

LATE ANTIQUITY

CLAS 12381/22381; 20 credits; Teaching Block 1, 2009-10

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The aim of this unit is to examine the complex and vibrant society which characterised the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries CE: the period now commonly known as Late Antiquity. There are a number of ways in which the period may be described; tradition, prompted by Edward Gibbon, has insisted that these centuries saw the fall of Rome from glorious Empire into barbarism, but more recent historians have disputed this, pointing to a high degree of social, economic and political continuity between Roman Empire and Germanic successor kingdoms. This unit will explore questions of continuity, both to throw light on this debate and to illustrate the nature of Late Antique society. Emphasis will be placed on the key themes of the growth and influence of Christianity, the supposed decline of the cities, and the presence and role of the 'barbarians' who created the successor states to Rome.

On successful completion of this unit, you should:

- be familiar with the broad outline of both events and the shape of society in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries CE. You should have knowledge of the political, social and economic changes of this period, and be aware of the ways in which interpretations of these changes can inform debate on the nature of Late Antiquity.
- have had some experience of studying key pieces of evidence (literature, archaeology, art). You should be aware of their relevance to the history of the period, and should be able to develop your own interpretations of the evidence within this historical framework.
- be able to use the knowledge acquired in lectures and through your own researches to construct coherent, relevant and persuasive arguments on a variety of aspects of the history of this period. These arguments should be informed by a range of different evidence.
- have had the opportunity to develop your skills in oral and written communication, in small groups and general discussion, and in essays and written exams.

Teaching There will be two classes each week, on Mondays at 12.10 (Lecture Room 8) and Tuesdays at 2.00 (Lecture Theatre 2). These classes will be largely lecture-based, but will also involve small-group work to discuss particular issues and pieces of ancient evidence. You are expected to prepare for each class by reading around the subject; this handout shows suggested introductory reading for each topic, as well as more general works with which you should become familiar.

Web Resources Information about this unit, including copies of Powerpoint slides, will be posted on *Blackboard*, Bristol's Online Learning Environment: log in using your UoB username and password at www.ole.bris.ac.uk and search for the course 'Late Antiquity'. You should have been registered on the system and on the course automatically; if not, please contact me by e-mail.

Contact My tutorial time this Teaching Block is Tuesday, 3.00-4.00; my room is 1.36, on the first floor in 11 Woodland Road. If you can't manage this time, or need to get in touch with me urgently, the best method is e-mail: n.d.g.morley@bristol.ac.uk.

Assessment and Feedback This unit is assessed by an essay, of c. 2,000 words for first years and c. 2,500 words for second years, due in on **10th December**, and a 90-minute exam in the summer term. In the exam, you have to answer two essay questions from a choice of eight. For the essay, choose one of the following titles, and make use of the introductory bibliographies below to identify introductory reading. You should then use the bibliographies in these works, and your other skills in finding relevant material (e.g. searching for articles in journals), to find further information. Note that many of these essay titles are deliberately designed so that they can be answered from a variety of perspectives; don't try to cover every possible aspect of the topic but focus your answer, depending on your interests. You should wherever possible refer to the ancient evidence and its interpretation, rather than simply summarising the views of modern historians.

'The emperor reigns but does not rule': is this a fair assessment of the empire's political structures in late antiquity?

Why did the Later Roman Empire become a 'command economy', and what were the consequences of this development?

'The conversion of Constantine was a triumph for the Church and a disaster for Christianity': discuss.

How far and in what respects was there continuity between the Roman Empire and its successor states in the west?

'The Roman state's internal enemies were far more dangerous than those outside its borders': discuss.

What happened to the Roman frontiers in the fifth century?

How should we account for the fate of traditional Roman religion in the fourth century?

Is 'late antiquity' a useful way of characterising the society and culture of the fourth and fifth centuries CE?

'The Roman Empire was simply too large to survive': discuss.

How far did the social position of *either* women *or* slaves change in late antiquity?

You will receive individual comments on your essay, and general comments on overall performance in each topic will be posted on *Blackboard*. If you have any queries about either set of feedback, come to see me during my tutorial hour or make an appointment.

Essential Reading The following books are strongly recommended as introductions to the period and to the various issues involved in studying it; they offer quite different perspectives, so that even a 'classic' work like Brown's 1971 book remains well worth reading. You are strongly advised to buy at least a couple of these — all available in paperback — and to read most of the others in the course of this unit.

P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (1971)

P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (1996)

A. Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (1993)

A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity* (1993)

R. Collins, *Early Medieval Europe* (1991)

P. Garnsey & C. Humfress, *The Evolution of the Late Antique World* (2001)

P.J. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (2005)

S. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* (2006)

C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (2006)

Essential Reference Works The following books are generally too expensive to be recommended purchases, unless you are especially keen on this topic, but are highly recommended as sources of information on a wide range of topics, usually in more detail than in the introductory reading.

- G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown & O. Grabar, eds., *Interpreting Late Antiquity* (2001)
A. Bowman, P. Garnsey & A. Cameron, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 12: the crisis of empire* (2005)
A. Cameron & P. Garnsey, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol.13: the Late Empire* (1998)
A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins & M. Whitby, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 14: Late Antiquity: empire and successors* (2000)
A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (2 volumes, 1964)
P. Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (2009) (on order in library)

Schedule of Classes

(1) Introduction: Decline and Fall?

- P. Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (1974)
E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1994), Ch. 38 and Appendix.
A. M. Rollins, *The Fall of Rome: a reference guide* (1983)
A. Schiavone, *The End of the Past* (2000)
S. Swain & M. Edwards, eds., *Approaching Late Antiquity* (2004)
M. Weber, 'The social causes of the decline of ancient civilization', in *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* (1976), Chapter 4.
C. Wickham, 'The other transition: from the ancient world to feudalism', *Past & Present* 103 (1984)
D. Womersley, *The Transformation of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1988)

(2) Outline History: Crisis and Recovery

- T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (1982)
A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (1964), Chs 1-3.
S. Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (1985)
M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1957), Chs 9-11.
R. MacMullen, *The Roman Government's Response to Crisis* (1976)
P. Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (2001)

(3) Outline History: Into the Dark Ages

(4) Outline History: Justinian and the East

(5) Outline History: The Western Successor States

- A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (1985)
R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: unity in diversity, 400-1000* (1983)
E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (1969)
E. James, *The Franks* (1988)
J. Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy* (1992)
P. H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (1978)
J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (1961)
C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome* (2009) (on order in Library)

(6) Enemies of Rome: The Army and the Frontiers

- A. Ferrill, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: the military explanation* (1986)
B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: the Roman army in the East* (1990)
A.D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity* (2007)
E. N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (1976)
C. R. Whittaker, *The Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (1994)

(7) Enemies of Rome: The Barbarian Invasions?

- W. A. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans* (1980)
P. Heather, *Goths and Romans* (1991)
P. Heather & J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (1991)
L. Musset, *The Germanic Invasions: the making of Europe* (1975)
E. A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians* (1982)
M. Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992)

(8) Enemies of Rome: From Persia to Islam

- D. Waines, *An Introduction to Islam* (1995)
B. Dignas & E. Winter, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity* (2007)
F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (1984)
E. Yaroslatter, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume III* (1983)

(9) Politics: The Late Roman State

- D. Cannadine & S. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty* (1987)
J. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (1999)
C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (2004)
S. G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (1981)
J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court* (1975)
F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (1977)

(10) Politics: Bureaucracy and Corruption

- A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (1964) Chapters 11-14, 16
R. MacMullen, *Corruption and the Decline of Rome* (1988)
J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (1989), Ch. 12.

(11) Economy & Society: Trade, Taxes and Inflation

- R. P. Duncan-Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (1994)
R. Hodges & D. Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe* (1988)
P. Horden & N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea* (2000)
A. H. M. Jones, 'Over-taxation and the decline of the Roman empire' and 'Inflation under the Roman empire', in *The Roman Economy* (1974)
M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy* (2001)

(12) Economy & Society: From Slaves to Serfs

- J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity* (2001)
N. Christie, ed., *Landscapes of Change* (2004)
M. I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1980), Ch. 4.
P. Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (1996)
C. R. Whittaker, 'Circe's pigs' in *Land, City and Trade in the Roman Empire* (1993)

(13) Economy & Society: Decline of Civic Society

- S. Barnish, 'The transformation of classical cities', *Jnl of Roman Archaeology* 2 (1989)
N. Christie & S.T. Loseby, *Towns in Transition* (1996)
J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (2001)
J. Rich, ed., *The City in Late Antiquity* (1992)
M. Whittow, 'Ruling the late Roman and early Byzantine city', *Past & Present* 129 (1990)

(14) Rise of Christianity: Origins and Expansion

- S. Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (1984)
G. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (1995)
P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (1996)
G. Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society* (2004)
L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (2004)
K. Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods* (1999)

R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (1986)

(15) Rise of Christianity: Pagans and Christians

P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede, eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (1999)

A.D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity: a sourcebook* (2000)

R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (1984)

R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (1997)

R. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (1990)

A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict Between Christianity and Paganism* (1963)

I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity* (2007)

(16) Rise of Christianity: Church and State

P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (1988)

P. Brown, *Authority and the Sacred* (1995)

M. Edwards, *Constantine and Christendom* (2003)

A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (1991)

S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (1981)

(17) Rise of Christianity: Heresy and Schism

H. Chadwick, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Early Church* (1991)

D. Christie-Murray, *A History of Heresy* (1989)

H. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: the politics of intolerance* (2000)

R.D. Williams, *Arius: heresy and tradition* (1987)

R.D. Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy* (1989)

(18) Late Antique Culture: Literature and Philosophy

D. Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (1962)

M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe* (1959)

L. D. Reynolds, *Scribes and Scholars* (1974)

P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West* (1976)

(19) Late Antique Culture: Art

J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer* (1995)

J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* (1998)

A. Graber, *The Beginnings of Christian Art* (1967)

R. Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (1988)

K. Weitzman, ed., *Age of Spirituality: late antique and early Christian art* (1979)

(20) Conclusion: 'The Collapse of Complex Societies'