



Contents

<i>Illustrations</i>	x
<i>Boxed Texts</i>	xii
<i>Preface: The Magic of History</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<i>Annotated List of Abbreviations and a Note on Citations from Secondary Literature</i>	xxi
<i>Timeline</i>	xxv
<i>Map: The Late Antique World At-A-Glance</i>	xxviii
Part I The “Vanishing” of Rome	1
1 Who and What Is Late Antiquity?	3
1.1 An Overview of the Book	4
<i>History from the ground-up, all the way to the top</i>	4
<i>A top-down view of Rome in the fifth century CE</i>	9
1.2 Three Lives and the “Fall of Rome”	10
<i>Victorinus, vicarius of Britain</i>	11
<i>Palladius, the law student from Gaul</i>	13
<i>Rufius Volusianus, the prodigy who went to Constantinople</i>	14
2 When Does Late Antiquity Begin? When Does it End?	19
2.1 The Third through Fifth Centuries CE: A Narrated Timeline	20
<i>The third-century crisis</i>	20

	<i>The fourth-century crisis</i>	24
	<i>The fifth-century crisis</i>	29
2.2	A Warning about Periodization	32
3	How Do We Do Late Antique History?	35
3.1	Evaluating Sources, Asking Questions	36
	<i>Comparing and contrasting</i>	36
	<i>Incorporating textual and material culture</i>	37
3.2	The Past in the Past	39
3.3	Acquiring Cultural Competence: The Study of Religion in History	43
3.4	Linking, not Disconnecting, Different Periods of Early Christianity	45
	<i>Paul and the context of the late Second Temple period</i>	46
	<i>Paul's legacy, forged texts, and the rise of Christianity</i>	47
3.5	Pre-Modern vs. Early Modern History: A Note on Sources	50
Part II	Late Antiquity Appears	53
4	Power	55
4.1	Third-Century Politics	55
4.2	Mithras and a Roman Fascination with the Mysteries of Persia	56
4.3	The Material Culture of Sasanian Persia	58
4.4	Rome and Sasanian Persia in Conflict	60
	<i>Weighing the accounts, making a decision</i>	63
4.5	The Roman World of the Third Century CE	69
	<i>Empire-wide citizenship is decreed</i>	69
	<i>Rome's birthday is celebrated, a saeculum is renewed</i>	70
	<i>New walls and city borders are constructed</i>	72
5	Worship	75
5.1	The Civic Sacrifice Policy of 250 CE	76
	<i>Implementation of the policy</i>	77
	<i>The historian's delicate task: writing about the policy</i>	78
5.2	How Did Romans Worship Their Gods? Text and Material Culture, c. Third Century CE	82
	<i>Traditional worship</i>	85
	<i>Mystery cults</i>	87
	<i>Emperor worship</i>	90
6	Social Change	93
6.1	Rome's Laws Against Christians	94
	<i>Emperor Valerian, 257–258 CE</i>	94
	<i>Christian sacrifice in context on the eve of the Rule of Four</i>	95

6.2	The End of the Third Century and the Rise of the Rule of Four	97
6.3	A View from Thessaloniki, Roman Greece, Late Third Century CE	99
	<i>Galerius' urban investments</i>	99
	<i>The political messages of Galerius' arch and palace vestibule</i>	99
6.4	Diocletian's Edict against Followers of Mani, 296 CE or 302 CE	105
6.5	The Rise of Christianity: Assumptions and Starting Points	106
	<i>"Christianization" and evangelization</i>	106
	<i>Christian demographics and faith-based narratives of rapid conversion</i>	108
	<i>Recognizing political disagreement among Rome's Christian community</i>	110
7	Law and Politics	113
7.1	Roman Law: History From the Ground-Up, Top-Down, and Sideways	114
	<i>Petitions from Roman Egypt</i>	115
	<i>Roman legal texts in Late Antiquity</i>	116
	<i>The history of Roman law as a story of "horizontal relations"</i>	119
7.2	The "Edict of Milan," 313 CE	119
	<i>The Roman constitution in context</i>	120
	<i>Expanding the idea of being Roman</i>	121
7.3	Individual Laws and the Collection of Legal Texts	123
	<i>The Edict on Maximum Prices, 301 CE</i>	123
	<i>The Edict against Christians, 312 CE</i>	124
	<i>The creation of the Theodosian Code, 429–438 CE</i>	124
7.4	Law and Politics in the Fourth Century CE	125
8	Urban Life	130
8.1	Daily Life in the Fourth Century CE and Beyond: Starting Points and Assumptions	131
8.2	The Archaeology of Rome	135
	<i>The city center and the imperial fora</i>	135
	<i>The communities of Rome's Aventine Hill</i>	137
	<i>Funerary banquets on the Via Appia</i>	140
8.3	The Archaeology of Constantinople	142
	<i>A new city but with a forgotten history</i>	143
	<i>Constantine's Forum</i>	145
	<i>Urban infrastructure and neighborhood residences</i>	148
9	Community	152
9.1	Mystery Cults	155
	<i>The cult of Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis</i>	155
	<i>Anthropological perspectives on initiation</i>	156
9.2	Christian Communities and Christian Law	156

9.3	The Jewish Community: Shared Values and Social Diversity	159
	<i>Synagogues</i>	159
	<i>The importance of Jewish place and time</i>	160
9.4	The Communities of Roman Egypt, Fourth–Fifth Centuries CE	163
	<i>Antony and the monastic communities</i>	166
	<i>Roman army members and military families</i>	166
	<i>Disaffected communities: “God’s soldiers,” c.391–392 CE</i>	168
10	Economy	171
10.1	Egypt beyond Its Borders	172
	<i>Porphyry and the economy of marble</i>	172
	<i>Egyptomania in Rome and Constantinople</i>	175
10.2	The Arena and Racing Culture	177
10.3	Economic Realities, Third–Sixth Centuries CE	179
	<i>The two economic corridors of the state</i>	180
	<i>The importance of ceramic evidence</i>	182
	<i>The importance of the wooden legal texts from Vandal North Africa</i>	183
10.4	The Crypta Balbi Excavations, Rome: The Story of a Social Safety Net, Third Century–Sixth Century CE	184
	<i>Ceramics from the Crypta Balbi excavations</i>	185
	<i>Two final details from the Crypta Balbi excavations</i>	188
11	The Household and Family	191
11.1	Home as a Place	193
	<i>Apartments</i>	193
	<i>Houses</i>	194
11.2	House-Churches in the Long History of Christianity	196
	<i>Tituli and the transformation of the Caelian Hill, Rome</i>	198
	<i>House-churches and church leadership</i>	200
11.3	Family and Household Relations, c.405–551 CE	201
	<i>Jerome and the lives of two Christian women in Gaul: c.405 CE</i>	201
	<i>Procopius tells of a scandalous Christian empress, c.550–551 CE</i>	203
11.4	Slaves and Slavery	203
11.5	Households and the Emergence of the Papacy in Rome	206
12	Ideas and Literary Culture	209
12.1	The “One” and the Many: Philosophical and Anthropological Perspectives	210
12.2	Literature and Ideas after the “Vanishing” of Rome	212
12.3	The Literary Culture of Justinian’s Roman Empire	215
	<i>Justinian’s Latin Laws</i>	215
	<i>Justinian’s Greek-speaking Christian state</i>	215
12.4	Literature as a Source for the Study of Medicine and Disease	218

12.5	The Rise of a Book Culture	219
	<i>Books and patrons</i>	220
	<i>Books and beliefs</i>	222
12.6	Latin Poetry and Christian Communities in Rome, c. 366–600 CE	222
12.7	Looking Ahead: “People of the Book”	224
Part III The Illusion of Mediterranean History		229
13	Geography and Society	231
13.1	Seeing the Sixth Century Through the Eyes of an Emperor and a Traveler	232
	<i>Emperor Justinian, 527–565 CE</i>	233
	<i>Justinian’s Christian architecture</i>	235
13.2	Cosmas’ Christian World	235
	<i>Geography</i>	236
	<i>The centrality of scripture</i>	237
	<i>Apocalyptic thinking</i>	238
	<i>Religious minorities</i>	241
13.3	Beyond Rome’s Christian Empire in the Sixth Century CE	242
13.4	Sixth- and Seventh-Century South Asia	244
	<i>Sri Lanka and the economy of the Indian subcontinent</i>	244
	<i>“Buddhism” and “Hinduism”</i>	245
13.5	Sixth- and Seventh-Century China and Central Asia	247
	<i>The nature of trade along the Silk Roads</i>	248
	<i>Coins as evidence for shared customs in Rome and Sasanian Persia</i>	248
14	A Choice of Directions	253
14.1	Jerusalem in the Sixth and Early Seventh Centuries CE	254
	<i>The Temple Mount in Jerusalem at the dawn of the seventh century CE</i>	254
	<i>Jesus’ end-time preaching and Jerusalem before the seventh century CE</i>	258
	<i>End-time preaching and Jerusalem during the seventh century CE</i>	259
14.2	The Social World of the Arabian Peninsula in the Sixth Century CE	260
	<i>Merchant oases and desert sanctuaries</i>	261
14.3	The Believers Movement	262
	<i>The Constitution of Medina</i>	264
	<i>An apocalyptic component</i>	267
	<i>An initial focus on Jerusalem</i>	269
	<i>Glossary</i>	273
	<i>Index</i>	276