As a result, King Bocchus' kingdom, which stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the eastern border of the reduced Numidian client kingdom, encompassed the future Roman province of Mauretania, which underwent several divisions later in its history (see Mauretania). Africa was renamed Africa Vetus after Caesar established the new Roman province of Africa Nova in 46 BCE by annexing the client kingdom of Numidia from King Juba I. In 35 BCE, Octavian reorganized both African provinces into the new province of Africa Proconsularis, which, by 23 BCE, reached Leptis Magna in northern Libya. During the reign of Claudius, Africa Proconsularis was extended further eastward to the western border of the province of Cyrenaica at Arae Philaenorum ca. CE 44. In CE 193, Severus created the province of Numidia from the western portion of Africa Proconsularis that had once constituted Caesar's Africa Nova (see Numidia). Ten years later, Severus enlarged the narrow coastal strip of Africa Proconsularis, later known as Tripolitania, as far south as Cydamus, Garbia, and Gholia in modern-day Tunisia and Libya. Although Severus' gains were

abandoned in CE 295, Africa Proconsularis, which came to be known simply as Africa, was enlarged after the parts of Carthage's former territory, which Masinissa had added to his Numidian kingdom after the Battle of Zama, were detached from Severus' Numidia. At the beginning of the fourth century CE, Diocletian divided Africa and created the provinces of Proconsularis, Byzacena, and Tripolitania, which he then added to the diocesis Africae. Together, Proconsularis and Byzacena encompassed the original territory of Africa, annexed in 146 BCE, and the western part of Numidia that was transferred to it in CE 295, while Tripolitania included the territory added to Africa Proconsularis in 23 BCE and CE 44 along the northern coast of Libya. Vitaly important to Italy's grain supply, particularly after Aegyptus' grain was diverted to Constantinople, the African provinces were subjected to several revolts while part of the Empire. In CE 15, Tacfarinas, a Numidian, led a coalition of native African tribes against Rome. Although the war did not pose a serious threat to Rome's continued control of Africa Proconsularis, the raids exacted by the African tribes greatly disrupted the production of grain in the province until Tacfarinas was finally defeated in CE 24. Domitius Alexander, who proclaimed himself emperor in CE 308, controlled Proconsularis and Sardinia until his defeat in CE 311. From CE 363 until 365, Tripolitania was subjected to devastating raids from the Austuriani tribe, but received no aid from Romanus, the *comes Africae*. His lack of response led to Firmus' usurpation of Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Sitifensis in CE 372. At the end of the fourth century CE, Firmus' brother, Gildo, revolted in Proconsularis against Honorius by preventing grain ships from sailing to Italy. With the Western Roman Empire's only grain supply threatened, Rome declared war on Gildo in CE

397. He was defeated in battle later that same year. Three years after the Vandals and Alans sacked Carthage, a treaty was reached in CE 442 that required Rome to permanently relinquish control of Proconsularis, Byzacena, and Tripolitania, the richest North Africa provinces, to the Vandalic Kingdom in exchange for the return of the poorer Mauretanian provinces, which had been ceded to the Vandals in CE 434. During the reign of Justinian, the Vandal kingdom was supplanted by the Byzantine Empire until the Arab conquest in the seventh century CE.

Important Dates

201 BCE Numidia becomes a Roman client kingdom
148 BCE The Numidian client kingdom expands east
146 BCE The province of Africa is established
112 BCE The Jugurthine War begins; the Numidian client kingdom is no longer under Roman control
105 BCE The Jugurthine War ends; western Numidia is given to King Bocchus of Mauretania; eastern Numidia resumes its Roman client kingdom status
46 BCE The province of Africa Nova is established
35 BCE Africa Vetus and Africa Nova are combined to create Africa Proconsularis
23 BCE Africa Nova is extended in the east as far as Leptis Magna
CE 15 Tacfarinas and his followers cause widespread damage in Africa Proconsularis
CE 24 Tacfarinas is defeated; economic stability is restored to Africa Proconsularis
CE 44 Africa Proconsularis is stretched further east to the western border of Cyrenaica
CE 193 Africa Proconsularis is reduced in size after the creation of Numidia
CE 203 Severus expands the province of Africa Proconsularis southward
CE 295 Africa Proconsularis receives territory from eastern Numidia; Severus' gains are abandoned
CE 308 Domitius Alexander usurps control of Proconsularis and Sardinia
CE 311 Domitius is defeated; Roman rule is restored
CE 363 The Austuriani tribe begins raids in Tripolitania
CE 365 The raids end; Tripolitania returns to Roman control
CE 397 Gildo revolts against Honorius; gains control of the grain supply in Proconsularis
CE 398 Proconsularis returns to Roman control
CE 442 The Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans takes control of Proconsularis, Byzacena, and Tripolitania

ii. Numidia

In CE 193, Septimius Severus detached Caesar's Africa Nova, that is to say, the eastern part of the former Numidian client kingdom, from the rest of Africa Proconsularis and established the province of Numidia. During the reign of Diocletian, Numidia was reduced in size ca. CE 295 after Carthage's former territory, which had been absorbed into Masinissa's Numidian client kingdom, was transferred back to Africa Proconsularis. Divided by Diocletian into Numidia Cirtensis and Numidia Militiana in CE 304, Numidia was reconstituted ten years later during the reign of Constantine. The province(s) belonged to the diocesis Africae until becoming part of the Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in CE 434.

Important Dates

CE 193 The province of Numidia is established

CE 295 Part of eastern Numidia is transferred to Africa Proconsularis

CE 434 Numidia becomes part of the Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans

iii. Mauretania

After western Numidia was given to Bocchus in 105 BCE, the Kingdom of Mauretania stretched across North Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the western border of the Numidian client kingdom. After the death of Bocchus II in 33 BCE, Mauretania briefly became a Roman province before it was reorganized into a client kingdom in 25 BCE under Juba II, the son of Numidia's last client king, Juba I. Upon quelling the revolts that arose after Caligula ordered the execution of Ptolemy of Mauretania in CE 40, Claudius annexed Mauretania to the Empire four years later and divided it along the Moulouya River into Mauretania Tingitana in the west, and Mauretania Caesariensis, which lay to the east of the Moulouya and corresponded to

the portion of the Numidian client kingdom that was given to Bocchus I. During the reign of Severus, the southern border of Mauretania Caesariensis was temporarily pushed further south to Castellum Dimmidi and Gemellae until the end of the third century CE. After Rome abandoned the territory around Volubilis in CE 248, a smaller Mauretania Tingitana, which came to be geographically separated from Mauretania Caesariensis following Rome's withdrawal from western Caesariensis ca. CE 295, was ascribed to the diocesis Hispaniarum. After creating Mauretania Sitifensis from the eastern portion of Mauretania Caesariensis, Diocletian added both provinces to the diocesis Italiae, Illyrici, et Africae, later named diocesis Italiae et Africae. In CE 372, Firmus proclaimed himself emperor during the reign of Valentinian I perhaps in response to Romanus' refusal to send military aid to Tripolitania during the Austuriani raids of the 360s. Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Sitifensis were returned to Roman control upon Firmus' defeat in CE 375. Upon crossing the Straits of Gibraltar in CE 429 and wreaking havoc in western North Africa, the Vandals and Alans were recognized as the rulers of the Mauretanian provinces, including Tingitana, and Numidia in CE 434. Three years after the Vandal sack of Carthage in CE 439, a new treaty was brokered between the Vandal Kingdom and the Western Empire. In exchange for the Empire's recognition of Vandal control over the richer African provinces in the east, the already impoverished, and now further devastated, Mauretanian provinces were returned to Roman control. Although Rome's ability to govern the Mauretanian provinces effectively was certainly restricted by the loss of territory in the neighbouring Iberian Peninsula and by Mauretania's distance from Italy, taxation resumed, albeit at an eighth of the former amount. By CE 460, the

Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans were able to regain control of the Mauretanian provinces as Roman rule deteriorated throughout the Western Empire.

Important Dates

- 33 BCE Mauretania comes under Roman control after the death of Bocchus II
- 25 BCE Mauretania becomes a client kingdom
- CE 40 Mauretania revolts after the murder of Ptolemy
- CE 44 The provinces of Mauretania Tingitana and Mauretania Caesariensis are established
- CE 203 Severus extends the southern frontier of Mauretania Caesariensis
- CE 248 Mauretania Tingitana's southern border is moved north
- CE 295 Mauretania Caesariensis loses some territory in the west, as well as the southern territory added by Severus
- CE 297 Mauretania Tingitana is added to the diocesis Hispaniarum
- CE 372 Firmus proclaims himself emperor
- CE 375 Firmus is defeated; Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Sitifensis return to Roman control
- CE 434 Vandal rule is recognized in the three Mauretanian provinces and Numidia
- CE 442 The Mauretanian provinces are returned to Roman rule
- CE 460 The Vandals regain control of the Mauretanian provinces, including Tingitana

III. Diocesis Illyrici

Established ca. CE 297 by Diocletian, the diocesis Pannoniarum was comprised of the provinces of Dalmatia, Pannonia, later renamed Pannonia Superior, Pannonia Secunda, Savia, also known as Saventis, Valeria, Noricum Mediterraneum, and Noricum Ripense. Transferred to the praefectura praetorio per Illyricum when it was first established in CE 356, the diocese Pannoniarum was renamed Illyrici in CE 379 and returned to the Western Empire as part of the praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae.

i. Illyricum

In the years preceding its first military campaigns in Illyria in the third century BCE, Rome had established regular economic and cultural contact with many Greek cities and kings in the Balkan Peninsula and along the Adriatic coast. The Kingdom of Illyria, which was ruled by the Ardiaean dynasty, was situated around Scodra and

the Drilo River on the southern Adriatic coast. After the decline of the Kingdom of Epirus, King Agron enlarged his Illyrian kingdom southward, capturing Corcyra and Epidamnus in Epirus, and northward, seizing Pharos and subjugating the Greek settlements in the territory of the Delmatae. But after raiding Illyrians from the Dalmatian coast captured or killed many Italian merchants in Phoenice in Epirus, Rome took military action against the Illyrian monarchy, led by Teuta, King Agron's wife and successor, in 229 BCE. Within a year, Rome had driven the Illyrians out of their recent conquests, made alliances with the coastal cities and tribes surrounding Illyria, forced Teuta to surrender her kingdom, which was given to Demetrius of Pharos to rule as a Roman client, and established Lissus as the southern limit of the kingdom. Although Rome's influence now spread over much of the southern Adriatic coast, which became known as Roman Illyricum, a regular province was not established in the region until the first century CE. Ten years after defeating Teuta, Rome was forced to intervene again in Illyrian affairs in order to restore the balance of power in the region after Demetrius, who had succeeded Teuta as regent of the Ardiaean Kingdom in 228 BCE, violated the terms of the treaty set out at the end of the First Illyrian War by conducting raids south of Lissus against Roman allies and protectorates. In 218 BCE, Illyria regained its client status under Pinnes, the son of Agron, after Demetrius escaped to Macedonia, from where he encouraged King Philip V to campaign against Rome rather than continue his efforts against the allied leagues of Greece. As a result, Roman Illyricum was under attack from 214 BCE until the 'Peace of Phoenice' was signed in 205 BCE, thus ending the First Macedonian War. After King Gentius of Illyria, who had allied with Perseus of Macedon against

Rome in 172 BCE, was defeated in 168 BCE, Rome reabsorbed his kingdom, which was subsequently divided into three administrative districts that were centred on Labeatae, Scodra, and Rhizon, respectively, into the Republic as a client kingdom and established the military *provincia* of Illyricum along the Adriatic coast. In the middle of the second century BCE, Rome began campaigning against the Delmatae tribe that controlled the coast and backcountry of Illyria between the Titius and Narenta Rivers. While the campaigns were successful in checking the growing power of the Delmatae, no territory was annexed to the Republic and campaigns to subdue the tribes in northern, and later eastern, Illyria continued sporadically until the first century CE. Even after the Delmatae expanded their power north of the Titius into the territory of the Liburni, still Rome annexed no territory despite numerous campaigns fought in Illyricum during the proconsulship of Caesar as well as his civil war with Pompey that followed. Roman control over the western Balkans, which secured a land route between the eastern and western halves of the Empire, was eventually established by a series of three military campaigns that began at the end of the Republican era: Octavian's expeditions against the Illyrian tribes between 35 and 33 BCE; Tiberius' victory in the Pannonian War of 12 to 9 BCE; and the suppression of the Great Illyrian Revolt in CE 9. Upon subduing and accepting the surrender of many of the native tribes, including the Iapodes, Octavian was able to enlarge the military command of Illyricum to the Sava River by 33 BCE. Twenty years later, Tiberius' campaigns against the Pannonii further extended the *provincia* north to the Drava and along the Middle Danube between the mouths of the Drava and Sava Rivers by 9 BCE. Despite such successful campaigns, many tribes in Illyricum remained

autonomous and Rome made little attempt to annex land. The territory of Illyricum, therefore, has not been included in surface area calculations until after the Great Illyrian Revolt ended in CE 9, which enabled effective Roman control to be established in Illyricum. Augustus divided the military *provincia*, which now included the Illyrian client kingdom, along the southern valley of the river Sava into Illyricum Superior, which was comprised of the territory south of the river (see Dalmatia), and Illyricum Inferior, which encompassed the territory between the Sava and Drava Rivers (see Pannonia). The Illyrian client kingdom has not been included in surface area calculations, as its territory became part of the Eastern Roman Empire in CE 395.

Important Dates

228 BCE The Kingdom of Illyria becomes a Roman client kingdom
220 BCE Demetrius violates the terms of Rome's treaty; Illyria loses its client status
218 BCE Illyria regains its client kingdom status under Pinnes
214 BCE The First Macedonian War begins; King Philip V besieges Illyria
205 BCE The War ends; peace is restored to Illyria
172 BCE King Gentius allies with Perseus of Macedon; Illyria is no longer a client kingdom
168 BCE The client kingdom of Illyria is restored to the Republic
CE 9 The Revolt ends; the Illyrian kingdom is absorbed into the new province of Illyricum

ii. Dalmatia

Soon after Augustus divided the *provincia* of Illyricum in CE 9, the province of Illyricum Superior became known as Dalmatia since it encompassed the territory of the Delmatae tribe south of the Sava River. The province, which stretched down the Adriatic coast from the river Arsia in Histria to Lissus at the mouth of the Drilo River, included the adjacent Adriatic islands as well as the former client kingdom of Illyria in its territory. Throughout its history as a Roman province, Dalmatia bordered

Italy in the northwest from the Arsia River to the Julian Alps, and Pannonia in the north along the southern valley of the Sava. Originally extending in the east as far as the Drin River, its eastern border with Moesia, and as far south as the Drilo, its approximate southern border with northwestern Macedonia, Dalmatia was reduced in size at the end of the third century CE when Diocletian moved its eastern border westward to the Drina River and created the province of Praevalitana, or Praevalis, from its southeastern territory. Dalmatia was added to the diocesis Pannoniarum, which was later renamed Illyrici, while Praevalitana, which corresponded in large part to the former client kingdom of Illyria, was ascribed to the diocesis Moesiae instead. When the Moesian diocese was divided during the reign of Constantine, Praevalitana became a province of the diocesis Daciae, which itself became part of the Eastern Roman Empire in CE 395. As a result, the territory of Praevalitana has not been included in surface area calculations neither while it constituted part of Illyricum, and later Dalmatia, nor after it was established as a separate province. Once established, Dalmatia was a peaceful province of the Empire and did not suffer greatly, if at all, from the foreign invasions and migrations of the third century CE. At the end of the fourth century CE, however, the Visigoths that had been settled recently in the Balkans as *foederati*, destroyed many Dalmatian cities along the Adriatic coast until finally expelled by Stilicho, the general of the West, in CE 396. Nevertheless, Dalmatia remained part of the Western Empire until Marcellinus, who had been given military command of the province in CE 454, rebelled against Valentinian III later that year and established independent control over the province. After his death, command of Dalmatia passed to Julius Nepos, who, in CE 474, briefly became the Western

Emperor until he was deposed by Romulus Augustulus and sent back to Dalmatia the following year. The province resumed its independent status in CE 475 under Nepos until becoming part of Odoacer's Italian kingdom in CE 482.

Important Dates

CE 9 The province of Illyricum Superior, later Dalmatia, is established
CE 293 Diocletian detaches the southeastern part of Dalmatia to create Praevalitana province
CE 395 Visigothic *foederati* overrun Dalmatia
CE 396 Stilicho defeats the Visigothic invaders; peace is restored to Dalmatia
CE 454 Marcellinus rules Dalmatia independent of the West
CE 474 Julius Nepos becomes the Western Emperor; Dalmatia is restored to the Empire
CE 475 Nepos is deposed; resumes independent control of Dalmatia

iii. Pannonia

Shortly after Augustus created Illyricum Inferior in CE 9, the province became known instead as Pannonia since it encompassed the territory of the Pannonii between the Sava and Drava Rivers, including the territory surrounding Emona near Ljubljana in modern-day Slovenia, which later became part of Italia at the end of the first century CE. The territory north of the Drava, which had been occupied by both the Boii and Daci tribes in the first century BCE, was under some Roman control, but only as a military *provincia* until the reign of Claudius. By CE 43, Roman rule in the north had been slowly and unobtrusively consolidated as the first Roman colony north of the Drava was established at Savaria, auxiliary troops were recruited for the first time from amongst the northern settlements, and the military occupation of the interior was reduced in favour of stationing the troops along the Danube frontier instead. As a result, the newly expanded province of Pannonia was bound in the north by the Middle Danube, and in the east by the rivers Danube and Drina, the latter of which

also formed part of the province's eastern boundary with Moesia. The province, which also bordered Noricum in the west along the Eastern Alps and Dalmatia in the south along the southern valley of the Sava River, stretched along the Danube from Vindobona in the northwest to Singidunum in the east at the confluence of the Danube and Sava, the latter of which formed the rest of its eastern border with Moesia. In order to consolidate the Dacian territory along the Danube frontier into one military command, the territory surrounding Sirmium in southeastern Pannonia was transferred to Moesia Superior in CE 86. Shortly after annexing Dacia to the Empire, however, Trajan reattached Sirmium to Pannonia then divided the province into Pannonia Superior, which encompassed the western half, and Pannonia Inferior, which encompassed the east in CE 106. The boundary line, which began at the bend of the Danube in the northeast corner of the province and continued in a southwesterly direction past Lake Pelso to the Urbas River in the south, was moved west almost as far as the mouth of the Arabo River ca. CE 212 in order to incorporate Brigetio, and its legion, into Pannonia Inferior. As part of Diocletian's administrative reforms at the end of the third century CE, Pannonia Superior was renamed Pannonia, which later became Pannonia Prima, and its territory south of the Drava was detached to create the new province of Savia, which was also known as Saventis. Pannonia Inferior was renamed Pannonia Secunda and its territory north of the Drava, which was settled by the Carpi tribe in CE 295, was detached to create Valeria. Diocletian added his four Pannonian provinces, along with Dalmatia and the Norican provinces, to the diocesis Pannoniarum, which was later renamed Illyrici when it became part of the praefectura praetorio Italiae et Africae in CE 379. On account of its extensive

Danubian frontier, Pannonia was subjected to numerous invasions from the adjacent Germanic and Iranian tribes throughout its history. After becoming a Roman vassal in CE 20, King Vannius expanded his Quadic Kingdom, which was situated in the Carpathian Mountains north of Pannonia's northern Danube frontier, into the territory of the Iazyges, a tribal branch of the Sarmatae, who occupied the Hungarian Plain between the rivers Danube and Tisia, by CE 50. Although the borders of the Quadic client kingdom lay beyond the traditional borders of the Western Roman Empire, its territory has been included in surface area calculations since it did not constitute part of the Eastern Empire after the division of the Empire in CE 395. The Quadi, one of many distinct tribes within the broad Suevic ethnic group, remained loyal to Rome until refusing to support Domitian against the Dacians in CE 85, which led to war four years later. Although defeated in CE 96, the neighbouring foreign tribes, primarily the Quadi and Iazyges, were a constant threat to the security of the Pannonian frontier by repeatedly disrupting Rome's control of the province in the centuries that followed. In CE 167, the Germanic Langobardi (Lombards) and Vandalic Lacringi tribes attacked the Pannonian provinces. Although the invasion was quickly defeated, it marked the beginning of the Marcomannic War, which soon affected all of Rome's Danubian provinces. Although some stages of the War were fought beyond the frontier, Pannonia has not been included in surface area calculations again until after Commodus negotiated a peace with the Germanic tribes in CE 180. During the Crisis of the Third Century, plague, civil war, and foreign invasions brought the Empire close to the brink of collapse. In CE 258, the Marcomanni and Quadi breached the Danube frontier and invaded Pannonia. Although Gallienus routed the Germanic

tribes two years later, the province was slow to recover economically since its legions could not be used to rebuild the province's lost infrastructure, as they were more urgently needed for the defense of the provinces along the Lower Danube. Toward the end of the third century CE, the Pannonian *limes* was threatened by the Sarmatian Iazyges, who were themselves under pressure from the Gothic migrations into the territory of the recently abandoned Dacia province across the Tisia River. The Iazygian invasions disrupted Roman control of the Pannonian provinces from CE 278 until 284, and again in CE 289 until Diocletian overpowered the tribe five years later. Although the Pannonian provinces enjoyed a brief period of peace following Diocletian's provincial reforms, the foreign invasions that followed marked the beginning of the end of Roman control in the Pannonian Basin. In the fourth century CE, Valeria was attacked by Iazyges, who were defeated later that year by Constantine, Valeria and Pannonia Secunda were overrun by Quadi and Iazyges, respectively, from CE 356 until 358, and in CE 374, both tribes invaded all the Pannonian provinces until defeated by Theodosius I the following year. After fighting at the Battle of Hadrianopolis, a band of Goths, Alans, and Huns raided Savia province in CE 379 until being settled in the province by treaty the following year. Despite their status as *foederati*, the foreign tribes executed raids in the other Pannonian provinces, which caused great devastation in the region, and prompted the settlement of the Marcomanni in Pannonia Prima in CE 395. At the beginning of the fifth century CE, large numbers of Roman citizens began emigrating from the Pannonian provinces following the settlement of the migrating Gothic tribes throughout the provinces. Despite Rome's attempts to consolidate control after the

Goths crossed to Italy ca. CE 409, Hunnic tribes gradually began to encroach upon Rome's territory in eastern Pannonia, eventually occupying the rest of the Pannonian Basin by CE 427. Although Rome did not officially cede control of the four Pannonian provinces to the Huns until CE 433, the western Pannonian provinces have been omitted from surface area calculations since their settlement by foreign tribes in the latter half of the fourth century CE, while the eastern provinces have been excluded since the Gothic migrations that began ca. CE 401. The territory surrounding Sirmium in eastern Pannonian Secunda, however, was not conquered by Attila's Huns until CE 441, though it had been under effective Eastern control since at least CE 420. By the end of the fifth century CE, the Pannonian provinces became part of Theodoric I's Ostrogothic Kingdom after having been settled by the Ostrogoths since the death of Attila in CE 453.

Important Dates

- CE 9 The province of Illyricum Inferior, which later became known as Pannonia, is created
- CE 20 The Quadic Kingdom becomes a Roman vassal state
- CE 43 The territory between the Drava and Danube is incorporated into Pannonia; its western boundary is established at the Alps
- CE 50 The Quadic Kingdom is expanded to include the territory of the Iazyges
- CE 85 The Quadi rebel against Rome; the Kingdom is no longer a client state
- CE 86 The territory surrounding Sirmium is transferred to Moesia Superior
- CE 89 Quadi and Iazyges invade Pannonia
- CE 96 The foreign tribes are defeated; peace is restored to the province; Emona becomes part of Italy
- CE 106 Sirmium is reattached to Pannonia
- CE 167 The Marcomannic War begins
- CE 180 The War ends; the Pannonian provinces are restored to Roman control
- CE 212 The border between Pannonia Inferior and Pannonia Superior is shifted westward
- CE 258 Marcomanni and Quadi attack the Pannonian provinces
- CE 260 Gallienus defeats the Germanic tribes
- CE 278 Sarmatian Iazyges invade the Pannonian provinces
- CE 284 Carus defeats the Sarmatians; Roman control is restored

CE 289 The Iazyges overrun the Pannonian provinces again
CE 294 Diocletian clears the Iazyges from Pannonia
CE 322 Sarmatians invade Valeria; are defeated later that year
CE 356 Quadi overrun Valeria; Sarmatians invade Pannonia Secunda
CE 358 The tribes are defeated; the eastern provinces return to Roman rule
CE 374 Quadi and Iazyges invade all the Pannonian provinces
CE 375 Theodosius I clears the foreign tribes from Pannonia
CE 379 Goths, Alans, and Huns invade Savia; are settled in the province by treaty the following year, but continue raiding
CE 395 The Marcomanni are settled in Pannonia Prima
CE 401 Gothic tribes settle throughout the Pannonian provinces; Huns follow ten years later
CE 420 The territory surrounding Sirmium comes under effective Eastern control; is officially ceded to the East in CE 437
CE 441 The Huns conquer Sirmium

iv. Noricum

Situated between the Danube and Upper Drava Rivers in the Eastern Alps, the *regnum* Noricum became a Roman client kingdom in 14 BCE during the campaigns of the Alpine War. The Norican Kingdom, which bordered the Danube in the north, the Amber Road in the east, Venetia et Histria in the south, and Raetia and the river Inn in the west, continued to be self-governed under a native prince or prefect until Claudius' reorganization of the Danubian lands in CE 43. After shifting the *regnum* Noricum's eastern border westward from the European Amber Road to the Alps, Claudius established the province of Noricum in its place. During the reign of Diocletian, the province was divided along the eastern Alpine watershed into Noricum Ripense, which encompassed the northern part of the province, and Noricum Mediterraneum, which encompassed the south, and added to the diocesis Pannoniarum. As a frontier province of the Empire, Noricum endured numerous incursions from the Germanic tribes that lived north of the Danube during the second and third centuries CE. The Marcomanni invaded in CE 168 and were not expelled by

Pertinax until CE 175. After a short period of stability, sporadic raids by the Alamanni, and later the Iuthungi, began in CE 235 and continued until peace was restored to the province ca. CE 274. At the beginning of the fifth century CE, Alaric attempted, unsuccessfully, to gain official control of the Norican provinces for his Gothic troops through negotiations with the Emperor. After a brief revolt in CE 430, the Norican provinces remained under Roman control until the Huns began a series of debilitating invasions in CE 455.

Important Dates

- 14 BCE The *regnum* Noricum becomes a Roman client kingdom
- CE 43 The Kingdom's eastern border is pushed westward; the Roman province of Noricum is established
- CE 168 The Marcomanni invade the province
- CE 175 Pertinax expels the Marcomanni; Noricum returns to Roman control
- CE 235 The Alamanni invade Noricum
- CE 274 The foreign tribes are driven out; peace is restored to the province
- CE 430 The Norican revolts begin
- CE 431 Aëtius pacifies Noricum
- CE 455 The Huns overrun Noricum Ripense and Noricum Mediterraneum

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Understanding the Collapse of the Roman Empire

When considering how the amount of surface area an empire controls affects its power, it becomes clear that the two values are neither reciprocal nor mutually exclusive,¹⁰⁸ but affect each other indirectly. During the crises of the third century CE, Rome was weak both internally and along the frontiers, but even at its lowest ebb, Rome still managed to control a considerable amount of territory in the west, almost 40%¹⁰⁹ of the total amount controlled at the height of the Western Empire¹¹⁰ at the beginning of the third century CE. In short, the amount of area controlled becomes one of many expressions of power.

At the beginning of its history, the Roman Empire appeared to have under its control, and at its disposal, an unlimited amount of resources.¹¹¹ Rome was not, however, able to manage its existing resources properly nor provide for its member states and maintain the *status quo* by continually expanding its borders. The necessity of frequent and regular expansion proved unsustainable and helped accelerate Rome's territorial losses instead, thereby precipitating its eventual decline as a major power in the Mediterranean. These losses were accompanied by less economic and occupational specialization as well as less sharing, trading and redistribution of resources throughout the Empire.¹¹² But while the loss of any one territory in particular cannot be fingered as the catalyst of Rome's subsequent losses nor indeed of its overall collapse, certainly the Battle of Hadrianopolis in CE 378 and the concessions made afterwards by Theodosius I to

¹⁰⁸ Taagepera. "Size and Duration of Empires: Growth-Decline Curves", 116.

¹⁰⁹ For calculation purposes, the 'crisis of the third century CE' has been reckoned at CE 261, the year in which not only was the most territory lost, but which also boasted the lowest amount of territory in the West under Rome's control throughout the entire third century CE.

¹¹⁰ Height in terms of surface area controlled.

¹¹¹ Tainter, 11.

¹¹² Tainter, 4.

the Visigoth tribes¹¹³ set a bad precedent for similar conflicts which arose later between Rome and other neighbouring foreign peoples. After the Germanic tribes breached the Rhine frontier in CE 406, Rome was forced to cede territory to the invaders in order to prevent further devastation in the provinces.¹¹⁴ The Visigoth and Vandal sack of Rome in CE 410 and 455, respectively, was another signal to rivals, new and old, that the Empire was no longer as strong as it purported to be. Later, Rome's systematic withdrawal from Britannia ca. CE 410,¹¹⁵ while not a military defeat *per se*, once again advertised Rome's weakening state to her opponents. Rome had finally become aware that not only had the Empire become overextended, but that it was also weak militarily. Withdrawing from Britannia, one of the Empire's most expensive¹¹⁶ territories, was Rome's eleventh-hour attempt to cut its losses and regain control of what, by that time, had become a hopeless situation. The Empire had doomed itself to eventual collapse¹¹⁷ by pursuing an expansionist policy beyond obtaining net resource benefits from its conquests.¹¹⁸ As

¹¹³ Rather than give up the contested land or engage in battle again, Rome may have attempted to incorporate the Visigoths into the Empire as a way of disguising the fact that the territory was now no longer under its control. It is more likely, however, that the incorporation of foreign tribes was allowed because Rome considered it to be beneficial for taxation, defensive, and peacekeeping purposes. For a comprehensive analysis of Rome's frontier policy as it relates to the accommodation of foreign tribes, see Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, AD 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

¹¹⁴ For analyses of the land settlements between Rome and some of the invading tribes, as well as their implications for the Roman world, see Halsall, pages 220-242, and Peter Heather, pages 107-175, in "Goths and Romans, 332-489". *Oxford Historical Monographs*. Ed. M. H. Keen et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). In addition, on pages 71-83 in "Goths and Romans, 332-489", Heather gives an overview of the extant ancient authors that describe the Gothic invasions, including Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, and Jordanes (*Getica*).

¹¹⁵ For an analysis of the date of Rome's withdrawal from Britain, see footnote 45.

¹¹⁶ Britain was expensive to administer on account of its distance from Rome and the related military cost of defence. The province was also poor in terms of resources – relative to richer provinces like Aegyptus – thus creating an overall negative net benefit for Rome.

¹¹⁷ A representative example of a scholar who points out Rome's fragility is historian Arnold J. Toynbee who argues in *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939-1961) that the Roman Imperial era was marked by a steady decay of its institutions and from its very inception, was unsustainable. Tainter is often thought of as belonging to the same school of thought, however he further suggests that almost every complex society is subject to collapse as a result of diminishing marginal returns on its investments in complexity.

¹¹⁸ 'Net benefit' can be defined as the cost of the campaign, including military operations and destruction of local capital, minus the acquired resources from the conquered territory, be it slaves or the capacity for taxation.

misfortune befell Rome, several ancient authors, including Polybius¹¹⁹ and Cyprian, used an intuitive biological model of growth and decay to explain the Empire's fallibility and inherently transient nature. Cyprian asserted that because Rome was aging, it could not be expected to flourish in the same way, and with the same strength, as it had when it was in its prime since "omnia orta occident et aucta senescent, et infirmentur fortia, et magna minuantur, et cum infirmata et diminuta fuerint, finiantur". (*Apologia ad Demetrianum*. 3)

While the general trend of declining marginal returns can be identified and traced throughout the Western Empire, it is most pronounced in the province of Britannia. According to Appian, the heavy cost of defending the island was not easily compensated for by the province's own capacity for production because the province itself was unprofitable to the Romans, even though its borders encompassed the better and larger part of the island. (*Praef.* 5)¹²⁰ Strabo further cautioned against establishing a Roman province in Britain, claiming that the cost to garrison the island alone may exceed not only the amount of tax that could potentially be extracted from the citizenry, but also the revenue *already* generated from the tariffs imposed by Rome on all imports to, and exports from, the island. (2.5.8 and 4.5.3)¹²¹ Nevertheless, Rome was determined to control and exploit the reputed wealth¹²² of Britain. Much of Britain's mineral

¹¹⁹ See frontispiece.

¹²⁰ "καὶ τὸν βόρειον ὠκεανὸν ἐς τὴν Βρεττανίδα νῆσον περάσαντες, ἠπειροῦ μεγάλης μείζονα, τὸ κράτιστον αὐτῆς ἔχουσιν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, οὐδὲν τῆς ἄλλης δεόμενοι· οὐ γὰρ εὐφορὸς αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν οὐδ' ἦν ἔχουσιν."

¹²¹ "πλέον γὰρ ἐκ τῶν τελῶν δοκεῖ προσφέρεισθαι νῦν ἢ ὁ φόρος δύναται συντελεῖν, ἀφαιρουμένης τῆς εἰς τὸ στρατιωτικὸν δαπάνης τὸ φρουρησὸν καὶ φορολογῆσον τὴν νῆσον" and "ὥστε καὶ φόρους ἀπάγεσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν, εἰς ἴσον δὲ καθίσταται ἂν τὸ ἀνάλωμα τῆ στρατιᾶ τοῖς προσφερομένοις χρήμασιν: ἀνάγκη γὰρ μειοῦσθαι τὰ τέλη φόρων ἐπιβαλλομένων, ἅμα δὲ καὶ κινδύνους ἀπαντᾶν τινὰς βίας ἐπαγομένης"

¹²² British exports included copper, lead, gold, silver, tin, iron, pearls, and hunting dogs. Sheppard Frere. "Britannia: A History of Roman Britain". *History of the Provinces of the Roman Empire*. Ed. Donald Dudley et al. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967) 45 and Vanessa Collingridge. *Boudica: The Life of Britain's Legendary Warrior Queen*. (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006) 63.

wealth, however, lay in the mountainous regions and required greater effort to extract.¹²³ In time, the true value of Britannia to the Empire manifested,

in its corn lands, which produced an exportable surplus, in the leather and woollen products of its herds and flocks, and in its overflowing manpower, which Rome could put to good use in her armies on other frontiers.¹²⁴

New agricultural,¹²⁵ industrial,¹²⁶ architectural,¹²⁷ and urban¹²⁸ advancements aimed at increasing productivity were developed during the late second and early third centuries CE under the Severan dynasty. Indeed, the general policy of the Severan Emperors was motivated, in no small way, by “a desire to strengthen the productive powers of the Empire and to achieve a balance between revenue and expenditure”.¹²⁹ Although the proliferation of such successful advancements characterized the Roman occupation of Britain, the Severan Emperors were unable to permanently improve the fragile British economy. As troops began to be withdrawn from Britannia between CE 383 and 407,¹³⁰ the defense of the province became evermore the responsibility of the local residents and exemplified the deterioration of Rome’s military power across the Empire.¹³¹

¹²³ Frere, 4-5. See ‘Low-Hanging Fruit’ principle, footnote 15.

¹²⁴ Frere, 5. Agricultural production and trade from mineral extraction, in particular from tin mines in Cornwall, were Britannia’s primary sources of revenue.

¹²⁵ E.g., farms increased in size, new crops, primarily used by the Roman army, were planted, new wells dug, and animal husbandry expanded.

¹²⁶ E.g., hydraulic mining, which facilitated large-scale production and exploitation in the mining industry.

¹²⁷ E.g., the construction of baths and aqueducts.

¹²⁸ E.g., the construction of a network of roads and sewers.

¹²⁹ Applebaum, 145.

¹³⁰ Troops were withdrawn not only by the Emperor for the defense of Italy, but also by usurpers (e.g., Magnus Maximus) seeking to support their claim. Frere, 360-365.

¹³¹ Another noteworthy example of the effect that the dissolution of Rome’s military power had on regular provincial administrative occurred in Noricum. Before Roman dominion in the province ceased, garrisons were maintained at the expense of the central government in Rome. Following the deterioration of Roman administration and military control in the fifth century CE, one Roman garrison remained in the town of Batavis, yet its soldiers were expected, or left with no choice but, to collect their pay themselves by travelling to Italy: “Per idem tempus, quo Romanum constabat Imperium, multorum milites oppidorum pro custodia limitis publicis stipendiis alebantur; qua consuetudine desinente simul militares turmae sunt deletae cum limite, Batauino utcumque numero perdurante: ex quo perrexerant quidam ad Italiam extremum stipendium commilitonibus allaturi, quos in itinere peremptos a

By exposing the dissolution of Rome's power in the Mediterranean, such pivotal events in Rome's history also may have fostered an otherwise forgotten and stifled sense of valour and fearlessness amongst its adversaries as well as within its own population that became the inspiration behind subsequent incursions from without, as well as rebellions from within.¹³² Such endeavours consistently challenged existing Roman rule. No single event, however, from Rome's history can be positively labeled as the sole impetus for the final disintegration of the Western Roman Empire in CE 476. Instead, the best criterion for discerning the why and wherefore of Rome's failure is the combination of the aforementioned economic, political, environmental, and social factors.

barbaris nullus agnouerat". (Eugippius. *Vita sancti Severini*. 20) The garrison was nothing more than a token of Imperial presence in the region and illustrates the soldiers' continued financial dependence on the central government, as they had no means of collecting tax locally or of generating revenue for themselves. As no benefit to the centre is evident, Noricum has been excluded from surface area calculations despite the garrison's presence in Batavis. For a fuller description of life in Noricum during the Germanic invasions of the mid-fifth century CE, see Ward-Perkins, pages 17-20.

¹³² For example, Boudica led a short-lived, but highly disruptive, uprising in Britannia, the Jewish population executed several successful revolts against Roman rule in Iudaea, and Zenobia of Palmyra effectively conquered many of Rome's eastern provinces, including Aegyptus and Syria-Palaestina.

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