



Seminar Guidelines

Upheaval or trifle? The Universal Grant of Citizenship of 212 CE

*Chair for Roman Law,
Juristic Papyrology and Private Law*

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**University of Zurich
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Zürich^{UZH}



I. Description

How astonishing would it be if all of a sudden the president of the United States granted the US citizenship to every foreigner established in North America? Unreal as this seems, it is what happened in the Roman Empire in 212 CE. That year, Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Caracalla –who months before had instigated the assassination of his younger brother and co-Emperor, Geta– issued an Edict, the so-called *constitutio Antoniniana*, granting full Roman citizenship to all free men inhabiting the Roman Empire.

In the West, deeply romanised, where a great part of the population, and certainly the elites, had long enjoyed the Roman citizenship, the change was probably not immense, except for the lower social strata. But in the East, where the number of Roman citizens was extremely scarce, the decision must have fallen like an earthquake. Greek in language and culture since Alexander the Great, the Eastern population found themselves from one day to another Roman citizens, with a new Roman name: Marcus Aurelius, the men, Aurelia, the women, as if all of them were, as newly born Romans, children of the Emperor. The Egyptian papyri show an explosion of Aurelii in those years: there is suddenly almost nobody who does not bear the name of the Emperor.

With the name, though, came a new status as Roman, and with it, one would expect, a complete subjection to Roman law. Until now, Roman law had been largely ignored by the local population: with the tolerance of the Roman administration, these Greek speaking non-Romans had despite centuries of Roman rule, continued living largely in conformity to the rules and traditions of Greek (or, depending on origin and culture, Egyptian, Jewish, etc.) law. Millions of them, now turned Romans, found themselves in uncharted territory: should they now entirely give up their legal culture and adjust to the alien, cumbersome and often incomprehensible rules of Roman law?



Whatever was expected from them, what they actually did we can reconstruct with astonishing detail thanks to thousands of papyri that have arrived to us from the decades after 212. This seminar aims at reviewing this evidence, and reconstructing as precisely as possible how completely ordinary people adjusted –or didn't– to their new status.

The number of participants is limited to twelve.

The participation and the written paper can be in German as well as in English.

II. Topic List

- Topic 1: *A Roman tradition: collective grants of citizenship before 212*
- Topic 2: *The political logic behind the Constitutio Antoniniana*
- Topic 3: *How universal was the universal grant of citizenship?*
- Topic 4: *Personality principle? Legal life of Roman citizens in the East before 212*
- Topic 5: *Autonomy, own laws and jurisdiction in the Eastern cities after 212*
- Topic 6: *Paternal power and emancipation after 212*
- Topic 7: *Children under power as owners after 212*
- Topic 8: *Marriage and family Law practice after 212*
- Topic 9: *Wills and testamentary practice after 212*
- Topic 10: *Slaves, slave purchase and manumission after 212*
- Topic 11: *Credit and securities after 212*
- Topic 12: *"Everything must change for everything to remain the same": Stipulation and the so-called Stipulatory Clause*

III. Process of participation

1. The Seminar will be published on **March 10, 2022**.
2. The RWF registration tool is open from **March 14 to 22, 2022**.
3. On **March 28, 2022**, the seminar allocation can be viewed in the registration tool.
4. By **April 10, 2022**, please notify the chair (lst.alonso@rwi.uzh.ch) of your three topics of choice, in order of preference, should you have any. Please also inform whether yours is a Bachelor's or Master's thesis.
5. The final assignment of topics will be made at the preliminary meeting on the **April 13, 2022 at 12:15**.



IV. Writing the thesis and attending the seminar

1. The presentation of the Seminar will take place on **April 13, 2022 at 12:15**. If you are unable to attend this date, please contact the chair.
2. Submission of an outline: Please send an outline, with the main questions to be explored, possible hypotheses and a preliminary literature list to the chair (2-3 pages) no later than **September 18, 2022**: lst.alonso@rwi.uzh.ch.
3. Writing of the actual thesis.
4. Submission of a preliminary version: Please send a preliminary version of your thesis to the chair by **November 6, 2022** at the latest: lst.alonso@rwi.uzh.ch.
5. On **November 17th and 18th, 2022**, the oral presentations will be rehearsed in front of the chair assistants.
6. **Seminar sessions**: The seminar will take place on **25./26. November 2022**. It consists of an oral presentation of your thesis (approx. 30 minutes) and a subsequent discussion. ***Both the presentation and the participation in the discussion are compulsory for all participants.***
7. **The deadline** for submitting the written thesis is **December 11, 2022 at midnight**. A physical copy is not needed: please send your thesis as a PDF and Word file to lst.alonso@rwi.uzh.ch.

Please note that the deadlines have been set in consideration of the exam session in winter and the spring break in April. If these do not correspond to your individual work rhythm or your semester planning, you are always free to complete and submit to us earlier the individual stages, such as disposition, preliminary version, etc. thus receiving also earlier feedback. ***The deadlines, however, remain set and binding as time limit.***

V. Length and grading of the thesis

Bachelor's theses are awarded 6 ECTS and must be approximately 25 pages long (about 62,500 characters). Master's theses can be written to the extent of 12 ECTS, which corresponds to a thesis of approximately 40 pages (about 100,000 characters).

For the scope and formalities of the thesis, please refer to the separately published information sheet on the homepage of the chair (see Documents).