

1. How did early Christianity interact with Roman power? How did the acceptance and then embrace of Christianity change both Rome and Christian religious practice / belief? Take a look at the primary sources from before and after this acceptance for some examples.

- A very brief text illustrating Rome's failure to grasp economics - <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/diocletian-control.asp>
- Letters between Pliny and Emperor Trajan - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/pliny.html>
- Martyrdom of Perpetua (excerpts) - <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/perpetua-excerpt.asp>
- Excerpts from [Augustine's City of God \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Laws for Christians \(Links to an external site.\)](#) promulgated by the emperor Constantine

2. Take a look at the primary sources for this week, all of which address perceived weaknesses with the Roman Empire. Evaluate the arguments made in these sources. Why did Rome fall? How would these authors answer that question? Do you find any of these claims persuasive? What factors did they, perhaps, overlook or misunderstand?

- [Marcellinus - Life of the Rich in Rome \(Links to an external site.\)](#)- a later account of weakness and decadence in Rome ([Links to an external site.](#))
- [Tacitus - Germania \(excerpts\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - an evaluation of Rome and the Germans from the height of Roman power
- [Gibbon's Decline and Fall \(Excerpts\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - an old but important account of and explanation for the fall of Rome
- Optional - [Toynbee critiques Gibbon's analysis](#)

3. We'll study two major episodes of disease in this class, this one, the Plague of Justinian, and, later, the Black Death. Take a moment to discuss how this plague seems to have impacted Byzantine society? How did people respond to the plague? In what ways did it place stress on the fabric of society? Does any of this seem eerily familiar?

- [Procopius on the Nika rising \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Procopius on the Hagia Sophia \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

- [Procopius Secret History \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - Here, focus on sections 11 and 12 - the rest of this mid-size and fascinating text is also worth a look-see, but not required - this is the history that Procopius wrote in secret, to spell out his hatred of and grievances against Justinian and Theodora.
- [Brief Excerpts from the Corpus Juris Civilis \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Procopius on the Plague](#)

4. We've read a fair bit this week about how Charlemagne's Empire functioned. Craft a substantial response of at least one solid paragraph, based on some subset of the following questions: What were the key characteristics of Charlemagne's Empire? Which were strengths, which weaknesses? How do we evaluate Charlemagne himself as a leader? How does his empire compare to the Byzantine Empire? Why did his Empire prove to be more fragile? Would it have been more durable had the Franks relied on a more reasonable law code to govern succession?

- [Einhard on Charlemagne \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - excerpts from his biography (full text available, for the curious - [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#))
- [Capitulary for Saxony \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - detailing edicts governing life in this region
- The text establishes the [Missi Dominici \(Links to an external site.\)](#), Charlemagne's personal agents in the field
- An [inventory \(Links to an external site.\)](#) of one of Charlemagne's estates - a useful glimpse into how an emperor lived

5. Consider the various texts provided that were written by Procopius. When we read the secret history and his official histories together, side-by-side, how does our understanding of his work change? How should we, as historians, work with sources such as these, by the same author, which seem to wholly contradict one another? What can we reliably learn from studying these texts? In what areas should we be much more cautious in trusting Procopius?

Spend about 2 pages answering a useful subset of these questions, using specific examples from the texts to prove your points. Submit your work as a .pdf (preferred), .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .odt file. .pages files will not be accepted, as they're incredibly annoying for me to read on a PC.

- [Procopius on the Nika rising \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Procopius on the Hagia Sophia \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

- [Procopius Secret History \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - Here, focus on sections 11 and 12 - the rest of this mid-size and fascinating text is also worth a look-see, but not required - this is the history that Procopius wrote in secret, to spell out his hatred of and grievances against Justinian and Theodora.
- [Brief Excerpts from the Corpus Juris Civilis \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Procopius on the Plague](#)