1: Reversals of Fortune: An Overview of the Age of Attila

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Attila's Painting

A story was told in antiquity that when Attila the Hun captured Milan in 452, he noticed a painting – perhaps decorating a public building – that showed the eastern and western Roman emperors on golden thrones with steppe nomads lying dead at their feet. The infuriated Hun king immediately summoned an artist to render a counterimage: in the new painting *he* would be the man on the throne while servile Roman emperors poured gold coins before him from leather money bags. In a triumphant mood, Attila was rejecting old stereotypes of nomad inferiority and boasting of the enormous treasure he had extorted from the Roman government.[1] Attila's painting, if it ever existed, would have been a scandalous outrage to a Roman viewer, and that is precisely what the Roman writer who described this episode wanted to convey.[2] He meant to shock his readers with an intimation of a world in which Roman claims of universal victory were successfully challenged and mocked by an uncivilized Hun.

Attila and the Huns left a deep stamp on European history. From 434 until his death in 453, the "Scourge of God" controlled a vast domain in central Europe and the western Eurasian steppe, from which the Huns had entered the European consciousness nearly a century

[1] The annual payment reached 2,100 pounds of gold per year. See Christopher Kelly, chapter 11 in this volume.

[2] *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler (1928, repr. Leipzig, 2001–2004); Suda On Line: http://www.stoa.org/sol/. The entry is κ 2123, for "kôrukos," leather sack. The source of the entry is not named. It could be from Priscus of Panium.

earlier. For a generation, his army of Huns and subject peoples assaulted the eastern Roman Empire, alternately coercing huge sums of cash and causing enormous destruction. During the last three years of his life, Attila campaigned in western Europe. When his momentum stopped after a great battle in Gaul in 451, he pulled back to Italy, where he fought with mixed results until his death. Attila's name came to resonate grandly in medieval legend,[3] and today he and his Hunnic armies still stand for violence and aggression. They were, however, only part of a much bigger and even more colorful story.

This book uses Attila to represent a world that was changing far more profoundly than the author of the anecdote above could have imagined. The *Companion to the Age of Attila* introduces readers to a long period stretching from the latter half of the fourth century, when Huns first appeared in the west Eurasian steppe and the Roman Empire still stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea, to the beginning of the sixth century, by which time Attila was yesterday's news and the Roman state based at Constantinople had become a regional power in the eastern Mediterranean, though it was still the strongest kingdom in Europe. Attila gives his name to the age, not because he was its prime mover or even because of the terrifying legacy he left in the European imagination, but because of the deep-seated transformations that he represents and that this book explores.

To help visualize the scope of the complex story of the Age of Attila, it is helpful to think of four interlocking geopolitical zones, each a composite with its own long history of local traditions, economies, political communities, and varieties of religious expression. These zones were (1) the Eurasian Steppe, a corridor of grasslands and desert that stretched from the Hungarian Plain to the Gobi Desert,[4] impeded only in part by the arc of the Carpathian Mountains;[5] (2) Sasanian Persia, which controlled the Iranian plateau, shared the Near Eastern culture area with Rome and reached the fringes of the Eurasian steppe north of the Caucasus range; (3) the lands of northern Europe that had never been included in the Roman state, bounded roughly

[3] Franz H. Bäuml and Marianna D. Birnbaum, eds., *Attila: The Man and His Image* (Budapest, 1993).

[4] Mark Whittow, "Geographical Survey," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, with John Haldon and Robin Cormack (Oxford, 2008) 219–231; Étienne de la Vaissière, "Central Asia and the Silk Road," in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott F. Johnson (Oxford, 2012) 142–169, here 142–144.

[5] Roger Batty, *Rome and the Nomads: The Pontic and Danubian Realm in Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007) 89–94.

by the Atlantic Ocean, the Rhine and Danube Rivers, and the great forests beyond eastern Europe;[6] and (4) the Roman Empire, based in the Mediterranean but controlling lands from Britain to the Red Sea. Rome receives the lion's share of attention in the chapters ahead. (map 1).

During the Age of Attila, the inhabitants of these zones came to interact differently with one another, while internally they experienced radical discontinuities as well as transmutations of far older cultural and political practices. This developmental aspect of the Age of Attila should be stressed. Despite all its violence and destruction, the period under discussion here, the "long" fifth century, should be seen as a time of unexpected growth, a threshold era that was as much witness to the emergence of the medieval world as it was to the end of so much of the classical age. This introductory chapter considers the four zones in turn, beginning with the Eurasian Steppe that produced the Huns.

Zone 1: The Eurasian Steppe

For Roman writers of the imperial period, the Eurasian steppe was synonymous with frostbite and savagery, but historians today understand the steppe quite differently. Its populations were more than able to generate their own quite sophisticated political and social formations without dependence on outlying empires, and they were not at all stuck in a rut of primitive life as was once believed. Although quite diverse culturally and linguistically, they shared certain traits of herding, trading, and fighting across the steppe's enormous expanse.[7] The nomads often lived in peaceful, complex synergy with nearby agricultural and commercial communities,[8] and they also benefited from long-distance trade.[9] In addition to caring for their herds, raiding the settled lands to acquire loot and livestock became regular practice among them.[10] Mounted warrior elites noted for their ferocity and high degree of mobility across the steppe directed affairs through elaborate networks of authority and dependence.

[6] See Peter J. Heather, chapter 12 in this volume.
[7] Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies* (Cambridge, 2002) 42–43; Peter B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford, 2011) 9–20, for introductory survey.
[8] Golden, *Central Asia*, 11.
[9] Xinriu Liu, *The Silk Road in World History* (Oxford, 2010) 63; Golden, *Central Asia*, 16–17.
[10] Golden, *Central Asia*, 16.

The Age of Attila marked an important phase in the long history of the steppe and the great empires surrounding it.[11] Although peoples originating in the Eurasian Steppe had fought ferociously with Rome on the Danube frontier in earlier centuries, it was only with the arrival of the Huns that the steppe as the seat of nomad empires became a permanent presence in Roman political calculations, especially for the eastern Roman Empire that confronted steppe peoples on the Danube frontier.[12] The steppe would remain a point of departure for Avars, Turks, and many other implacable enemies in the centuries to come.

The canvas gets even larger. Rome's greatest rival, Sasanian Persia, endured profound internal readjustments in response to the kingdoms of the Hephthalite, Chionite, and Kidarite Huns (not connected to Attila's domain) on their northeastern frontier.[13] Much farther afield, the Gupta empire in northern India became deeply preoccupied with the Hephthalites,[14] while China, temporarily in a state of political disunion, fought with other groups from the steppe as well.[15] This volume focuses on the kaleidoscopic alterations in the political, religious, and social landscape "only" from the Atlantic to the western steppe. Nevertheless, we can say that over an even greater area, the Age of Attila inaugurated a new order in world affairs.

The Arrival of the Huns

Bands of Huns reached the western Eurasian steppe in the second half of the fourth century, around 370, perhaps driven in part by climate

[11] The steppe has been inhabited by modern humans for nearly fifty thousand years, but pastoral nomadism only emerged after a long and piecemeal development about 1200 BCE; Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies*, 13–42, surveys theories.

[12] Dennis Sinor, "The Hun period," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. Dennis Sinor (Cambridge, 1990) 177–205; Roger Batty, *Rome and the Nomads*, 347–456.

[13] Frantz Grenet, "Regional Interaction in Central Asia and Northwest India in the Kidarite and Hephthalite periods," in *Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples*, ed. Nicholas Sims-Williams, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 116 (Oxford, 2002) 203–224; on divisions of the Huns, Mark Ščukin, Michel Kazanski, and Oleg Sharev, *Des les Goths aux Huns: Le nord de la Mer Noire au Bas-empire et a l'epoque des grandes migrations*, British Archaeological Reports International Series 1535 (Oxford, 2006) 111.

[14] Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton, 1998) 177–178.

[15] Mark E. Lewis, *China between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009) 144–151.

changes in their Central Asian homelands.[16] Their arrival on the western side of the Volga River changed the political landscape of the western steppe in a dramatic fashion. Some scholars believe that to some extent they brought with them political and cultural attachments to the defunct Xiongnu empire (ca. 200 BCE to 100 CE) on the northwest Chinese frontier, credited as being the first nomad empire [La Vaissière].[17] As they crossed the steppe, their ranks were increased by defeated tribes and other groups that willingly joined them, as regularly happened on the steppe.[18]

Initially, Huns came in separate groups, with different names and leadership traditions, and they settled over a very wide area.[19] Within a century, however, their elites controlled all of the steppe and its indigenous peoples between Hungary and the Urals, although they were never unified under one ruler (maps 1 and 2).[20] Kidarites, Chionites, and Hephthalites in turn established their kingdoms northeast of Iran, while "European" Huns moved further west, basing themselves first in the Pontic-Danubian region[21] and then on the Hungarian Plain. Their arrival was a calamity for the western steppe's other nomadic peoples as well as for its settled populations, most importantly Gothic kingdoms that had been established between the Danube Basin and the Black Sea for several generations.[22] Much of the Gothic population fled west from the Huns and sought refuge across the Danube in the Roman Empire, instigating a cascade of events that led to the disastrous battle of Adrianople in 378 (see below) and the eventual settlement of Goths

[16] La Vaissière, "Central Asia and the Silk Road," 144–147.

[17] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Ethnogenesis, Coevolution and Political Morphology of the Earliest Steppe Empire: The Xiongnu Question Revisited," in *Xiongnu Archaeology: Multidisciplinary Perspectives of the First Steppe Empire in Inner Asia*, ed. Ursula Brosseder and Bryan K. Miller (Bonn, 2011) 35–48.

[18] Golden, *Central Asia*, 15–17.

[19] Étienne de la Vaissière, chapter 10 in this volume; Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, 169–170.

[20] See Richard Payne, chapter 16 in this volume; Ščukin, Kazanski, and Sharev, *Des les Goths aux Huns*, 111.

[21] Batty, *Rome and the Nomads*, 2, calls this region "a zone of interaction" rather than a place with strict territorial boundaries.

[22] Peter J. Heather, "The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe," *English Historical Review* 110 (1995) 4–41; Peter J. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996); Marina G. Moshkova, "A Brief Review of the History of the Sauromatian and Sarmatian Tribes," in *Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes in the Early Iron Age*, ed. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, Vladimir A. Bashilov, and Leonid T. Yablonsky (Berkeley, 1995) 87.

within the empire.[23] Some Alans, who were a nomadic people in the region, also fled further west, but many of them, as well as Goths and others, remained under Hun dominance.[24]

Huns based in the Pontic Steppe soon attacked the Middle East. In 395–396, war bands, perhaps driven by famine, crossed the Caucasus Mountains and raided in force into Armenia, Syria, Palestine, and northern Mesopotamia. They took slaves, cattle, and other movable goods back to the steppe.[25] At the same time, Huns in Europe hired out as armies in the service of Rome on various occasions, sometimes in considerable number.[26] In this way they played a significant role in Roman political affairs. An indication of scale (probably the high end) is given by the perhaps sixty thousand Huns employed as auxiliaries by the western general Aetius in 425 for service in a revolt against emperor Theodosius II.[27]

By the early years of the fifth century, the western Huns coalesced into a more unified confederation under the leadership of Rua.[28] He invaded Thrace in 422 from his base on the Hungarian Plain (the westernmost extension of the Eurasian Steppe) and extorted from the Roman government an annual payment of 350 pounds of gold, setting a precedent for relations with Constantinople. After his death in 433, his nephews Bleda and Attila assumed leadership of the Huns of the west.[29] They began a more aggressive policy toward Rome, and in 435, they negotiated a new treaty which doubled their annual subsidy from Constantinople. This brought five years of peace, but in 441, Attila attacked again. Negotiation, extortion, and extreme levels of violence marked his interactions with Roman authorities as well as with his own subjects [KELLY]. He forbade any movement of people out of his empire and insisted that Romans return all fugitives to be punished [POHL].[30]

[23] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, ed. and trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, Mass., 1935) book 31.

[24] Roger Batty, *Rome and the Nomads*, 368–374; Moshkova, "Brief Review," 88–89; on Alans: Agustí Alemany, *Sources on the Alans: A Critical Compilation* (Leiden, 2000), and Bernard S. Bachrach, *A History of the Alans in the West: From Their First Appearance in the Sources of Classical Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, 1973).

[25] Dennis Sinor, "The Hun Period," in Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, 177–205, here 182–184.

[26] Hyun Jin Kim, *The Huns, Rome, and the Birth of Europe* (Cambridge, 2013).

[27] Aetius changed sides at the last minute and sent the Huns home after paying them.

[28] Heather, "Huns and the End of the Roman Empire," 14–17.

[29] Attila ruled with his brother Bleda from 434 to 445, and alone from 445 to 453.

[30] Andreas Schwarcz, "Relations between Ostrogoths and Visigoths in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries and the Question of Visigothic Settlement in Aquitaine and Spain,"

At its greatest extent, Attila's realm stretched from the Volga to central Gaul. Hun influence may have reached as far north as the Baltic Sea as well.[31] This was the first steppe-based empire of such a size to have an impact on European events.

Attila's rule and his influence on the Roman Empire and neighboring lands are evaluated in detail in various chapters within this book. Some paradoxes may be pointed out here. On the one hand, Attila never established a state on Roman territory or even won a major battle against Roman forces [KELLY, HEATHER]. On the other hand, the indirect effects of the Huns on the Roman Empire were quite significant. As the following chapters describe, the destabilizing presence of the Huns contributed to imperial economic weakness and inability to retake lost western territories for financial and strategic reasons. Huns played a role, although scholars debate the extent, in pushing various barbarian groups into the empire [KELLY, HEATHER]. They had considerable influence on other zones as well. In northern Europe, they helped create an environment that contributed to the rise of the Slavs [HEATHER]. Further to the east, Iran's Hunnic neighbors forced changes in Sasanian political ideology and cosmology [PAYNE].

How did the steppe itself change during the Age of Attila? Several points may be made. First of all, Huns brought new ethnic elements with them when they crossed the Volga and entered European history.[32] The doors to populations from further east would remain open, most immediately for Avars and Turks who would dominate the western steppe from the late sixth century.[33] Through their conflicts with Rome and Persia, and the accompanying financial extortion and diplomatic interaction, these peoples of the steppe gained experience – and heightened expectations – of dealing with the rich settled empires. Perhaps most significant were the consequences for trade and economy.

in *Integration and Authority in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Walter Pohl and Max Diesenberger (Vienna, 2002) 217–226, here, 223.

[31] Priscus, fr. 8, ed. Roger C. Blockley, in *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, 2 vols. (Liverpool, 1981–1983); Priscus Panita, *Excerpta et Fragmenta*, ed. Pia Carolla (Berlin, 2008) 51. Some influences were seen in Sweden: Ščukin, Kazanski, and Sharev, *Des les Goths aux Huns*, 116 on extent of the empire, and 111 for Roman sources.

[32] Peter B. Golden, "The Peoples of the South Russian Steppes," in Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, 256–284, here 256–258.

[33] Samuel Szádeczky-Kardoss, "The Avars," in Sinor, *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, 206–228, here 206–207, Walter Pohl, *Die Awaren: Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa* (Munich, 1988) 567–822.

The once-rich kingdom of Bactria suffered terribly in the wars between the Hunnic nomads and the forces of Sasanian Persia, remaining largely depopulated until the sixth century. As a result, trade routes – collectively known as the Silk Road – shifted north into Sogdia, which prospered greatly. Nomadic elites made Sogdian towns centers of wealth in Central Asia that would dominate trade across Central Asia until the rise of the Muslim Caliphate in the mid-eighth century.[34] [la vaissière]. It was along these trading networks that Christian missionaries traveled east from the late fifth century, bringing their Nestorian beliefs to Central Asia and China. At the same time Buddhists journeyed west from China but did not reach Europe.[35]

Zone 2: Sasanian Persia

The Sasanian dynasty, which rose to power in Iran in 224 and created an empire that lasted until the Arab conquest in 651, had many borders to defend during the Age of Attila (map 3). On its western flank it confronted Rome's eastern provinces across the Mesopotamian Plain, and it struggled with Rome for the Caucasus region, particularly for Armenia.[36] On its southwest border lay northern Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and a portion of the Indian Ocean. Control of these regions enabled seaborne trade with India. To the east lay the Gupta Empire, with which Sasanian Iran maintained diplomatic relations and conducted extensive trade.

The most perilous frontier for Persia, however, was the one shared with the steppe. Passes through the Caucasus Mountains provided an avenue for nomad raiders. More significant was the border north and east of the Caspian Sea, where Iran abutted Central Asia and the disputed lands of Transoxiana. In the late fourth century, Sasanian monarchs fought wars on this frontier with Chionite Huns and in the first half of the fifth century with Kidarite Huns. The rise of the Hephthalite kingdom and its seizure of the rich trading kingdom of Sogdia after the middle of the century put Sasanian monarchs on the defensive. Caught in a Hephthalite trap while campaigning on the steppe, the Persian monarch Peroz died in battle in 484. Subsequently, Hephthalite rulers

[34] La Vaissière, "Central Asia and the Silk Road," 146–148; Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden, 2005) 95–107.

[35] Joel Walker, "From Nisibis to Xi'an: The Church of the East in Late Antique Eurasia," in Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 994–1052.

[36] This disputed region rebelled against Persia in 451 and 482.

interfered in royal Sasanian dynastic politics, and they helped Kavad, who had married into the Hephthalite royal family, regain the Persian throne in 498.[37]

Interacting with these Hunnic kingdoms profoundly affected the Sasanian political system. In the face of defeat, humiliation, and loss of territory, the Sasanian regime reinvented itself, creating a new ideology of empire based on historical legends and Zoroastrian teachings. (The emergence of this new conceptual system roughly parallels the transformation of Rome into a Christian-Roman polity.) The Sasanian monarch held paramount authority, but his power depended on finding consensus among the great aristocratic clans of Iran. Aristocratic involvement in the new imperial ideology proved critical for its success [PAYNE].

Rome and Persia enjoyed peaceful relations through most of the Age of Attila, but they fought a cold war in North Arabia and southern Iraq through their Arab proxies. The Ghassanid federation led by the Jafnid clan fought for Rome, while the Lakhmid tribes led by the Nasrids took the Persian side. At stake in this competition was control of the highly lucrative trade coming from farther east.[38]

Zone 3: Northern Europe (Barbaricum)

Romans designated all of the lands in northern Europe that they had not conquered as "Barbaricum." This derogatory term suggested a clear distinction between their own civilized realm and the lands beyond. Reality offered no such obvious absolute differences. Roman defensive fortifications and system of alliances and accommodations with client kings on the other side were intended to protect the Roman provinces by keeping out invaders, but the border had never been impermeable. Traders, slavers, and artisans went back and forth quite often, as did settlers who had imperial permission to enter Roman territory. For centuries, recruits from the north had joined Roman armies in different capacities, and when their enlistment ended, many returned to their homes across the highly militarized frontier.

[37] Michael Maas, "The Equality of Empires: Procopius on Adoption and Guardianship across Imperial Borders," in *Motions of Late Antiquity: Religion, Politics and Society from Constantine to Charlemagne. Essays in Honour of Peter Brown*, ed. Jamie Kreiner and Helmut Reimitz (Turnhout, 2015); Frye, *Heritage of Central Asia*, 177–179.

[38] Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1989) esp. 22–24.

In his chapter, Peter Heather describes barbarian Europe as comprising three parallel regions. The westernmost part, consisting of Gaul and some lands just east of the Rhine, had largely been absorbed by Rome and was the most developed. The second region, which included Central Europe as far as the Vistula in modern Poland, was home to large-scale and powerful political units, known to Romans as warlike tribes and confederacies. Large numbers of people emigrated into the Roman Empire from this region, the notorious "barbarian invaders" of the fifth century, and, after the Huns left the scene, various small kingdoms emerged there, created by groups that had been components of the Hunnic empire. In the third region, which was the least developed materially, the Slavic inhabitants began to emerge in new political configurations once older Germanic power elites, and the Huns themselves, were dispersed [HEATHER]. The archaeologist Simon Esmonde Cleary has noted many changes in the western region and suggested that 500 CE may represent an archaeological threshold.[39] Heather also points out significant changes in the central and easternmost regions of barbarian Europe by the same approximate date, linking these developments to the presence of the Huns. By the end of the Age of Attila, a new era had begun for Northern Europe.[40]

Zone 4: The Roman Empire

Until the Age of Attila, the Roman Empire for the most part remained strong and intact, generally able to maintain the loyalty of its military and administrative cadres, keep its peasants and slaves under control, repel attackers, absorb newcomers, and when necessary adjust its internal government structures to meet compelling circumstances. Just as brutal as any enemy but far better organized, the Roman state could marshal unmatchable resources of manpower and supplies to keep its population of perhaps fifty million people secure – most of the time. This resilience became evident in the third century when the empire faltered due to civil war, invasion, and economic crisis. In response, the emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305), building on the work of his immediate

[39] Simon Esmonde Cleary, *The Roman West, AD 200–500: An Archaeological Study* (Cambridge, 2013) 466–482.

[40] For an overview, Walter Pohl, "Rome and the Barbarians in the Fifth Century," *Antiquité Tardive* 16 (2008) 93–101.

predecessors, enacted far-reaching military, economic, and administrative reforms that enabled the following century to be a time of security and prosperity.[41] From 324 Constantinople (the "New Rome") and Ravenna from 402 served as the hubs from which power flowed to all the empire's lesser cities with their dependent agricultural territories. Networks of aristocratic power and patronage anchored in the cities extended throughout imperial territories. These great imperial capitals generated sufficient centripetal power to hold the disparate elements of the empire together under firm administrative control. Above all, no one could ever forget that Rome's great armies, and the terrible force they could wield, provided the tightest bonds of all.

During the course of the Age of Attila, however, the entire empire endured tremendous shocks. The ties that for centuries had drawn its varied populations together yielded to centrifugal forces of political, cultural, and religious fragmentation, most notably in the western European provinces that spun off from Roman control. The eastern portion of the empire weathered the storm, but for the western empire there would be no recovery.

In the West. In the western part of the Roman Empire, centuries-old political bands dissolved, and all of the provinces, from Britain to North Africa, including the Italian homeland, with their manpower and revenues, gradually fell from imperial control.[42] Under a cascade of invasions, usurpations, and vicious civil war, imperial authority caved in, although its supporters put up a vigorous fight. While Roman authority diminished, smaller, more distinct regions split from its core, each deploying its Roman inheritance somewhat differently.[43] Thus, what had been a coherent Roman Empire in the fourth century underwent a process of re-regionalization in which new political structures, new formulations of self-interest, new forms of cultural and religious expression, and new identities emerged, all of them displaying both continuity and innovation.[44]

New kingdoms eventually took shape in Rome's old western territories, sometimes through conquest (as with the Angles and Saxons in

[41] Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993) 30–46.

[42] Peter Brown calls it a "return to normal in the long term history of western Europe," in Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity,* A.D. *200–1000*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2003) 96.

[43] Chris Wickham, *Framing the Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005) 10.

[44] Michael Kulikowski, "The Western Kingdoms," in Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 31–59.

Britain after 410) or negotiation with the government (as with the Visigoths in Aquitania in 417). Except in Britain, all the nascent states built extensively on Roman foundations and with heavy Roman involvement. Provincial Romans had to learn to live without the empire. While adjusting to new management they had to make choices about what aspects of Roman life to hang on to and what it even meant to be Roman. Solutions differed, but throughout the century being Roman provided a widespread sense of unity [CONANT].

By 500, the western provinces were entirely lost to the empire (map 4a and b). A look at the map in the early sixth century shows the kingdom of the Franks dominant north of the Alps, the Visigoths masters of Spain, Vandals controlling North Africa, Britain in the hands of Angles and Saxons, and Italy ruled by an Ostrogothic monarch. We should not imagine, however, as many historians of earlier times have done, that an unstoppable wave of distinct barbarian tribes systematically pried the provinces from Roman control simply by brute force. That would be a great oversimplification. Although all of these "tribal" groups bore ethnic names that reflected some shared ideas about their collective identity, they also included hardened soldiers drawn from many backgrounds. The chapters that follow explore a very complex political and social environment in the west, of which the movement of militarized barbarian groups into the empire was only one vector of change.

No single cause for the disintegration of the empire in the west can be isolated, though we can watch five linchpins of empire corrode and snap in the course of our period. In previous centuries, they had held the wheels on the imperial wagon; without them the imperial enterprise skidded and crashed.

Control of the army. During the fifth century, imperial authorities gradually lost control of the armed forces, a process that left the borders permeable and internal government precarious.

The tax system. The tax system that could support the state's military and administrative apparatus fell apart. The destruction caused by invasions, chronic civil war, and the rupture of links between the imperial administration and local aristocrats caused its breakdown. In some of the successor kingdoms, however, the new rulers made attempts to keep the tax system running, but of course kept the revenues for themselves.[45]

[45] Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth: The Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012) 389.

Recruitment. Owing in part to the steady loss of revenues and to the reluctance of great landowners in the West to release their tenants for military service, the Roman system of internal military recruitment broke down, and Roman authorities found it increasingly difficult to find Roman soldiers to fill the ranks. Military commanders increasingly relied on bands of fighters from outside the empire. For the most part, these were small bands of mixed origin under their own commander, though sometimes they bore a specific ethnic identification.[46] They received land, not coin, in payment for military service, which contributed to further economic decline [SARRIS]. By the middle of the century, no distinct Roman military identity remained.[47] [ELTON].

Loyalty. A fourth casualty of the Age of Attila was the loyalty of western provincial elites to the imperial order. Forced to make hard choices to protect their lands and authority, provincial aristocrats found ever fewer reasons to participate in imperial administrative structures. More often than not, landed aristocrats turned to barbarian leaders for protection.

Assimilation. For centuries, Roman officials had stage-managed the entry of settlers into the empire through negotiation. By rewarding the newcomers with land and citizenship, Rome gained military benefit.[48] In the Age of Attila, the Roman Empire still remained an attractive goal for outsiders who sought loot and land, but their leaders additionally hoped for recognition by imperial authorities and a place in the imperial system. The soldiers did not wish for the empire's destruction, as demonstrated especially by the Goths, whose leader Alaric jockeyed for a position in the Roman military establishment even while causing mayhem and destruction, and by the Huns, who depended on the empire as a source of gold and slaves [LENSKI]. In the course of the century, however, the process of assimilation into Roman culture lost force. Newcomers to the empire, whether invaders or entrants by treaty, gradually found it impractical, undesirable, or impossible to participate in the ever-weakening imperial power structures. When the dust settled, their leaders began to construct new power relations with the local provincial populations and with the imperial government.[49] In Vandal

[46] Walter Pohl, chapter 14 in this volume; Heather, *Kingdoms of the Empire*.

[47] Esmonde Cleary, *The Roman West*, 467.

[48] See the various chapters in Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl, eds., *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Leiden, 2003), esp. the "Introduction," by Hans-Werner Goetz, 1–11.

[49] Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 393–394.

Africa, for example, the first step in the creation of the Vandal regime after the conquest of Carthage was appropriation and redistribution of land among the supporters of the king and the rank and file of the Vandal army [MERRILLS]. A treaty with the government in Constantinople followed two years later, in 442. Other start-up kingdoms made different arrangements with local aristocrats and the imperial government, but all of them involved seizure and distribution of the best lands for the new settlers [SARRIS].

For readers unfamiliar with the history of the fifth-century collapse of the Roman Empire, it is useful to describe some signal events, which occurred in three phases.

First Phase: Summer 378 to Midwinter 405–406

In 378, a force of Goths crossed the Danube and destroyed two thirds of the eastern army led by the emperor Valens at the battle of Adrianople in Thrace, a terrible disaster but by no means a lethal blow to the empire. The new eastern emperor, Theodosius I, who ruled in the east from 379 to 392 and was sole ruler of the entire empire from 392 to 395, managed to contain the Gothic incursion, which dealt great damage in the Balkans. Usurpers in the West who often had the support of provincial aristocrats, proved to be greater threats to his authority.[50] When the last was overcome in 394, Theodosius once again divided the empire into two discrete parts with separate administrative and military establishments. After his death in 395, his two sons ruled the different halves of the empire, Arcadius in Constantinople and Honorius in Ravenna [GREATREX].

Second Phase: From the Rhine Crossings to Attila, 405–406

In midwinter 405–406 the Rhine boundary broke irremediably. Large bands of Sueves, Vandals, Alans, and Burgundians, with their allies and their dependents crossed the upper Rhine near Mainz. These groups originated in different places in central Europe [HEATHER]. Temporarily halted by an army of Frankish settlers, and further restrained for two years by a usurper from Britain who had brought the last Roman troops from the island with him, the invaders finally penetrated deep into Gaul and beyond, taking advantage of civil strife that prevented

[50] Matthew Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Europe, 300–900: The Sword, the Plough and the Book* (Milton Park, U.K., 2007) 83.

adequate defense. The invading groups were too large to be defeated by Roman forces or to be absorbed readily into the imperial fabric, and at the same time they were too small to deal a lethal blow to the empire. Consequently, for three or four decades, they moved through the western provinces seeking land from the authorities. They took part in civil war and caused great damage and suffering while enduring many misfortunes themselves.[51] The image before us should be of capable, armed war bands of mixed origin, not helpless refugees.

In the West. Roman defenses of the West came under the control of military strongmen who advanced the cause of the imperial house, for principles of dynasty remained a compelling force [CROKE]. These strongmen pitted the invaders against one another, against claimants to the throne, and against rebellious provincial populations with great effect. Two names stand out. Stilicho, whose father was a Vandal and who was married to Theodosius's niece, served as regent to the child-emperor Honorius from 394 to 408. Notable for sparring with the Gothic general Alaric in the Balkans and Italy and for halting a separate Gothic invasion of Italy in 406, he was executed in 410 following the sack of Rome by Alaric. Another highly effective general, Flavius Aetius, dominated military affairs in the West from 433 to 454. His policy was to work closely with the Huns, who by this time were expanding into western Europe from their base on the Hungarian Plain, while he established control within the western imperial realm. When Attila invaded Gaul in 451, however, Aetius organized the defense against him, creating a coalition of Visigoths, Franks, Romans, and others. After Attila's defeat at the Catalaunian Fields (somewhere near Chalons in France) and his death in Italy in 453, Aetius's policy fell apart, and he was soon murdered. For the rest of the century, other competing warlords and emperors dominated affairs, causing imperial politics in the West to become ever more convoluted and treacherous.[52]

Sometimes imperial forces went on the offensive. The emperor Majorian (r. 457–461) campaigned successfully against the Visigothic and Burgundian kingdoms, forcing them to accept subordinate federate status. He reasserted control over much of Spain, but was unable to mount a successful expedition against the Vandals, by this time securely established in North Africa. Ricimer, a barbarian commander with whom he had been collaborating in the management of the empire

[51] Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005).
[52] Penny MacGeorge, *Late Roman Warlords* (Oxford, 2002).

had him murdered A series of barbarian generals began to compete for the western throne by backing other Roman politicians. One of these military strongmen, Odoacer, put an end to the charade by deposing the last emperor in the West, Romulus Augustulus, in 476 and openly holding power as king of Italy. Odoacer cleverly demonstrated his deference to the emperor Zeno in Constantinople by returning all the imperial regalia that remained in Italy. Odoacer in turn was murdered by the Goth Theoderic, who had moved west with his army from the Balkans with Emperor Zeno's encouragement. He absorbed Odoacer's troops and established a highly successful kingdom in Italy that lasted until Emperor Justinian's armies destroyed it in the middle of the next century.[53]

In the midst of the century's political developments, various Roman Christian groups fiercely struggled for doctrinal preeminence in western Europe, as they did in the eastern empire (see below), and the church establishment grew rich as new Christian aristocracies emerged after the empire's collapse.[54] A problem of doctrinal affiliation developed in the West due to the fact that unlike the mostly Catholic Romans, the majority of the newcomers to the empire followed Arian Christianity. The post-imperial kingdoms responded in different ways. For the Vandals, Arianism seemed a good way to reinforce their identity in the ocean of North African Catholics whom they ruled [MERRILLS]. Ostrogoths in Italy likewise found it sensible to maintain separate church establishments for themselves and their Catholic subjects. The situation was complicated, however, by the fact that there was an active Arian community in Italy before their arrival. Clovis, the Frankish king, found it convenient to convert to Catholicism with his followers in 496, which had the effect of making assimilation of the Gallo-Romans and the Franks much easier. Salvian of Marseilles, a Gallic cleric painfully aware of the suffering of his fellow provincials at the hands of both Roman landlords and barbarian invaders, developed a new interpretation of events. He explained that the Arian Vandals and Goths had brought God's punishment upon the Romans. Because of their Arianism, the barbarians could not follow God's law properly. Catholic Romans, on the other hand, should have known better and so had earned divine anger. For Salvian, knowledge of God's law – that is, doctrinal correctness – determined the character of communities

[53] John Morehead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992); Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Western Europe*, 142–155.

[54] Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, esp. 369–384.

more than anything else. The time-honored distinction of Roman and barbarian meant little to him.[55]

In the East. Unlike its western counterpart, the eastern half of the Roman Empire held firmly together. Constantinople doubled in size to about 600,000 inhabitants, replacing Rome (which dramatically shrank in population) as the greatest consumer capital in the empire [VAN DAM]. The imperial house, the bureaucracy, and the army maintained their integrity and effectiveness.[56] [GREATREX]. Nevertheless, the eastern empire's character changed substantially, due to the influence of Christianity on government and society. The result was a state Roman in administration, law, and other traditions; Greek in language and cultural heritage; and now deeply Christian. We call this realm Byzantium, although the inhabitants of the eastern empire always understood themselves to be Romans.

As the masters of a vastly shrunken empire, the eastern Romans had to rethink their priorities. After Adrianople in 378, the Goths in the Balkans posed the most immediate threat. When Hunnic raids began in the first decades of the fifth century, military and diplomatic attention focused on the Danube frontier, the interface with the steppe.[57] Roman authorities maintained this border, although it remained permeable to devastating Hunnic raids when negotiations and the payment of subsidies stopped.[58]

The eastern empire suffered economically when taxes had to be raised to pay for Attila's extortionate demands.[59] His incursions had a catastrophic effect on the Balkans: roughly 150,000 people were taken into captivity, only some of whom were ransomed [LENSKI]. At the same time, Sasanian leaders felt enormous pressure from the steppe along their northeastern border. Because they did not wish to fight on two fronts they cultivated peaceful relations with Rome. During the fifth

[55] Michael Maas, "Ethnicity, Orthodoxy, and Community in Salvian of Marseilles," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, ed. John F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge, 1992) 275–284; Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 444–446.

[56] Michael Whitby, "The Army, c. 420–603," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 14: *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600*, ed. Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby (Cambridge, 2001) 288–314, here 300–301.

[57] A. D. Lee, "The Eastern Empire: Theodosius to Anastasius," in *The Cambridge Ancient History* 14, 33–62.

[58] Lee, "Eastern Empire," 40–42. For diplomacy: Ekaterina Nechaeva, *Embassies, Negotiations, Gifts: Systems of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 2014); Roger C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Leeds, 1992).

[59] Lee, "Eastern Empire," 41.

century the empires fought only two brief wars, and sometimes they actively cooperated with one another, an enormous benefit to both.[60] These relations, however, would not survive in the sixth century.[61]

Attila's death in 453 and the rapid dissolution of his empire brought new and perhaps more complicated problems to the government in Constantinople. Some of Attila's sons continued to cause trouble in the Danube region into the 460s, but more dangerous were the large populations of Goths, Heruls, Gepids, Rugi, Sciri, and others who had been subjected to Hunnic rule for decades and now began to create new kingdoms. They developed independent relations with the regime at Constantinople. Roman officials sought to control these peoples through diplomacy, bribes, and occasional warfare. Whenever possible they tried to set the barbarians at each other's throats and encourage them to move westward. As seen above, the Goths freed from Attila's rule, now referred to as Ostrogoths, found a place in Italy under Theoderic's leadership after defeating Odoacer and his mixed barbarian forces.

Eastern rulers did not forget the West. Perpetuating dynastic ties remained a compelling force drawing the two halves of the empire as well as Romans and non-Romans toward one another [CROKE]. The idea of regaining lost territory died hard. Occasionally, eastern expeditionary forces attempted to help the regime in Ravenna, but defending the Balkans always came first. In 441, for example, Theodosius II canceled preparations for an attack on the Vandals because of Huns rampaging in the Balkans [ELTON]. After several costly, failed attempts at seizing North Africa from Vandal control,[62] many members of the governing elite concluded that Roman fleets could no longer keep the Mediterranean a Roman lake. After the Vandal sack of Rome in 457, Constantinopolitans hurried to build great defensive walls around their city.[63] Contrary to expectations, however, in the first half of the sixth

[60] Geoffrey Greatrex, "The Two Fifth-Century Wars between Rome and Persia," *Florilegium* 12 (1993) 1–14; Michael Maas, "The Equality of Empires."

[61] Geoffrey Greatrex, "Byzantium and the East in the Sixth Century," in Michael Maas, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005) 477–509.

[62] In the years 441, 460, and 468; Andy Merrills and Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (Chichester, 2010) 109–113.

[63] For a later date: Cyril Mango, "The Shoreline of Constantinople in the Fourth Century," in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden, 2001) 17–28, here 24–25; Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel-Istanbul: Historisch-topographische und baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 2007) 2 with note 7.

century, the emperor Justinian accomplished what fifth-century emperors could not, seizing back the lost territories of North Africa in 534 as well as Italy, and some coastal areas in Spain by 552.

On the empire's southern flank, various Arab tribal configurations developed, but remained malleable to Roman influence.[64] Muhammad would not be born for another century, and the teachings of Islam were still unknown.

Paradoxically, Christian belief proved to be as much a divisive as a unifying force in the East, where the most visible internal changes resulted from bitter debate about theological doctrine. Three church councils at the time of Theodosius II (r. 408–450) shaped Christian discussion about doctrine for centuries to come. Bishops at these meetings dealt especially with the question of the human and divine natures of Christ. These were the First and Second Councils of Ephesus (in 431 and 449, respectively), and of greatest importance the Council of Chalcedon, in 451.[65] Intended to bring unity of faith to believers, in their establishment of formulas of "correct" doctrine, they intensified divisions among the religious communities of the empire, thereby helping to fragment the entire Roman world in a new way. The theological intricacies and their political ramifications cannot be traced here, but three observations should be made.

First, after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, emperors and church leaders at Constantinople supported its interpretation of Christianity, which they wished to be the universally accepted statement of the faith.[66] Individuals and communities that objected most strongly on doctrinal grounds were viewed as heretical.[67] Second, the Church of the East rose to prominence in the Syriac-speaking East. This church is also known as the Nestorian Church because its teachings about the

[64] Irfan Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*; Fred M. Donner, "The Background to Islam," in Maas, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, 510–533.

[65] Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408–450* (Berkeley, 2006) app. A, "The Acta of the Fifth-Century Councils: A Brief Guide for Historians," 235–247, is an invaluable introduction; Patrick T. R. Gray, "The Legacy of Chalcedon: Christological Problems and Their Significance," in Maas, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, 215–238.

[66] The council established that Christ has both human and divine natures, separate but unified in one person and one subsistence.

[67] On the growth and significance of heresiological discourse in identity formation, see Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin, eds., *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2008).

distinct human and divine natures of Christ were put forward by Nestorius (386–451). The first Council of Ephesus condemned him and his teachings, producing the Nestorian Schism. Nestorius's followers fled to Persia, where they worshiped safely. From there they carried their beliefs through Central Asia as far as China,[68] an important instance of linkage of the steppe to European concerns. Third, new cultural-religious realms defined by these variants of Christian belief gained a sharp profile in the course of the fifth century, making use of holy writings, including the Bible and the New Testament, in the languages of the region: Coptic in Egypt, Syriac in many parts of the Middle East, and Armenian and Georgian in the Caucasus. In consequence, self-identity in the eastern empire increasingly reflected Christian doctrinal affiliation rather than much older civic or provincial formulations, all of which nevertheless remained in play. Rivalry among the great bishops over authority and precedence further contributed to internal divisions.[69]

In light of these developments and in reaction to the suffering of the general population that he saw all about him, Leo, the bishop of Rome and a man of broad vision, attempted to extend his influence into North Africa, Gaul, Spain, Constantinople, Egypt, and Syria by pursuing an ideal of unity that recognized both Christ's divinity and human suffering. The regional churches were ambivalent about their ties to Rome, however, and in the end Syria, Egypt, and much of Spain were unable to share his doctrinal and political vision [WESSEL].

Doctrinal arguments also found expression in monasticism and asceticism, which had become basic parts of Christian life in the fourth century and taken on a highly political charge. Monastic and ascetic interaction with imperial and church authorities – and reaction to barbarian invasions – contributed to regional differences in East and West [ELM].

Christianity powerfully influenced the character of urban life in the eastern empire. Under the Theodosians, Constantinople became imbued with Christian piety.[70] Other cities followed suit. This ensured

[68] Joel Walker, "From Nisibis to Xi'an: The Church of the East in Late Antique Eurasia," in Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 994–1052.

[69] David M. Gwynne, "Episcopal Leadership" in Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 876–915.

[70] Brian Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople: Theodosius I's imprint on the imperial city," in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Later Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE*, ed. Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts (Cambridge, 2010) 241–264.

the eventual death of pagan practices of every sort; sacrifice was forbidden by law, temples were destroyed, and participants in traditional cults were cruelly punished.[71] This is not to say that the entire population immediately embraced Christianity. Very large pockets of traditional practice lasted well in to the next century, especially in the countryside, and various elements of nonsacrificial practices remained deeply ingrained in social life, to the dismay of bishops, who railed against them [SALZMAN].

With new criteria for inclusion within (and exclusion from) authoritative communities of faith enforced by both church and state, violence could be targeted against dissident groups, Christian and non-Christian alike. Jewish communities found themselves caught at the intersection of church and empire [SANZO AND BOUSTAN]. Imperial law protected Jewish communities but also limited their public presence, while zealous bishops often spurred their followers to attack them.

In fifth-century cities, conversion to Christianity often happened as a top-down process. Councilmen, the political and social elite in the empire's cities, sometimes converted in order to maintain their high position and to compete with bishops for local influence. This led in turn to broader acceptance of Christianity at lower levels of society [HOLUM]. In a parallel development, the urban educational system changed. Because of heightened imperial interest in controlling education a rather more centralized system developed, but it faded by the end of the fifth century [WATTS]. Nevertheless, traditional Hellenistic education became integrated with Christianity in new ways, and survived to become a basic element of Byzantine culture.[72] In the course of the century new Christian interpretations of the cosmos displaced older forms of geographical knowledge across the Mediterranean and Middle East [JOHNSON]. For example, the peoples of the steppe took a permanent place in the Christian imagination as Gog and Magog, mentioned in the Bible and developed in the New Testament as hordes of demons prophesied to play a monstrous role in world affairs before the Last Judgment.[73] This became a topic of discussion not limited to the East. While Ambrose of Milan identified the Goths as Gog following

[71] Jaclyn Maxwell, "Paganism and Christianization," in Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 849–875.

[72] Yannis Papadogiannakis, *Christianity and Hellenism in the Fifth-Century Greek East. Theodoret's Apologetics against the Greeks in Context* (Washington, D.C., 2012).

[73] Revelation 20:7–8.

Adrianople,[74] Augustine warned in *The City of God* against identifying these prophetic names with any contemporary peoples.[75] Despite Augustine's reservations, however, Gog and Magog continued to be linked to Goths, Huns, and other peoples from the steppe throughout the late antique period in the Latin, Greek, and Syriac realms, doing much to shape how the steppe was viewed for centuries to come.

Only a few other signs of internal changes in the East can be noted here. Old local languages were dying out in many places where they were not used in church or administrative contexts. Even comprehension of Latin, the language of law and government, could not be taken for granted among the educated elite. Although the Roman tongue remained the language of law and official documents, the east was governed in Greek. The *Acta* of the Council of Chalcedon, at which leading clergy from the East were present, shows that they could not understand Latin. It was a "Greek Roman Empire."[76] Laws, however, continued to be issued in Latin. The Theodosian Code, a codification of the laws of Christian emperors since Constantine in 312, was published in the East in 438 and in the West in the following year. Rulers of the successor kingdoms in the West started to issue law codes on the Roman model at the close of the century [HUMFRESS].

When the Age of Attila ended about 500, the Roman Empire in the East was transformed, differently but no less thoroughly than its old territories in western Europe. The state was now conceived of as one unified community that shared the Orthodox faith. All were subject to the will of the Christian emperor, and no room remained for people holding alternate doctrinal positions. Jews walked a tightrope, and pagan worship was absolutely forbidden. Constantinople, the New Rome, stood at the center of this imperial Christian polity, which in

[74] Ambrose, *De fide ad Gratianum*, II.16.137, in Ambrosius von Mailand, *De fide [ad Gratianum]*, text with translation and commentary by Christoph Markschies (Turnholt, 2005); *On Faith to Gratian*, ii.16; Edward Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932) 9; Emeri van Donzel and Andrea Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources: L Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Leiden, 2010) 12–13; Mark Humphries, "'Gog Is the Goth': Biblical Barbarians in Ambrose of Milan's *De fide*," in *Unclassical Traditions*, vol. 1: *Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. Christopher Kelly, Richard Flower, and Michael Stuart Williams, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, suppl. vol. 34 (2010) 44–57.

[75] *City of God*, 20.11, trans. David Knowles, *City of God* (London, 1971) 917–918: book 20 is about the Last Judgment.

[76] Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 1–38. Knowledge of Greek had similarly diminished in the West.

theory existed as the image of heaven on earth. The political idiom of expression for much of this remained imperial and Roman, but a new, total view of the cosmos and its communities in Christian terms had started to take shape [Johnson].[77] At century's end, the stage was set for the genuinely reactionary Age of Justinian.

Conclusion

The chapters that follow will explain in greater detail the realignments of culture and power that characterize the Age of Attila. They will show how the Roman world shifted gears in the course of the fifth century, falling apart in the West but refashioned with a new Christian face in the East. We will see that equally important shifts also occurred in northern Europe and Iran, as well as on the western Eurasian steppe, which took a permanent place as one of the major building blocks of the West. As much as the Age of Attila stands as an era of destructive change, it was also a time of fresh growth as a new international order emerged from the Pillars of Hercules to the Volga.

[77] Michael Maas, "*Mores et Moenia*: Ethnography and the Decline in Urban Constitutional Autonomy in Late Antiquity," in *Integration and Authority in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Walter Pohl and Max Diesenberger (Vienna, 2001) 25–35.