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| **GRST 347 – Assignment 2** | Alex Stevenson - 30073617 |

**Primary Source:** *Medieval Sourcebook: St. Perpetua:* *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* *203*

*The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* is a firsthand historical account of the events preceding the execution of Vibia Perpetua in the arena of Carthage on March 7th, 203. It is written as a diary from the perspective of Perpetua, and is one of the earliest firsthand accounts of martyrdom ever preserved along with being one of the earliest pieces of writing by a Christian woman (SOURCE). These attributes make this a very important text for understanding and documenting Christian history. The source consists of three main parts that recount the persecution, imprisonment, and execution of a group of Christian martyrs that include Perpetua, Saturus, and Felicity. It was likely written in order for Perpetua to document their trials, and for others to understand and become encouraged (weird to say) by the martyrdom of this Christian group. As Perpetua is clearly a devout Christian, one must take into account the bias that is present in her retelling of historical facts of the event. However, this bias is implicit and important to understand the emotions and thoughts of Perpetua during this time and should not be dismissed out of hand (revise).

The first major section of the source is also the longest, as it documents Perpetua's account of the series of events that happen before their execution. It begins with Perpetua under legal surveillance and imprisonment of the Roman state. She writes about her father who comes to her multiple times before the trial in a pleading attempt to have her reject her Christian faith. Perpetua acknowledges that he does it out of his love for her, however she must refuse him in a vexing argument between the two. This is significant as it is indicative of the way Christianity is changing Roman society. Before the rise of Christianity, the father is deemed the most important member of the household and all other family members obey him without question. During the trial, her father appears one last time to cast down Perpetua's faith himself. He is smitten by a rod, and sent away with her child who she has been breastfeeding and caring for in prison.