

Archaeology of the Late Roman Empire

This course explores the archaeology of the Later Roman Empire (c. AD 300–700), a period once cast unilaterally as an age of decline but now recognized also for its unexpected prosperity and transformation. After a brief historical overview, we will investigate the flourishing Late Roman countryside, the resilience and dynamism of its economy, and the evolving relationship between town and country. We will also trace the rise of Christianity through its material remains, study the typical characteristics of Late Roman art and architecture, and consider the archaeological footprint of migration and cultural encounter.

Throughout, the emphasis will be on archaeological evidence—sites, monuments, and objects that reveal a world both familiar and surprisingly innovative. Far from being a twilight era, the Later Roman Empire emerges as a time of adaptation, creativity, and enduring vitality.

Individual lectures:

1. The Fall of the West...
2. ... and the survival of the East Roman Empire?
3. Rise and fall of the Late Roman rural villa: *Hispania*
4. The early Church in Rome
5. The Late Roman economy
6. Fighting at the frontiers
7. Statuary in Late Antiquity
8. Visual culture in the Late Roman Empire