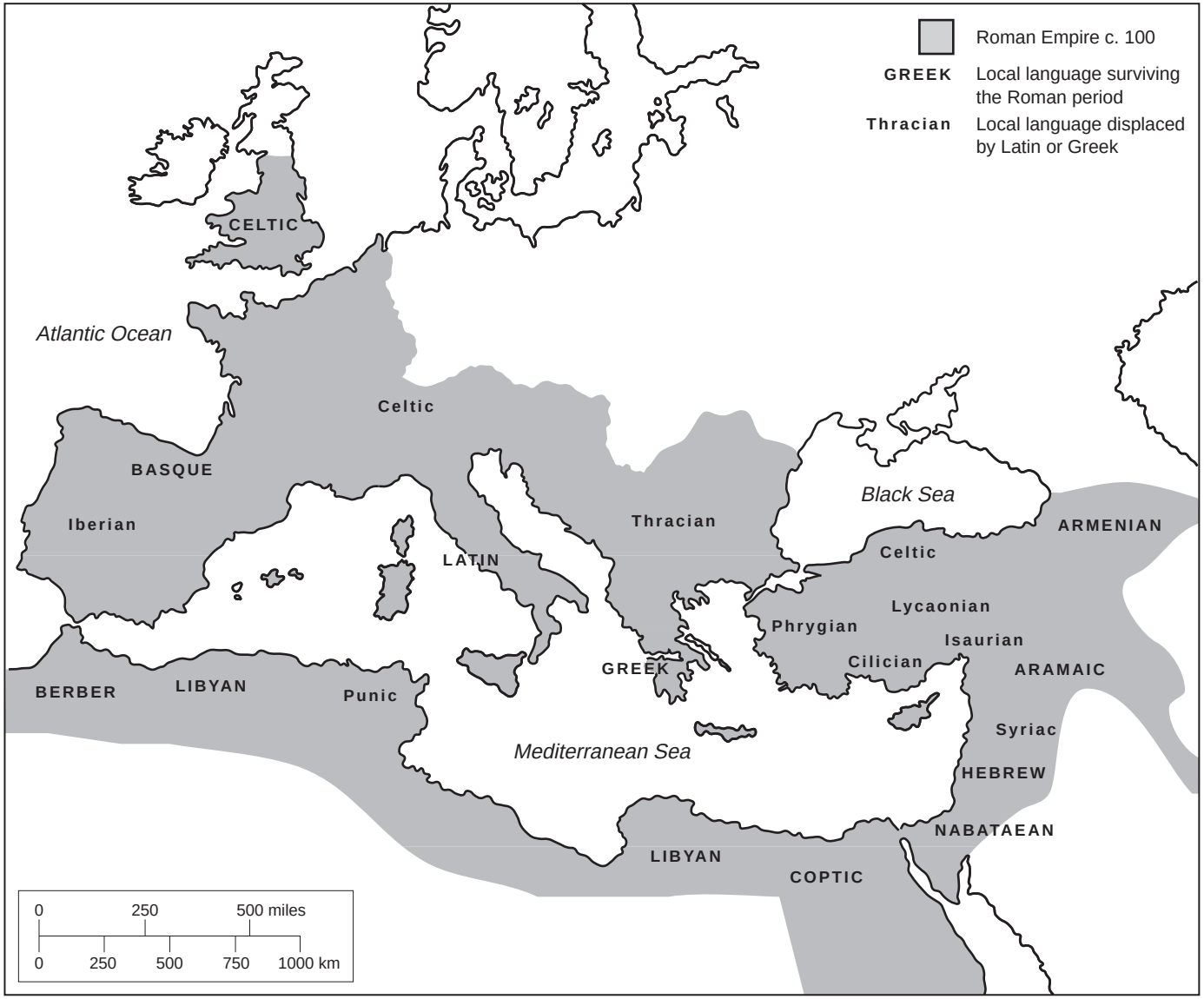
Languages of the Roman Empire 100 CE

Latin was the official language of the Roman Empire. Financial administrators, legal officers, and leading men of local communities used it throughout the area under Roman government.

The wealthy and educated classes of the empire often spoke Latin, but the majority of people continued to speak local languages such as Celtic, Coptic, and Aramaic.

In some areas, public monuments had bilingual inscriptions in Latin and the local language so that everybody could read them.

Some local languages died out completely during the Roman period and were replaced by Latin. An example is the Punic language of North Africa.

Latin had a lasting effect on the languages of Europe. Some modern European languages, such as French and Spanish, are very similar to Latin. English contains many words that come from Latin.