Paper ARC27: Europe in Late Antiquity and the Migration Period [ASNC Paper 15]
Co-ordinator: Susanne Hakenbeck

The period of late Antiquity and the so-called Great Migrations (the third to eighth centuries AD) was a time of great social transformations. This course focuses on the changes that occurred during the final centuries of the western Roman empire, the effects of its collapse and the subsequent formation of the medieval polities. The canonical historical narrative of the period is the product of the literate Christian elite, who saw themselves as the inheritors of the Roman world. A critical engagement with the material evidence provides a counter-discourse to this, and gives voice to the populations on the frontiers of the Roman world.

This course will develop a framework of the history and archaeology of Europe in this period and will expand on the major scholarly debates. Students should be able to discuss the relationship between written and material sources for this period and the implications of recent theoretical changes, especially those relating to the competing interpretations of the end of the Roman Empire and the emergence of the barbarian polities. They will be encouraged to develop a critical understanding of how nationalism and modern views of the classical heritage of Europe have influenced our interpretations of the period.

By the end of the course students should display familiarity with the archaeological evidence for societies within and outside the frontiers of the Empire and their interactions with the remains of the Roman Empire.

Each student will select a small topic on which to base a practical project, involving direct examination of some aspect of material evidence for the period.

Structure
Lectures: One hour each week (Michaelmas and Lent), Thursday, 11-12 am
Practicals: 3 x two hour-sessions (Michaelmas, Lent), Wednesday, 2-4 pm; one field trip
Supervisions: 3-4 per term (Michaelmas and Lent)

Mode of examination
Final written paper: 80% of the final mark
Practical project: 20%