

# Notes – Early Medieval Ages 7

Notes 7

The Roman Empire committed suicide by accident?

The further back the events the easier it is for the historian to “see it coming”

Who are the Barbarians?

Burgundian code

Refer to themselves as Barbarians not Romans

What do we know

From Archaeology

Have settlements but not urban

Have grave sites

Have trade with Roman Empire

Roman items buried with them on occasion

Main written source for pre-invasion German tribes is Tacitus

Best known for his

Pessimistic annals of the Roman Empire

In Germania

For Tacitus the Germans are

Childlike and noble

Warlike

The general Roman view on Barbarians

Intent on invading the empire and enjoying the riches

Never visited Germania

Write about them as a way of castigating the Romans

Contrast a beautiful natural simple world

Gauguin's paintings

Melville

Compared to fatiguing rat race

Warlike concerned with personal bravery and honour

Close family ties

Heterosexuals

Treat women well

Contrasting with Romans  
Some vices

Lazy

Drunk

Quarrel

Gamble

True of later German practices

Tacitus does not make up for a moral purpose

Comitatus

Extend kinship

My second cousin will repay you if you kill me  
Wergeld

Compensation for hurt killing

Cost – depend on who he is and what he did  
Before enter empire

Lived in little villages

Cattle raisers

Cultivated grain

Iron working

Spot of raiding  
Above clan level

Federation or tribes?  
Who are the Visigoths?

Come together

Invent notion that from one place  
Ethnogenesis  
Not a lot of evidence that they were searching for common ancestor  
Come into empire as

Refugees

Allied troops

Federati

Supported by a system with bland name of hospitality

Goffart

Destroyed idea of invasion with arrows on map

Came from here, then there

506 – Franks defeat Visigoths

500 – most impressive Barbarians Ostrogoths – in Italy

Been in Crimea

Balkans

Tried to attack Constantinople

Impressive ruler

Theodoric

Ruled from Ravenna

Roman education survived in Italy for a bit

Boethesius

Last person to try and spread Greek knowledge

In prison wrote

The consolation of Philosophy

Cassiodorus

Lives till 90ish

Transmits to us liberal arts

Invents idea that monks should copy literature

Liberal arts – things that are not immediately practically useful

Help illuminate the person seeking after knowledge

Seeking God and the divine

Bible not an immediately evident document

View of world full of mysteries

Very few intellectuals in the Barbarian kingdom

After Theodoric dies 535

Eastern empire invades

20 year war in Italy

Vandals

Less accommodating than the Ostrogoths

More fiercely Arian

Persecuted bishops

Plundered Rome several times in fifth century

Strong rulers

506 kingdom shrunk

Fought among each other  
Anglo Saxons

From continent in 440s

First place to withdraw

Britain

Celtic majority

Very little knowledge of what is going on  
Brugundians

Very status orientated

Law shows a lot of Roman influence

If my dog bites you and kills you

No revenge if accident  
Compensation for victims  
In west

Injure me – you break peace offend state

In early times – more personal

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## Notes – Early Medieval Ages 6

Notes 6 Transformation of the Roman Empire  
410 to 480

West empire disintegrated  
Dismembered by Barbarians

Wanted to share in wealth and accomplishments not destroy it  
476 fall of the Western Empire  
Barbarian deposed a Roman emperor

Barbarian leader Odavacer  
Deposed Romulus Augustus

Us means little  
He didn't appoint new emperor and said he would follow the East  
Kingdom smaller than empire  
King of Italy, King of Franks

Etc

Why did the West fall?

External or internal

Who were these Barbarians?

How severe was this change?

Destruction of government also of the military

Lost works

Esculus wrote 60 plays 3 survive

Also Cicero's work Hortensius

End colosseums

Literacy fell except in church

Some historians say a cataclysmic change, others quite a bit of continuity

Continuists

Survival of trade

Roll of bishops replacing government order

Bishops ensure food supply and lead rally against Barbarians

Barbarian leaders collected tax

Some maintenance of order

Not radically more primitive

Lecturer is a moderate catastrophist

Wickham – the inheritance of

Romans

Barbarian – Greek term

Uncivilised – speech unclear

Nomads

Illiterate

Not unfamiliar

Most Arian Christians

Been at Roman border for ever

Continuous

What changed 250 to 600

The ancient world became the medieval world

More rural

Why collapsed

Taken over by Germans

Who admired Rome  
Last thing they wanted was to live in huts in the forest

Not that numerous

Tens of thousands  
Changes in Roman Army  
Afghan Mujahideen

Trained by USA  
Lots in army were barbarians  
In 370s Visigoths asked to be an allied army

Federati – barbarian troops serving

In Roman Empire  
In 378 they were on the move  
Emperor Valens defeated Adrianople  
Magister Militum title to Barbarian leader of army  
Visigoths given land in Romania

Balkans  
Stilicho and Alaric  
Moving from the Balkans towards Italy  
Where was the Roman army?  
The Huns

Interested in plunder  
450s Huns united under Attila  
Huns decided East too hard  
Then lost in France  
Started sacking Roman cities  
Leo the first

Goes to remonstrate with Attila

Attila dies soon after  
Pope  
After this Barbarians takes  
430  
Vandals have taken over North Africa

Cut off grain supply  
Vandals have navy

Sack Rome 455  
Ostrogoths in Hungary  
Angles and Saxons in Britain  
493 eastern empire  
Have biography of saints  
Severinus in Austria

Takes over helping poor

Organising society

Urban population declines

Radical material simplification

Fewer imports

More homemade crude building materials

When vandals blocked grain supply

Cities could not support all people

In 5BC Rome 800,000 or 1,000,000

At time of Constantine

600,000

After sack of Rome

300,000 – 500,000

590

150,000

In 800

Charlemagne crowned in St Peters

Rome

Max 30,000

People not aware at the time

That there was a decline

Compare

Patrick Leigh Fermov

Conversation with General

Knowledge of Latin and classics a lot weaker than in past – 100 years ago

Heirs of Roman Empire

1 Byzantium

2 Barbarian Kings

3 Islam

4 Church

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## Notes – Early Medieval Ages 5

Notes 5

Why study the Confessions?

Christianity had a great impact on Roman Empire late fourth and fifth century  
3 problems

1. Problem of evil

2. Relation between body and soul

3. Understanding of sin and redemption

All of these are dealt with thoroughly in Augustine's work  
More thorough than any other

Ancient thinker

Philosophical and Psychological investigation

Men go out and gaze at astonishment at high mountains... But they pay no  
attention to themselves

An examination of the author's heart – intellectual and emotional  
Reads dialogue by Cicero hortensius

Convinces him life of mind most important

About a search for truth

That takes a lot of wrong turns

A confession of sin

About spiritual yearning

An intellectual and a passionate person

Not apposed to desire

Love is a psychological need

I was in love with the idea of love

Both sexual and spiritual

Also a believer in friendship

He is ambitious

Ability to write

Read

Argue

At that time the course of success

Was government service

Rhetoric and law

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion

Writing well and elegantly



Highly valued in Roman Empire  
Mother is extremely pious  
Augustine's mother is a saint now

Wants him to be a success which means delaying baptism

Involvement in government service

Which involves dealing with sin,

Wrangling, parties, honours,

Sexual conquests

Gives it up when converts

What bothers Augustine?

Problem of evil

Why does a good God allow bad things to happen

Compared to the works of the Greek writers and philosophers the Bible seems awfully crude

Rhetorically in terms of style

And conceptually in terms of ideas

The Old Testament God seems temperamental

The flood

Kills man touches the ark

Anthropomorphism

Walking in garden

Talks to people

Likes Manichaeism

Two gods one bad

Christian belief

There will be bodies as well as spirit in resurrection

Platonism

Evil is the absence of something Good

It is the absence of being and meaning

Turning away from the good is the human problem

People of cave

Chained looking at back of cave

Seeing images of what is outside

Forget chained

Think this is the real thing

If you tried to liberate them

Persecute you, don't want to change  
Key differences

Platonism assigns evil to ignorance

Christianity to sin  
Why steal pears?

Bored

Not hungry, not desire

It's gratuitous – not from need  
Platonists don't have a good idea of why this happens as not to do with  
ignorance.  
If human beings are sinful and education not going to help,

What will?

The nature of sin is the pears

The way out of it is the conversion

At least in part

After his conversion Augustine's plan was to lead a life of contemplation  
with his friends

Leisure with dignity

He did not follow through with it

Went back to North Africa

Became bishop

Defended doctrine against heretics

Died defending his city of

Hippo from the Vandals

Writes City of God when Rome falls in 410 to Vandals

You cannot live a life of perfection

Becomes more and more against doctrine of perfectionism

Cannot in any way earn salvation

Some saved by grace

Visible elect – know who's going to heaven

Small community seeking salvation

Everyone outside doomed

Invisible – then everybody ought to be in the church

Ought to be roping in every one you can

Augustine believes in forced conversion

With baptism

Doesn't mean perfection

Means entering the process

Key points

Opposition to perfectionism

Exaltation of grace

Sin as indelible

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## Notes – Early Medieval 4



Christian Roman Empire

Tolerated

Official

Then sole legal religion except Judaism

Arianism

Donatists

Manicheans

Constantine died 337

When he died empire restored to former glory

Fourth century often seen through the lens of 410 sacking

Inequality one of signs/problems

Time of social mobility

Many paths open

Barbarians taking major positions in Roman Empire, especially in army

Sometimes empire divided sometimes not

395 Theodosius dies

After always two, east and west

Julian the apostate 360-363

Tried to restore traditional paganism

Intellectual of sorts

After his death no paganism

Marcus Aurelius was a philosopher  
393 Theodosius made only

Christianity legal and small space for Judaism  
The saints are a kind of substitute for polytheism  
Rural people and intellectuals

Especially platonists  
Chief occupation of emperors

Persians and on Danube Barbarians  
Arianism

Christ different from God  
Platonism emphasises the absolute

and the superiority of the spiritual

Material is mortal passes away

In Platonism

The one

The Demi-urge

Matched up with God the father

And son  
There was a time when Christ was not  
Nicean

All co eternal, members of trinity  
Missionaries that converted barbarians were Arians

By time barbarians in empire

Arianism was gone

370s  
Barbarians – generally Germanic

Tribes  
320s Nicea

381 Constantinople a heresy  
In west still Arianism  
Donatists

If it turns out priest is bad

Had buckled under torture

Your baby was not properly baptised

Marriage didn't count etc  
But if Bishop was fine but anointed by failed priest – not legitimate  
Lends itself to sectarianism  
Office greater than man?  
Manichaeans

Teaching about good and evil

Have real existence

War between good God and evil one

Eg Devil

Or the God of the Old Testament

Also matter evil  
Salvation means casting off the flesh  
What's wrong

God is limited

Takes away individual responsibility  
Roman emperors had to intervene  
Frustrating for emperors as can't kill the heretics  
He was afraid of upsetting God

Didn't want to let it go  
Also frustrated with Arianism

Considered it over subtle and trivial  
Summoned bishops in Nicaea 325

God and Christ are the same essence but different persons  
Begotten but not made – not in time  
Athanasius  
Constantine was baptised just before he died

He was a moderate Arian later in life

Augustine introduced child baptism  
330s understanding that Christian no longer a sinner  
Why read confessions?

An autobiography

Intimate

Anxiety, desires, doubts

Shows the fluidity of religious scene

First Platonist

Then a Manichaeon

Then Christian Manichaeon

Then Christian Platonist

Then Orthodox Christian

More time is spent on stealing pears than his concubine

A lot of prayers, quotations from scripture

Platonism

More interested in the one and trying to apprehend the one

Superiority of spirit over material

Unlike Manichaeans material not

Sinful it is good but inferior

Platonic love –

Platonism is a turning away

Loving physical more

Result of poor education



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## Notes – Early Medieval Age 3

### **Conversion of Constantine**

Permanent change

Hard to explain on strategic grounds

Starts the Christianisation of Roman Empire

Been illegal for 250 years

Romans killed Jesus

Polytheism and its ceremony was rife

First becomes tolerant

Then favoured

Then official and almost only religion

Paganism – polytheistic

Local variation

Eclectic – different gods in places times and times of life

Emotional vacuum

Denied longing of more to life

Innerness – important

Other religions – mystery

Eg Mithraism

Promise of afterlife

Appeal to elite and common

But it was alien

Romans did not always persecute

Didn't like intolerance

Judaism recognised Roman Leader

Christianity

Rejected pleasures

Emperor worship

Celebrations

Killjoy religion

Persecution was not that intense

Nero

Third century

Diocletian

Enough persecution to give it backbone but not enough to crush it

Constantine son of one of the Caesars – helpers

Of the west

Sent east to serve Galerius eastern

Not chosen next

306 Constantine rebelled

Raised empire in England

Maxentius rebelled in Rome

Milvian Bridge 312 battle

2 stories of conversion

One had a dream – Angel spoke to him and told him to make symbol

Chi and rho

Other story later

Eusebius

Marching with army

Saw a cross in the sky

On the sun

In this sign you will conquer

Chi rho

No reason to doubt Constantine's sincerity – hard to imagine any emperor thinking Christianity was good for empire

Christianity was pacifist

Commands not to fight hit back

Saw himself favoured by fortune

Need to placate

Quite clever

Latin literature

Some Greek

Doesn't become totally committed Christian

Coins kept invincible son

Only later – just the cross

Edict of toleration

Constantine and Licinius

Christianity legalised

Returned property confiscated from Diocletian

No tax for church

Left pagan centre for moment

Built St Peters

Laterin Basilica

At his death about half of the empire had converted

What did it mean to the church?

Establishes the problem of the

Church in the world

St Augustine dealt with some of this

At start very successful

390 about 90% Christian (nominal)

Held out

Peasants – weather God

Army



Intellectual elite – Greek Roman philosophy  
Battle of Chrysopolis

Found importance of

Byzantium

Constantinople

Istanbul

Bosporus – narrow canal or river  
Can get to Danube and Persian border quite easily

The Difficult borders

City in richest part of empire  
Like Brazil and Portugal

Brazil bigger and more important now  
Facilitated division by addition of new capital like Rome

Forum

Sporting stadiums

Victory column

Palaces

Gets more devout and less tolerant

Gets more involved with doctrine  
Donatists

Taught that priests were not legitimate if had sinned  
People appealed to emperor 317  
Involved in Arian heresy

Christ subordinate to God the father  
Harsher crimes for sexual sins

Rape, concubines  
Nicea 32

Dealt with Arian

Appears as head of the church

But not a bishop  
Vs Diocletian

Similar

Military and Admin structure

Heavy taxes

Diocletian persecuted church but Constantine strengthened it

Ended tetrarchy but division strengthened with new capital

Constantine more successful economically

476 fall