

History 640.01
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Fall 2007

RESEARCH SEMINAR ON THE ROMAN EMPIRE

This will be a research seminar in which we will explore various aspects of the Roman Empire from the principate of Augustus to that of Trajan, a period of a little over one hundred years. During this period the patterns of empire were established and a new kind of civilization emerged. But the history of this period is not without its myths and controversies, many of them propagated by Hollywood, TV miniseries, and even PBS, with its *I, Claudius*: Did wicked and strong-willed women really poison man after man in their lust for power and position? Were the emperors tyrants who lived in luxury at the same time that they exercised unbridled power over the Romans? Was Rome an Evil Empire that oppressed the peoples of the Mediterranean Basin and Western Europe? In order to understand the nature and development of the Roman Empire over this period, we will have a twin emphasis in the seminar: (1) the process and problems of historical reconstruction and explanation, especially considering the nature of the source materials that have survived; and (2) an examination of the basic structures of the Roman Empire from the Princeps and Senate to society and culture. During the first part of the semester we will focus on a common set of readings of primary and secondary sources for weekly discussions; in these early weeks, each seminar member will write two short five-page papers on specific topics in Roman history. The remainder of the seminar will be spent on your own historical research project on any aspect of the period that you wish.

Reading List:

Cassius Dio, *Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*
Petronius and Seneca, *Satyricon* and *Apocolocyntosis*
Pliny, *Letters*
Sherk, R. K., *Translated Documents of Greece and Rome, vol. 6: Roman Empire*
Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*
Tacitus, *Complete Works*

The remainder of the readings are in the reserve bookroom of the library; for the call numbers, see the last three pages of the syllabus; the journals are in the main stacks of the library—please be sure to return the journals to their proper place on the shelf so that others may use them. Most of the journals are also available on JSTOR

In additions to various electronic databases, the following general works are useful for both research and bibliographies:

L'Année Philologique (one of the Library's databases—for bibliographic materials)
The Cambridge Ancient History (vol. 10, second edition; vol. 11, second edition)

Garzetti, A., *From Tiberius to the Antonines*
Millar, F., *The Emperor in the Roman World*
Pauly-Wissowa, *Real Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*

Assignments and Grading Procedures:

Oral participation: 10%

Two five to seven page essays based on the weekly readings: 15% each

Research paper: 60%

Written Assignments:

1. Essay in Political History: five to seven pages: **due September 19**

Primarily using ancient sources only, write an expository essay on ***one*** of the following topics:

- (1) As precisely as possible, reconstruct the events surrounding the accession of Claudius: how and why was he chosen emperor?
- (2) Was Claudius really a tool of his slaves and freedmen? How are we to understand the relationship between him and them? Why do the ancient sources portray the relationship the way that they do?
- (3) Who was *really* responsible for Claudius' death—how and why did he die? [As part of your essay figure out why he married Agrippina in the first place—was this a deadly mistake?]

2. Essay in Social History: five to seven pages: **due October 3**

Write an expository essay on ***one*** of the following topics:

- (1) Write a critical analysis of any two of the authors on Roman women—compare and contrast their methods, approaches, and conclusions.
- (2) Write a critical review of Hopkins and one other author on gladiators—include a comparison of their methods, moral judgments, approaches, and conclusions.
- (3) Write an analysis of the *problems* doing Roman social history, using women or gladiators as your example; be sure to discuss the nature of our source materials, their value as well as their problems.

3. The Research Paper. Minimum of twenty pages. **Due December 14, by noon.**

Write a rigorous scholarly paper on *any* aspect of Roman history from Augustus to Trajan or Hadrian. Your paper should be written in good college prose and should follow the format for footnotes and bibliography as found in Turabian and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Your paper should be **analytical** in nature, and focus on a **problem** to be solved—a *how* or a *why* question usually produces a more focused paper as well as a **thesis**.

ALL written work ***MUST*** be turned in on time; late papers will not be accepted—extensions or an incomplete will only be given for bona fide illnesses or emergencies (an exam or a paper due in another course is not a bona fide emergency). Since a graduate seminar is far more time consuming than a lecture course, it is absolutely essential that you budget your time carefully, and begin the various reading and writing assignments **before** the week that they are due to be

discussed or turned in; at the beginning of the semester you will undoubtedly be juggling several assignments simultaneously.

THE COURSE

1. Aug. 29: Introduction to the Seminar

2. Sept. 5: The Political Foundations of the Roman Empire

Focus: The Augustan Principate and the Patterns of Power—Image and Reality

Suetonius, *Augustus* 17-66, 72-78

Velleius Paterculus 2.85-93

Dio 51.1-3, 17, 19-23; 52.41-42; 53.1-5, 11-23, 28, 30-33; 54.1-4, 6, 10, 12-19, 26-28, 30, 35; 55.3-6, 13, 34; 56.10, 17, 28, 43-44

Sherk, pp. 1-16, 19-24, 41-52

Tacitus, *Annals* 1.1-5, 9-10

Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, ch. 11

Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, pp. 1-13

Study Questions: What were the political challenges and problems that faced Augustus after 31B.C.? How did he meet these challenges? How would you characterize the system that he created? Was he just a “monarch” in all but name? How would you characterize the symbols that Augustus created for his New Order?

[If you want more details on Augustus or want to do a paper on him, the following are useful:

CAH 10², pp. 78-79, 84-87, 113-146, 324-332, 337-343

Brunt, *CQ* 34 (1984)

Lacy, *JRS* 64 (1974)]

3. Sept. 12: Problems with Sources I: Perceptions and Portrayals of the Emperor’s Position and Power: ***Focus: Tiberius—Hypocrite? Wicked? Benefactor and Savior?***

Suetonius, *Tiberius* 7-42, 47-67, 76

Tacitus, *Annals* 1.1-15, 46-47, 72-81; 2.5, 26-33, 42-43, 47-51, 64, 69-70, 83-88; 3.1-6, 10, 14, 17, 31, 49-60, 63-72; 4.1-19, 32-33, 39-42, 55-62, 67; 6.45-46, 48, 50

Dio 55.6, 13; 56.31-34; 57.1-4, 6-24; 58.1-16, 19

Velleius Paterculus 2.97-99, 104, 123-131

Sherk, pp. 53-73

Garzetti, *Tiberius to Antonines*, 3-58, 79 [scan for a general narrative of Tiberius]

Scullard, ch. 13

Study Questions: How are Tiberius and his position perceived and portrayed by ancient and modern writers? Why do you think this is the case? How accurate are these

perceptions and portrayals? How did Tiberius present himself to the Romans? What problems confronted Tiberius, and how do you think he handled them? What is the nature of our source material on Tiberius (this is a question that you should ask every week). Is it possible to get at what the emperors did, and why?

[Useful modern sources on Tiberius, especially the *CAH*:
Seager, *Tiberius*, 112-118, 123-177
CAH 10², pp. 198-221, 283-295, 332-335
Burgers, *Latomus* 58 (1999)]

4. Sept. 19: Problems with Sources II: Establishing the Facts Amid Conflicting Sources

Focus: Claudius—Accession, Policies, Death

Suetonius, *Caligula* 45-48, 55-59; *Claudius* (entire)
Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*
Josephus *Ant. Jud.* 19.17-36, 99-113, 157-167, 185-189, 201-271; *Bell. Jud.* 2.204-217
Dio 59.29-30; 60.1-16, 29-35 [this last sequence is in v. 8 of the Loeb as part of bk. 61]
Tacitus, *Annals* 1.32; 11.1-7, 11, 13-15, 23-37; 12.1-9, 22-27, 41-43, 52-69; 13.15-16
Martial, *Epigram* 1.20
Pliny, *Letters* 1.13; 3.16; 7.29; 8.6
Sherk, 83-101, 237-238
Cicero, *ad Q.fr.* 1.1 and 1.2

Garzetti, *Tiberius to Antonines*, 100-117, 131-145 [scan for a general narrative]

Study Questions: How and why did Claudius become emperor? Was he a tool of his slaves, freedmen, and wives? Was he a murderer and a tyrant? A visionary who changed the very nature of the Roman Empire? Why did Suetonius spend so little time on Claudius' life? How and why does Claudius die? [Why did Claudius marry Agrippina?]

[Some interesting interpretations of Claudius:
Barrett, *Agrippina*, 71-109, 137-142
Levick, *Claudius*, 1-20, 25-39, 81-91, 93-103, 115-126, 163-186
CAH 10², 228-241, 296-308, 335-343]

5. Sept. 26: High Society and Politics: The Roman Senate

Focus: The Insiders' View of Domitian, Trajan, and the Senate

Suetonius, *Vespasian* and *Domitian*
Dio 65.1-2, 9-16; 67.1-18; 68.4-7, 15-16
Pliny, *Letters* 1.5, 14, 18, 23; 2.1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14; 3.4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20; 4.8, 9, 11, 22, 24, 25; 5.4, 8, 14, 20, 22; 6.5, 13, 19, 20, 29, 31, 33; 7.10, 16, 27, 31, 33; 8.6, 14; 9.13
Pliny, *Panegyricus* 1-11, 13, 21, 23-4, 44-7, 49, 52-5, 57-9, 62-7, 71, 75-8, 80-1, 94-5
Tacitus, *Agricola* 1-9, 17-24, 39-46; and *Dial.* 41
Sherk, pp. 124-126, 129, 132-134, 151-153, 176-177, 248

Garzetti, *Tiberius to the Antonines*, 240-253, 265-278, 292-295, 308-318, 339-342

Study Questions: What does the Senate do? How would you identify its functions? Of whom is it composed? Is it important? Is it “free”? Does it change in composition or function over time? How typical is a senator like Pliny or Trajan? Why do the senators hate Domitian so?

[Useful secondary sources on the Roman Senate:

Jones, *Domitian and the Senate*, 22-29, 44-87

CAH 11², 214-237

Talbert, *Senate*, 372-407, 460-480 (and other sections you find relevant)

Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 149-156, 168-176, 184-198]

6. Oct. 3: Social History I: Various Theoretical Approaches

Focus: Imperial Roman Women and Gladiators [choose ONE or the OTHER]

A. Roman Women:

Barrett, *Agrippina*, pp. 1-12, 22-48, 127-137, 181-195, 205-208

Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 69-106

Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 243-251, 414-416, 424-427, 432

Beard, *JRS* 70 (1980)

Pliny, *Letters* 1.4, 14; 3.1, 3, 16; 4.19, 21; 5.16; 6.4, 7, 24, 26, 32; 7.5, 6, 11, 19, 24; 8.5, 11

Juvenal, *Satire* 6

Martial, *Epigrams* 1.10, 34, 109; 4.81; 6.45; 8.79; 10.55; 11.29, 62; 12.93

Sherk, pp. 225-227

B. Gladiators:

Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 1-30

Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, 3-46 [Review: *JRS* 84 (1994), 188-189]

Coleman, *JRS* 80 (1990), 44-73

Review of Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, *JRS* 84 (1994), 229-231

Juvenal, *Satire* 10

Pliny, *Letters* 1.8; 4.22; 6.34; 9.6

Cicero, *ad fam.* 7.1

Sherk, pp. 45, 47, 61-63, 73-74, 211-223, 236

7. Oct. 10: Social History II: Romanization and Provincial Culture(s)

Focus: The Intersection of Society, Politics, and Multiple Identities

Acts 21.37-22.3; 25.9-12

Aelius Arisitides, *To Rome* (handout)

Tacitus, *Agricola* 13-21, 24, 30 and *Germania* 4-18, 28-31, 33

Sherk, pp. 92-99, 138-140, 151, 184, 206-210

Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 1-23, 54-76, 82-91, 112-130, 203-215
Carroll, *Romans, Celts, and Germans* [e-res, password, rhineland]
Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 184-198
Mattingly and Hitchner, *JRS* 85 (1995)

Study Questions: How many identities to people like Paul and Aelius Aristides have? What does this suggest about the nature of “Romanization”? Considering Lendon’s comments on violence and the Roman Empire, is he correct? How does the Roman Empire work? What does it mean to be “Roman”? Is the history of Rome more to be found in the provinces than in the City of Rome itself? What are the policies and attitudes of Roman government (especially the emperor) towards the provinces?

8. Oct. 17: Discussion of paper topics

Hopkins, *JRS* 68 (1978) [a review of Millar’s *Emperor*—how *NOT* to do history]
Badian, “Figuring Out Roman Slavery,” *JRS* 72 (1982) [A Critique of Hopkins’ Historical Method]

9. Oct. 24: Working Bibliography Due

10. Oct. 31: Discussion of Bibliography and Work in Progress

11. Nov. 7: No Class: Conferences on your Projects

12. Nov. 14: Discussion of Work in Progress [or time off for research]

November 21: Thanksgiving Recess

13. Nov. 28: Oral Reports

14. Dec. 5: Oral Reports

15. Dec. 12: Oral Reports

Papers due: by Friday, December 14, by noon.