ARCL 3065: Selected topics in the archaeology of the Later Roman Empire
2015–2016
Year 2/3 option, 0.5 unit Turnitin ID: 2970216

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1 Overview

This course will examine selected aspects of the archaeology of the Later Roman Empire (c. AD 300–700). Following a brief historical overview it will examine topics such as the archaeology of the early Christian church, the late Roman army, late Roman fortifications, town and country in the Later Roman Empire, late Roman economics and migrations, barbarians and ethnicity. In all cases emphasis will be given to the archaeological evidence.

Course syllabus

1 07/10/15 Course and historical background
2 14/10/15 Towns in the west
3 21/10/15 The Roman Countryside
4 28/10/15 Towns in the east (C. Fenwick)
5 4/11/15 The archaeology of late Antique religion (C. Fenwick)
6 18/11/15 The late Roman economy
7 25/11/15 The later Roman Army (Andrew Gardner)
8 2/12/15 Romans and barbarians
9 9/12/15 Late Roman coinage (Adrian Popescu) date to be confirmed.
10 16/12/15 Art and architecture

Basic texts

There is no ‘textbook’ for this course. Some general readings and background texts are given in the bibliography for the first session (see page 4.1 below).

Method of Assessment

This course is assessed by means of two pieces of course-work, each of 2,375–2,625 words, which each contribute 50% to the final grade for the course. Penalties will only be imposed if you exceed the upper figure in the range. There is no penalty for using fewer words than the lower figure in the range: the lower figure is simply for your guidance to indicate the sort of length that is expected.

If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the Course Co-ordinator. The nature of the assignment and possible approaches to it will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline.

Teaching methods

This course will be taught through ten two-hour sessions. One of these sessions will be held at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Attendance at all elements of the course is compulsory with the exception of the coinage session if that clashes with prior commitments.

Workload

There will be 20 hours of lectures and seminar sessions for this course. Students will be expected to undertake around 110 hours of reading for the course, plus
58 hours preparing for and producing the assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of approximately 188 hours for the course.

Prerequisites
Students should have taken a variety of first and possibly second year archaeology and ancient history courses, although no specific pre-requisite is necessary. If there are archaeological concepts or techniques which are new to you, please talk to the course coordinator for additional guidance and/or readings.

2 Aims, Objects and assessment

Aims of the course
The aim of this course is to examine a selection of topics in the archaeology of later Roman Empire, c. AD 300 to c. AD 650.

Objectives of the course
This course is designed to give students:

1. the historical framework within which the period can be studied;
2. an understanding of the a selection of topics in the archaeology of the period;
3. an understanding of how theoretical perspectives can inform the study of this period;
4. an opportunity to engage with some of the current debates.

Learning outcomes

1. Improve your skills in seeking out relevant data both in traditional publications and the web, and from other professionals.
2. Expand and improve basic computing skills.
3. Experience of academic research, writing and referencing.

3 Coursework

Essay titles
You will need to write two essays for this course. Choose two titles from the following list. Additional possible titles may be given out during the lectures.

1. Self defined question. If there is a topic you would like to research in more detail, come and discuss it with me. (If the topic relates to subjects covered by Cori Fenwick or Andy Gardner, please consult them first then
confirm it with me.) You/we will have to come up with a specific question to answer, “something on Ravenna” will not do.

2. Transformation or decline and fall? With reference to a specific region, discuss Ward-Perkins’ rebuttal of the ‘transformation’ model of Late Antiquity.

3. How did the Church impact upon either (a) the urban or (b) the rural landscape. Discuss with specific reference to a region of your choice.

4. What are the problems inherent in the identification of “barbarians” in the archaeological record and how may this period contribute to our understanding of ethnicity?

5. With reference to a specific region of your choice, how did the rural settlement pattern change during late Antiquity when compared to the earlier Roman period? What difficulties are there in the interpretation of the archaeological evidence? What factors may be responsible for the change?

6. Compare and contrast the impact of the Vandal conquest and the Byzantine reconquest on either (a) towns or (b) rural settlement patterns in north Africa?

7. Was there urban continuity in the towns of northern Italy? Compare and contrast the historical and archaeological evidence. Can they be reconciled?

8. Does the archaeological evidence support Luttwak’s ideas for the development of defence in depth in the later Roman Empire?

9. How has the use of archaeological survey data changed our perception of the late Roman countryside? What are the problems in using this data? Discuss with reference to specific examples.

10. How has the scientific analysis of ‘dark earth’ contributed to our understanding of late Roman urbanism?

11. How useful is the Notitia Dignitatum for our understanding of late Roman military archaeology?

12. The changes within the later Roman military have been described by Ramsay MacMullen as ‘a very serious degeneracy’. How accurate is this assessment in light of recent archaeological studies?

13. How far was the economy of the period pan-Empire or a myriad of local enterprises? What evidence could we use to address this problem, and what are the pitfalls?
Deadlines

We will decide the deadlines in class but I suggest the following: assessment 1: deadline: **Tuesday 17th November 2015**; assessment 2: deadline: **Friday 15th January 2016**. *One term affiliate students will have to complete their assignments sooner. Please see the course coordinator.*

If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the Course Co-ordinator.

Students are not permitted to re-write and re-submit essays in order to try to improve their marks. However, students may be permitted, in advance of the deadline for a given assignment, to submit for comment a brief outline of the assignment.

Word-length

The word length for essays for this course is 2,375–2,625. The following should not be included in the word-count: title page, contents pages, lists of figure and tables, abstract, preface, acknowledgements, bibliography, captions and contents of tables and figures, appendices, and wording of citations.

4 Schedule and syllabus

Teaching schedule

Lectures will be held 11am–1pm on Wednesdays in Room 412. The coin session will be held from 2-4pm at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, details to be arranged.

Syllabus

The following sections outline the course as a whole, and identifies essential and supplementary readings relevant to each session. Information is provided as to where in the UCL library system individual readings are available; their location and Teaching Collection (TC) number, and status (whether out on loan) can also be accessed on the eUCLid computer catalogue system. Readings marked with an ✓ are considered essential to keep up with the topics covered in the course. Copies of individual articles and chapters identified as essential reading are in the Teaching Collection in the Institute Library (where permitted by copyright).

4.1 Background to the course.

An overview of the history of the Later Roman Empire from c. 250 to c. 600. This lecture will introduce some of the themes of the course as well as providing the historical framework.
Reading

There are a fair number of general histories of the period one could consult. Highly recommended is the recent book by Mitchell (2007). Cameron (1993a, 1993b) are easy to read. The Cambridge Ancient History vols XIII and XIV are extremely good and more detailed. Brown (1971) and Jones (1964) are classic works on this period. Ward-Perkins (2005) is essential reading for one of the essay questions. Late Antiquity. A very short introduction (Clark 2011) provides an easy quick overview of the subject, probably a good place to start!

The series Late Antique Archaeology provides bibliographic essays in every volume which are an excellent place to get an overview of the literature and further reading. The majority of these volumes are now available online, search for Late Antique Archaeology in the library catalogue and follow the links to Brill’s website.


Brown, P. 1971. The World of Late Antiquity. London: Thames and Hudson. ANCIENT HISTORY A 5 BRO.

Cameron, Averil 1993a. The Later Roman Empire. Fontana. IOA ISSUE DESK 10A CAM 4; ANCIENT HISTORY R 17 CAM.

Cameron, Averil 1993b. The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity (395–600). Routledge. ANCIENT HISTORY R 19 CAM.


Knight, Jeremy 1999. ‘How the west was lost’, in The End of Antiquity, chapter 3. HISTORY 41 FA KNI.


Moorhead, John 2001. The Roman Empire divided, 400–700. Longman. ANCIENT HISTORY R 19 MOO.

4.2 The archaeology of later Roman towns: the west

This lecture will look at the development of towns in the west. How did they change in form and in function? We will look at Rome, and the other imperial capitals such as Trier. What variation was there in the fate of towns in this period?

Reading

Lavan provides a useful bibliographic essay for this topic from which one can follow up many themes and places. An overview for the whole period is difficult to find although Ward Perkins (1998) is good for the earlier period and Knight (1999) is an easy read for Gaul.


Lavan, L. 2001. Recent research in late-antique urbanism. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 42. INST ARCH DBA 100 LAV.

4.3 The later Roman countryside

This session will look at the development of the late Roman countryside through a series of case studies.

Reading


Christie, N. (ed) (2004). Landscapes of Change. Ashgate. Chapters on: themes (1), the late villa (2), Villas in Spain (3), Italy (4), Africa (5), Greece (6), the Balkans/Albania (7), lower Danube (8) and Gaul (9). INST ARCH DA 180 CHR; ISSUE DESK IOA CHR.


Munro, B. 2012. ‘Recycling, demand for materials, and landownership at villas in Italy and the western provinces in late antiquity.’ Journal of Roman Archaeology 25: 351–70. INST ARCH PERS.


Whittaker, C. R. 1998. ‘Rural life in the later Roman Empire.’ CAH XIII, chapter 9. ANCIENT HISTORY A 5 CAM.

Wickham, C. 2005. Framing the early Middle Ages, chapter 8, ‘Rural settlement and peasant societies’, pp. 443–518. Oxford University Press. HISTORY 41 FA WIC.

4.4 The archaeology of later Roman towns: the Eastern provinces and Africa (C. Fenwick)

This lecture looks at cities in the east and Africa, including the foundation and growth of Constantinople.

Reading


Lavan, L. 2001. Recent research in late-antique urbanism. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 42. INST ARCH DBA 100 LAV.


in transition: urban evolution in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, pp. 159–84. INST ARCH DA 200 CHR.


4.5 The archaeology of late Antique religion (C. Fenwick)

This period saw the dramatic rise to prominence of church with the adoption of Christianity by Constantine. What impact did the Church have on both the urban and rural landscapes? How did Church architecture develop? Can we trace the spread of Christianity in the archaeological record? How far did paganism survive. The end of our period sees the Arab conquests and the rise of Islam.

Reading


4.6 The late Roman economy

This lecture will look at the development of the trade and the economy over this period. Was there a collapse? How significant were these changes?

Reading


Hodges, R, and W. Bowden 1998. *The Sixth Century. Production, distribution, demand.* Leiden: Brill. See especially chapters 1 and 2 (Pirenne), 6 (Italy), 7 (Spain) and 12 (Overview by Wickham). INST ARCH DA 180 HOD.

Karagiorgou, Olga 2009. ‘Mapping trade by the amphora.’ In M. M. Mango (ed) *Byzantine trade, 4th–12th centuries: the archaeology of local, regional and international exchange*, pp. 37–58. Farnham: Ashgate. INST ARCH DA 180 MAN.


Salter, Christopher J. 2009. ‘Early tin extraction in the south-west of England: a resource for Mediterranean metalworkers of Late Antiquity.’ In M. M. Mango (ed) *Byzantine trade, 4th–12th centuries: the archaeology of local, regional and international exchange*. Farnham: Ashgate. INST ARCH DA 180 MAN.


4.7 The later Roman Army, frontiers and fortifications.

This lecture looks at changes in the Roman army including the development of the field army. It also examines the development of fortifications from the display / offensive works of the earlier Empire to the defensive works of the later Empire including both military sites and civilian settlements.

Reading


Elton, H. 1996. Frontiers of the Roman Empire. Batsford. ANCIENT HISTORY R 61 ELT; INST ARCH CDC 220 ELT.

Elton, H. 1996. Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350–425. ANCIENT HISTORY R 70 ELT.


Goldsworthy, Adrian 2000. Roman Warfare, chapters 5 and 6. ANCIENT HISTORY R 70 GOL.


4.8 Romans and barbarians: problems in ethnicity (will include burial evidence)

This course concentrates on the Empire but of course that is only half the story. This lecture will have a look at some of the barbarian groups which were attacking and settling in the Empire. How easy is it to see them in the archaeological record? What are the issues?

Reading


Swift, E. 2000. Regionality in Dress Accessories in the late Roman West. Librairie Archéologique. INST ARCH HD QTO SWI.


4.9 Late Roman coinage (Fitzwilliam Museum, Adrian Popescu)

This lecture will look at the development of Roman coinage and some of the issues surrounding its use and discard.

Reading


Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology, pp. 139–170. Leiden: Brill. INST ARCH DA 180 LAV.


4.10 Late Roman art and architecture

Reading


Elsner, Jas 1998. ‘Art and architecture’, CAH XIII. ANCIENT HISTORY A 5 CAM.

Mundell Mango, Marlia 2000. ‘Building and architecture’, CAH XIV. ANCIENT HISTORY A 5 CAM.

Reece, R. 1983. ‘Late Roman Art’, in Henig, M. Handbook of Roman Art. Phaidon. desk, ISSUE DESK IOA HEN 6; YATES A 40 HEN.

Reece 1999, chapters 1–5. YATES A 47 REE.


5 Online resources

The full UCL Institute of Archaeology coursework guidelines are given here: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/administration/students/handbook.

Information will also be posted on Moodle for course ARCL3065.

6 Additional information

Libraries and other resources

In addition to the Library of the Institute of Archaeology, other libraries in UCL with holdings of particular relevance to this degree are the main library in the classics and history section. Additional copies of some works can be found in the Senate House library. Some of the readings are available online, especially papers in the series Late Antique Archaeology.

Attendance

A register will be taken at each class. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the lecturer by email. Departments are required to report each student’s attendance to UCL Registry at frequent intervals throughout each term. Students are expected to attend at least 70% of classes.
Information for intercollegiate and interdepartmental students

Students enrolled in Departments outside the Institute should collect hard copy of the Institute’s coursework guidelines from Judy Medrington’s office.

Institute of Archaeology coursework procedures

General policies and procedures concerning courses and coursework, including submission procedures, assessment criteria, and general resources, are available in your Degree Handbook and on the following website: http://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/archadmin. It is essential that you read and comply with these. Note that some of the policies and procedures will be different depending on your status (e.g., undergraduate, postgraduate taught, affiliate, graduate diploma, intercollegiate, interdepartmental). If in doubt, please consult your course co-ordinator.

Granting of extensions

New UCL-wide regulations with regard to the granting of extensions for coursework have been introduced with effect from the 2015–16 session. Full details will be circulated to all students and will be made available on the IoA intranet. Note that Course Coordinators are no longer permitted to grant extensions. All requests for extensions must be submitted on a new UCL form, together with supporting documentation, via Judy Medrington’s office and will then be referred on for consideration. Please be aware that the grounds that are now acceptable are limited. Those with long-term difficulties should contact UCL Student Disability Services to make special arrangements.