

## HIST287: Empire Transformed

### The Roman World in Late Antiquity



The Roman aristocrat Junius Bassus in a chariot, early fourth-century mosaic panel from the basilica of Junius Bassus, Esquiline Hill, Rome, now in Museo del Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome.

## THE BASICS

### Timetable

**Lectures:** Thursdays @ 11am-12pm, South Campus Teaching Hub Lecture Theatre 1.

**Seminar Group 1:** Thursdays @ 1pm-3pm, Weeks 2, 4, 7, 10 and 12, South Campus Teaching Hub Seminar Room 10.

**Seminar Group 2:** Fridays @ 3pm-5pm, Weeks 2, 4, 7, 10 and 12, South Campus Teaching Hub Seminar Room 10.

### Module Description

In this module, students will explore the history of the Roman Empire from the late third century to the late fifth century. They will consider the major transformations which reshaped the Roman world in this period: the massive expansion of the Roman state and the development of an autocratic ideology of power; the rise of the Christian church as a force in Roman society; and the influx of 'barbarian' warbands from beyond its northern frontiers which (perhaps!) heralded the end of the Western Roman Empire. Students will have the opportunity to consider how these big processes affected the lives of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean in this period, from the (supposedly) all-powerful emperor in his glittering court down to humble peasants in the Roman countryside, via corrupt bureaucrats, influential Roman matrons, and charismatic holy men.

### Content

The lecture programme (eleven 1-hour lectures) will introduce key themes in late Roman politics, society and culture: the reformation of the Roman Empire after the third-century crisis; the conversion of Constantine; the ideology and the practical workings of late Roman government; the households of the late Roman super-elite and the life courses of peasants and slaves; the rise of Christianity, with the invention of monasticism, controversial debates over orthodoxy, and conflict with adherents to traditional Greco-Roman religions ('pagans'); relations between barbarians and Romans across the frontiers of the empire, and barbarian settlement in the Roman West (the so-called 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire').

The seminar programme (five 2-hour seminars) will consist of class discussion and (in seminars 2-5) assessed class presentations on major problems in the study of the later Roman Empire, rooted in significant primary sources and case studies: the impact of the reign of Constantine; imperial power; Roman society; religious conflict; and the debate over the fall of Rome.

### Aims

To develop students' awareness of the transformations of the Roman Empire c. 250-500 CE.

To explore different ways to evaluate the impact of major historical processes on Roman society.

To introduce various forms of late ancient evidence and how they have been used as part of modern historiographical debates.

### Learning Outcomes

- ☐ \_An ability to read, analyse and reflect critically and contextually upon secondary evidence, including historical writings and the interpretations of historians.
- ☐ \_An understanding of the development of history as a discipline and an awareness of different historical methodologies.
- ☐ \_An understanding of key problems in the political, social, and cultural history of the later Roman Empire.

## TIMETABLE

### Lectures and Seminars

#### Schedule

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Week 1:        | Lecture: Transformations of the Roman World: Approaching Late Antiquity                      |
| Week 2:        | Lecture: Constantine<br><b>Seminar 1: The Roman Revolution of Constantine?</b>               |
| Week 3:        | Lecture: Imperial Power I: State and Society   |
| Week 4:        | Lecture: Imperial Power II: Ceremonial and Image Making<br><b>Seminar 2: Imperial Power</b>  |
| <b>Week 5:</b> | <b>READING WEEK</b>  |
| Week 6:        | Lecture: Religious Conflict I: Christianization  |
| Week 7:        | Lecture: Religious Conflict II: Orthodoxy and Heresy<br><b>Seminar 3: Religious Conflict</b> |
| Week 8:        | Lecture: A Trip to the Desert: Asceticism and Monasticism                                    |
| Week 9:        | Lecture: Late Roman Society I: Gender, Family, Life Course<br><b>EASTER VACATION</b>         |
| Week 10:       | Lecture: Late Roman Society II: Land and Labour<br><b>Seminar 4: Roman Society</b>           |
| Week 11:       | Lecture: Barbarians and Romans   |
| Week 12:       | Lecture: Decline and Fall?<br><b>Seminar 5: Barbarians and Romans</b>                        |

## Teaching and Learning Strategies

### Lecture and Seminar Preparation

For each seminar, you should read the source pack, plus at least TWO essays or articles of relevant modern historiography. The previous fortnight of lectures will introduce you to the pair of topics to be discussed in the seminar. The items of reading listed under each lecture are the most obvious pieces for you to look at to prepare for these seminars; you will particularly profit from them if read before that lecture.

Seminars will discuss key sources related to these themes, to help you get to grips with late Roman evidence, so you can deploy it in your coursework essays. Seminars 2-5 will include assessed presentations introducing these sources. The expectations for preparation on the part of presenters are listed below.

### Mutual Expectations

Attendance at lectures and seminars is compulsory. If you have a valid reason to miss a lecture/seminar (e.g. an illness or a family bereavement), you should get in touch with me to explain. You are responsible for catching up on work you have missed. I will be very happy to help you do so if you get in touch with me, but I will not chase you up.

For my part, I will respond to e-mails and queries as soon as I can (and certainly within 72 hours), and I strongly encourage you to come see me in office hours should you wish to discuss any aspect of the course and your own work for it.

Seminars are intended as an opportunity to **work together** to gain a better appreciation of a particular subject. This means doing the reading beforehand, coming to the session with questions and ideas to share with the rest of the group, and being **active** and **supportive** listeners when your classmates are offering their own contributions. If you have concerns about speaking in public for any reason, please come see me so that we can work out together how you can best participate.

### Assessment

#### (1) 5-minute Presentation (15%)

For this assessment, you will give a 5-minute presentation in the seminar in week 4, 7, 10 or 12. There will be an opportunity to discuss the format of this presentation in the first seminar in week 2. I will also ask all presenters to see me in my office hours before their presentation (or organize an appointment to discuss it).

**NB. Your presentation should have a powerpoint OR a handout. This should include a bibliography. I expect you to send your slides/handout to me at [robin.whelan@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:robin.whelan@liverpool.ac.uk) by noon on the day before your presentation, or you will receive a mark penalty.**



## PRESENTATIONS

### SEMINAR 2

#### PART 1: Petitioning the Emperor

Presentation (1): The Romanus Affair: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 28.6.

Presentation (2): Porphyry of Gaza, Eudoxia and Theodosius II: Mark the Deacon, *The Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, sections.

#### PART 2: Presenting the Emperor

Presentation (3): Constantius II's *adventus* into Rome, 357CE: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 16.10.

Presentation (4): Julian's *adventus* into Constantinople on his accession, 360 CE: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22.1-2.

### SEMINAR 3

#### PART I: Christian and Pagans: The Emperor Julian

Presentation (5): Julian's religious reforms: *Letters* 84 and 89.

Presentation (6): Julian's Law on Christian Teachers: Julian, *Letter* 61c.

Presentation (7): How do you solve a problem like Arius? Documents from the early Arian Controversy (from Frend and Stevenson, *New Eusebius*)

Presentation (8): Creating Arian Heresy: Athanasius, *First Oration against the Arians*

### SEMINAR 4

#### PART I: Christianity and Marriage (or not)

Presentation (9): *The Life of Melania the Younger*, chs 1-19.

Presentation (10): Jerome, *Letter* 23 to Eustochium

#### Part II: Rural Patronage

Presentation (11): Libanius, *Oration* 47 'On Protection Systems'

Presentation (12): Salvian, *On the Governance of God*, book 5, chs 4-9.

### SEMINAR 5

#### Part I: DEBATE: 'The movements of various northern barbarian groups into the western Roman Empire in the late fourth and fifth centuries are best understood as...'

Presentation (13): Migrations

Presentation (14): Invasions

Presentation (15): Roman Civil Wars

#### Part II: Sidonius and the Goths

Presentation (16): Sidonius on Theoderic, *Ep.* 1.2 to Agricola.

Presentation (17): Sidonius on Euric: *Epp.* 4.17, 7.6.

## Source Presentations

This presentation is intended to be an exercise in source criticism. To prepare, you should read BOTH the sections of this author/text included in the source pack, AND the key works on that author/text included in Reading Lists @ Liverpool. You will be marked on your ability to identify, summarize, and communicate both (a) the key features which bear on how we interpret these sources and (b) their significance for how modern historians have reconstructed key aspects of life in the later Roman Empire. In practice, that means that your presentation should include the following:

### (a) Basic details about the source

When and where is it from?

**For the texts:** who wrote it? What do we know about them? What kind of genre is it? What are the contents: what is it about/what happens in it/what events does it describe?

There may not be straightforward answers to all of these questions! Part of source criticism is also being aware of the *limitations* of what we know, and weighing up different possible interpretations. Depending on how controversial these various features are—and how significant they are for part (b)—you may want to spend some time discussing and assessing these options.

### (b) The significance of this source

What can this author or text tell us about the key issues under consideration?

How have previous historians used it? What are its limitations?

Discussing the source's significance will require you to make **choices**. I do not expect you to be comprehensive in your treatment (in 5 minutes)! But this is exactly what historians do: using their judgement to **select** what they think is most salient in a source, while keeping in mind its overall contents/context/purpose.

**NB. Try to avoid saying anything in this presentation that could be said about any source.** ('It is biased'; 'it only presents an elite/religious view'; 'it is only one perspective'). Instead, try to be as *specific* as possible, show the particular aspects of bias or perspective at play here, and relate them to the big question we're discussing.

For example, instead of 'X is clearly biased/provides a limited perspective because he's a pagan':

(1) *'X's criticism of the emperor for his greed here is framed in terms of his policies towards temples, in a way which is clearly tied to X being a pagan. We obviously have to be a bit skeptical as to whether this reflected wider opinion at the imperial court—especially given we have Texts written by the Christian bishop, Y, and even the pagan senator, Z, which praise the emperor for remitting taxes.'*

Or, instead of 'A is only one example, so he's obviously limited':

(2) *'A's account of his own childhood in his autobiography is revealing of both the sorts of emotional connections which could form in late Roman families, and of the strong sense of the dominance of the Roman father. But his perspective on his*

*childhood is also influenced by his later conversion to Christianity, which leads him to criticism of his father for sending him on the wrong path. Historians have thus wondered about how representative A's family is: both in terms of the potential psychological (or even psychosexual!) aspects of his reflections on his family, and because of the theological messages he is trying to convey.'*

**The Upshot:** remember this is a **5 minute** presentation. I will be looking to reward you for doing **some** of these things very well, rather than looking to punish you for **not doing everything**.

## **(2) 2500-word Essay (85%)**

Essay questions will be released at the end of week 8. There will be an opportunity to discuss what is expected in the lecture on Monday of week 9. You will find reading lists on relevant topics on Reading Lists @ Liverpool (see below). I expect you to read at least SEVEN distinct items from one of these lists for your essay, including at least ONE primary text. The essay deadline is **Monday 13 May 2019, to hand in via Turnitin.**

Markers will take the word limit into account when assigning grades, but there is no standard penalty for failing to meet the word limit. For example, essays that exceed the wordcount will normally not have been edited properly, or will reflect weaknesses in project design. Essays that do not reach the wordcount will normally be missing opportunities to include important material. Such flaws will inevitably reduce the mark awarded.

You should also ensure that the essay is properly referenced and that you avoid plagiarism (which does not have to be intentional). If you have concerns, see the following:

<https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/referencing>  
[https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/ld.php?content\\_id=31383417](https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/ld.php?content_id=31383417)  
[https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix\\_L\\_cop\\_assess.pdf](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix_L_cop_assess.pdf)

## **Essay Writing Advice**

### **(i) Introduction**

An introduction can be the key to an excellent essay. I would usually use an introductory paragraph mainly to:

- point to the main issues and academic debates raised by the question
- indicate what your main argument/ thesis/ interpretation will be.
- briefly indicate the main stages that your analysis will take.

You are likely to produce a more impressive essay if you let the reader know right at the start what your line of inquiry or argument will be. Then you can discipline the whole essay by developing this argument in stages.

### **(ii) Thesis/argument**

- Your argument/thesis does not have to be an extreme position. In some cases you might even have as your central argument the assertion that the

state of play in the relevant field of research does not yet allow clear conclusions. But to maintain this position— just as to support any other—you will need to evaluate evidence carefully as you develop the essay.

- If you take one side in a debate, you should not only show the strength of your argument but should pay attention to the opposing arguments and point out its/their weaknesses.
- Also, don't just name-drop historians and assert that they are right or wrong: give supporting evidence for your judgement. Don't just summarise what some academics have written: evaluate what they have said.

### **(iii) Paragraph construction**

- The first sentence of each paragraph (the topic sentence) should be very clearly focused. It should usually make an important assertion, or should signpost a significant stage in your analysis.
- The rest of the paragraph should develop this assertion or stage. Everything in the paragraph should be related to the topic stated in the topic sentence. If you start to discuss some new topic, it is time to start a new paragraph.
- The line of argument in your essay should emerge clearly when you proceed from one topic sentence to the next. When you have written a draft of your essay, read only the topic sentences and make sure that your argument becomes evident as you read from one topic sentence to the next. Everything should have a place, with paragraphs sustaining a coherent logic and the sentences within a paragraph developing from each other.
- Short and long paragraphs often betray undeveloped thoughts or poorly-structured arguments. A paragraph is a unit of thought, not distance, but look out for long or short paragraphs and consider whether they need reworking.

### **(iv) Conclusion**

- The conclusion should take the reader back to your overall thesis. Take stock of the main evidence that you have used to support your thesis, and make the strength of your argument clear.

### **(v) Footnotes**

- Footnotes should be used to cite books and articles to which you are referring (even though these sources are also listed in your bibliography). Ideally, where you refer to a particular argument from within a book or article, you should footnote the relevant page(s) from the source used.
- Footnotes should also be used to show the source of quoted material. They can also be used to show where support for a particular observation or claim can be found. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively.

### **(vi) Bibliography**

Include a bibliography. See the School of History's Undergraduate Student Guide.

### **Developing Your Writing Skills**

The ability to write clearly, persuasively, and concisely is one of the most valuable skills you will develop over the course of your history degree. Writing can be hard



but writing is also a skill that can be developed through practice and careful attention. Each time you write, edit, or proofread a piece of work you are developing your writing skills. That said, you will also benefit from working on your writing skills beyond the repeated practice of essay writing. You may find, for example, that there are some issues that get flagged up repeatedly in your feedback. These might include issues with clarity, sentence or paragraph structure, word choice, conciseness, etc.

Here are some of the resources available at the University of Liverpool that can help you to improve your writing skills. It is never too early or too late to start working on your writing skills.

### **Writing@Liverpool**

Writing@Liverpool is a free service to help boost the academic skills of students. You will work with Writing Tutors to improve your writing skills. The Writing Tutors are experienced academic writers who are specially trained in tutoring students in 1:1 and in online contexts. If you think you would benefit from some additional support in analysing questions, becoming more critical, planning and structuring writing or developing proof-reading techniques then you can book a session here: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/humanities-and-social-sciences/writing/>

### **Knowhow**

KnowHow offers a wide range of academic skills materials and workshops to help you gain the most from your studies. They have a section dedicated to academic writing with online materials that you can work through at your own pace. They also run regular workshops on a wide range of issues. For the full range of support available through Knowhow, see here: <https://student.liverpool.ac.uk/advice-and-guidance/knowhow>

For upcoming sessions, see here: <https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/knowhow>

### **Skills4Study**

Skills4Study Campus is an interactive resource for developing student study skills. The service is free, but you will need to register. It provides online courses on a wide range of skills that you will develop as part of your History degree, including writing and note-taking. <https://libguides.liverpool.ac.uk/skills4study>

### **Reading Lists**

The module's Reading Lists @ Liverpool page has a series of reading lists in three categories:

- (1) background/further reading to accompany the lectures and set up the seminars
- (2) further reading on the texts in the source pack
- (3) general reading lists on specific topics

Each seminar will have a source pack, which will be available on VITAL. The texts in these packs will also be excellent starting points for your assessed essay.

The general reading lists are (in the first place) to guide you in writing your assessed essays. Everything on these lists could potentially help you to answer a question I set. Start with the general reading, and then follow your interests and your intuition as to what you need to answer the Q. I have often given short remarks to help you find the most useful reading, and to see how the different pieces in a section relate to one another. (NB there are lots of different ways to answer these questions!)

These lists will also help you to explore topics of interest in greater depth as the semester goes on. In that regard, you may wish to dip into reading on one theme or period before the questions are released.

## WEEK 1

### LECTURE: Transformations of the Roman World: Approaching Late Antiquity

#### Topics

How the course will work

Late antiquity and the later Roman Empire as a period

Entry routes and key themes: autocracy, centralization, Christianization, barbarians, and Decline and Fall.

#### Reading:

Gillian Clark, *Late Antiquity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2011), ch. 1 ('what and when is late antiquity?')

Averil Cameron, 'The "Long" Late Antiquity: A Twentieth-Century Model?', in T. P. Wiseman (ed.) *Classics in Progress: Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 165-91.

## WEEK 2

### LECTURE: Constantine

#### Essential Reading

Noel Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics* (Philadelphia, PA, 2016), introduction.

#### Questions

What was the significance of Constantine's conversion to Christianity for the early fourth-century Roman Empire?

Is Constantine's religious affiliation the key to understanding his reign? Or is he best understood as a more traditional Roman emperor?

### SEMINAR 1: The Roman Revolution of Constantine?

For this seminar, you will be divided into four groups, who will get sources providing differing perspectives on the reign of Constantine. You will read the source and the accompanying essay or journal article assigned to your group, and make notes to answer the following questions.

(1) What does this source mark out as important about Constantine as emperor?

(2) How does this source deal with Constantine's religious affiliation?

In the seminar, your group will discuss your findings, before presenting the source and your conclusions collectively to the rest of the class. We will then discuss what to make of these different visions of Constantine, and how we as historians might put them together.

We will also discuss your assessed presentations for future seminars.

The following are the set chapters for each group. You may want to divide up the optional reading between you.

**Group 1: Selections from Eusebius, *Life of Constantine***

Averil Cameron, 'Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* and the Construction of Constantine', in Mark Edwards and Simon Swain (eds) *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 145-74.

**Group 2: The Arch of Constantine**

Noel Lenski, 'Evoking the Pagan Past: *Instinctu Divinitatis* and Constantine's Capture of Rome', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.2 (2008) 208-57. ([http://www.academia.edu/2489964/Evoking\\_the\\_Pagan\\_Past\\_Instinctu\\_Divinitatis\\_and\\_Constantines\\_Capture\\_of\\_Rome](http://www.academia.edu/2489964/Evoking_the_Pagan_Past_Instinctu_Divinitatis_and_Constantines_Capture_of_Rome))

**Group 3: The Orcistus and Hispellum Rescripts**

Noel Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics* (Philadelphia, PA, 2016), chs 4-5.

**Group 4: The Foundation of Constantinople**

Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine: Divine Emperor of A Christian Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012), ch. 2, pp. 000-000, 000-000.

**Week 3**

**LECTURE: Imperial Power I: State and Society**

Questions

What were the key structures of the late Roman state (family, court, bureaucracy, army)?

How did the expansion and centralization of the state from the late third century affect the power of the emperor and his subjects' experience of his power?

What were the practical limits on the emperor's (notionally absolute) authority?

Background Reading

Christopher Kelly, 'Emperors, Government, and Bureaucracy', in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History vol. 13: The Late Empire, AD 337-425* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 157-80.

Arnold H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Oxford, 1964), ch. 12.

Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), ch. 4.





(The Missorium of Theodosius I (378-395): a silver plate given to key officials of the emperor as a reward. Theodosius is flanked by his sons and military guards; an official performs the 'adoration of the purple' while receiving his office.)

## Week 4

### LECTURE: Imperial Power II: Ceremonial and Image Making

#### Questions

Why did late Roman regimes present emperors as godlike, and did anyone really buy it?

Why have historians become less skeptical about the significance of court ceremonial in the legitimation of imperial power?

What other media did regimes use to disseminate images of that power?

Why was the image of an emperor's female relatives crucial to his legitimacy?

#### Background Reading

Christopher Kelly, 'Emperors, Government, and Bureaucracy', in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History vol. 13: The Late Empire, AD 337-425* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 138-56.

Meaghan McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD367-455* (Oxford, 2013), ch. 1.

Lesley Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the

Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in Liz James (ed.) *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 52-75.



Gold coin (*solidus*) of Aelia Eudoxia, empress and wife of the Eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius (395-404).

## SEMINAR 2: Imperial Power

In this seminar, we will discuss the following topics. Read the sources in the pack, and take notes aimed at the following questions.

Essential Secondary Reading:

\*Christopher Kelly, 'Emperors, Government, and Bureaucracy', in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History vol. 13: The Late Empire, AD 337-425* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 138-80.

### PART 1: Petitioning the Emperor

Presentation (1): The Romanus Affair: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 28.6.

Presentation (2): Porphyry of Gaza, Eudoxia and Theodosius II: Mark the Deacon, *The Life of Porphyry of Gaza*, sections.

How do you access the emperor's power? What determines whether you're successful: why does one of these petitions succeed and the other fail? What do these stories tell us about how the state operated in the later Roman Empire?

### PART 2: Presenting the Emperor

Presentation (3): Constantius II's *adventus* into Rome, 357CE: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 16.10.

Presentation (4): Julian's *adventus* into Constantinople on his accession, 360 CE: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22.1-2.

What can these passages tell us about how these emperors sought to present themselves as legitimate rulers? Or about how their subjects viewed ceremonial

occasions? What is Ammianus' take on the impact of such occasions? Is he a reliable guide to them? How much do you think this ceremonial matters?

## WEEK 5

### Reading Week

This week would be a good time to read ahead for your assessed presentation, or read around a subject you find particularly interesting.

## Week 6

### LECTURE: Religious Conflict I: Christianization

#### Questions

What was the long-term impact of Constantine's conversion to Christianity on late Roman society?

How did Christian bishops and the imperial state seek to outlaw traditional Greco-Roman religion in the fourth century? Did that century see a conflict between Christianity and paganism?

#### Reading

Neil McLynn, 'Pagans in a Christian Empire', in P. Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 572-87.

Jaclyn Maxwell, 'Paganism and Christianization', in S. Johnson (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 849-75.

Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), ch. 2.

## Week 7

### LECTURE: Religious Conflict II: Orthodoxy and Heresy

#### Questions

Why did imperial support for Christianity weaponize doctrinal divisions in the church?

How did late ancient Christians defame and demonize their opponents?

How have revisionist approaches to heresy reshaped our understanding of the Arian and Priscillianist controversies?

#### Reading

Richard Lim, 'Christian Triumph and Controversy', in G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (edd.) *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 196-218.

J. Rebecca Lyman, 'Arius and Arians', in S. Ashbrook Harvey and D. Hunter, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 237-57.

Virginia Burrus, 'The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Jerome', *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991) 229-48.





Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, Rome, 359 CE.

### SEMINAR 3: Religious Conflict in the Fourth Century

Key secondary reading:

Neil McLynn, 'Pagans in a Christian Empire', in P. Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 572-87.

J. Rebecca Lyman, 'Arius and Arians', in S. Ashbrook Harvey and D. Hunter, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 237-57.

In this seminar, we will discuss the following topics:

#### PART I: Christian and Pagans: The Emperor Julian

Presentation (5): Julian's letters on pagan cult practices (**REFS FROM TOUGHER**)

Presentation (6): Julian's Law on Christian Teachers: Julian, *Letter* 61c.

How did Julian seek to overturn the new ascendancy of Christianity in the Roman Empire? Could he have succeeded? Does he represent a microcosm of pagan hostility to Christianity, and conflict between Christians and pagans in the fourth century? Or is he an unusual troublemaker—and a weird pagan—in an era of coexistence?

#### PART II: Orthodoxy and Heresy: The Arian Controversy

Presentation (7): How do you solve a problem like Arius? Documents from the early Arian Controversy

Presentation (8): Creating Arian Heresy: Athanasius, *First Oration against the Arians*



How did a disagreement between a bishop and a priest in Alexandria in the early 320s lead to a decades-long conflict in the Mediterranean church? How can these texts help us to understand what was at stake in this church conflict? What strategies can we see Alexander, Arius and Constantine using to try to resolve this evolving conflict? How does Athanasius try to make it clear that Arius is the one at fault? What sorts of arguments does he use?

## Week 8

### LECTURE: A Trip to the Desert: Asceticism and Monasticism

#### Questions

How and why did people start quitting “the world” to become Christian monks, and how did this new lifestyle spread across the Mediterranean?

How far did asceticism/monasticism subvert the norms of Roman society (re: gender, property etc), and how far did it perpetuate them?

Were late ancient holy women significant in spite or because of their gender?

#### Background Reading

Daniel Caner, “‘Not of this World’: The Invention of Monasticism”, in P. Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 588-600.

Elizabeth Clark, ‘Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the “Linguistic Turn”’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.3 (1998) 413-30.



A follower brings a meal to the ascetic virtuoso Simeon Stylites. Simeon spent c. 40 years on a pillar in the Syrian desert outside Antioch. Now in Bode Museum, Berlin.

## Week 9

## LECTURE: Late Roman Society, I: Gender, Family, Life Course

### Questions

What sources allow us to see into late Roman households (e.g. laws, Christian letters/sermons/tractates), and what can we do with them?

How far did Christianization reorient late Roman views of sex, marriage, and divorce?

What social resources and forms of agency were available to late Roman women?

### Background Reading

Kate Cooper, 'Gender and the Fall of Rome', in P. Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 187-200.

Kyle Harper, 'Marriage and Family', in S. Johnson (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 667-714.

Gillian Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Life-Styles* (Oxford, 1993), chs 2 and 4.

## WEEK 10

### LECTURE: Roman Society II: Land and Labour

### Questions

How was rural society organized in the later Roman Empire?

What sources allow us to see the lives of late Roman peasants, and what can they tell us?

Did the patronage systems of the late Roman countryside help ordinary farmers or serve to oppress them?

### Reading

Cam Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (Cambridge, 2011), chs 5 and 7.

Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 519-26.

Peter Sarris, 'Aristocrats, Peasants, and the State in the Later Roman Empire', in P. Eich, S. Schmidt-Hofner and C. Witschel (eds) *Der wiederkehrende Leviathan: Staatlichkeit und Staatswerdung in Spätantike und Frühe Neuzeit* (Heidelberg, 2011), pp. 375-92.

## SEMINAR 4: Roman Society

Read AT LEAST ONE article or essay from each of the last two lectures. In this seminar, we will discuss the following topics. Look at the sources, and make notes with these questions in mind.

### PART I: Christianity and Marriage

Presentation (9): *The Life of Melania the Younger*, chs 1-19.

Presentation (10): Jerome, *Letter 23* to Eustochium

Why did Melania and Pinian get into conflict with their families? What social and legal forces affected their ability to 'drop out' of elite Roman society?

What does Jerome's advice to Eustochium suggest about the forms of agency afforded to elite ascetic women, and the significance of their social status in their new lives?

Can these sources help us see the ways Christian lifestyles challenged traditional elite Roman family life and gender norms, and the ways they simply perpetuated them?

## Part II: Rural Patronage

Presentation (11): Libanius, *Oration 47 'On Protection Systems'*

Presentation (12): Salvian, *On the Governance of God*, book 5, chs 4-9.

How do Libanius and Salvian characterize the phenomenon of rural patronage (*patrocinium*)? Who do they see as the perpetrators and the victims of this process? What are the wider interests we can see behind their differing views? What can these sources tell us about interactions between the state, big landowners, and ordinary peasants in this period?

## EASTER VACATION

### Week 11

#### LECTURE: Barbarians and Romans

##### Questions

How did Roman writers characterize people from north of the imperial frontiers, and how have historians deconstructed these stereotypes of 'barbarism'?

How did Roman military policies result in the integration of barbarians into late Roman society?

How should we characterize the history of the Goths from 376-418?

##### Background Reading

Peter Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity: Image, Reality, and Transformation', in Richard Miles (ed.) *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), pp.

Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge, 2007), ch. 2.

Andrew Gillett, 'The Mirror of Jordanes', in P. Rousseau (ed.) *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 392-408.



Detail from the Ludovisi sarcophagus (3<sup>rd</sup> century), showing Roman soldiers defeating stereotyped barbarians.

## Week 12

### LECTURE: Decline and Fall?

#### Questions

How have English-language historians taken different approaches to the end of the Roman Empire in the West in recent years?

How did successor kingdoms form out of barbarian settlements on Roman soil?

What was the economic impact of the end of the West Roman state?

#### Reading

Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 82-83, ch. 5, conclusion.

Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (London, 2005), ch. 10.

Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge, 2007), ch. 9.

## SEMINAR 5: Barbarians and Romans

In this seminar we will discuss the following topics. Read at least ONE piece from each of the last two weeks' lecture reading, and the texts from the sourcepack.

Part I: DEBATE: 'The movements of various northern barbarian groups into the western Roman Empire in the late fourth and fifth centuries are best understood as...'

Presentation (13): Migrations

Presentation (14): Invasions

Presentation (15): Roman Civil Wars



Everyone else: read Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* book 31. Which of these arguments do you think the experience of the Goths in the period 376-378 supports? Ammianus clearly thinks this is a catastrophe: but who does he blame? Is the ending to his history downbeat or upbeat?

Part II: Sidonius and the Goths

Presentation (16): Sidonius on Theoderic, *Ep.* 1.2 to Agricola.

Presentation (17): Sidonius on Euric: *Epp.* 4.17, 7.6.

How does Sidonius depict the arrival of Goths, Burgundians, and Franks in Gaul, and the character of these new rulers and elites, in his various letters? Does he have a single view on these 'barbarians'? Can we intuit from him the attitudes of Gallo-Roman elites to the end of Roman power?

\* \* \*

If you have read all the way through the handbook, well done. E-mail me a gif from *The Good Place* so I know you're up to speed.

Good luck!