



The Foundations of Western Civilization:

The Eastern Mediterranean in the 1st Millennium CE

A Lecture Series from NEAF

In 2015 NEAF continued a series of Saturday lectures that aimed to give an overview of the development of Western Civilization from the 4th millennium BCE through to Late Antiquity. The first three series of these lectures consisted of four lectures each, concentrating on the 4th/3rd millennium BCE, the 2nd millennium BCE and the 1st millennia BCE in the Eastern Mediterranean. Each series was very popular and therefore we are offering our fourth series during February/March 2016. These lectures will concentrate on the 1st millennium CE and will again be held in the wonderful facilities at CCANESA.

As with the earlier series, the lectures will be given by members of the NEAF Board. These lecturers all have extensive backgrounds in teaching at University level. The lectures will present interesting and up-to-date research and will be aimed at the interested lay person.

Egypt and North Africa

The Greek and Phoenician colonisation of the southern shores of the Mediterranean had resulted in a rich mixture of Afro-European cultures by the turn of the millennium. Under the rule of Rome for the first half of the 1st millennium CE, the coastlands developed a common 'Mediterranean' culture, which integrated successive waves of southern inland influence, while benefitting from the growing riches of the overland trade with the sub-Saharan south. The spread of Islam (after 640 CE) saw much of rural inland North Africa more firmly integrated with the coastal urban settlements for the first time, creating a new and vibrant culture, which gradually developed an ever-stronger continental 'Berber' flavour as the millennium unfolded.

This lecture will begin by examining the origin and initial characteristics of the coastal urban settlements, through a study of the main cities of Roman Imperial North Africa (Alexandria, Cyrene, Leptis Magna and Carthage), and the more rural hinterland settlements (Dougga, Timgad, Cuicul and Volubilis), before moving on to a consideration of the chief cities of the Islamic period (Cairo, Tripoli, Kairouan and Tunis, Algiers, Tlemcen, Marrakesh and Fez), along with the developing inland centres of the Berber uplands and oases.

Iran: The Great Empires

Following the disintegration of the Hellenistic world, Mesopotamia and Persia fell under the rule of the Parthians and then the Sasanians. By the early 1st century BCE the Parthians controlled an area stretching from Babylonia to Bactria whilst under their successors, the Sasanians, arose one of the most brilliant and powerful empires of Antiquity. This seminar will explore the history, art and monuments of these two remarkable empires and will also examine the astonishing changes which took place in Iran following the Muslim conquests of the 7th century CE.

The Levant

At the beginning of the first millennium CE, the Levant was a mix of client kingdoms, ill-defined Roman provinces and independent states, still strongly influenced by the Hellenistic rulers of the region. Eventually entirely brought under direct Roman control, and benefiting from the *Pax Romana*, the region became a powerhouse of architectural innovation and some of the richest provinces of the Empire. The rise of Christianity parallels other changes in the Roman world, as the structures of the Classical world were finally left behind. Into this



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familiar world rode the armies of Islam in the middle 7th century. Rapidly overthrowing the Roman armies, within a decade the Muslim world spread from Mesopotamia, throughout the Levant and across northern Africa. These fundamental changes in orientation can be charted in the histories of the great cities of the Levant – Jerusalem, Damascus, Petra, Beirut and Antioch. We will examine changes in the religious landscapes of the Levant, and the way in which the rulers of the region provided themselves with palaces, as case studies, which illustrate the rich history of this millennium.

Turkey & Greece in the Byzantine Period

From the banks of the Bosphorus, the boundary between Europe and Asia, the culture, religion and politics of the Byzantine Empire was to define the western Near East for much of the first millennium CE. This seminar will focus on Turkey and Greece, the heartland of the Byzantine Empire, to examine a 1,000 transformative years as these areas changed from being provinces of the Roman Empire to one of the great powers of the day. The historical, cultural and archaeological legacy of this period is manifest and this seminar will move from the great trading cities of Ephesus and Antioch to the rich heritage of the imperial capital at Istanbul. It will also look to the provinces - from the black basalt walls of Diyarbakir guarding the Tigris River to small churches in rural Greece - to fully explore this influential period.

We require a minimum of ten people to run the series with a maximum of fifty.

The lectures will begin at 10am with a half hour break for morning tea at 11.30, then resume at 12, and finish at 1.30 with a glass of wine and chance to chat with the lecturer and other members.

The cost of an individual lecture is \$30 and the series is \$100. This includes the lecture, morning tea and wine.

2016 LECTURE DATES

27 February	Egypt and North Africa	Stephen Bourke
5 March	Iran: The Great Empires	John Tidmarsh
12 March	The Levant	Kate da Costa
19 March	Turkey & Greece in the Byzantine Period	Ben Churcher