

# 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 Ostragoths

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

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# Notes – Early Medieval Notes

## 2

Early medieval notes 2

Crisis of Third Century

Diocletian

Was awesome

Saved the Roman empire

Problems

Problem of succession – how next one chosen

Size

Urban and rural

Cities draining country

East west imbalance

Armies – staffed by barbarians

Problems of replacing generations

Disease

Death childbirth

Infant mortality

Problems in 3rd century

Invasions – Persian

Back as far as Heroditus

First western historian

370BC

Persia on till 7th century

Valerian captured by Persians

Danube and Rhine – bulwarks against Barbarians

Decius died 251 fighting goths

235 to 280 30 emperors

Some lasting months

Assassinated by own troops – most

How choose

Sometimes family

2nd – choose

Other – military leaders

Rome becoming less and less relevant

Rome 271 Aurelian walled the city



Third century

Ruled by succession of generals

Not rich

Hold senate in contempt

Not well educated

Donative – reward from new emperor

Plotinus – flourished in third century

New Platonist

Big inflation problems

Romans didn't have debt financing

Debase coinage – don't put in as much silver or gold

Go to buy stuff – price 50% up as coins not good

Local elites – ruined

Sardis

People not interested who move in

Interested in religions that cross borders

Diocletian abdicated 305

Son of ex-slave

From Dalmatia

Under severe guidance empire reformed

Empire militarised

Changed in taxes

Change and grow army

Nearly doubled

200,000 to 400,000

No income tax as is based more on land than on salary

Admin values land, estates

Each 15 years change estimate

Diocletian improve mail system

Also more punishment for tax avoidance

Establishment of tetrarchy

Divided empire in west and east

Gets co-emperor in west he in east

And each has helper

Augusti – boss

Caesar – helpers

Emperor distant glimpsed

Not appear in public

He's a god

Throw yourself at his feet

Don't look at him till he says so

285 Diocletian

Maximian

306 brings down

Son of Augusti not appointed

Rebels

Fixed prices on goods – trying to deal with inflation

Gresham's law? Coinage

Fixed price

Legal price stuff is rubbish

Better stuff is more expensive on black market

Diocletian's policies failed

Tetrarchy

Fixed prices

Christianity

Liver told Diocletian Christians were responsible

Successful

Saved Roman Empire for 100 years

And east for 1200 years

People at time felt saved from disaster

Mosaic – a world restored

On whole things good in fourth century

Prosperous

Barbarians back

Persians back

Trier great in Germany

Milan