

History 137: Early Medieval Worlds (250-c. 1050)

Lecture: MF 5a (usually in Leighton 305)

Discussion Sections: W

Instructor: William North

OFFICE HOURS:

TU 2-4 PM (MY OFFICE); TH 8-11 PM IN THE LIBRARY; & BY APPOINTMENT

wnorth@carleton.edu

Telephone: x-4202 (office-Leighton 203A); 645-7807 (home, between 7am -10 pm)

STUDENT EXHIBITIONS ASSISTANT

Stuart Urback (History '13)

Office Hours: Tu 8-9 pm (Libe); Th 7-9 pm (Libe), & by appointment

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Course Overview

Through the intensive exploration of four “worlds” in the early Middle Ages (Late Antique Italy, Anglo-Saxon England, Carolingian Europe, the Holy Roman Empire) this course seeks to offer an introduction to formative political, social, and cultural developments in Europe between c. 250 and c.1050. Particular attention will be paid to the sources of our knowledge of early medieval people and polities.

Course Goals

This course has several goals.

- To provide an occasion for you to be historians, to exercise those same critical skills of observation, humane judgment, and sympathetic reflection that inform your daily lives but upon the thoughts, perceptions, and actions of people in far-distant places and times.
- To offer a “thought laboratory” about what we can know, what we cannot know, and how we know what we think we know about past people using the evidence that their worlds have left behind. How do we move from a text, whether long or short, cryptic or verbose, recording a land transfer or a miraculous healing, to the values, beliefs, and actions of those who wrote the text, participated in the action, and perhaps thought those thoughts?
- To sharpen your skills in reading and assessing the value of various kinds of source materials as evidence for the politics, society, and thought of a world.
- To acquaint you with some of the main historical figures, problems, and developments in four important “worlds” of early medieval Europe: Late Antique Italy, Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Ireland; the Carolingian Age; and the world of the Holy Roman Empire (10-11th century Germany and Italy).
- To engage in a sustained, serious project in **public history** wherein you will not only learn a great deal about a variety of historical issues and objects but also the full and complex process—scholarly, artistic, organizational, pedagogical, and technical—through which scholarship is transformed into a learning opportunity for a more general public.

To realize these goals we have at our disposal several crucial elements:

- your minds and imaginations;
- the evidence of the period which includes texts, images, objects;

- my mind and imagination and those of the scholars whom we will read (which differ from yours principally in having devoted themselves to being systematically puzzled and fascinated by this world and trying to figure it out for a living);
- the assistance of other students and staff with significant experience and expertise in a variety of related areas.

What does this mean? It means that I am an experienced guide, but not an oracle. More importantly, it means that the central relationship in this course is a three-way one between your mind and imagination; the minds of others including mine; and the historical evidence. Your full imaginative engagement in this course is vital! The more you care and think about the people and worlds we study, the more you can engage scholars you read as partners in conversation, the more you will get out of the experience and the more you will be able to give back to the class. If you find yourself thinking about feud while in the LDC lunch line; wondering about miraculous healings in the presence of a saint's finger on the way to soccer practice; worrying about the dynamics of the gift economy the next time Friday flowers rolls around; and reflecting carefully on the nature of being a "good" RA and the ways in which an RA community and its "lord" interact in Carolingian categories, then you are doing the "right thing."

Books and Reserves

The following books are available at the Carleton Bookstore. At least one copy of each is available on Closed Reserve at the library.

Julia Smith, *Europe after Rome. A New Cultural History, 500-1000* (Oxford 2005)

The Age of Bede, trans. D. Farmer & J. Webb (New York, rev. ed. 1998)

Carolingian Civilization, 2nd ed., ed. & trans. Paul Dutton (Toronto: U of Toronto 2004)

Ottoman Germany. The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg. Trans. David A. Warner (Manchester: MUP 2001)

Additional materials will be available via History 137 e-reserves (Password: HIST) and full-text electronic resources like JSTOR (available through the Library's "Electronic Resources" webpage).

If you have any problems gaining access to the materials, contact me immediately: during the day, via email; in the evening, via email or telephone.

Course Requirements and Grading

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| • Attendance and Participation | 16% |
| ○ Attendance at both lectures and sections | |
| ○ Active engagement in all aspects of the class | |
| ○ Thoughtful preparation | |
| • 2 Primary Source Analyses (1 per world) (3 pages) | 24% |
| • Scribal Worlds Exhibition | 30% |
| • Final Paper: Dynamics in a Medieval World (6-8 pages) | 30% |

Class Attendance & Participation

Attendance at all lectures and sections is expected and mandatory. Because of the nature of this class, your engaged presence and active participation in class is vital. One **unexcused** absence will therefore result in a drop of **one-third of a letter** grade in class participation; two unexcused absences will result in a drop of **an additional two-thirds of letter grade**; three unexcused absences will result in a letter grade of F for class participation and will affect other aspects of the course grade. The message is simple: if you are compelled by legitimate factors to miss a session of this course, let me know immediately

and, if due to an extracurricular activity or scheduled appointment, in advance. If you not compelled by legitimate factors, ask yourself why you are missing class and whether it is really worth it. In the end, I mean this policy not to be about arbitrary rule-making or draconian punishments but about responsible communication and helping you to get the most out of your time in this course.

Likewise, because group work will be a very important part of this class, it is imperative that you be a responsible member of your working group. This means: answer emails and other communications promptly; be flexible on meeting times within reason; be on time to meetings and be prepared for the topic of conversation.

Participation is desired and expected. Because history is fundamentally a process of systematic inquiry rather than a body of predetermined and predigested truths, this class will work best if there is active interchange, and I fully expect to devote time in lecture and in sections to discussing your questions, interpretations/reactions, and criticisms of the readings. Being a good listener is very important, but never voicing your own questions and interpretations will limit the intellectual experience for me, for you, and for your colleagues. Listen, to be sure, but also be bold (or be hesitant boldly) and ask a question, mention something you noticed, question the texts or the prof (preferably both). Read carefully and notice and **note down details**; think of the evidence as the remains of real, complex people in many ways just like yourselves but different; then give your ideas a try in dialogue with the materials.

Readings range between 20 and 95 pages per class (with the average around 60) **BUT DO NOT BE DECEIVED**: the material is dense (especially when dealing with primary documents) and requires attentive (i.e. slow) reading and recurring reflection. (Ancient authors often talked about “chewing” their texts—and they believed in the 50 chews before swallowing policy!!) Study questions may be distributed on occasion and you are encouraged to find and follow your own lines of questioning. Often readings will consist of a mix of several shorter sources and a longer reading—there is no particular order in which these should be read. My strongest advice is negative: Do NOT try and read all of it at once; pace yourself over the day and half between classes.

Primary Source Analyses (3 pages)

Over the course of the term you are required to do 2 PSAs. They are evaluated on a percentage scale with 100 being the highest score with the usual grade cut-offs. See the specific handout on PSAs for guidelines, suggestions, and examples. To insure that you receive feedback in a timely manner, the following guidelines must be observed:

- You may do only one PSA on the primary sources from one world;
- Please follow the basic guidelines for structuring your PSA, remembering that this assignment involves the close analysis/interpretation of a specific text in context, NOT a summary or a series of general comments.
- The PSA must be submitted by midnight on the day we discuss the source in class. This means that you have the full day on which we discuss the source and can revise, augment, etc. in the light of discussion. Ideas from class discussion can certainly be incorporated with appropriate acknowledgement.
- Detailed and helpful guidelines will be available on the Moodle Site for your reference

Scribal Worlds: Public Exhibition and Related Projects

- There will be extensive documentation regarding this project and it will be made available via Moodle.

- An essential individual element will be a project journal in which you document and reflect upon the intellectual and social process of creating instances of public history.

Final Essay: Dynamics in a Medieval World (8 pages with footnotes for all citations)

This essay will require sustained consideration of primary sources, secondary readings, and perhaps very modest research (depending on the topic). I will provide a list of potential topics that can be adapted and refined to the sources for a given time and place. You may also develop your own topic. This essay will be due on

Syllabus

Week I

- 9/10 Course Introduction: The Worlds, the Plan, and the Reasons
- 9/12 Speaking and Writing in the Early Middle Ages
→ Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 13-50.
- 9/14 Launching the Exhibition: Orientation and Inspirations for “Scribal Worlds”
→ Rosamund McKitterick, “Script and Book Production,” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 221-247. (e-reserves)
→ Peter Vergo, “The Reticent Object,” in *The New Museology*, ed. P. Vergo et al (New York, 1997), 41-59. (Moodle)
→ Mickey’s 10 Commandments (Moodle)
→ Janet Marstine, “What a Mess! Making Space for Student Exhibitions in a University Museum.” (Moodle)

LATE ANTIQUE ITALY (LATE 5TH–6TH CENTURIES)

Week II The World of Theoderic

- 9/17 Lecture & Discussion
General Theme: Living and Dying
→ Smith, *Europe after Rome*, c.3, pp. 51-82 (please refer to the endnotes as you read)
Specific Theme: Theoderic the Great: Ostrogothic King or True Roman?
→ Smith, *Europe after Rome*, c. 8a, pp. 253-268.
→ Anonymous Valesianus, *Fragments*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, in *Ammianus Marcellinus* v. III, Loeb Classical Series (Cambridge, MA, 1972), pp. 531-572. (e-reserves) (Latin on facing page)
→ Cassiodorus Senator, *Variae* I.10, I.17; III.1-4, 23, 30-31, 51; IV.51; V.1, V.42, trans. S.J.B. Barnish, *Translated Texts for Historians* 12, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 1992, pp. 12-15, 45-49, 58-59, 60-63, 67-73, 79-83, 90-93 (e-reserves)

- *Book of Pontiffs*, trans. Raymond Davis, Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool, 1989), chapters 50-56, pp. 41-51. (e-reserves)
- Procopius, *Histories* V.1.1-35, V.12, pp. 1-15, 117-133 (e-reserves) (Greek on facing page)

9/19 Discussion Sections: Learning in the Age of Theoderic

- Cassiodorus, *The Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning*, trans. J. Halporn, Liverpool Translated Texts for Historians 42 (Liverpool 2004), pp. 105-111, 139-168, 229-233. (e-reserves)

9/21 Exhibition Session: InDesign Training and Facsimile Work Session

- Group I Gould Library
 - Matt Bailey, Presentation on Finding Images
 - An Orientation to Medieval Manuscripts (Meet in Special Collections, Gould Library, Tier 1)
- Group II: Weitz Center, Idea Lab
 - Learning **InDesign** with Tucker MacNeill.

Week III

9/24 Lecture & Discussion

General Theme: Friends and Relations

- Smith, *Europe after Rome*, c.4, pp. 83-115 (please refer to the endnotes as you read) (32 pp.)

Specific Theme: Chaos, Order, and the End of Ostrogothic Italy

- *Book of Pontiffs*, chapters 57-66, pp. 51-62. (e-reserves) (11 pp.)
- Procopius, *Histories* V.2-11, V.13-23, pp. 15-116, 133-226 (e-reserves) (Greek on facing page) (100 pp.)

9/26 Discussion Sections: The World of the Benedictine Monastery

- Gregory I, *Dialogues Book II. Saint Benedict*, trans. Myra Uhlfelder (New York, 1967), pp. 1-49.
- Benedict of Nursia *The Rule of St Benedict*, trans. Boniface Verheyen (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule2/files/rule2.html>)
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9/28 Exhibition Session: Discussion and Working Groups

Exploring an Online Exhibition—Carolingian Culture at Reichenau and St Gall

- http://www.stgallplan.org/en/index_plan.html

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND (7TH AND 8TH CENTURIES)

Week IV

10/1 Lecture & Discussion

General Theme: Men and Women

→ Smith, *Europe after Rome*, c.4, pp. 115-150. (35 pp.)

Specific Theme: The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England

→ Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, I. 27, II.9-16, III.1-25, trans. J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, repr. 2009), pp. 41-54, 84-100; 110-159.

→ Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, in *The Age of Bede*, trans. D. Farmer (New York, new ed. 1998), pp. 105-184.

→

10/3 Discussion Sections: Building Northumbrian Christianity

→ Bede, *History of the Abbots of Wearmouth-Jarrow* in *The Age of Bede*, pp. 185-210.

→ Anonymous, *The Life of Ceolfrith*, in *The Age of Bede*, pp. 211-230.

→ Bede, *Letter to Egbert*, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, II.1-III, trans. J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, repr. 2009), pp. 341-357. (e-reserves)

10/5 Exhibition Session: Labels and Images Workshop or The Importance of Design

→ Labels-Extended Guidelines (Moodle)

→ Label Guidelines (Moodle)

→ Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels. An Interpretive Approach* (Walnut Creek, CA, 1996) (selections) (Moodle)

Week V

10/8 Lecture & Discussion:

General Theme: Getting and Giving

→ Smith, *Europe after Rome*, c. 6, pp. 183-216.

Specific Theme: Leadership in Anglo-Saxon England, Historical and Mythic

→ James Campbell, *Bede's Reges and Principes*, Jarrow Lecture 1979. (e-reserves)

→ *The Laws of Ine*, in *English Historical Documents I*, ed. David Douglas (London, 1968), pp. 364-372. (e-reserves)

→ *Beowulf*

- British Library Online Gallery: Beowulf

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/englit/beowulf/>

- Beowulf, lines 1987-3178, trans. S. A. J. Bradley, in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London 1995), 464-494 (e-reserves)

10/10 Discussion Sections: Paths to Biography-Archaeology, Science, Poetry, and Hagiography

→ Bede, *The Life of Cuthbert*, in *The Age of Bede*, pp. 41-104.

→ Robin Fleming, "Writing Biography at the Edge of History," *The American Historical Review* 114. 3 (2009), 606-614. (JSTOR)

→ *The Gifts of Men*, trans. S.A.J. Bradley, in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London, 1995), pp. 325-328. (e-reserves)

10/12 Exhibition Session: From Elements to Compound-Designing the Whole

CAROLINGIAN EUROPE
(8TH-9TH CENTURIES)

Week VI

10/15 MIDTERM BREAK

10/17 Discussion Sections

- Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 26-49. (23 pp.)
- Alcuin, *Letters*, in *Carolingian Civilization*, pp. 120-135. (15 pp.)
- Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 268-277. (9 pp.)
- Janet Nelson, "Did Charlemagne have a Private Life?" in *Writing Medieval Biography. Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton, Woodbridge: Boydell 2006, pp. 15-28. (e-reserve)
- Rosamund McKitterick, "The Carolingian Renaissance of Culture and Learning," in *Charlemagne. Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester, 2005), pp. 151-166. (e-reserves) (15 pp.)

10/19 Exhibition Session: Completion and Refinement

Week VII

10/22 Lecture & Discussion

General Theme: Labour and Lordship

- Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 217-253.
- *The Polyptyque of Saint-Germain-des-Prés*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 207-214.
- Adalhard of Corbie, "Of Bread and Provisions in the Statutes of Adalhard of Corbie," in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 223-229.

Specific Theme: A Penitential State

- Halitgar, *The Penitential*, in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, II.1-III, trans. J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, repr. 2009), pp. 235-250.
- Thegan, *The Life of Louis the Pious*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 159-175.

10/26 Exhibition Session: Installation

Week VIII

10/29 Lecture and Discussion

General Theme: Kingship and Christianity

- Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 217-252.
- Hincmar of Reims, *On the Governance of the Palace*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 516-532.

Specific Theme: Things Fall Apart-Civil War, Invasion, and Doubt

- Ermentarius, *The Wandering Monks of St Philibert*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 468-471.
- *Annals of St Vaast* 882-886, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 507-512.
- *The Vision of Charles the Fat*, in *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*, trans. P. Dutton (Toronto, 2nd ed. 2004), pp. 537-540.

10/31 Exhibition Opening 4:30 pm, Library Athenaeum

THE OTTONIAN AND EARLY SALIAN EMPIRE (10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES)

11/2 Reading Day (no class meeting)

Week IX

11/5 Lecture & Discussion: The Rise and Function of the Ottonian Dynasty

- Karl Leyser, "Ottonian Government," in *Medieval Germany and Its Neighbors, 900-1250* (London, 1982), pp.69-102 (e-reserves)
- Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* Books I & II, in *Ottonian Germany*, trans. David Warner (Manchester, 2001), pp. 66-126

11/7 Discussion Section: Ottonians Between East and West

- Liudprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople*, in *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, trans. P. Squatriti (Washington, DC, 2007), pp. 238-282.
- Henry Mayr-Harting, "Liudprand of Cremona's Account of His Legation to Constantinople (968) and Ottonian Imperial Strategy," *The English Historical Review* 116 (2001), 539-556. (JSTOR)
- Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* Books III & IV, pp. 126-205.

11/9 Lecture & Discussion: An Imperial Church?

- Timothy Reuter, "The 'imperial church system': a reconsideration," in *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Janet Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 325-354. (e-reserves)
- Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* Books V & VI, pp. 206-235.
- *Indiculus Loricarum*, trans. W. L. North (Moodle)
- *Life of Burchard of Worms*, trans. W. L. North (Internet)

Week X

11/12 Regarding Henry (II)

- Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* Books VII & VIII, pp. 235-386.
- Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 277-293.

11/14 Concluding Discussion: The Early Medieval World: Problems, Solutions, and Perspectives