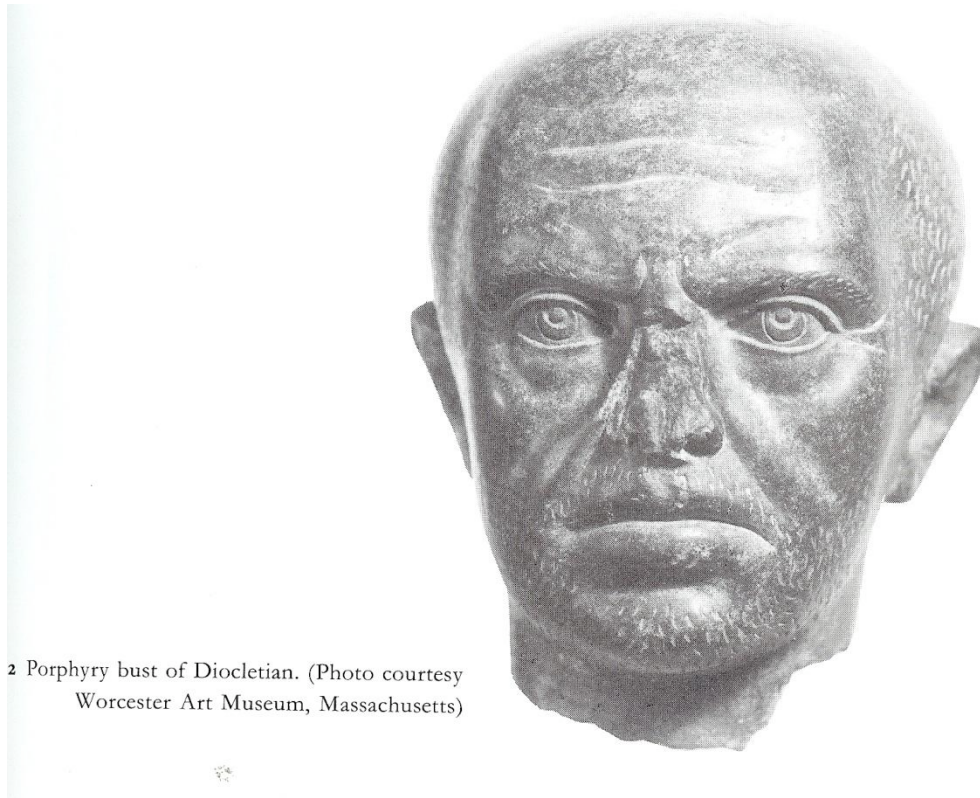


DIOCLETIAN



2 Porphyry bust of Diocletian. (Photo courtesy Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts)

Thesis:

In the 300's the city of Constantinople was founded and would become the new Rome. Although it was Constantine who founded this city, it was really the reforms that Diocletian implemented which led the ground work for Constantinople.

Sources:

Barnes, T. D. (1982). *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

- A secondary source which was written in order to argue dates and facts which are assumed about this time period. The author lays out a time line that generally shows at what time Historians think things happened. This book focus more on the timeline of Emperors and of their administration. This book tries not to draw conclusions. The limitations is that the author often notes that a lot of these dates cannot be proven.

Corcoran, S. (2008). Diocletian. In A. A. Barrett, *Lives of the Caesars*. MA, USA: Blackwell Publishing.

- A secondary source that directly pinpoints events of Diocletian's life. He references his dates and tries to use primary sources when he can. The author tells when he is not sure of the facts and when there might be multiple versions of the truth. This author specializes on Diocletian.

Diehl, C. (1969). *History of the Byzantine Empire*. New York: AMS Press.

- A secondary source which tries to give a history of the Byzantium Empire. He tries to give a general knowledge of that time period and is not trying to give a factual historical account. The author is summarizing things which happened in that time period to give the reader a general understanding of what happened. This book is a translation of the original book which was written in French.

Lenski, N. (2008). Constantine. In A. A. Barrett, *Lives of the Caesars*. MA, USA: Blackwell Publishing.

- A secondary source that directly pinpoints events of Diocletian's life. He references dates and tries to use primary sources when he can. The author tells when he is not sure if something is a fact or when there might be multiple versions of the truth. This author specializes in late antiquity but not Rome or Byzantine directly. He takes a western perspective in his writing.

Mango, C. (1984). *Byzantium and its Image*. London: Variorum Reprints.

- A secondary source which is a collection of eighteen studies. The author is trying to paint a picture of life in the Byzantine time period and is not trying to give a historical summary of events. The author states that there are still many things we do not know about this time period.

Southern, P. (2001). *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine*. New York: Routledge.

- A secondary source which gives a summary of historical events which took place between Severus's rule up to Constantine's rule. This book gives a historical account but does not reference where the information is obtained. Once again the author states that dates, times, and even places can be hard to pinpoint because of the lack of historical documents of that time. The book uses primary sources to try and determine dates.

Williams, S. (1985). *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. London: B T Batsford Ltd.

- A secondary source which details how Diocletian took over a broken Empire and fixed it. The author wrote this book well after the fact and uses resources which are also written well after the fact. The author writes the book in a summative way without a lot of references to sources.

Explore Byzantium 2003. Retrieved on February 24, 2010 at: <http://byzantium.seashell.net.nz/index.php>

- This is an online secondary source produced by Chris Ambrose. It is a collected of articles, maps, images, timelines and links which the author has assembled for general educational purposes. It is easy to read, very accessible and contains a wide range of information. The drawback to this particular source is the limited information about the author and the sources that he uses to compile this site.

Wilkes, J.J. *Diocletian's Palace, Split: Residence of a Retired Roman Emperor*. Short Run Press Ltd., Great Britain, 1993.

- This book is a secondary source of information particularly about the retirement palace of Diocletian. There is a thorough introduction to Diocletian's life, which is helpful. He draws on the sources of early writers such as Lactantius, who was a Christian writer. It is noted through

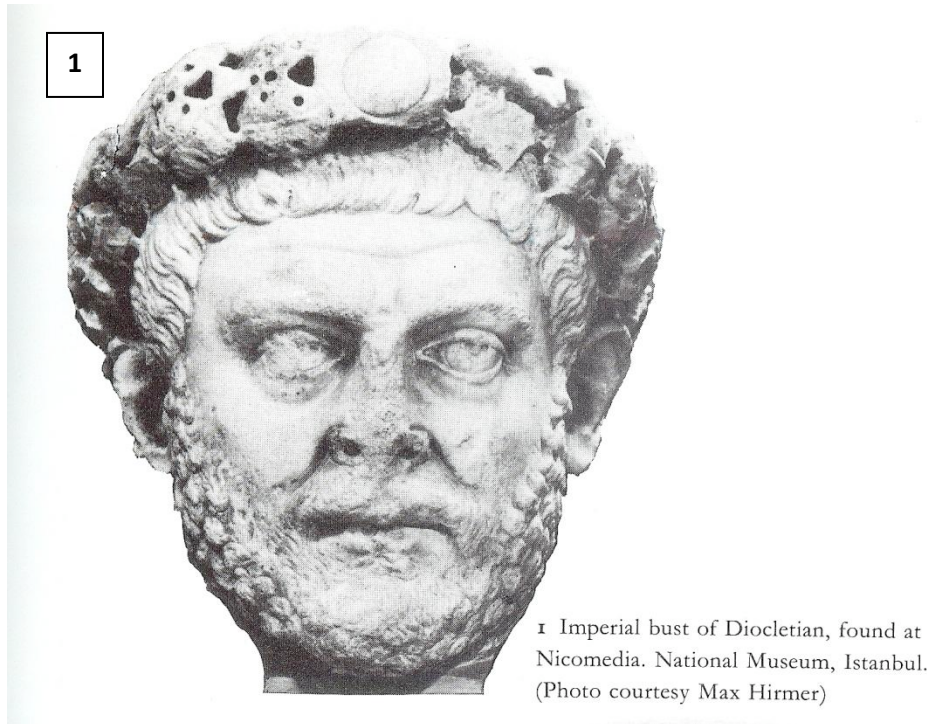
the book that his perspective, particularly around the persecution of the Christians during Diocletian's life, may be subject to bias.

Pictures Sources:

1. Williams, S. (1985). *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. London: B T Batsford Ltd.
2. Found on the site: <http://www.fpa.ysu.edu/~slsmith/ecbyzwebpage/lectures.html> Crisis of the Third Century: Art of the Late Empire to Constantine.
3. Found where. www.ancient-art.com/images/rc1274.jpg Image may be subject to copyright. Below is the image at: www.ancient-art.com/roman4.htm.
4. Southern, P. (2001). *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine*. New York: Routledge.
5. Southern, P. (2001). *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine*. New York: Routledge.
6. Williams, S. (1985). *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. London: B T Batsford Ltd.
7. The Plataian Fragment of the Edict of Diocletian. Theodor Mommsen. *The American Journal of Archaeology and the History of Fine Arts*, Vol. 7, No. ½. (Mar- June, 1981), 54-64.
8. Found on the site: <http://www.fpa.ysu.edu/~slsmith/ecbyzwebpage/lectures.html> Crisis of the Third Century: Art of the Late Empire to Constantine.
9. Williams, S. (1985). *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*. London: B T Batsford Ltd.

Discussion:

Diocletian's Rise to Power



- Diocletian arose to power under the shadow of suspicion. Servus, the Emperor before Diocletian died leaving those of power to fight to be emperor. Numerianus was one of

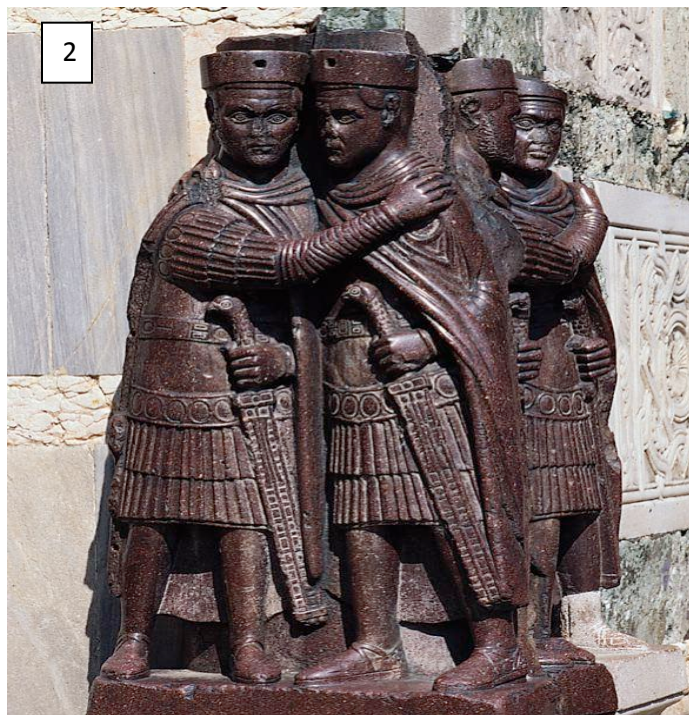
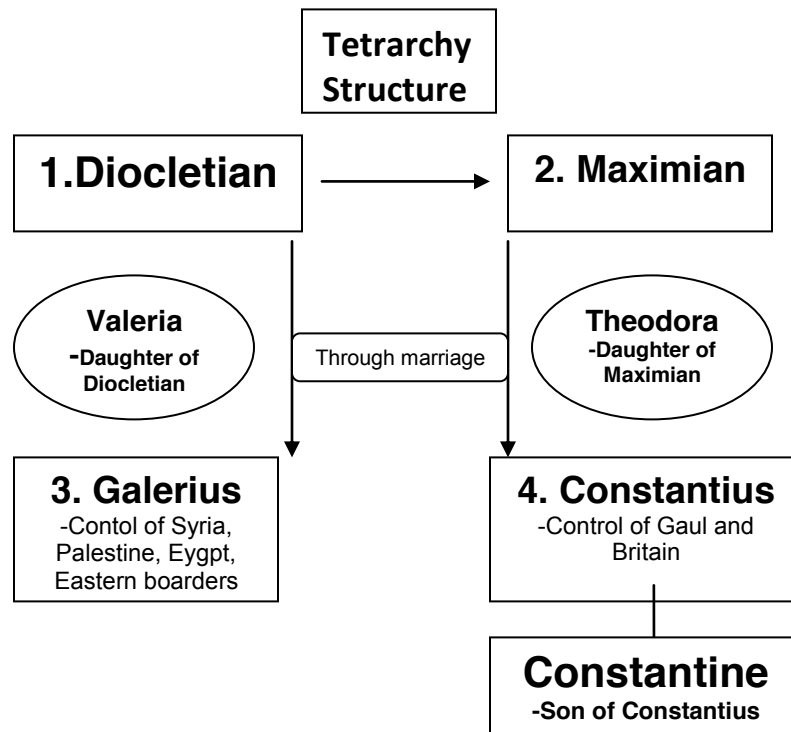
these people, but was murdered leaving the road to being Emperor open for Diocletian. (Southern, 2001). It is not known whether or not he was involved in the plot to kill Numerianus, he did however condemn the doer, Aper, to death, killing him with his own hands in front of his army. (Southern, 2001).

- Allegedly there was a prophecy made by a wise woman in Gaul, that he would become Emperor after killing his boar. (Southern, 2001).
- Unlike his competitors, Diocletian promised liberality to the people, therefore they supported him against his rivals. After the death of Numerianus there were three men fighting to be the one ruler. (Southern, 2001). He let the two men fight it out and then fought the winner. With public support he convinced one of Julianus' officers to kill Julianus and then rewarded him with land and title. (Southern, 2001).
- From the start of his reign, Diocletian had a new vision for the empire and for Rome.

Diocletian's Reform

Administrative Reform

- When Diocletian took power he set his eyes on fixing a Roman Empire which was financially strapped, deteriorating, and eroding from the outside in. "The first half of the third century was a time of difficulty and disruption marked by war, plague, inflation, economic collapse, and the decline of cities." (Barrett, 2008) It is not clear whether he had a vision in mind when he started his reform or if he was just making decisions as he went.
- First priority was to re-establish internal law and order in the provinces, and restore the frontiers of the Empire. (Southern, 2001).
- Second he would need generals to carry out orders and trust them to deal with issues of the territory. (Southern, 2001).
- Third, there was a history of Emperors without sons who would adapt one to become their heir. Diocletian appointed his fellow soldier Marcus Aurelius Maximianus as his Caesar, who could share rule and then carry on for him. (Barnes, 1982).
- From the start of his rule Diocletian decided that he no longer wanted to be involved with Rome. As far as capitals Rome was not the safest city, it had been successfully attacked a couple of times. Diocletian also wanted to get away from the senators and governors which resided there. He wanted to start separating the senate from the control of the empire. (Southern, 2001). So, in 291 when Diocletian and Maximianus decided to celebrate their strengthened Empire, they held this party not in Rome, but in Milan. (Southern, 2001). Rome was no longer the center of the Empire; it was so out of the way that the roads sometimes dangerous, communication became difficult. Therefore Diocletian decided that nerve center of the government would be where ever the Emperor was. (Southern, 2001). In 293 he split the empire into 4 and appointed two more Caesars. Constantine would be the son of one of these men. (Southern, 2001). This was not a normal division, the goal was each man would reside in an area and go where he was needed within his area. The four worked cooperatively to fight wars and fix the empire. Diocletian remained the head of the four. (Southern, 2001). Diocletian eventually retired to the country side only to see the tetrarchy his empire thrived on fade as personalities' clashed. (Barnes, 1982). This division of four rulers was known as a Tetrarchy.



- “The principal ‘tetrarchic capitals’ were: in Gaul, Trier (capital of Constantius); in Italy, Milan (seat of Maximian) and Aquileia; in the Balkans, Sirmium on the Sava, not far from the vital Danube Frontier, but also Thessalonica (Galerius’ Choice); and in the east,

Nicomedia (Diocletian's favourite), Antioch (nearest to the Persian front), and Caesarea (popular with the Caesar Maximinus from 305)" (Corcoran, 239).

Financial Reform:

- One of the first things Diocletian did was created a budget. He wanted to look at what was incoming and what was outgoing. (Barnes, 1982).
- Making another move which would only shame Rome, he decreed that Italy would pay taxes, making it equal to its provinces. Only the city of Rome was exempt from this taxation. (Barnes, 1982).
- Diocletian created the iugum, a system to judge how much crop farmers should be getting. It considered things like soil quality, and types of crops. So farmers who lived in areas with bad soil and low irrigation would pay fewer taxes than those who lived in areas with great soil and high irrigation. (Williams, 1985).
- He also considered how many people lived in a house. For every male head in a household, they would be marked one caput. For every woman in the household they were marked a half caput. The total amount of caputs would be taken into consideration when paying taxes. (Williams, 1985).
- In the years prior to Diocletian succession, the coinage system had fallen into decay. Coins did not have a high content of precious metals. The weak coinage was driving prices higher and higher. In order to stop prices from increasing Diocletian reformed the coinage. He brought back three metal coins and issued better qualities coins getting rid of the weaker ones. (Williams, 1985).



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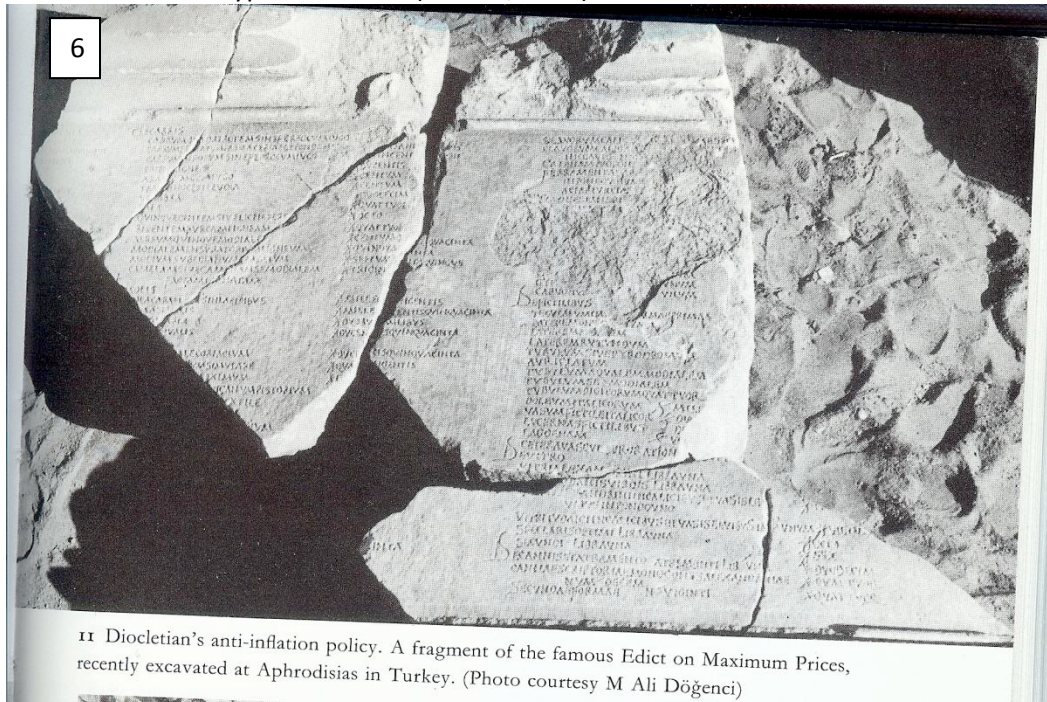


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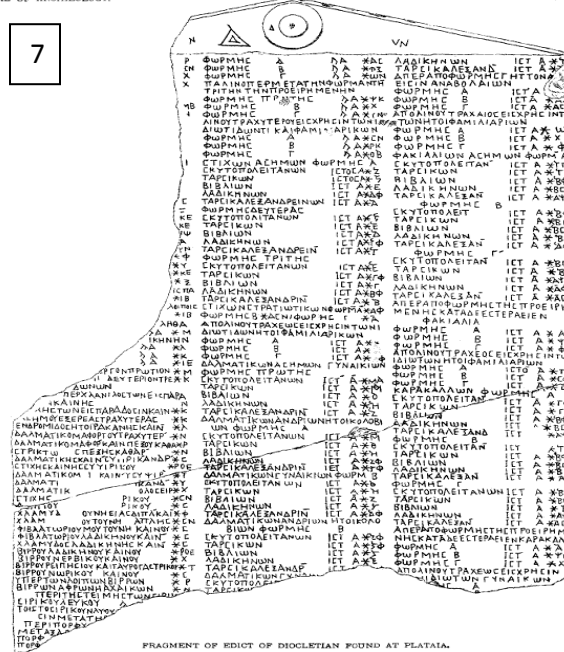


- Diocletian also created a fixed price system for common items which people purchased. (Barrett, 2008).
- A network of factories was created in order to produce arms, clothing, purple-dyed cloth and linen for both types of militia. (Barrett, 2008).

6



11 Diocletian's anti-inflation policy. A fragment of the famous Edict on Maximum Prices, recently excavated at Aphrodisias in Turkey. (Photo courtesy M Ali Döğenci)



- Store houses were constructed to hold purchased or requisitioned goods such as grain. (Barrett, 2008).
- In order to help businesses and trades, he identified trades and setup guilds for those trades. A guild is an association of like tradesmen. People would pick a skill and join the corresponding guild. Once there they could work on improving and strengthening their skills. These men could then teach these trades to their sons and when they were ready those sons could join the guilds. (Barrett, 2008).
- Diocletian took a closer look at business such as mines and quarries. In the past these business were often run by corrupt or self-serving individuals. By supervising their practices closer, Diocletian hoped that less would go to the individual and more to the public. (Barrett, 2008).
- In order to help track the budget and where money was going, Diocletian decreed that a census would take place every five years. (Williams, 1985).

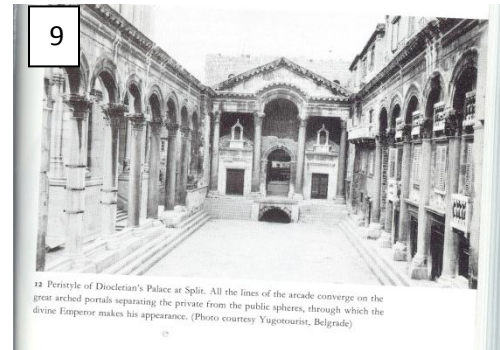
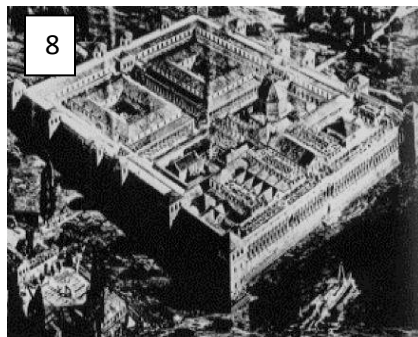
Army & Frontier Reform:

- Diocletian's vision for the army was to make them bigger, stronger, and most of all to have both a mobile field forces and stationary hard defence points. (Williams, 1985).
- Diocletian first wanted to increase the Roman army, not just for himself but also for those of the Tetrarchy. First, he added men to the army. Second, he decreased the size of a Roman Legion from 5000 men to 1000 men. (Southern, 2001). These smaller Legions were placed under control of generals with equestrian rank, called Duces. (Barrett, 2008) The four members of the Tetrarchy could use these soldiers when they needed them. (Williams, 1985).

- Opposite of Augustus he kept some of the army on the outer part of the provinces, instead of leaving them on the inner side of the provinces. This was to help settle the borders which were being threatened from surrounding peoples. (Barrett, 2008).
- Locations near critical frontiers or on major lines of communication became more regular imperial residences. They took the form of alternative capitals, furnished with monumental buildings. (Barrett, 2008).
- Forts on the frontiers were refurbished, strengthened and upgraded. (Southern, 2001).
- Farmhouses were included with the stationary hard defences in order to provide the soldiers with food and nourishment. (Williams, 1985).

Constantine's Rise to Power:

- In 304, Diocletian became very ill and returned to his palace to live. (Barrett, 2008). In May of 305, he decides to “lay aside his imperial robe” (Wilkes, 1993). It was very rare for emperors of this time to voluntarily give up their power. He retired, and lived at his palace in Split, until his death, perhaps in 311, although sources are not clear on the exact date.



- Upon retiring, Diocletian made Galerius an Augustus, and Maximin the Caesar. Maximin was a relative of Galerius. (Wilkes, 1993). At the same time, Maximian resigned his powers to Constantius, and appointed Severus as Caesar. However, this newly formed Tetrach did not last long, as there soon was to be great conflict between the newly appointed Caesars. (Barrett, 2008).
- Eventually, Constantine, who was the son of Constantius, became appointed as a Caesar and this marked the final collapse of the Tetrarchy (Wilkes, 1993). In attempt to rid the memory of Diocletian and Maximian's reign, he ordered that pictures of the two to be taken down, and the families of Galerius and Diocletian, including Diocletian's wife Prisca and daughter Valeria (widow of Galerius), were hunted down and killed (Wilkes, 1993).

Relation:

- The study of Diocletian's reign can be an exciting opportunity to explore several aspects of governance, including: comparing centralized verses decentralized governments, different styles of leadership, and relationships between members of government and civilian populations.

- The study of the Tetrarchy can be examined for the interpersonal relationships and conflicts which occurred, and this can easily be compared to relationship dynamics in a classroom or peer setting.
- The transition between the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine can be examined closely to consider the long-term development of societies in terms of values, traditions and customs.
- Impacts of Diocletian's reign on modern day systems:
 - Taking a census regularly to account for populations and taxation.
 - Idea of taxation based on per capita and quality of resources.
 - Imposing fixed prices on agricultural products to fix inflation.

Conclusion:

During Diocletian's rule he introduced reform that restructured and restored a dying empire. He brought stability to the borders and frontiers, and he reorganized the army businesses, finances, money, and most importantly brought in a working tetrarchy. Under his rule the people of Roman Empire were treated to a structured government and prosperous empire. It was Diocletian's rule which paved the way for Constantine to start a great city, the new Rome, Constantinople. If it was not for Diocletian and his reform policies there might not have been a capital to move.